

# ICLEI150

## LEADING WITH CLIMATE SCIENCE

An explainer for ICLEI USA leaders working toward climate neutrality as part of the UNFCCC's Cities Race to Zero Initiative.

Stay up to date on ICLEI150's Race to Zero Initiatives at <http://icleiusa.org/race-to-zero>

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# RACE TO ZERO OVERVIEW

Race To Zero is a global campaign (established by the UN Climate in June 2020) to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero-carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. The Cities Race to Zero is the local government engagement opportunity within the UN's initiative and is coordinated by city network partners, C40, Climate Mayors, Global Covenant of Mayors, ICLEI, and others. ICLEI USA is turning Cities Race to Zero into an actionable work plan for U.S. cities, towns, and counties.

The objective is to globally activate a decarbonized economy to keep atmospheric warming below 1.5°C. This global movement puts cities on track for the emissions reductions they must achieve by 2030 on the way to zero emissions by 2050.

There are two main ways ICLEI USA members can join the Race to Zero:

1. Joining the ICLEI150 (more on page 4) by signing, at the head-of-organization level, the ICLEI150 commitment form. **ICLEI will report your participation in the Race to Zero** and work with your team to accomplish each step of the race; or
2. Sign up on the [Cities Race to Zero](#) portal.

This toolkit contains the informational materials for city and county leadership to participate in the Race to Zero. It explains the intention and logistics of the ICLEI150, declaring your administration's commitment to using leading practices to direct your climate targets and action.

# CITIES RACE TO ZERO COMMITMENTS

The Race to Zero is an opportunity to listen to the demands of constituents, develop new green economies, and foster innovation. With ICLEI's assistance, ICLEI leaders participating in the Cities Race to Zero will:

1. **Endorse:** the following Principles:

- a. We recognize the global climate emergency.
- b. We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
- c. We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the center of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.
- d. We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognizing the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.

2. **Pledge:** at the head-of-organization level to get to zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and by 2050 at the latest. Set a 2030 interim target reflecting maximum fair share effort to reach 50% global CO2 reductions.

3. **Plan:** the actions necessary to achieve both the 2030 and 2050 targets within 12 months of joining.

4. **Proceed:** with high-impact action to achieve the targets during 2021

5. **Publish:** report Race to Zero actions by 2022

# ABOUT ICLEI150

**ICLEI150 is a movement of local governments across the ICLEI U.S. network** stepping up to join the Cities Race to Zero to cut global emissions in half by 2030 and to zero by 2050.

Respond to the moment and be recognized for real action by joining ICLEI150.

When you join ICLEI150, ICLEI will provide your community with:

- National and international recognition for your ambition and action from ICLEI USA and ICLEI World Secretariat.
- Your community's 2030 Science-Based Target, offering your city or county its calculated share of the Paris Agreement goal and putting you on a path to climate neutrality by 2050.
- Community-specific high-impact actions to meet the 2030 target.
- Technical assistance to proceed with one or more high-impact actions during 2021.
- Personalized support package, pairing ICLEI's resources with your community's goals.

ICLEI USA embraced the challenge and the opportunity of the Cities Race to Zero. With your community's climate data already in our industry-leading emissions management software, ClearPath, and technical expertise, ICLEI USA is uniquely positioned to provide your community support on ambitious greenhouse gas reductions.

Knowing this, Angie Fyfe, ICLEI USA's Executive Director, committed to Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, that we will engage 150 U.S. local governments in the Race to Zero. The ICLEI150 opportunity is now underway with a first group of climate leaders.

# PARTICIPATING IN ICLEI150

**GETTING STARTED:  
PLEDGE TO REACH  
ZERO EMISSIONS AS  
SOON AS POSSIBLE**



**All local governments in  
the ICLEI USA network  
are welcome to  
participate in ICLEI150.**

Pledges bring both recognition and accountability—but they must urgently be followed by action. Within 12 months of joining the Race to Zero your community must:

**Pledge at the head-of-organization level to reach (net) zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and by 2050 at the latest.**

Local governments can make this pledge via any official documentation such as a council decision, commission decision, or strategy paper. For inspiration, see Ann Arbor, MI's [A2Zero Carbon Neutrality Plan](#), Pittsburgh, PA's [Carbon Neutral by 2050 Executive Order](#), and Montgomery County, MA's [Emergency Climate Mobilization Resolution](#).

**Set an interim 2030 target that reflects maximum effort toward or beyond a fair share of 50% CO2 reductions by 2030.**

ICLEI will support the city or county in developing their 2030 Science-Based Targets (more on pages 6-7).

Once each is complete, ICLEI will report your participation as **Cities Race to Zero Element 2: Pledge**.

# EMBRACE YOUR 2030 SCIENCE-BASED TARGET: OVERVIEW



If you have a completed 2016 to 2019 community-wide greenhouse gas inventory, ICLEI's technical experts will calculate your science-based target (SBT). This target is the level of emissions your city or county must reduce to achieve your fair share of the Paris climate goals. ICLEI's technical advisors will review the SBT with city contacts.

Embrace this target and encourage your community, colleagues, and other elected officials to develop and embrace their targets. Ways you can publicly embrace your 2030 Science-Based Target:

- Align your budget with the climate imperative
- Communicate around a 2030 goal, crafting messaging that speaks for the world 9 years from now.
- Encourage your city council or county government to adopt a resolution integrating the target
- Include the target in the next climate action plan
- Put out a public statement of the climate action plan and your commitment to achieving it
- Add to or develop a climate target dashboard on your government website

## WHY A SCIENCE-BASED TARGET?

Science-based targets build internal and external support needed to achieve ambitious greenhouse gas reductions and boost public confidence in local climate action. They show local governments what they need to do by 2030 and 2050, spurring innovation and collaboration.



## WHAT IS A SCIENCE- BASED TARGET?

Science-based targets are climate goals in line with the latest climate science. They represent your community's fair share of the ambition necessary to meet the Paris Agreement commitment of keeping warming below 1.5°C. To achieve this goal, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that we must reduce global emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Equitably reducing global emissions by 50% requires that high-emitting, wealthy nations reduce their emissions by more than 50%.

## ICLEI'S METHODOLOGY

The foundation of ICLEI's science-based target calculation methodology is based on the One Planet Cities Challenge (OPCC) calculation methodology. While our methodology is based on the OPCC, ICLEI adapted it to fit our diverse network of local governments.

## KEY DIFFERENCES

### **Baseline years range from 2016-2019**

Justification: Many local governments produce inventories every 2-5 years. We prefer the science-based target baseline emissions to be precisely calculated rather than extrapolated based on a 2018 normalization.

### **We can provide a separate target for scope 3 emissions**

Justification: Many local governments have influence over their scope 3 emissions allowing them to plan and implement high-impact actions (HIAs) to reduce them.

### **Minimally compliant inventories must be compliant with ICLEI's U.S Community Protocol (USCP) or the GPC Basic reporting level.**

Justification: Many local governments within ICLEI USA's network build inventories in compliance with the U.S Community Protocol. Other local governments build inventories in compliance with the GPC Basic reporting level. The GPC Basic reporting level requires all activities required by the U.S. Community Protocol, except the use of energy in potable water and wastewater treatment and distribution.

**[Click for info on "Inventory Guidance for Science-Based Targets"](#)**

## ACT NOW: HIGH- IMPACT ACTION



ICLEI's technical staff will meet with your team to develop high-impact actions to achieve the 2030 target. Once identified, ICLEI will provide technical assistance to help your team begin implementation.

ICLEI's Carbon Neutrality Framework and ClearPath planning module will support high-impact actions. ICLEI will draw from and leverage our partners, including American Cities Climate Challenge, America's Pledge, C40 Green and Just Recovery, and Project Drawdown.

ICLEI150 participants are invited to participate in ICLEI's technical assistance workshops targeting high-impact actions. Topics may include building electrification, strategies for working with your utility provider, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, etc. **ICLEI will report your participation as Cities Race to Zero Element 3: Plan**

ICLEI technical advisors will guide local governments through high-impact action (HIA) identification, planning, and implementation. To do this, ICLEI will help local governments better understand the position of policy in decision making and will guide cities through influence mechanisms that yield high impact results. Additionally, ICLEI will provide instruction on best practices to implement HIAs. These best practices will allow cities to hone in reduction strategies and maintain confidence in their longstanding Cities Race to Zero commitment. This guidance includes strategy-specific technical workshops that cover necessary implementation concepts and resources. Lastly, ICLEI will strengthen each local government's reduction trajectory as they map their Race to Zero on ICLEI's planning module. Once you start implementing the action, **ICLEI will report your implementation as Cities Race to Zero Element 4: Proceed.**



## HOW WILL ICLEI SUPPORT YOUR HIGH IMPACT ACTIONS?

## REPORT OUT: LET THE WORLD KNOW YOUR PROGRESS



The world needs your immediate action. As you work to achieve your goal, reporting will give your progress visibility and develop internal and external support for climate neutrality.

ICLEI views the Race to Zero as a long-term commitment to achieving your 2030 target and then your climate neutrality by 2050. Reporting your progress allows ICLEI and your team to co-develop the next steps in your journey. ICLEI will amplify your progress through its media and partner channels. **As noted above, ICLEI will report ICLEI150 participant's actions.**

## HOW TO REPORT THE RACE TO ZERO?



Report progress at least annually, including via, to the extent possible, platforms that feed into the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Portal for **Cities Race to Zero Element 5: Publish**. Cities can report targets and progress against these targets, as part of their existing commitments through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. GCoM Committed cities can report through either of GCoM's recognized platforms: the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or MyCovenant platform.

For cities that have reported to the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System in the past, there are no additional reporting questions for the Race to Zero. Cities that have never reported can contact CDP at [cities@cdp.net](mailto:cities@cdp.net) to sign up. The reporting system is free to use.

**[Click here for more reporting guidance or to log in to the reporting platform.](#)**

# YOUR ICLEI WORK PLAN IN THE UNFCCC'S CITIES RACE TO ZERO

## For those with a GHG inventory

## ICLEI Support

## For those creating or updating GHG inventory

