North Bay is working to reduce its corporate environmental footprint. This “Step Two” brochure explores the issue of “buy-in” in the Corporation. It is the City’s objective to cut electricity and fuel use by 5% per year from 2007 levels and to cut natural gas use by 3%. Results will be documented annually and reported frequently. Success however is more dependant on you than you realize?

**It’s a proven fact!** We can spend money on fixing the energy crunch by investing in new technology but it may not achieve the results desired. Where this has been tried without employee education it has only proven to be moderately successful. Alternatively, we could not invest in any new technology and focus solely on employee education. Where this has been done it has been fairly successful.

So energy efficiency has more to do with having the right attitude than having the right gizmos!

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**How do I fit into this Picture?**

Let’s consider fuel efficiency for a moment. It would seem reasonable that the answer to fuel economy is to convert the fleet to more efficient vehicles.

**But fuel economy has as much to do with the way a vehicle is driven as with its efficiency rating!**

So we need to start looking at the fuel economy rating of our drivers!……..

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“**Smart Driver**” is a program run by the federal government that teaches people who drive for a living how to make major efficiency improvements by changing driving habits. You would think that someone who drives for a living would already have these skills?

But program results speak for themselves.

People that complete the Smart Driver program and apply the techniques learned have **significant improvements** in fuel economy. Therefore, most people drive inefficiently and don’t even realize it. Moving our fleet to more efficient vehicles will not achieve the results desired unless we begin to train our drivers how to drive them efficiently and alter existing driving habits!

**So what’s the secret behind Smart Driver?**

It’s actually pretty simple:

1. **Easy does it.** You might enjoy being first off the mark at a stop light, but you’re wasting gas and unnecessarily straining your vehicle.

   Aggressive driving on the highway can lower a car’s gas mileage by 33 percent. Accelerate slowly after every stop. Ease up on the gas pedal, save fuel and improve safety.

2. **Drive smoothly.** Every time you touch the brake you waste energy. Abrupt stops are extremely hard on fuel economy.

   Leave more space and anticipate stops sooner. Let up on the accelerator and let the vehicle’s momentum carry you when possible. Cruise control on the highway will maintain a smooth, constant speed. Becoming a smoother driver keeps fuel bills in check.
3. **Keep to the speed limit.** Speeding is an expensive driving habit. The faster you drive, the bigger the fuel-economy hit. Driving 110 km/h instead of 100 will lower your car’s fuel economy by 10 percent. Drive at 90 kmh will improve your car’s fuel economy by 17 percent. So stop treating speed limit signs as suggestions and slow down.

4. **Avoid slow traffic.** Stop-and-go is not only annoying; it’s bad on gas mileage. Avoid routes that encounter rush hour backlogs. Stagger your travel plans to avoid busier times of the day.

5. **Combine trips or double up.** You can save fuel and cut wear and tear on your vehicle through careful planning. Choose the shortest route to your destination and combine trips when possible. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer, multi-stop trip of the same distance with a warm engine. Also don’t go in separate vehicles – ride together.

6. **Travel light.** Remove excess weight from your vehicle. Less weight means better fuel economy. Carrying an extra 100 pounds can cut your vehicle’s fuel economy by 1 to 2 percent. (Example - many trailer hitches are removable – if you don’t need it leave it behind)

7. **Consider the vehicle’s aerodynamics.** A truck with signs and shovels sticking up above the roof of the cab is like driving with a parachute. Changing the vehicles aerodynamics creates drag and can negate all of the good engineering that has gone into improving the vehicles fuel economy. Remove removable roof racks and use emergency lights that can be put in the cab when not needed.

8. **Go easy on the air conditioning.** In town roll down vehicle windows and enjoy the summer breeze. Reducing the use of the gas-hogging air conditioner will improve fuel economy in a big way. Air conditioning reduces fuel economy by 10 to 20 percent. Keep in mind, though, that at highway speeds modern vehicles are more fuel efficient with the air on and the windows up.

9. **Clean is better and so is dry.** A clean vehicle has less drag than a dirty vehicle. A wet vehicle experiences greater aerodynamic friction. Water on the road acts like a braking system and is a safety hazard. Wind direction can affect fuel economy. Think of the elements you can control and act accordingly.

10. **Don’t idle.** When you idle your vehicle fuel economy drops to zero. The larger your engine the more gas you waste. Get with the times. Modern vehicles don’t need to idle to warm up; the fastest way to get them warm is to drive them.

The same goes for improving efficiencies in municipal buildings. We can retrofit entire buildings with efficient lighting, new energy efficient appliances, and try to get the heat and cooling systems working effectively…. But if you leave you lights and computer on all the time, are dueling with co-workers on heating and cooling controls or disable controls that are designed to make systems work efficiently – little will be gained. We need to make sure you understand how systems work and why control settings are important.