



County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

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Dane County Adopts First Community-Wide Climate Action Plan

As Earth Day Turns 50 Amidst Coronavirus Pandemic—Community Sets Goals and Strategies to Fight Climate Change

Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi joined community partners to announce the first climate action plan, which sets goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) 50% county-wide by 2030 and puts the county on a path to be carbon-neutral by 2050. The *2020 Dane County Climate Action Plan – Today's Opportunity for a Better Tomorrow* (CAP) provides a roadmap of recommended policies and projects to be pursued to achieve emission reduction targets.

“While the coronavirus crisis is more immediate, climate change is a slower moving risk and is one of the greatest challenges of our generation,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Reducing GHG emissions not only slows global warming but results in cleaner air. We cannot wait for the federal government – we must lead the effort at the local level and do our part to address the climate crisis. Now more than ever the effort of local elected officials, residents, business and community leaders across Dane County is required to produce a resilient climate-ready economy, carbon-free future.”

New climate modeling by UW-Madison scientists published for the first time predicts that southern Wisconsin will continue to get hotter and wetter. The scientists predict that by 2050 30 to 40 summer days will reach over 90 degrees. Historically, 10-15 days a year have high temperatures above 90 degrees.

The Dane County Council on Climate Change comprised of business leaders, local government officials, area utility companies, UW Nelson Institute scientists and equity and environmental advocates participated in the two-year long CAP project. The CAP outlines strategies to reduce energy use in buildings, increase the supply of renewable energy and reduce emissions from the transportation and waste sectors.

The CAP sets a goal for the county to meet one-third of its electricity use with solar power (1200 MW) and one-half with wind power (700 MW) by 2030. The plan's goal to reduce GHG emissions by 50% by 2030, exceeds the 45% worldwide reduction goal set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees C by 2030.

“According to the World Health Organization, 23% of global deaths are due to modifiable environmental factors. By reducing carbon and other harmful emissions locally, this climate action plan will create a healthier environment for the citizens of Dane County, including our most vulnerable communities,” said Mary Evers Statz, Program Director of Energy Management and Sustainability at UW Health.

Other key climate change emission reduction strategies include:

- Increase electric vehicles sales (EVs), and transition heavy-duty trucks to electricity or renewable natural gas (RNG) vehicles.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled by shifting from driving alone to increase use of public transit, carpooling and biking.
- Reduce energy use by 2% per capita by 2030 by increasing the efficiency of old and new residential and commercial buildings.
- Process 50% of livestock manure in anaerobic digesters reducing GHG methane emissions, limiting phosphorus in our lakes and creating a new revenue source for farms.

The CAP describes how the actions will: 1) result in major economic and health benefits; 2) lead to energy security and great resilience to the harmful impacts of our changing climate; and 3) address racial and economic equality to ensure the benefits of carbon reductions are equitably shared.

“The technology to meaningfully reduce our carbon footprint already exists and has been proven elsewhere at scale,” said Chad Sorenson, CEO of SunPeak. “Dane County’s Climate Action Plan is the vital leadership that is necessary to accelerate the implementation of these technologies, which will have a positive long-term impact on the world by doing our part to reduce emissions.”

“MGE committed two years ago to aggressive carbon reductions by 2050 and we are pleased to partner with the county toward these efforts,” said Jeff Keebler, MGE Chairman, President and CEO. “With several solar projects in development, MGE continues to grow our use of cost-effective clean energy to benefit all MGE customers and to help customers, like Dane County, achieve their own sustainability goals through partnerships like ours to build solar at Dane County Regional Airport. By bringing together council members, each with a role to play, we can collectively reach shared goals that best serve our entire community.”

In 2017, County Executive Parisi created the Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change (OECC) to lead public and private efforts across the county to address climate change. The OECC led by its director, Keith Reopelle, created the Council on Climate Change—a workgroup of 38 local governments, energy utilities, businesses, and environmental and community organizations that provided important input into the development of the CAP to reduce GHG emissions across all 61 cities, towns and villages as well as the private sector.

To view the 198 page CAP, visit the OECC website at <https://daneclimateaction.org/climate-action-plan>.

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