



# Eau Claire Renewable Energy Action Plan

## Workshop #1 NOTES

Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)  
Energy Education Center, Room 103  
May 9, 2019  
6:30 – 8:30 pm

### Agenda

Welcome And Orientation	
15 min	Introductions & Project Background
10 min	Partners in Energy Overview
Why Are We Here?	
20 min	Climate Change and Local Vulnerabilities
Community Values And Vision	
10 min	City Sustainability Initiatives
10 min	Xcel Energy Carbon Reduction Goals
5 min	Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
20 min	Community Energy Vision & Discussion Activity
Community Energy Baseline And Next Steps	
15 min	Eau Claire's Baseline Carbon and Energy Footprint
5 min	Next Steps and Wrap Up

### Presenters:

- Scott Allen; City of Eau Claire
- Adam Wehling; Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Ned Noel; City of Eau Claire
- Jenny Edwards; Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
- Tami Gunderzik; Xcel Energy
- James Boulter, Ph.D.; University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire
- Julie Thoney; Xcel Energy
- Dody Wubker; Eau Claire Energy Co-op

### In Attendance:

- Steering Committee members (See page 2)
- Members of the public, City, and Xcel Energy staff
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## Steering Committee Members

Name	Affiliation	Meeting 1
Kate Beaton	City Council	YES
Andrew Werthmann	City Council	YES
Heather Feigum	CESA 10 / Focus on Energy	YES
Mike Buck	Holiday Mega Gas Stations	YES
Dave Bell	Next Step Energy	YES
Mark Lauer	IBEW Local Union 14 (electricians)	YES
Nick Webber	IBEW Local Union 953 (linesmen)	YES
Cindy Estrada	Green Building Architecture	YES
Greg Granlund	Lien & Peterson Architects / Plan Commissioner	
Zina Obaid	Realtor / Plan Commissioner	YES
Cody Filipczak	C&M Homes Builders	
Jeff Urlab	MEP Associates	YES
Mike Schummer	Bartingale Mechanical	YES
Rachel Bauer	Miron Construction	YES
Mark Vinall	Advanced Disposal	
Ellenor Wolf	Sierra Club	YES
Kerry Kincaid	Former City Council President	YES
Zacharious Pappas	Earthbound Environmental Solutions, LLC	YES
Jim Vaudreuil	Heubsch Laundry	YES
Robert Dubiel	Mayo Clinic Health System - Eau Claire	
Tyrel Zich*	Xcel Energy	
Jim Schumacher*	Renewables & Citizens Climate Lobby	YES
Aaron Tessendorf	Kia Prestige	YES
Sam Johnson	JAMF	YES
Julia Johnson	Pablo Properties	YES
Jim Boulter	UWEC Chemistry Professor	YES
Barry Bremness	Cascade Tissue Project Engineer	YES
Lauren Becker	UWEC Student Office of Sustainability / WI Climate Table	YES
Lillian Strehlow	UWEC Student Office of Sustainability	YES
Karen Mumford	UWEC Watershed Institute Professor	YES
Adam Wehling	CVTC Dean of Agriculture, Energy & Transportation	YES
Anna Carderella	Western Dairyland Executive Director	YES
Ann Francis	City Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee	YES
Josh Clements	City of Altoona City Planner	
Lori Bica	Eau Claire Area School District	YES
Gina Keenan	DNR Grants Project Manager	YES
Jim Dunning	Eau Claire County Board - Dist 18	YES
TBD	Eau Claire County Staff	
Sarah Rykal*	UW-Stout Sustainability Manager	
David Hon*	DNR Water Specialist	
Brian Graff*	Business & Renewables	YES
Steve Terwilliger*	Renewables & Transit	YES
Brian Larson*	Architecture	
Crispin Pierce*	UWEC Environmental Public Health Professor	YES
Dody Wubker*	Eau Claire Energy Cooperative	YES
*City's Sustainability Advisory Committee member		

# Welcome and Orientation

On behalf of the City of Eau Claire, Community Development Director **Scott Allen**, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Dean of Agriculture, Energy & Transportation **Adam Wehling**, on behalf of Chippewa Valley Technical College, added his welcome to the group, sharing that the Energy Education Center aligns with this meeting's purpose remarkably well.

## Introduction and Project Background

**Ned Noel**, associate city planner with City of Eau Claire, provided background on the origin of the project.

- There was a tremendous response from the community to participate on the steering committee. Attendance was capped due to the enthusiastic response received.
- This initiative originated as a result of President Trump's rejection of Paris Climate Accords. City Council directed staff and the City's Sustainability Advisory Committee to interpret country goals listed in the Paris Agreement to a city-level as a starting point for goal setting.
- An online community survey showed that 75% of respondents support ambitious climate and renewable energy goals.
- In March 2018, the City Council passed a resolution calling for the municipality and city to be 100% renewable / carbon neutral by 2050. A 2015 baseline will be used to measure progress against this goal, since it is the most reliable dataset for the whole community.
- Having passed goals, now the next step is the Renewable Energy Action Plan.
- The first meeting of the Renewable Energy Action Plan Steering Committee would focus on education, goal setting, and exploring the importance of climate change for the Eau Claire community.
- Prior to tonight's meeting a survey was distributed to committee members to assess the reasons behind their desire to participate.
  - An interest in sustainability was the key driver behind the desire to participate in this effort.
  - There were surprisingly strong results among people taking energy actions at home and work, and most claimed very strong energy & climate change literacy.
  - This group is very connected to the community through multiple channels, such as ...
    - business groups,
    - colleges,
    - city departments,
    - local community groups, among others.

## Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy Overview

**Tami Gunderzik**, Xcel Energy Program Manager for Partners in Energy, provided an introduction to Partners in Energy. Partners in Energy is designed to help communities develop and articulate their own energy priorities, and then support those communities

as they pursue their energy goals. The offering provides an excellent framework for Xcel Energy to work with communities based on their unique goals, local strengths and local priorities, rather than force-fitting any one plan from Xcel Energy,

- Typically, Partners in Energy facilitates a planning period that is 6 months long, and then supports the community during its first 18 months of implementing their plan.
- Xcel Energy Partners in Energy is supported because:
  - The offering provides valuable information to Xcel Energy about local communities' needs.
  - Partners in Energy is a new avenue to reach residents and businesses.
  - Finally, one of Xcel Energy's core values is support for the communities it serves.
- The Renewable Energy Action Plan will be a living document that isn't intended to be finished and forgotten.
- During planning, Partners in Energy provides:
  - Facilitation services.
  - Data analysis.
  - Project management.
- During implementation, Partners in Energy provides:
  - Marketing communications.
  - Data tracking.
  - Program expertise.
  - Project management.
  - Ongoing support in the form of webinars and "Office Hours" focused on specific subject area to share best practices among communities.

## Process Discussion

**Jenny Edwards**, Partners in Energy community facilitator, provided an overview of the plan development process. She discussed the anchoring, baseline, visioning steps of the process and noted that while communities typically meet 5 times to arrive at an Energy Action Plan, the team in Eau Claire has challenged us to get the plan written in 4 meetings. She anticipates that the plan will be finalized this fall.

- Expectations for successful participation in the plan development process include:
  - Active participation.
  - Represent your organization.
  - Use critical thinking.
  - Be an advisor.
  - Be an ambassador for the group and plan.
- The responsibilities of City staff during the process:
  - Convene the steering committee.
  - Facilitate development of the Renewable Energy Action Plan.
  - Manage PSC grant.
  - Provide context on city and community action to date.
- The Xcel Energy team's roles include:

- Facilitating the Renewable Energy Action Plan’s development.
- Gathering, processing and sharing data to inform decisions.
- Actively learning about Eau Claire’s goals and needs.
- Providing customized access to Xcel Energy programs and resources.
- Providing transition into and support during implementation.

## **Questions**

A few questions were asked by members of the steering committee.

- **Q:** Are there examples of successes (or failures) from other communities?
  - Winona, MN:
    - Had great success with an outreach program targeting low-income households.
    - Winona’s door to door business campaign had great results.
    - An industrial “Green Ribbon Commission” was well received, also.
  - St. Louis Park, MN:
    - Did a great job raising awareness.
    - Very successful early adoption of its renewable goal.
- **Q:** How granular will data be for benchmarking information?
  - Jenny offered to discuss this in more detail later in the presentation.
- **Q:** Will data include the entire community, including all sectors (residential, business, government)?
  - Yes, with the exception of non-Xcel Energy customers.

# Why Are We Here?

## **Climate Change and Local Vulnerabilities**

**Jim Boulter**, Associate Professor of Chemistry, Ph.D., with the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, provided an overview of current climate change data to underscore the importance of this initiative. He noted that these are sobering times in the climate world.

- Average temperatures are likely to increase 1.5 degrees between 2030 and 2052 (Paris goal was not before 2100).
- The Eau Claire community’s weather in 2060’s will resemble Kansas today.
- Damage from climate change could affect GDP 1 – 10%.

Dr. Boulter turned to projections of what might result if all energy in Wisconsin could be locally created. Among the likely outcomes:

- Gain in jobs statewide.
- 10% increase in energy cost.
- Net gain in state GDP, plus added tax revenues.
- Savings of \$12.1 billion in avoided health costs.

Finally, in addition to economic reasons, Dr. Boulter emphasized that there is an ethical reason to pursue this initiative.

**Ned Noel** led the next portion of the meeting asking attendees to consider this question:

“What is your personal or professional motivation to address climate change considering the impacts and opportunities?”

Responses included:

- Grandkids.
- Need to educate students so they can confront these challenges.
- Transformational to our economy akin to agricultural revolution or industrial revolution.
- Right thing to do.

Ned asked that attendees continue to think about this.

## Community Values and Vision

### City Sustainability Initiatives

**Ned Noel** discussed the eco-municipality movement focused on sustainability. He also discussed The Natural Step Process.

- The core premise of eco-municipality is that in a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:
  - Concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth’s crust.
  - Concentrations of substances produced by society.
  - Degradation by physical means.
  - People are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.
- The City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2009 added a chapter on sustainability. This Renewable Energy Action Plan effort is consistent with that master plan.
- The goal for the City to use 25% renewable electricity by 2025 has already been met with Xcel Energy’s help.
- A 1MW Xcel community solar garden array went live in fall 2017 and the City’s subscribes to 116kW to offset all electric use at its municipal pool.
- The US Department of Energy named Eau Claire a top 10 city in the U.S. for solar readiness in 2017.
- Small businesses and residents will soon be able to aggregate capital for on-site solar as part of a Midwest Renewable Energy Association solar group-buy.

### Xcel Energy’s role in the Eau Claire Community

**Julie Thoney**, Xcel Energy’s Manager, Community Service & Economic Development, updated the steering committee on the company’s energy mix. She noted that Xcel Energy is a recognized leader in wind, energy efficiency, carbon emission reductions, innovative technology, storm restoration, and veteran hiring. Xcel Energy employees live in the community and are committed to the state.

Julie discussed Xcel Energy's goals for transition to carbon free electricity by 2050 and the tactics planned to achieve these goals. She also provided takeaway information on their new Renewable Connect subscription rate.

### **Eau Claire Energy Co-op's role in the Eau Claire Community**

**Dody Wubker**, Chief Financial Officer of the Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, discussed the organization's role in the Eau Claire area. Dairyland provides electricity to the co-op and currently generates 64% using coal, with 22% from renewable sources. Their goal is to reduce coal use to 50% by 2027.

- Eau Claire Energy Co-op serves 11,000 consumers, primarily in rural Eau Claire County.
- They have renewable subscription programs, and they can be faster to implement them than Xcel Energy since the co-op isn't regulated the same way.
- Among their renewable programs are community solar, the Evergreen wind sourced program, geothermal, and distributed generation.
- The co-op offers an electric vehicle program, where the co-op provides a free charger and offers lower rates for charging between 2:00 pm and 9:00 pm.

### **Draft Vision Statement**

**Jenny Edwards** discussed the Natural Step planning framework and reviewed a draft vision statement:

"The Renewable Energy Action Plan will continue Eau Claire's leadership in sustainability and renewable energy development. Ongoing efforts will be guided by an evidence-based, transparent, equitable, inclusive, and just planning process, aligned with the Natural Step Framework, to meet the goals of 100% renewable energy and carbon neutrality by 2050."

Jenny discussed guiding principles to use in reacting to the statement, asking that participants to help prioritize what else is important beyond carbon and energy savings, what other values should be reflected in the plan, and how choices should be prioritized.

After a work session, committee members shared their initial ideas and feedback on the vision statement and principles. (More detailed information on all responses will be available separately.) Among committee members' comments were:

- How do we incorporate place in this narrative?
- "Socially environmentally and economically balanced".
- Include water, noise, etc.
- Maintaining system reliability during transition.
- All incomes, do not marginalize communities.
- Employ people from the local area.
- Create something that doesn't negatively impact workforce development – additional costs make a city less desirable to employers.
- Provide for future generations.
- Create a culture of sustainability.

- Support inclusivity and public engagement.

# Community Energy Baseline & Next Steps

## Eau Claire's Baseline Carbon and Energy Footprint

**Jenny Edwards** reviewed data on Eau Claire's inventory of greenhouse gases, comparing data from 2015 – 2017. The data is for residential, commercial/industrial, water and wastewater treatment, solid waste, and transportation and mobile services. Additionally, Jenny reviewed key details of the energy data being used.

- Data are from Xcel Energy, so other energy providers are not represented.
- Xcel Energy follows strict data privacy rules, which assure that no individually identifiable data is used.
- Highlights from Eau Claire's energy use data:
  - 2/3 of energy use is commercial.
  - Vast majority of premises are residential.
  - Energy consumption has increased slightly, largely due to weather, over the past 3 years.
  - Electricity is about 40% of energy consumed. Gas is about 60%.
  - The average resident spends about \$1400 per year on energy.
  - The average commercial or industrial user spends about \$17,500.

## Questions

**Q:** Can this data be compared to similar communities? What about before and after?

- Yes, but it will be Minnesota slanted.

**Q:** Can the steering committee reflect better ethnic and low-income representation?

- Ned stated they tried and found it hard to find people in those groups who can participate. He asked for any leads to follow up on.

## Wrap Up and Next Steps

**Ned Noel** offered some closing remarks and thanked all for participating. He asked that the steering committee read the City's "Toward Renewable City" report and list their top mitigation strategies for consideration. He will email out directions to make it clear so everyone is better prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop.

The second meeting of the Renewable Energy Action Plan is scheduled for **Thursday, June 6, 6:30-8:30 pm.**