

HOT SPOTS

5 CITIES

TURNAROUND

On Earth Day 1970 smog was bad, cars were big and the three Rs referred only to schoolwork. Forty years later we're reducing, reusing and recycling, and communities across the U.S. are putting ecological priorities into practice. "It's partly out of necessity," says Glen Brand, director of Sierra Club's Cool Cities program (coolcities.us). "Many industrial cities have declining economies." But, Brand continues, "there's also a widespread commitment across the country to address global warming."

Curious to see how far a new attitude can really get a city, we scoured the country for five that are cleaning—and greening—up. Our finds included a few surprises.

LIVING THE GREEN LIFE

Green improvements not only help the ecology over the long term, they also improve everyday life in the now. If you're planning a move, ask your CENTURY 21 Sales Professional for insight on the neighborhoods in your new community—including bike paths, public transportation, short commute times, green spaces, air quality and shops and restaurants within walking distance. To find an agent near you, visit century21.com.

CLEVELAND, OH Remember when the Cuyahoga River was so polluted it caught fire? Well, give Cleveland another look. This city takes the planet seriously, proven by the creation of a sustainability managerial position five years ago. Cleveland now boasts hundreds of community gardens—and even full-fledged farms—within city limits. Potentially on the horizon: an offshore wind farm on Lake Erie, which would cause the city's percentage of renewable-source energy to skyrocket.



LOUISVILLE, KY Horse racing springs to mind when you mention Louisville, but residents are emphasizing biking these days, earning *Bicycling* magazine's recognition as one of the three most-improved cities in the nation. Louisville publishes a bike commuting website (louisvilleky.gov/BikeLouisville) too, to help green up the morning commute. Can't ride a bike? The "Louisville Loop"—more than a hundred miles of greenways—is in the offing, making the city truly walkable as well as rideable.

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NEW ORLEANS, LA Along with the challenge of creating a new city blueprint comes the opportunity to do it right. Post-Katrina, New Orleans has been changing its infrastructure from the ground up. The municipal fleet runs almost entirely on alternative fuels, for example, and environmental building advocates—such as the international organization Global Green and Brad Pitt's foundation Make It Right (makeitrightnola.org)—have been heavily investing in the rebuilding effort. The city's brightest—and greenest—days may well lie ahead.

NEW YORK, NY Surprise: New York City is actually one of the most sustainable cities in the country. Thanks to small, densely positioned housing, excellent public transportation and a low car-to-citizen ratio, this big red apple is actually pretty green. On top of that, the city's new initiative to cut greenhouse gases (PlaNYC, nyc.gov/planyc) is among the most ambitious. Goals include making sure everyone lives within a 10-minute walk of a park, for example, and closing down some streets to traffic altogether. Hey, if we can make it there, we can make it anywhere.

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LAS VEGAS, NV Say what you will: This town understands the power of the dollar. According to the local water authority, most of the water in the region is consumed by residents, not businesses, so landowners are now being paid to replace their thirsty green lawns with indigenous, drought-happy plantings. The result? An estimated 20 billion gallons of water savings annually. Keeping water levels stable gives new meaning to the phrase, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!"

