

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Building for Energy Efficiency: Developing New Construction Standards for Ithaca*

- **Year Complete:** 2018
- **Local Government:** City of Ithaca, NY
- **Local Foundation:** Park Foundation

Project Purpose

To conduct a comprehensive, collaborative examination of policy tools that Ithaca can use to incentivize or mandate green building standards for new construction.

Key Lessons Learned

Lessons learned about tools and tactics through the project that other sustainability directors could use to advance their work.

- Allow plenty of time for the consultant selection process.
- It can be challenging to engage stakeholders, even inside City Hall. Engaging the developer community was more challenging than anticipated. The lesson learned was to plan more direct outreach to key stakeholders.
- A major initial finding of the building permit review was that new construction and major renovations are a small fraction of the building permits pulled in any given year; lower level renovations, new roofs, and mechanicals replacements were much more common. This should be considered when finding the levers of change in a community.

Lessons for developing a collaborative process between a local government sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s).

One successful tactic was to make a point of meeting (often over lunch) without any agenda. In addition to strengthening personal relationships, this allowed time to informally discuss common goals, existing local efforts (and gaps), and opportunities for collaboration. The differing viewpoints of funder and municipal employee are very helpful to share with each other.

Additional Information and Resources

The main deliverable of this project, the [Green Building Policy](#), was successfully created and approved by the city council in [May 2018](#).