



# Partnering for Public Work

A City Practices Brief

August 2007

In the process of solving problems and seizing opportunities, municipal governments very frequently work with partners --- business firms, neighborhood organizations, non-profit associations, civic groups, and others. These collaborations take many forms and are aimed at numberless public purposes. Carefully balanced partnering opportunities most often provide positive results with noticeable cost savings for the community.

For more examples, visit the City Practices database on the NLC website, [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

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## Workforce Development Collaboration

City: **Columbus, Ohio**

Population: 711,470

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(614) 225-6901

The City of Columbus, surrounding jurisdictions, local organizations, and area colleges work together to develop the region's workforce. As a result of a leadership summit, convened in 1998, the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce organized a Workforce Leadership Council to implement a workforce development initiative based on business-driven standards. The initiative includes the development of education and training standards for the area's most vital and high-demand industries and occupations. It also addresses challenges in workplace communication, adult training assessment and certification, and online skills matching. Because of the initiative, local business leaders pledged to update job skills standards and provide more opportunities for those entering the job market. The local public school system pledged to implement education reforms so that graduates have the academic skills necessary to enter the high-demand industries in the Columbus area.

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## "Main Street"

City: **Farmingdale, New York**

Population: 8,399

For more information, contact: David Smollett, Village Clerk  
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(516) 249-0093

Cooperation between public and private institutions helped Farmingdale's Main Street become an attractive destination. The village worked with the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, local schools, and private businesses to eliminate a 17 percent vacancy rate, create over 250 jobs, and use over \$2 million in grants to improve its streetscapes. Improvements included brick sidewalks, benches, ornamental lighting, landscaping, and facade improvements. Eleven vacant stores were converted into fine restaurants, and an abandoned movie theater into law offices. In addition, there are no longer parking meters on Main Street and parking spaces for shoppers were added. Farmingdale won First Place in the 2002 Main Street Awards from the New York Conference of Mayors.

### **Environmental Landfill Collaboration**

City: **Greensboro, North Carolina**

Population: 223,891

For more information, contact: Jeryl Covington, Director of Environmental Services  
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An energy consulting firm, a textile company, and the City of Greensboro collaborated to find a innovative solution to a landfill methane problem. No longer able to passively vent methane gas from its landfill because of Clean Air Act regulations, the city and its two private partners developed a gas recovery system. The private partners provided the capital for the project, thus eliminating the need for the city to use taxpayer funding to build the system. With more than 54 wells, the system yields more than two million cubic feet of methane per day. It is piped directly to the textile plant which uses it for supplemental energy generation. The city paid for the initial feasibility study, but the rest of the \$5 million cost of the project is being paid for with royalties from the consulting firm, who runs the operation and sells the gas to the textile company. In 2007, operation of the system will revert to the city. This project won a 1997 Award of Merit from American City & County.

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### **Hopewell Community and Industry Panel**

City: **Hopewell, Virginia**

Population: 22,354

For more information, contact: Ben Ruppert, Emergency Services Coordinator  
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(804) 541-2298

The mission of the Hopewell Community and Industry Panel (HCIP), a partnership between citizens and local industry, is to identify, coordinate, and communicate environmental strategies for the community. Shortly after its creation, HCIP held a public forum entitled "What You See, Hear, and Smell" where citizens of the heavily industrial city spoke directly to plant managers about their public health, environment, and city image concerns. HCIP used the suggestions that came from the forum to launch several programs including an annual emergency preparedness drill for citizens and local plants, industry annual reports on spills and releases, an emergency radio notification system in case of hazardous chemical release, an automated citizens information system, and frequent tours of plants for high school science classes and the general public. Also, HCIP encouraged two plants in the city to construct and maintain wildlife sanctuaries on their properties. For its efforts, HCIP received a Public-Private Partnership Award from the International City/County Management Association.

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### **Lancaster Community Shelter**

City: **Lancaster, California**

Population: 118,718

For more information, contact: Geri K. Bryan, City Clerk  
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(661) 723-6000

The Lancaster Community Shelter for homeless persons is the result of a partnership between the Lancaster's redevelopment agency and the Antelope Valley Building Industry Association. Through these two entities, numerous community and business groups donated labor, materials, and money to construct the shelter. Federal, state, and county grant money was also used, as was community development block grant and low/moderate income housing funds from the city. The shelter offers homeless persons housing for as little as one night and as much as six months. Professional case managers hold workshops and counsel one-on-one to help clients find permanent housing and become self-sufficient. Since 1989, the shelter has served 2,000 persons. Sixty percent of the clients have found a job and permanent housing. This program won the International City/County Management Association's 1997 Award for Programs for the Disadvantaged in Memory of Carol Keane.

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### **Lapham Park Venture**

City: **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Population: 596,974

For more information, contact: Kenneth Barbeau, Managing Director  
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The Lapham Park Venture in Milwaukee is a synergy of public, private, and nonprofit investment, drawing on contributions of experts and practitioners in housing, medicine, social service, gerontology, and architecture and design to assist residents of Lapham Park, a nine-story public housing facility in the city. On-site services for residents include prescription drug refills, hospice care, dentistry, home health care, physical therapy, and podiatry services. The city housing authority raised \$1.3 million from corporations and foundations to renovate the basement of the building and \$600,000 for services. The founding partners of this venture include the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Service Empowerment Transformation Ministry Inc., the Lapham Park Residents Organization, and Community Care Organization, a local care provider for the elderly and disabled. The Lapham Park Venture received the American Planning Association's 2004 National Social Advocacy Award.

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### **Community Policing Grassroots Management Team**

City: **New Haven, Connecticut**

Population: 123,626

For more information, contact: Francisco Ortiz, Chief of Police  
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Each district in the New Haven Police Department has a grassroots Management Team comprised of residents, business owners, and institutional and service representatives who are concerned about their community. A committee system reviews and recommends policies and implementation plans regarding public safety, youth issues, physical and infrastructure conditions, and other topics. A high priority issue from the Teams is responding to high risk behaviors and the safety needs of city youth. The holistic concept of youth oriented policing evolved from its many interrelated components that include aspects of prevention and intervention, youth crime, truancy, juvenile probation, mentoring, recreation, education, and service. Partnership and collaboration were key to making a visible change in the neighborhoods, schools, and at home. The Department won top honors in the National League of Cities Third Annual Excellence in Community Policing Awards competition (Community Policing in Action, 75,000-150,000 population category).

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### **Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program**

City: **New York, New York**

Population: 8,008,2787

For more information, contact: Neil Coleman, Assistant Commissioner  
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New York's Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program is a partnership among local community leaders, the city, businesses, and banks to renovate dilapidated or abandoned housing, and quickly move them from city to private ownership. The Program targets clusters of buildings, rather than individual buildings, so that rehabilitation efforts have a more profound and far-reaching effect on the neighborhood. City money and private financing pay for the renovations. Once completed, buildings are turned over to private neighborhood entrepreneurs. They are responsible for maintaining and managing the buildings. Previously occupied units must be preserved for low-income residents, while vacant units may be rented at market rate. In its first five years, the Program was responsible for rehabbing 159 apartment buildings, 1,695 housing units in all. This program won a 1999 Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

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## Transportation Coalition

City: **Tempe, Arizona**

Population: 158,625

For more information, contact: Carlos de Leon, Deputy Public Works Manager  
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To fund improvements for alternative modes of transportation, a coalition of local citizen and business groups in Tempe convinced voters to approve a referendum calling for a sales tax increase. The extra tax revenue goes into a \$22 million per year dedicated fund used for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, as well as the creation of a downtown transit center, and a study of the possibility for rail transit in the city. Projects implemented under a five-year plan include expanded bus routes and new bike lanes and trails. The increased transit and bicycle use in the city has significantly reduced vehicle miles traveled, saving an estimated \$477,000 worth of gasoline. This effort won Tempe a 1997 Way to Go! Award from the EPA's Transportation Partners.

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City Practices Briefs contain examples from NLC's City Practices database, available at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org). Series editors: Bruce Calvin and Larry Foxman. For more information contact the NLC Municipal Reference Service at (202) 626-3130 or email [mrs@nlc.org](mailto:mrs@nlc.org).