



# Mayors Leading the Way on Climate

How Cities Large and Small are Taking Action

2018

## ALLIANCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A joint effort by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)



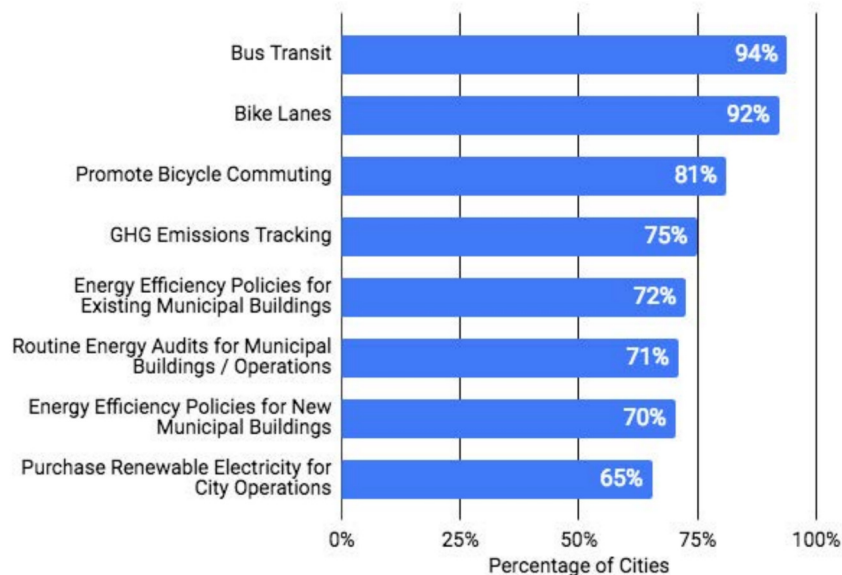
## BY THE NUMBERS

Cities are not slowing down in their drive toward sustainability and climate action. As we look toward the next critical decade the survey results show significant opportunity to continue turning city leadership into even more action and results. This is a critical observation as we look to keep cities healthy and America moving on its global climate commitments.

- **158 cities** participated, including all 102 respondents to the 2017 survey.
- **95%** of cities have experienced a change related to at least one climate impact in the past five years, with most experiencing more.
- **60%** of cities have launched or significantly expanded a climate initiative or policy in the last year.
- **More than 80%** of new municipal vehicle purchases will be made in cities with a green vehicle purchasing policy.
- **Bike-share** and **scooter-share** services are the most commonly cited new transportation options cities are considering.
- **65%** of cities procure renewable electricity for municipal operations.
  - **27** cities cover 30% or more of city government electricity needs through renewable sources - an apparent increase from 2017 results.
    - **8** cities cover all their electricity needs with renewable sources.
- **More than 70%** of cities have energy efficiency policies for new and existing municipal buildings.
- **More than 83%** of cities are looking to the business community for support in advancing transportation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency solutions.
  - **More than 55%** of cities are interested in joining the **28-32%** of cities that already partner with businesses in pursuit of these solutions.

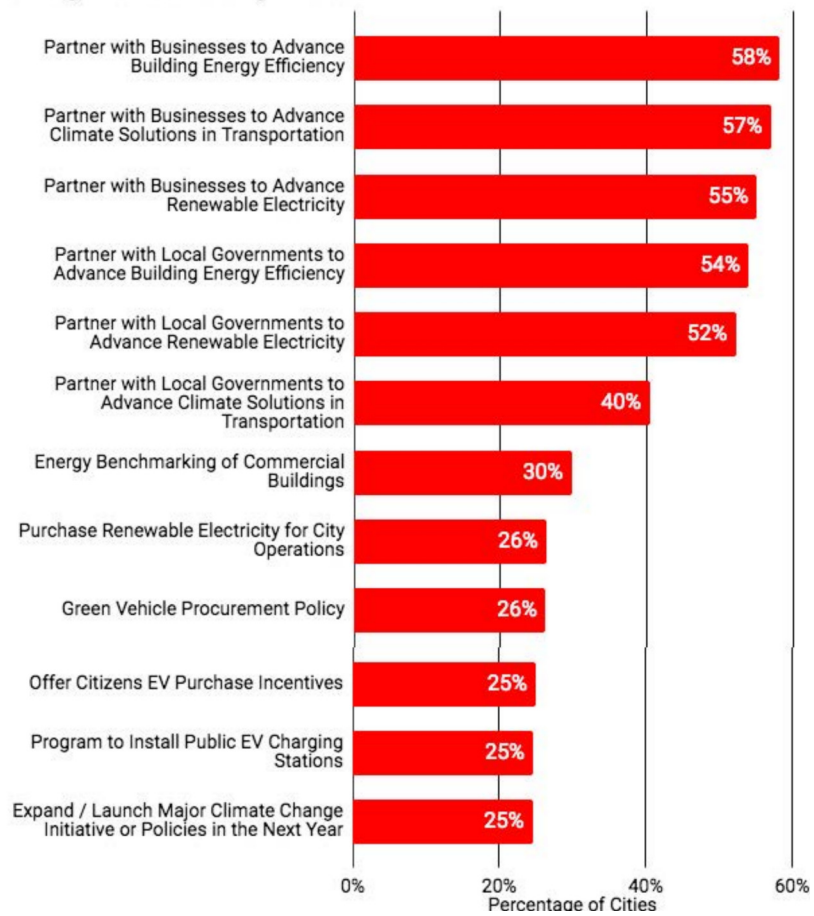
### Most Common Policies and Activities

Percentage of Cities With Policies and Activities Underway



### Areas of Greatest Interest for New Participation

Percentage of Cities Considering or Interested



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions have established an alliance to help cities and businesses strengthen partnerships toward mutual sustainability and climate goals. A central part of the work is to assess the actions and needs at the city level to help set priorities and identify opportunities. The sustainability questionnaire is designed to determine innovative practices in key local policy areas, identify trends, and define opportunities where additional assistance may be needed. The responses of more than 150 American cities provide a snapshot of local action and potential.

Climate action at the local government level and coordination with the business community now play a more important role than ever in developing climate solutions. As the second largest carbon emitting country, the climate and energy policies of the United States set an example for the world community in the global effort to stem climate change. Last year, American cities, states, businesses, and other institutions including universities and hospitals, took on a greater leadership role, embracing a responsibility to address the high stakes for their citizens, employees, and business sustainability. Broad coordination efforts such as “We Are Still In” and “America’s Pledge” have grown to help fill the vacuum of national leadership. Our survey shows that cities are uniquely positioned to advance solutions and continue to step up to the challenge.

### CITIES ARE FEELING CLIMATE IMPACTS AND ACTING

- 95 percent of cities have experienced a change related to at least one climate impact in the past five years. The most prevalent changes cities reported during this time include heavy rain events or inland flooding (76 percent of cities), heat waves (65 percent), and drought (51 percent). Additionally, an alarming 18 percent identified wildfires as a changing impact.
- Over the last 12 months, 60 percent of cities have launched or significantly expanded a climate initiative or policy, and this pace is expected to continue in the coming year.

### CITIES ARE TAKING ON TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

- Cities are addressing the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions by adopting alternative fuel vehicles into municipal fleets. Large cities in particular lead in the adoption of hybrid and all-electric passenger vehicles, as well as all-electric buses, a very recent addition to the market.
- Nearly 60 percent of city governments have green vehicle purchasing policies and an additional 26 percent are considering them. More than 80 percent of new municipal vehicle purchases will be made in cities with a green vehicle purchasing policy, indicating significant potential for low-carbon fleets in the future.
- Cities are evaluating an expanding slate of transportation choices, with bike-share and scooter-share services as the most commonly cited options under consideration.
- Importantly, 57 percent of cities have a policy or program for public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, with an additional 22 percent considering such action. This shows an interest in providing the infrastructure necessary for clean vehicle deployment.

## **CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY ARE A GROWING PRIORITY**

- More than half of cities (54 percent) have a renewable energy goal, and an additional 18 percent are considering setting a goal.
- 65 percent of responding cities currently procure renewable electricity for municipal operations. 27 cities cover 30 percent or more of city government needs through renewable sources, an apparent increase from 2017 results. 8 cities cover all their needs with renewable sources.
- 51 percent of cities help citizens and businesses adopt renewable electricity options. An additional 13.5 percent of cities are considering offering such support. Renewable policies and programs for residents and the private sector appear more common in cities with citywide renewable energy goals.

## **CITIES ARE PROMOTING EFFICIENT BUILDINGS**

- A majority of city governments have energy efficiency policies for new and existing municipal buildings (70 percent and 72 percent, respectively). In addition, more than half have policies or incentives for new and existing commercial and residential buildings.
- 23 percent of cities support or require energy benchmarking of commercial buildings, an emerging local policy strategy.

## **THERE ARE CLEAR INDICATIONS OF GROWING OPPORTUNITY FOR VITAL PARTNERSHIPS**

- 90 percent or more of cities are partnering or interested in partnering with other local governments in pursuit of transportation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency solutions.
- More than 83 percent of cities are partnering or interested in partnering with businesses in pursuit of transportation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency solutions.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent, cities rated highest their utility partnerships around energy efficiency, with a score of 3.7. Partnership scores for renewables and low-carbon transportation were slightly lower, both scoring 3 out of 5.
- The private sector and nonprofit community are playing a vital role in supporting local leaders. Cities report strong collaborations already established, and also indicate real opportunities for new and expanded partnerships with other local governments and businesses to advance climate solutions. Increased collaboration will help more cities achieve broader implementation, a strategy the Alliance for a Sustainable Future is designed to facilitate.