

FCSG Statement on LED Street Lights and Vision for a Fossil-Free Future Budget

Offers

Statement updated on October 21, 2014

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) strongly supports budget offers EH 61.1: LED Streetlight Replacement Program and EH 47.15: Community Engagement in a Vision for A Fossil-Free Future. We were disappointed to learn that neither of these items appears on the list of offers that City Council has asked to be added to the City Manager's Recommended Budget on first reading.

The first item, EH 61.1, would provide \$1,047,000 to fund the first year of a 5-year capital improvement street light replacement program with LED lights. When completed, this program would reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 3,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year. This program would pay itself back in 10-12 years as a result of energy, operations, and maintenance savings.

The second item, EH 47.15, would provide \$200,000 for a concrete and strategic public campaign to advance the updated Climate Action Plan that Council is on track to adopt next spring. That plan envisions an 80% reduction in CO₂e emissions by 2030 with respect to 2005 levels, and a 100% reduction in emissions by 2050. Achieving those goals would require significant community-wide engagement, which would start with the outreach and education campaign funded by EH 47.15.

While we are encouraged by Council's support for strengthening our existing Climate Action Plan, we are concerned about the recent trend line of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. Those emissions have increased from 13.1% below 2005 levels in 2011 to only 4.9% below 2005 levels in 2013. Those increases, coupled with the City Manager's and Council's lack of support to date for two very significant programs that would help move us forward, paint a troubling picture of a City government that may talk a better game on climate action than it is willing to play.

The LED Streetlight Replacement Program and the Vision for a Fossil-Free Future budget offers provide critical support both for the City's current Climate Action Plan and the anticipated update to that plan. The FCSG calls on City Council to back up its expressed values by including both of those budget offers in the 2015-16 budget.