

FCSG Statement on Climate Action Plan Progress Work Session Item

Statement updated on August 31, 2016

On August 30th, Fort Collins City staff gave a presentation to City Council on progress toward implementing the 2015 Climate Action Plan (CAP). Staff addressed “branding”, the vetting process for CAP initiatives, financing options, and next steps toward messaging, community engagement, and implementation.

The branding effort for CAP implementation is in its early stages. At this point, it features the slogan “Road to 2020: Forging an Efficient Future” and a commitment to finding ways to reach a broader segment of the community than simply those who understand and are motivated by the need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) is generally in favor of this effort, as we believe that the ambitious goals set forth in the 2015 CAP Framework will only be achieved if the majority of people, institutions, and businesses in our community pull together in support of them. However, it's important that the urgency of addressing climate change not be lost as the rebranding effort moves forward.

The vetting process for CAP initiatives, which seeks to provide sufficient cost and benefit information about CAP initiatives to allow City Council to select the most cost-effective pathway toward the 2020 goal – 20% GHG emissions reductions compared to 2005 levels – has been well underway since the beginning of this year. The focus of the August 30th work session was on initiatives to be proposed for the 2019-2020 biennial budget, however. The FCSG hopes that clear and transparent cost and benefit information about CAP-related initiatives proposed for the 2017-18 budget will be provided to Council and the public as soon as possible. After all, we have just four more years to work toward the 2020 goal, and the upcoming biennial budget period will be critical if we are to place our community in a good position to achieve that goal.

The financing component of the work session item focused on discussing the evolution of the City’s on-bill financing program and research into how peer cities have funded their GHG emissions reduction efforts. In addition to the financial mechanisms discussed in the work session item, the FCSG would like to see an analysis of the potential impact of making use of Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) bonds, as well as the potential benefit of establishing a statewide green bank.

Finally, the FCSG believes that much of the environmental value of the Fort Collins CAP lies in providing an example to other communities of how GHG emissions can be reduced – significantly – while achieving positive social and economic outcomes. We would like to see the development of a messaging effort to other communities be part of CAP implementation. Fort Collins cannot solve Earth’s climate crisis on its own. But it – and similarly environmentally conscious communities - can show a path forward to other local, state, and national governments that may end up enabling humanity to address this problem successfully.