**7-13-21, Community Climate Advisory Committee meeting**

**Draft Initiatives for Community Climate Action Plan**

**2030 Priority Initiatives and Actions**

The Cedar Rapids Climate Resolution commits the city to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. It further commits the city to climate adaptation targets that strengthen the city against climate hazards, and to support the community’s most vulnerable by meeting the basic needs of all residents. Achieving these goals won’t be easy. This will require a community-wide effort where everyone contributes to the success of the plan. This section includes initiatives and actions that will guide the city toward meeting the goals of its Climate Resolution. Initiatives are programs, policies, and competitions that are aimed at particular GHG reduction or resilience strategies and include multiple stakeholders. Actions are more discrete tasks to support the initiatives and help the city continue to progress toward its goals.

Initiative 1: Annual Climate Leadership Recognition

**Initiative Description: *Recognize and celebrate individual and community accomplishments toward the Community Climate Action goals annually at Eco Fest.***  Host an annual climate festival that highlights and celebrates accomplishments toward the city’s goals and provides an opportunity to share information and resources for residents and businesses to continue to support the climate action plan.

# Priority Actions

1. Identify who should be involved in the event planning process, including residents, business leaders, relevant city staff, entities/organizations that can support food and waste planning
2. Ensure the event is planned with consideration of the CCAP by making it zero-waste, inclusive of all cultures, providing and encouraging accessible non-motorized transportation options, and offering locally grown and culturally relevant food.
3. Establish categories for recognition, following the Climate Resolution and Initiatives in this plan
4. Track progress toward climate goals and actions taken to highlight at the event, share on the city’s website
5. Develop and communication and outreach strategy both to encourage action and promote the event

Initiative 2: Sustainable Neighborhoods Program

**Initiative Description:** Launch the Sustainable Neighborhood program that guides and celebrates sustainable action in neighborhoods that support the mission of the Community Climate Action Plan. This program provides resources to kids, families, and adults to take actions that improve health, strengthen environmental assets, and build community connection.

# Priority Actions

1. Create guidance for sustainability actions that residents can take with an equity angle
2. Work with Neighborhood Associations to encourage neighborhood participation
3. Provide quarterly updates to Neighborhood Associations on progress
4. Recognize participation at individual and neighborhood level with public communications and signage
5. Explore opportunities to support door-to-door canvassing to build relationships and involvement in program

Initiative 3: Healthy Food Access

**Initiative Description:** Identify partnerships and resources needed for gardens, food pantries, or other healthy food outlets within walking distance of residents in all high-vulnerable neighborhoods.Through these partnerships, create opportunities to grow, consume, and preserve local and healthy food; increase access and affordability of healthy and culturally relevant food, prioritizing vulnerable residents.

# Priority Actions

1. Complete neighborhood-level assessments to identify the needs and interests of residents pertaining to growing and accessing healthy and culturally relevant food, complete assessment annually to track progress
2. Develop strategies and partnerships to meet the needs and interests identified in the assessments
3. Review the city regulations to identify and remove barriers to local food production (e.g., greenhouses, urban farms)
4. Explore opportunities to grow and or share food on underutilized public spaces
5. Support broader participation of businesses and nonprofits that donate to food pantries to expand options of the variety of food available

Initiative 4: Green & Healthy Homes

**Initiative Description:** Complete block-by-block assessment of household energy and health needs in under-resourced neighborhoods to reduce energy costs and improve indoor living conditions.Leverage utility and federal programs to accelerate deep energy retrofits (envelope improvements, equipment upgrades) in communities with lower incomes. Connect to a job training program to build the workforce needed to implement this program. Focus on block by block improvements in priority neighborhoods, including Westdale, Northwest, Wellington Heights, Oak Hill Jackson, and Taylor. Expand community-wide by 2030.

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# Priority Actions

1. Assess the number of homes (single and multifamily) located in under-resourced neighborhoods to include in project scope
2. Convene key partners to design a home retrofit training and implementation program for key neighborhoods
3. Launch program demonstration
4. Add metrics to Cedar Rapids Neighborhood Association dashboard

Initiative 5: Sustainable Small Businesses

**Initiative Description:** Small businesses implement comprehensive climate actions to address emissions, sustainability, and adaptation. Tools, resources, and assistance are directed toward small businesses to help them become more sustainable. Climate-smart businesses seek to reduce energy use, increase clean energy, implement sustainable waste practices, host bike racks, install beneficial landscaping (e.g., native plants, pollinators, rain gardens), use low-carbon lawn equipment, and design buildings to keep cool (e.g., white or green roofs, cool and reduced pavement).

# Priority Actions

1. Develop a comprehensive list of climate mitigation and adaptation actions for small businesses to take
2. Partner with local organizations to provide consultation to small businesses
3. Encourage small business owners to take advantage of the city’s stormwater credit incentive
4. Maintain a resource hub on the city’s website; enable small businesses to report actions through the resource hub
5. Recognize small businesses leaders at EcoFest, annually

Initiative 6: Large Business Partnership

**Initiative Description:** Large businesses play a key role in helping to address greenhouse gas emissions and improve local resilience. Through efficiency programs, employee behavior, and community participation, the city can partner with large businesses to advance the goals of the Climate Resolution

Priority Actions

1. Develop a building energy benchmarking and disclosure policy or program for large businesses
2. Implement commuter programs to reduce emissions from employee commuting
3. Provide space for underutilized land to be used for growing food, solar generation, and/or reducing stormwater impact and urban heat
4. Explore opportunities for employees to engage in city resilience projects (e.g., tree planting)
5. Recognize large businesses leaders at EcoFest, annually

Initiative 7: Accelerate Solar Adoption

**Initiative Description:** Support Solar policies, programs, and incentives that accelerates solar adoption, making Cedar Rapids a leader in Iowa. Expand upon existing actions taken to achieve SolSmart Gold Designation to accelerate the installation of rooftop and ground mount solar, especially for residents with lower incomes. The Cedar Rapids Climate Resolution includes a target to supply 70-100% of electricity generation with renewable energy by 2050. Accelerating the installation of rooftop and ground mount solar energy systems can help move toward this goal faster, reduce energy bills, and increase grid resilience on the distribution system.

# Priority Actions

1. Continue to partner with Linn and Johnson Counties to host a community bulk buy program to help bring down costs of solar installations
2. Offer a production incentive to businesses and residents who install solar, prioritize residents with lower incomes who live in under-resourced communities
3. Share resources for solar installation permitting and interconnection processes, federal tax credits, and utility programs on the city’s website
4. Support demonstration projects that pair solar installations with battery storage or electric vehicles, and/or provide additional benefits like pollinator habitat, stormwater management, shading, and grid resilience.

Initiative 8: Industrial Innovation

**Initiative Description:** Support, encourage, and recognize industrial and business innovation in greenhouse gas emissions reduction and community leadership. Host an annual convening of industrial leaders to learn about progress made toward goals, plans to reduce emissions, and identify opportunities to participate in community events, like tree plantings, rain garden installations, among others.

# Priority Actions

1. Encourage industrial partners to participate in national stakeholder processes to shape federal policy and identify pathways to reduce industrial emissions:
   1. [Industrial Innovation Initiative](https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/i3-Economic-Recovery-Recommendations-2.pdf)
   2. [RMI Climate-Aligned Industries](https://rmi.org/our-work/climate-aligned-industries/)
2. Provide support to industrial partners for innovation opportunities, like carbon capture
3. Coordinate employees to participate in resilience volunteer opportunities around the community
4. Enhance on-site resilience measures to improve stormwater management, integrate cool site and building design
5. Recognize industrial leadership at the annual Climate Leadership Celebration and through the city’s climate dashboard

Initiative 9: Create Complete Green Streets Corridors

**Initiative Description:** Develop green corridors that encourage sustainable development, green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, trees, and pollinators), and sustainable transportation (e.g., bike, walk, wheelchair, bus, drive clean vehicles). Designing streets that incorporate these elements helps to reduce emissions and air pollution through reduced driving, fosters active transportation, improves stormwater management, provides habitat for wildlife, offers community amenities, and can help sequester greenhouse gas emissions.

# Priority Actions

1. Review and update complete streets policy to ensure it includes additional green infrastructure elements and better user experience
2. Integrate green streets planning with proposed on-street and off-street bicycling network
3. Involve community members and business owners in design and implementation
4. Encourage the use of shared micro-mobility (e.g., e-scooters, e-bikes, etc.)
5. Prioritize transit routes in under-resourced communities
6. Discuss enhancing vegetation/trees at high-vulnerable corridors/locations (e.g. bus stops & neighborhoods with high ped traffic and high poverty)

Initiative 10: Accelerate Electric Vehicle Adoptions

**Initiative Description:** Prepare Cedar Rapids for more electric vehicles (EVs) and expand charging stations in homes, businesses, and public spaces. Like solar installations, electric vehicles also require enabling policy and regulatory changes to help spur adoption. Switching to electric vehicles will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve local air quality.

# Priority Actions

1. Review and update ordinance language to allow electric vehicle charging infrastructure in all districts
2. Encourage EV-ready development through parking design requirements, the development review process, and planned unit development (PUD) criteria.
3. Review and update development regulations to drive an increase in EV charging
4. Explore opportunities to implement an all electric car-share program with affordable and locational access for all users
5. Partner with electric utility and car dealerships to explore incentives for electric vehicles

Initiative 11: Sustainable Materials

**Initiative Description:** Expand the use of sustainable materials (reusable, compostable, recyclable) purchasing and management among local businesses. Local businesses have a key role to play in helping to minimize the amount of waste that is landfilled by replacing single-use plastic, and purchasing sustainably made products.

By 2030, Cedar Rapids needs to have achieved a 16% reduction in total waste generation, and by 2050, a 24% reduction. During that same timeframe, residents will need to divert 47% of remaining waste to recycling by 2030, and 76% to recycling by 2050.

# Priority Actions

1. Create an inventory of sustainable products commonly used in businesses, crowd source with businesses to expand list
2. Encourage group purchases of sustainable products among businesses
3. Expand recycling and composting to better serve local businesses with more disposal options

Initiative 12: Resilience Hubs

**Initiative Description:** Create public spaces where people can gather during and after extreme weather events to escape the elements and meet basic needs. Extreme weather events, like prolonged heat waves, heavy precipitation, or severe storms can cause property damage, displace residents, or cause power outages causing people to seek assistance and gain access to basic services. Resilience hubs will be located throughout the community, especially in high priority neighborhoods. Hubs will provide food and basic necessities, phone and computer charging, restrooms, and sleeping accommodations when necessary.

# Priority Actions

1. Identify locations that can act as potential resilience hubs; work with neighborhood organizations to share through multiple communication channels
2. Encourage residents to participate on a Linn County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
3. Partner with Linn County and community-based organizations to engage and educate residents on preparing for extreme events; develop materials in English and Spanish

Initiative 13: Advance Green Jobs

**Initiative Description:** New jobs are going to be vital to the success of this plan. Green jobs means high-wage jobs that further greenhouse gas reduction and climate adaptation. They can also include jobs that support local food, or increase sustainability. This initiative leverages federal opportunities with state and local partners to create a green jobs program that identifies local green jobs, provides training and placement, and keeps talent in the community.

# Priority Actions:

1. Complete an analysis of the potential for green jobs and moving toward a green economy using a broader definition to capture
2. Partner with local institutions to identify job training opportunities
3. Support outreach for job training and placement in under resourced communities
4. Incentivize businesses and institutions for greening existing jobs (e.g., integrating sustainable practices into daily actions)

Initiative 14: City-Schools Partnership

**Initiative Description:** Formalize a City-School partnership program that engages students and supports sustainability, literacy, and climate and equity goals. Schools offer opportunities to both reduce emissions across the school district as well as engaging students in understanding what climate change is and how to engage in solutions to reduce its impact.

# Priority Actions

1. Establish a formalized partnership between the city and the school district
2. Develop a curriculum to engage students in climate topics
3. Create an internship program where students can support the city’s efforts to implement the Community Climate Action Plan
4. Support efforts to increase solar on schools
5. Continue to implement and enhance the School Routes Initiative to allow for safe, active, and low-carbon transportation to all schools
6. Provide opportunities for students to present their efforts to different audiences

The remaining initiatives are under development. ReLeaf will be completed with input from the city.

Initiative 15: ReLeaf Cedar Rapids

**Initiative Description:** Strongly support ReLeaf — a collaborative effort with Trees Forever to aggressively replant trees after the loss from the 2020 derecho — as a key climate resilience strategy that reduces urban heat, enhances stormwater management, capture greenhouse gas emissions, and provides habitat for birds and pollinators.

Initiative 16: Sustainable Land use

**Initiative Description:**

Initiative 17: Equitable Engagement

**Initiative Description:**