



## **Response to questions from CB3 ConEd Task Force re: 2011 EcoBizNYC renewal**

1. *Please specify a numerical expectation for new business participation for the upcoming year, and how do we see the future of EcoBizNYC beyond 2012.*

An additional 75 businesses enrolled in EcoBizNYC in 2011. We anticipate an increase in new businesses at an equivalent level in the coming year. Our goal is to enroll an additional 75 businesses in 2012.

EcoBizNYC has canvassed over 1,000 businesses throughout CB 3 and has recorded contact information and level of interest for each business in our database. Outside of the 10% that is already part of the program, there is an additional 25% that appear to be viable candidates to join. The most enthusiastic businesses have been approached and have already participated in the program. Even so, as EcoBizNYC is hitting its stride, our numbers continue to increase daily. We will focus our efforts on maximizing the support of the ever-growing EcoBizNYC community in order to draw in the more challenging businesses.

We anticipate that there will eventually be diminishing returns for EcoBizNYC in terms of bringing new businesses into the program. There are numerous factors that will make it complicated to reach the remaining small businesses in CB 3, such as: language barriers, difficulty in contacting business owners, and resistance to change. Because it is very labor and time intensive to move participants through the program, we would also need to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of pursuing these challenging businesses. As we move through 2012, we expect to have a clearer view of the best direction for the program in the coming years.

2. *Better information on the partnerships specified in the proposal. What are the services, how do we work with them, and are there any quantitative results.*

The 2012 proposal submitted for EcoBizNYC indicates the following partnerships:

### Con Edison's Demand Side Management (DSM) Program

This program is our most successful partnership and provides free lighting assessments and highly subsidized upgrades to our businesses. DSM representatives meet with the EcoBizNYC interns during the training period and then interns make introductions between business owners and the DSM representatives during the initial EcoBizNYC sustainability assessment. At this time, the interns are able to explain the DSM program and answer any initial questions from business owners. Our introductions are highly

successful in persuading the businesses to participate in, and benefit from, the DSM program. We also facilitate the process by following up on both sides to make sure things move forward.

The business owners receive additional “points” to improve their EcoBizNYC rating by participating and implementing the lighting audit and upgrade. In addition, it is a mandatory requirement to participate and implement at least a portion of the DSM audit and upgrade to qualify for the EcoBizNYC Sustainability Grant.

This program has provided small businesses with more than \$33,000 in upgrades, covering 93% of the total upgrade costs.

#### Green Hospitality Initiative (GHI) - a program of the New York State Restaurant Association

This program provides free energy, water, and chemical assessments for restaurants and bars. The GHI is funded by an EPA grant to “green” restaurants. We found this partnership beneficial because they have specialized knowledge of current restaurant industry practices and challenges to sustainability.

The GHI fits into our program similarly to DSM. Interns meet GHI representatives before they begin working directly with businesses and then make the introduction to the GHI representatives during the initial sustainability assessment. They also use the sustainability assessment as an opportunity to explain the process as well as answering any questions about GHI. Because EcoBizNYC facilitates the introduction, businesses are more likely to participate and they also earn additional “points” to improve their EcoBizNYC rating for their participation.

We began working with GHI in fall 2011 and have not yet collected any numerical results.

#### Go Green Lower East Side Model Block with Fourth Arts Block

The Model Block is an initiative of the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, with the goal to “green” all entities (residences, businesses, etc.) on East Fourth Street between Second Avenue and the Bowery as a model for the rest of New York City. The Borough President’s Office has also partnered with many organizations on this project (such as Fourth Arts Block and the Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association). EcoBizNYC has committed to working with all the small businesses on this model block to promote this initiative. Businesses can participate in the Model Block initiative by joining EcoBizNYC. In addition to the benefits of “greening” a whole block, this project garners press, marketing and acknowledgement for the participating businesses and EcoBizNYC.

Through the collaborations with the other organizations on this project, EcoBizNYC hopes to participate in future programs to showcase our businesses. One example is a “Shop Your Values” Week, where New Yorkers pledge to shop and eat only at

sustainable and ethical businesses. Because our program is so highly respected and sets a standard for a sustainable business, all EcoBizNYC participants will be included on the “Shop Your Values” Week list. Alternatively, businesses in CB 3 that seek to be included will be encouraged to join EcoBizNYC to qualify as sustainable business.

This partnership began in fall 2011 and six new businesses on the block have enrolled.

#### Lower East Side Business Improvement District

The LES BID is an organization serving the needs of the LES business community. All of the businesses in the LES BID qualify to join the EcoBizNYC program and the LES BID encourages their businesses to go green by including information about EcoBizNYC in their welcome packet. The LES BID also invites EcoBizNYC staff to networking events, such as their annual meetings, so we can meet and mingle with the business owners in a different setting. The LES BID and EcoBizNYC are currently organizing a sustainability-focused workshop, called “Non-Toxic Business and Home”. Business owners will be personally invited, and it will also be open to the public. The LES BID has also allowed us to use their conference space for meetings and a Street Tree Care workshop. In 2012, the LES BID plans to include EcoBizNYC in their new Visitor’s Guide. A green leaf will be placed next to those businesses that have participated in the EcoBizNYC program, indicating their commitment to sustainability.

Currently we have 12 businesses from the LES BID enrolled in the EcoBizNYC program.

#### MillionTreesNYC

Because the Con Edison Settlement Fund seeks to ameliorate air quality, health and/or quality of life problems, EcoBizNYC has focused its efforts on promoting MillionTreesNYC’s “Adopt A Tree” and “Request a Tree” programs. An individual, group or business can go onto the MillionTreesNYC website and pledge to care for and “adopt” a tree. They can also request a tree. We educate the interns on this stewardship program and how to care for and request street trees.

During the initial sustainability assessment, we ask business owners if they are interested in requesting or adopting street trees near their storefront. We discuss and introduce them to the MillionTreesNYC program, explain the process and what the requirements are. If there is interest, we bring a laptop to the recommendations meeting, sign them up online and give them an instruction sheet on how to care for the newly adopted tree.

MillionTreesNYC also holds street tree care workshops, which we promote to the business owners. This fall, EcoBizNYC coordinated a street care workshop at the LES BID with GreenThumb. The business owners also receive additional “points” to improve their EcoBizNYC rating for adopting, requesting, and attending these workshops.

So far, over 45 businesses have adopted a tree (or requested a tree be planted) through the MillionTreesNYC stewardship program.

3. *Request for more visibility on the Lower East Side Ecology Center's website.*

We understand that the EcoBizNYC information is not immediately findable on the Lower East Side Ecology Center's website and have made some improvements to address that problem:

- 1.) In August 2011, we purchased the domain "ecobiznyc.org", which redirects directly to the EcoBizNYC main page on the Ecology Center website.
- 2.) The Ecology Center's website is fully searchable so searching "EcoBizNYC" or a specific business name will bring you to the EcoBizNYC main page or a business' profile, respectively.
- 3.) We will also redirect lesecologycenter.org/ecobiznyc to the EcoBizNYC main page to make it even easier for find the appropriate webpage.
- 4.) We are exploring the option of creating a "Quick Links" area on the homepage of the Ecology Center's website. This would allow pages to be accessed through one click instead of being navigated to through the top menu (i.e. Environmental Education → EcoBizNYC). We have not found the right solution to integrate this functionality into the Ecology Center website, but will continue to look into all available options.

Currently, EcoBizNYC information is found under the "Environmental Education" tab on the main page of the Ecology Center website. EcoBizNYC falls under this category as it is a program that seeks to reduce air pollution and environmental impacts of the Settlement Area by educating small businesses.