

# FCSG Statement on Staff Memo Regarding 100% Renewable Electricity Goal

*Originally posted on July 2, 2018, and updated on July 16*

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Fort Collins Partners for Clean Energy (FCP4CE) presented a resolution to City Council that would establish a community-wide goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Councilmembers expressed interest in considering the resolution at a later meeting, and directed City staff to provide a high level analysis of the proposed goal. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, staff sent a memo to Council (see first attachment) that overstepped the directive they had been given by calling for more study and proposing that Council consider a different, far weaker resolution in Q4 of 2018.

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) respectfully requests that Council direct staff to prepare a resolution using the FCP4CE resolution as the starting point. This resolution should feature a goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030, and should be ready for council's consideration before the end of Q3.

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, staff was directed to conduct an analysis of the 100% renewable electricity goal in five areas (see second attachment):

1. A peer city review to include consideration of pathways or plans to achieve a 100% renewable electricity goal;
2. A carbon inventory projection to assess the impact of achieving a 100% renewable electricity goal;
3. An **outline** of the areas that would need further analysis to determine achievability of the proposed goal in upcoming planning processes;
4. An **outline** of the future costs and benefits analyses needed to understand rate impacts in the Platte River Power Authority's (PRPA's) upcoming Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process; and
5. An **outline** of how the City's and PRPA's plans and policy updates will be sequenced and aligned.

With respect to the first area, staff found that about half of the 17 communities they examined had established the goal before putting together a detailed plan, and about half had developed a detailed plan first.

With respect to the second area, staff noted that the 2015 Climate Action Plan (CAP) Framework included a goal of reducing carbon emissions associated with utility scale electricity by 80%, which would – in combination with the other high level measures identified in the CAP framework – result in a community-wide carbon emissions only 73% lower than 2005 emission levels by 2030. The goal adopted unanimously by Council in 2015 was an 80% emissions reduction by 2030. Council understood that additional measures

would have to be identified and implemented in order to achieve the 80% community-wide emissions reduction goal. 100% renewable electricity by 2030 is a measure that could likely close that 7% gap and make up for potential shortfalls in other areas.

With respect to the third – through fifth areas, staff not only **outlined** those items that need further study and planning in order to achieve the 100% renewable electricity, they also in effect used the fact that further study and planning will be necessary to modify the proposed resolution beyond recognition. In so doing, staff overstepped their directive.

We remind City Councilmembers and staff that two key studies relevant to the 100% renewable electricity goal have already been completed: the [PRPA's Zero Net Carbon \(ZNC\) analysis](#) and the [Northern Colorado Partners for Clean Energy \(NCP4CE\) critique](#) of that study. The first study found – based on very conservative assumptions – that the PRPA could provide ZNC electricity to its four owner communities at costs only slightly higher than the business-as-usual case. The second study pointed out many areas in which the first study was overly conservative, and suggested that declining storage costs would likely make 100% renewable electricity feasible at costs comparable to the business-as-usual case by 2030. More study will be needed to determine the optimal path to renewable electricity with zero carbon emissions. As staff have noted, the IRP is an appropriate mechanism for that study.

More study is not needed, however, in order for City Council to establish a 100% renewable electricity goal. Fort Collins takes pride in leadership for climate action – and establishing a 100% renewable electricity goal now would continue this leadership and provide clear direction to City and PRPA staff as they work through the upcoming multi-year planning processes outlined in staff's memo. Speaking generally, goals are expressions of what the community wants, of community values. Fort Collins residents have expressed strong support for the Climate Action Plan goals, the latter two of which cannot be met without bold new initiatives. Additionally, over 2,000 residents have signed FCP4CE's petition calling for 100% renewable electricity by 2030. A small fraction of that number attended the City Council meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> to ask City Council to set that goal.

Two studies suggest that achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2030 is feasible. The community has spoken loudly and clearly on this issue. We ask that City Council do its part and formally establish the goal of achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2030.

*Update:*

At the City Council meeting on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Mayor Pro Tem asked staff to bring a 100% renewable electricity resolution forward for council's consideration as soon as possible. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, staff released a memo outlining a timeline for bringing forward a resolution based on the one submitted by FCP4CE on October 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year. The timeline includes a series of meetings with boards, commissions, and other stakeholders, including two with FCP4CE/FCSG, the first of which occurred on July 5<sup>th</sup>.