



The Green Resource

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THE SMALL APPLE – NEVADA CITY, CA¹



We're zooming in on Nevada City, California, and how this community came together with a citizen-led initiative to make their city more sustainable and eliminate their reliance on fossil fuels.

The citizens started an organization called the Alliance for a Post Petroleum Local Economy (APPLE).

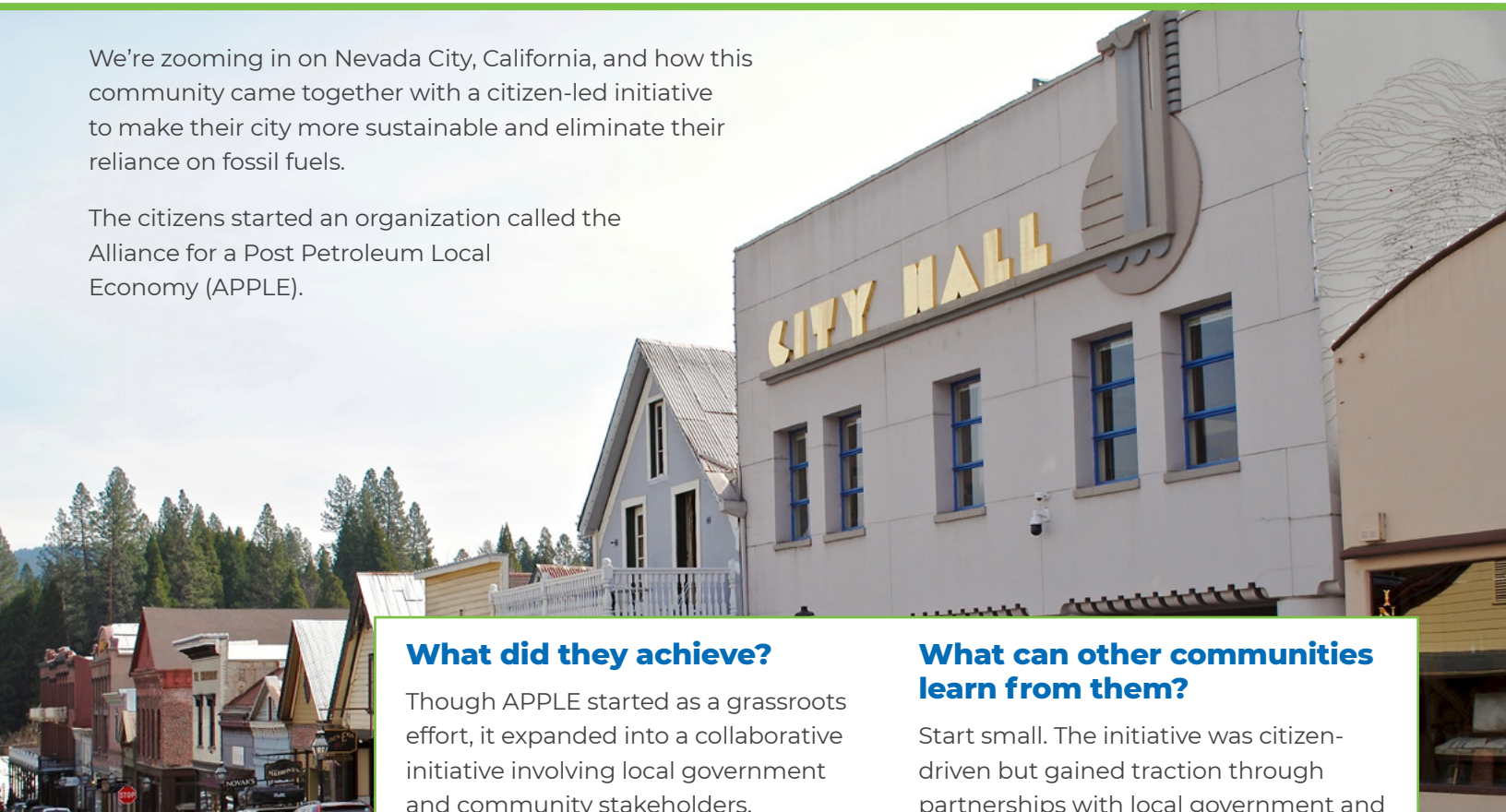


Image courtesy of EWY Media - stock.adobe.com

What did they achieve?

Though APPLE started as a grassroots effort, it expanded into a collaborative initiative involving local government and community stakeholders.

Projects included the establishment of a new center for sustainable living and many community-based sustainability initiatives, including insulation installation workshops, community gardens and more.

Why did this work?

The focus of Nevada City's citizens was clear. They knew what they wanted to address and were highly motivated to get there. Their goals were: to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, promote energy independence and foster resilience in response to global issues like peak oil and climate change.

What can other communities learn from them?

Start small. The initiative was citizen-driven but gained traction through partnerships with local government and other organizations.

This case study demonstrates the potential of grassroots movements to inspire broader community and governmental action.

This example highlights the importance of collaboration between citizens, local governments and organizations to achieve sustainability goals. Green designers can be a part of this change!



¹sierranevadaalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CaseStudyTranstion.pdf

GREEN COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



Here we look at a few communities from around the U.S. to see where other cities are focusing their sustainability efforts.



DENVER, COLORADO

Community Goal:
**Water conservation
through xeriscaping**

Denver pioneered xeriscaping, a landscaping method designed to conserve water. The city created programs to help residents remodel their yards using xeriscape principles. Denver Water developed downloadable plans and resources for easy implementation. Additionally, a demonstration garden offers hands-on tutorials for residents.



LA FARGE, WISCONSIN

Community Goal:
**Promoting organic
farming and sustainability**

La Farge is home to Organic Valley®, the largest organic farming co-op in North America. The co-op produces sustainable food products and operates from a facility built with locally sourced and recycled materials. The community hosts sustainability workshops and events like the Kickapoo County Fair to educate residents about organic farming and rural heritage.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



NEW YORK CITY

Community Goal:
Creating accessible
green infrastructure in
urban areas

The Greening NYC project focuses on developing rooftop gardens, pocket parks, and greening historical buildings to mitigate urban heat island effects and enhance biodiversity. This initiative improves air quality, climate resilience and recreational opportunities for residents in densely populated neighborhoods.



WASHINGTON STATE

Community Goal:
Conservation of forests
through community
management

Washington has implemented community forests under the U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Program since 2008. These forests emphasize collaboration with tribal governments, youth engagement through educational programming, and cultural integration into forest management practices.



OBERLIN, OHIO

Community Goal:
Carbon neutrality

Oberlin is part of the Climate Positive Development Program, which aims to eliminate carbon emissions, restore local agriculture and create sustainable economic bases. The Oberlin Project combines city efforts with college and private partnerships for impactful results.

Image courtesy of Douglas - stock.adobe.com

Green Community Features



PUBLIC GREEN SPACES



PEDESTRIAN ZONES, BICYCLE LANES



PLAYGROUNDS WITH SHADE



LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMS



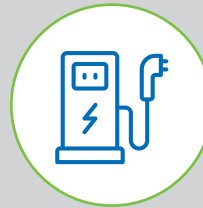
COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS



WASTE & RECYCLING



BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION INITIATIVES



ELECTRICAL VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS



WATER CONSERVATION INITIATIVES



EMPHASIS ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Looking for a handout to help demonstrate the value of green community features to your clients?

Check out our Green Community Features Client One-Sheet in your Green Member Center!

Green Community Features



What Does Community Engagement Look Like?²

- Networking
- Advocacy
- Digital Engagement
- Collaborations with Local Businesses
- Neighborhood Sustainability Events
- Local Government Involvement
- Building Relationships

² <https://ecologycenter.org/>

How Can You Help Your Community as a **GREEN DESIGNER?**



1

Promote Sustainable Features in Properties

Highlight energy-efficient appliances, solar panels, advanced insulation and smart home systems in property listings. These features reduce utility costs and minimize carbon footprints.

2

Educate Buyers and Sellers

Provide information on green certifications like LEED or ENERGY STAR, and explain the benefits of sustainable homes, such as lower operating costs and improved indoor air quality. Help your clients know their sustainable options and make informed decisions.

3

Advocate for Green Building Practices

You can push for policies that incentivize sustainable construction, such as tax breaks or stricter building codes that promote energy efficiency. Collaborate with policymakers, landlords and even construction companies to work together.

4

Provide Educational Resources

Supply clients with case studies and success stories. Give them information on financial incentives and long-term cost savings of investing in eco-friendly properties.

Green Designee in Action

Q: What steps do you take to educate your community about sustainable living and green homeownership?

A: After building and listing a high-performance home, we are digitally marketing the green features on a regular basis to inform the community how easy and important it is to reduce our ecological footprint.

Q: What initiatives have you supported to promote eco-friendly housing and programs in your community?

A: Since becoming a Green designee, I have founded a nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to build eco-friendly homes and to educate the public about sustainable living. Our brokerage donated to support the nonprofit as well.

Kimberlee Davidson, Designated Managing Broker & Founder of DreamBuild Illinois



Make Storytelling a Unique Aspect of Your Marketing



Use this step-by-step guide to help you build your unique story that will inspire clients to embrace green living and make them want to work with you!

1

Identify a Unique Story to Tell

- Focus on the property's green features by highlighting aspects like energy-efficient appliances, solar panels, sustainable materials, water conservation systems or proximity to green spaces.
- Include real-life success stories by documenting testimonials from previous buyers who have benefited from eco-friendly features, such as reduced utility bills or improved indoor air quality.

2

Understand Your Audience

- Eco-conscious buyers are your aim, so tailor your narrative to resonate with buyers who prioritize sustainability, health and cost-efficiency in their lives.
- Emphasize green values by showing your Green designation. Focus your narrative on environmental stewardship, well-being and long-term savings to align with what your clients are looking for.
- Like all buyers, money matters. Provide information on government grants, tax credits and rebates for energy-efficient upgrades or renewable energy installations.

3

Create an Emotional Connection

- Share relatable anecdotes about how green features improve daily life.
- Appeal to buyers' values by providing research that stresses the importance of small actions to the health of the planet.

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Make Storytelling a Unique Aspect of Your Marketing



4

Incorporate Community

- Highlight how the property integrates into an eco-conscious neighborhood and is part of a community that values sustainability.
- Provide testimonials from community partners and local businesses that attest to the commitment to green living.

5

Use Multiple Platforms

- Tap social media tools to share stories through posts, videos and infographics on multiple platforms.
- Publish blogs and articles with case studies or the latest research about green properties and their impact on homeowners.
- Utilize email marketing by creating green-focused campaigns featuring green listings and eco-living tips.

6

Avoid Greenwashing

- Ensure transparency by verifying all sustainability facts are accurate and backed by certifications like LEED or ENERGY STAR.
- Build trust by clearly communicating what makes the property eco-friendly without exaggeration, and importantly, what isn't eco-friendly in a home so that clients are aware.

Upcoming Events

Green Knowledge Exchange

Join us for a virtual Knowledge Exchange featuring a discussion with the Green designation's partner Pearl Certification. This is an opportunity to learn more about utilizing your Green designation and how it can expand your business!

JULY 10, 2025 | 11 AM ET
VIRTUAL

[Register Now!](#)



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