

# FCSG Statements on Support for CAP Goals in Biennial Budget and 100% Renewable Electricity Resolution

*Post updated on October 3, 2018*

Update: City Council held a public hearing on the 2019-20 biennial budget and considered a 100% renewable electricity resolution on Tuesday, October 2. Council approved the 100% renewable electricity resolution by a vote of 6-1; read the story in the Coloradoan here:

<https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2018/10/02/fort-collins-sets-100-p...> Comments that we made on both of those agenda items follow. A photo of those who came to the council meeting to support the 100% renewable electricity resolution is attached at the bottom of this post.

## **FCSG Statement on Support for CAP Goals in Biennial Budget**

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) has reviewed those portions of the City Manager's Recommended Biennial Budget for 2019-20 that impact Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals. We are generally pleased with the level of support in that document for achieving those goals. We are concerned, however, that according to an analysis performed by City staff on September 20th, funded offers plus a solar project undertaken by the Platte River Power Authority will not be quite sufficient to achieve the 2020 goal of 20% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2020 compared to 2005 levels.

**We therefore support the proposed additional 0.63% electric rate increase to fund several other offers that will help get our community over the goal line.**

**Specifically, we are pleased to see the following offers included in the City Manager's Recommended Budget:**

43.12: CAP/Energy Policy Update: This offer will fund a planning effort geared toward achieving the City's very ambitious 2030 goal of reducing its GHG emissions 80% compared to 2005 levels.

45.5: Transfort 365 Service: The FCSG was part of a coalition that supported extending Transfort service to Sundays and holidays, and we are happy to see the City Manager recommending the continuation of this level of service.

9.80 Energy Services: This offer supports an array of incentives and assistance to homeowners and business owners to reduce their consumption of electricity and natural gas, and will reduce CO2 emissions by more than 25,000 metric tons annually.

9.81 Residential Solar Rebates: This offer will support the installation of residential rooftop solar systems.

9.82 Core Renewable Energy: This offer will pay for the purchase of wind energy from the PRPA as well as the purchase of solar energy from various providers located within city limits.

**We are disappointed that the following two offers that would reduce GHG emissions are not included in the City Manager's recommended budget:**

9.90 Energy Efficiency: This offer would fund additional incentives to homeowners and business owners to reduce their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

9.92 Non-residential Solar Rebates: This offer would support the installation of new rooftop solar systems on commercial and institutional buildings.

If these two offers were funded at 50% of the original amount proposed, staff projects that Fort Collins would just exceed its 2020 CAP goal by reducing its GHG emissions 20.2% compared to 2005 levels.

**In order to fund 50% of the above two offers plus several other "enabling offers", the FCSG reluctantly supports a 0.63% electric rate increase as proposed by City staff.** Given the importance of incentivizing energy efficiency and renewables, we would have liked to see this rate increase included in the significantly larger 5% electric rate increase Utilities is requesting to cover increased power costs from the PRPA and our own infrastructure needs. We note that the "Benefit to Cost" ratio of offers 9.90 and 9.92 are both greater than one, meaning the net present value of the lifecycle financial benefits are greater than the net present value of the total community investment and therefore much greater than the value of the City's investment. So the 0.63% rate increase makes good sense from a financial standpoint.

Finally, we note that among the questions to be addressed by Offer 43.12 is this: "How should the City build in adaptation and resilience initiatives?" Unfortunately, the City Manager's recommended budget does not include any funding for protecting public health during anticipated extreme heat and poor air quality events that we know will become increasingly frequent as a result of climate change.

**We therefore ask both City Council and staff to consider a mid-cycle budget offer in 2019 to provide funding to publicize heat advisories broadly, establish procedures for using existing**

**buildings as cooling centers, and set up pilot programs to mitigate the urban heat island effect.**

### **FCSG Statement on the Communitywide 100% Renewable Electricity Goal Resolution**

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group has reviewed the proposed resolution to create a communitywide 100% renewable electricity goal and the related materials detailing the consultations City staff conducted with various community groups and citizen boards.

**We strongly support the proposed resolution** and request the following (bolded) change to the definition of renewable electricity:

Section 3. For the purposes of this Resolution, renewable electricity includes non-fossil fuel sources, including electricity derived from wind, solar, hydroelectricity **from existing dam impoundments, biogas,** geothermal sources, and other means that may become available that do not add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere;

We make this request because methane releases occur during the production of electricity from nearly all hydroelectric facilities. Methane that forms at the bottom of reservoirs or dam impoundments in anaerobic conditions is drawn through the dam and released as water passes through electricity-generating turbines. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential 86 times that of CO<sub>2</sub> over 20 years. Methane releases are greatest from newly created reservoirs. For this reason, we recommend that the inclusion of hydroelectricity be limited to that produced from existing dam impoundments.

Additionally, biogas may play an important role in a future renewable electricity mix and should not be excluded.

FCSG would like to recognize the hard work and diligence City staff displayed while soliciting feedback from a wide range of community groups and citizen boards in advance of drafting the resolution. We believe the development of this resolution is a strong example of the City's commitment to co-create important policies and programs with key stakeholders. We commend City staff and Council for following a transparent, inclusive and productive process.