

Statement on Fort Collins CAP Implementation

Statement updated on November 18, 2015

The City of Fort Collins is currently working to develop a detailed plan to implement its ambitious 2015 Climate Action Plan. That plan calls for reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, and for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) believes that it is important to acknowledge the significant gap between our current emissions and those goals if we are to achieve success.

In 2014, Fort Collins' community-wide greenhouse gas emissions were 2.6% below the 2005 baseline. Since 2011, our emissions have been rising by about 2.5% year. This means that our 2015 emissions will likely be approximately the same as they were in 2005, and that in order to achieve our 2020 goal, we will need to reduce our emissions by 4.3% each year starting in 2016. Accomplishing that will require major efforts by both residents and City government.

City Council approved four climate-related mid-cycle budget offers on September 15th of this year. Those four budget offers are:

1. Water Reclamation Biogas to Cogen
2. Business Planning for Strategic Initiatives and Public-Private Partnerships
3. Energy Code Performance Program
4. Communication and Engagement Platform Design and Implementation

While the FCSG supported these four budget offers, we note that only the first and the third will result in lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The total anticipated reduction from those two offers is 2,800 metric tons of CO₂(e), or about 0.1% of annual community-wide GHG emissions.

Much more will need to be done to attain the additional 4.2% reduction in emissions needed in 2016. The 2015 Climate Plan calls for making significant near-term improvements in commercial, residential, and industrial building and process energy efficiency in order to achieve our goals. This will require robust public and private investments, which will be offset by future energy cost savings.

The detailed Climate Action Implementation Plan will be complete in early 2016, with delivery to City Council slated for March 8th. Several council members have indicated

that they will support approval of additional reserve funds for climate action shortly after delivery of that Plan. Those funds should be dedicated toward improving building and process efficiency, via expansions to existing programs such as ClimateWise, rebates for energy efficiency upgrades, and rebates for rooftop solar panels. Those programs have helped contribute to a 6% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in the electric power sector since 2005. The City should also consider implementing new programs in 2016, such as a second community solar garden, renewably-powered electric vehicle recharging stations, and a large-scale tree planting project.

The FCSG strongly encourages City staff to have proposals for such program expansions and new programs ready for Council's consideration and approval in the first quarter of 2016. The sooner we begin working to achieve the 2020 goal, the more likely we will be to achieve success.