



Moving Forward

Photo: Samantha Haas



This CAP contains approximately 110 recommendations for programs, policies, and projects that will help with climate change mitigation. Now that this initial Dane County CAP is written, the Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change and other Dane County departments will engage external partners, including the Dane County Climate Council organizations and the Office of Energy & Climate Change work group organizations, to conduct public outreach and engagement, flesh out program design details, acquire resources, and set up tracking, measurement, evaluations, and verification protocols for as many of the recommendations as possible.

The Office of Energy & Climate Change will prioritize programs, policies, and projects based on a combination of GHG reduction potential and feasibility as well as the six guiding principles covered in separate sections earlier in this report. Once prioritized, the Office of Energy & Climate Change will take the lead in identifying and engaging partners, designing programs, and subsequently launching them.

We will also launch a public engagement, awareness, and listening campaign. There are two important types of public outreach and engagement for this CAP. One is a broad public relations campaign that raises awareness across as many sectors and audiences as possible. This public relations campaign will give Dane County residents a variety of immediate ways to take climate mitigation actions, share climate stories and ideas, and engage with friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other like-minded citizens in climate mitigation and adaptation activities.

We will also conduct very targeted outreach that takes the form of listening to and learning from citizens, to seek out experiential knowledge, opinions, and perspectives. This type of outreach will be especially important with the populations, communities, neighborhoods, and individuals most vulnerable to climate impacts. It is our job to seek out, recognize, and value the experiential knowledge of Dane County's first nation, the Ho-Chunk, the communities and cultures we know to be most concerned about climate change, such as the Latino community, and communities most at risk. The section on equity and justice goes into more detail on some of the specific ways the Office of Energy & Climate Change is going about this type of targeted outreach and engagement.

Achieving deep decarbonization at any level, including the County level, is a complex proposition – a “wicked problem.” That’s why, although we came together as 38 organizations that made up the Dane County Climate Council, and another hundred or so technical experts serving on ten Office of Energy & Climate Change work groups, there are still areas of climate solutions we couldn’t completely explore. For these areas we recommend the Office of Energy &

Climate Change create additional ad hoc or permanent work groups. Among the topics we could explore are:

- Green infrastructure
- Geothermal heating and cooling
- Grid modernization
- Air-source heat pumps
- Agricultural emissions

There may be others. Virtually every GHG emission source and associated solution has a learning curve that needs attention, innovation, and diligence. However, the Office of Energy & Climate Change will have to prioritize and decide how to balance resources between implementing recommendations in this CAP (certainly the priority) and figuring out how we, as Dane County, can contribute to finding additional solutions in the five areas above and others.

In many ways, this CAP is a snapshot in time. Technologies evolve at ever-increasing rates. Markets evolve in fits and starts. Innovation in policies, business models, research and development, and solution strategies grow at different paces but together progress as surely as our glaciers now recede.

This CAP lays out a plan to get Dane County on a path to deep decarbonization. It provides a wealth of information on how to reach that path over the next 10 years, but at the same time, has much less to say about what we need to do between the years 2030 and 2050 to ultimately reach a carbon-neutral or carbon-negative economy. In the same way, this CAP informs the next five years better than it does the five years after that, and for that reason, it is important that the Office of Energy & Climate Change not only track, evaluate, measure, and verify our GHG emission reduction progress, but revise this CAP every three to four years. This CAP also recommends that the Office of Energy & Climate Change publish progress reports on a regular basis.

