

ITEM #9: Climate Action Plan Update.

Council Question:

Please tell me more about what we are analyzing, when that work will be done. What are we tracking along the way (ie annually)? Beyond what was shared last time, is there other data or information you can share about these first five years?

Staff Response:

Beyond greenhouse gas emissions and the inputs that go into tracking this data, we will be rolling out some additional metrics as part of the Council strategic priorities tracking process and sharing those through the Business Plans.

Council Question:

Are the questions for council at the end of the presentation, the same ones you plan to ask the public?

Staff Response:

Yes. We will also ask the Council if there is another question you'd like us to ask the public in our outreach and education.

Council Question:

How have technology, funding, State & Federal policy, utilities, and climate change impacts impacted our work (years 1 – 5)? How do we see them impacting our assumptions, priorities, or actions going forward?

Staff Response:

Technology: Battery technology for vehicles and buildings is rapidly evolving and improving. This means we are now looking to include battery storage with all our solar installations. Batteries enable us to use solar energy when utility energy costs are most expensive.

Funding: State and federal grant opportunities are significantly reduced as compared to what they were five years ago under the previous administration. This means that we will need to be more creative about how we find resources and how we accomplish our work. New ways of doing business might include the use of fundraising models like the [Community Giving Fund](#) (Orange County) and more regional collaboration that help share the cost of programs and projects amongst multiple local governments.

State and Federal Policy: At the federal level, there have been policy rollbacks, both real and threatened. For example, the ENERGY STAR program was threatened but seems stable, while the EPA's landmark Endangerment Finding, which stated that greenhouse gases pose a serious risk and must be reduced, has now been rescinded by that agency. One impact of this decision is on fuel efficiency standards for vehicles. The current administration is actively rolling back the CAFE standards that had been moving the auto industry towards higher fuel efficiency vehicles. This means that if we are unable to find a suitable EV to replace an older vehicle, it's now more likely that the gasoline-powered replacement will not be as fuel efficient as it otherwise would have been under the previous CAFE standards (i.e., what was a 50 mile per gallon fleetwide 2031 target under the previous administration is now a 34 mile per gallon fleetwide target).

Utilities: Because most of our community emissions come from the energy we use in our buildings, we know that our utility partner's efforts to decarbonize are critically important to helping us reach our carbon goals. For this reason, we are closely tracking Duke Energy's carbon planning process and their commitments within that plan, which have been pushed back from their original 2030 commitment. The Town Mayor has signed a joint letter with other local governments each of the last three Duke Energy carbon plan cycles, advocating for a utility resource plan that best supports the Town's climate goals. This work will be important to continue in future cycles.

ITEM #9: Climate Action Plan Update. (Cont'd)

Staff Response: (Cont'd)

Climate Change Impacts: Increased summer heat and storms like Chantal have been recent reminders that we must continue adapting to our changing climate. The Council's focus on environmental resiliency, both through the Stormwater Plan and through implementation of the new Heat Action Plan of Orange County, will be increasingly important over the next five years. Continued investments in smart city technologies like flood early warning sensors will also be critical.

Council Question:

What is the anticipated timeline for 1) rooftop and battery storage and 2) energy and water efficiency upgrades for Town facilities? Will these projects also result in financial savings? If so, can you estimate how much and when?

Staff Response:

Facility energy and water efficiency upgrades are ongoing and part of routine maintenance that's performed by our Public Works/Facilities team. The timeline and financial savings for the rooftop and battery storage projects will be provided within the sustainable facilities study. This study will include a multi-year investment strategy that aligns the timing of solar installations with roof replacements. The study will also include a total cost of ownership (cost-benefit financial analysis) and emissions reduction projection for each project. We will soon bid for some of these projects so that construction can begin in FY27.

Council Question:

Beyond CPACE, what are the most impactful things local businesses and organizations/property owners can do? Are there programs that can help educate and encourage businesses and organizations in town to make these types of investments/changes?

Staff Response:

We have found that the most effective sustainability programs for businesses and commercial property owners are those that provide certainty and support doing the work. Previous attempts at outreach and education programs for businesses have been marginally effective because they require businesses to invest time and money that they don't have. Instead, utility programs, certification programs, and C-PACE are better models because they help businesses address current needs that affect their bottom lines. The Offices of Sustainability and Economic Development are actively working to support programming that will be attractive to businesses and commercial property owners. This programming will be predictable, well-supported, and yield tangible results.

Council Question:

Where do things stand with the Natural Areas map? How will it inform our Climate Action Plan update?

Staff Response:

To help monitor a variety of topics, we will be developing additional metrics as part of the Council strategic priorities tracking process and reporting through the business plans.

Council Question:

How does our timeline on evaluating new stormwater management strategies align with this update?

Staff Response:

This is something we will need to determine.

ITEM #9: Climate Action Plan Update. (Cont'd)

Council Question:

How built out is our current network of public EV charging stations? Where are the biggest gaps and what are our plans to address those?

Staff Response:

The Town currently owns and hosts 40 charging stations (plugs) across Chapel Hill. These stations are located in the following places:

- North - Aquatic Center (4)
- North - Eubanks Park and Ride (2)
- East - Chapel Hill Public Library (2)
- Central - Town Hall (2)
- Central - 140 West (6)
- Central - Rosemary Parking Deck (20)
- South - Southern Community Park (2)
- West - Hargraves Community Center (2)

The current set of stations provides public charging along and near most of our major roadway corridors. Future expansion could include the East 54 and North 15-501 corridors, although there are privately owned public charging stations in those areas today. Additionally, most charging still takes place at home and nearly all new residential and mixed-use development projects in Chapel Hill are installing EV charging, with plans to expand as demand grows.

Council Question:

Where do things stand on composting and recycling; waste, water, & natural resources; and other matters with respect to the county? What is the Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) currently working on?

Staff Response:

We understand that the County is actively working to implement their new Zero Waste Plan. One example of this work is a new food waste drop-off site initiative. Two of the six sites are in Chapel Hill – one at Cedar Falls Park and the other at the recycling center in Meadowmont. To help monitor a variety of topics, we will also be developing additional metrics as part of the Council strategic priorities tracking process and reporting through the business plans.

Council Question:

How are we tracking tree canopies across town?

Staff Response:

To help monitor a variety of topics, we will be developing additional metrics as part of the Council strategic priorities tracking process and reporting through the business plans.

Council Question:

Please tell me more about the resilience hub assessment grant, including how long the assessment is expected to take?

Staff Response:

We are still waiting to hear back from Central Pines about our grant application and can provide more details at a later date.