



**The League of Women Voters of Dane County, WI, Inc.
Presents...**

General Meeting and Issues Forum

**Sustainability, a Framework of Support for
Present and Future Generations**

Speakers:

Erika Kluetmeier, Fitchburg Sustainability Specialist

Lisa MacKinnon, Dane Co. Sustainability and Program Evaluation Coordinator

Spencer Schumacher, Middleton Sustainability Committee Chairperson

Wednesday, November 1, 2017, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

**The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall
333 West Main St., Madison**

(Free parking in the ramp across the street.)

Study Committee: Sue Ann Larson, Caryl Terrell, Dorothy Wheeler

Study and Discussion Questions:

1. Which habits or practices have you changed in your life due to your commitment to sustainability?
2. What area(s) of the Dane County Government Sustainable Operations Plan – air, water, health, transportation, etc. – is most important for the maintenance of quality of life for you and others where you live?
3. Dane County is projected to add about 157,000 new people by 2050. What challenges does this growth pose for community Sustainability Goals?
4. The Dane County Government Sustainable Operations Plan is intended to be responsive to new ideas, strategies (etc.) every five years. What observations and suggestions would you make for its future review?

For more information **and to access linked material (underlined text)**, visit the League's website www.lwvdanecountry.org or call 608-232-9447.

[Local League Position in Support of a Climate Action Framework and Sustainability Plan](#)

January 26, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Partner Organization of CRANES, the League of Women Voters urges passage of the “CRANES Amended Resolution.”

We do so on behalf of our members who, with all the members of CRANES partners numbering over 5000, have endorsed the 2050 Climate Action Plan Framework for the Municipalities of Dane County.

While we support the proposed updating of the City’s goals of 100% renewable energy and net zero carbon, this resolution must explicitly affirm the City’s existing commitments to:

- 50% overall energy reduction by 2030 or sooner
- target date of “2050 or sooner” for achieving 100% renewable energy and net-zero carbon goals.

Adoption of the “CRANES Amended Resolution” will harmonize the City’s updated climate/energy goals with those of the 2050 Climate Action Plan Framework, which the city endorsed in 2013, as well as its own Sustainability Plan (2009).

Fortunately, it seems that everyone involved agrees that it was intended that these existing commitments would be honored. Since that is the case, passing an amended resolution that makes this intention explicit, while also putting all relevant climate/energy goals in one current document, should be supported by everyone.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Fullin
Brook Soltvedt
Co-Presidents

“LWVDC supported efforts by CRANES and others to highlight previous formally adopted City of Madison energy and climate goals in the 2011 Sustainability Plan and the 2013 Framework. This recent history was deleted from the Energy Work Plan developed by the Madison Sustainability Committee before submittal to the Madison Common Council.” (explanatory note from Caryl Terrell)

Links to Additional Study Materials:

[Dane County Government Sustainable Operations Plan](#)

[Dane County Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness Plan](#)

[City of Madison Sustainability Plan](#)

[Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change](#)

(In the 2016 November election, Middleton voters approved two referenda that addressed climate change and carbon fees as a means to limit it.)

Election silver lining: Wisconsin city votes to support Carbon Fee and Dividend, By Jamsheed Cooper

In a small Wisconsin city, election night brought some good news for those concerned about the state of the world's climate: Voters in Middleton approved two referendum questions related to climate change, one of them to support a national [Carbon Fee and Dividend](#).

The questions, placed on the ballot thanks to the efforts of the Middleton Climate Referendum Project and the local Citizens' Climate Lobby chapter, appeared as follows:

1) Do you agree that the City of Middleton, as a local sustainability leader, has a responsibility to mitigate the risks of global warming through its policy decisions and actions?

2) Do you agree that the City of Middleton should endorse the national effort to implement a federal Carbon Fee and Dividend (CFAD) to slow the humanitarian crises and negative economic consequences caused by global warming? CFAD will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging conservation and make renewable energy more economically viable.

Both questions received a resounding '[Yes](#)' by city residents, passing with votes of 80.6% and 72.3% respectively.

"We must remember as citizens that last Tuesday's ballot marks the start, not the finish, of our work against climate change and for a livable world. We have begun that work with this referendum. We have the privilege and opportunity to continue that work with the Middleton Climate Referendum Project and the Citizens Climate Lobby," said Kermit Hovey, coordinator of the Middleton Climate Referendum Project, in a letter to the editor of the Middleton Times Tribune. "An entire city has shouted one loud message to the state, the country, and the world. Everybody now knows there are people in the United States, in Wisconsin, and in Middleton who recognize the seriousness of climate change and call for federal legislators to take significant effective action against climate change now."

Citizen's Climate Lobby was instrumental in promoting and organizing the push for the referendum. Earlier this year, Dick Smith, a volunteer with Citizen's Climate Lobby, spoke to the Middleton Sustainability Committee about how Carbon Fee and Dividend could benefit the people and businesses of Middleton and serve as a model for other communities in the state, as well as the country, to take action on climate change.

Middleton is the first city in the United States to pass such a referendum. The measure received overwhelming support by city officials, who then worked to draft language that was on the ballot.

Citizen's Climate Lobby is working to generate strong support for Carbon Fee and Dividend by securing [endorsements](#) from local officials, residents and. Many members of Congress, particularly Republicans, are apprehensive to lead on climate solutions, fearing repercussions from voters and donors. Community endorsements provide the political cover for them to step up.

The city of Middleton has sent lawmakers a clear message: You have our approval to lead on climate solutions.

Jamsheed Cooper, a member of CCL's blog team, is a biomedical engineering student at The Georgia Institute of Technology and a volunteer in the Atlanta CCL chapter.

[Dane County Government Close to Meeting 100 Percent Renewable Energy Goal](#)

Abigail Becker, *Capitol Times*, July 29, 2017

In expressing support for the Paris Climate Accord, Dane County officials also committed to having all county government operations generated by renewable energy sources by 2035 at the latest.

But the county might meet that goal way before then.

In 2016, Dane County paid utilities for using 35.5 million kilowatt hours of electricity while also producing 34.6 million kilowatt hours of renewable electricity from county landfills and solar energy projects, according to Dave Merritt, the county's Department of Administration director of policy & program development.

With new projects funded in the 2017 budget becoming operational, such as the east district highway garage that features 800 solar panels, the county could meet its goal 18 years early.

"It is reasonable that county government electricity use will be offset by 100 percent renewable production in the 2017-2018 time period," Merritt said.

If manure digesters were included, Dane County government would be producing 170 percent of the renewable electricity it uses.

Manure digesters that the county helped develop in Middleton and Waunakee produce a combined 26 million kilowatt hours per year. However, that energy is owned by Gundersen Health System and Clean Fuel Partners, the companies that operate the digesters.

The County's Sustainability Subcommittee of the Public Works and Transportation Committee will work to set a date for county government operations to rely solely on renewable energy.

The Paris agreement, signed by 195 countries in 2015, establishes a commitment to take concrete measures to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. President Donald Trump announced June 1 the United States would withdraw from the agreement.

The resolution signed by Dane County Executive July 17 states that the county has a responsibility to "protect and enhance the quality of life" for future generations.

"Actions that reduce the combustion of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse gases in Dane County, including prioritizing efficiency and transitioning to low-carbon energy sources, have the potential to improve air quality, public health, energy security, social equity, local natural environments, and quality of life for all residents," the resolution states.

The resolution also supports setting a similar goal beyond county government operations to include the entire community.

"Our goal really is not to try to force anybody to do anything ... but rather to set an example," Supervisor Tim Kiefer said.

Dane County has taken strides to confront the effects of climate change. The Climate Change Council, created by Executive Joe Parisi in the 2017 budget, met for the first time Tuesday to begin developing a climate action plan that will inform how the county can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare the county for the effects of climate change.

"With our communities constantly getting bombarded with heavy rains and 100-year floods seeming to take place every year now, the Climate Change Council could not be more timely," Parisi said in a statement. "I am eager to have the council begin its work and see what further actions Dane County can take to combat climate change and its effects that negatively impact our residents on a more and more frequent basis."

Dane County is also in the process of switching over its fleet to using compressed natural gas with the goal of having nearly all county-owned vehicles converted to compressed natural gas by 2023, Kiefer said. Some vehicles would still run on gasoline or diesel such as the sheriff's department's boat patrol, which cannot be feasibly converted to compressed natural gas.

Green Fitchburg **Sustainability Framework**

Two city organizations are responsible for green initiatives:

Resource Conservation Commission

The RCC recommends policy, enforcement, and informational programs to promote the preservation and improvement of the environment. The RCC has made [recommendations](#) for meeting the Kyoto Protocol, and has [suggestions](#) for how individuals can reduce their carbon footprint. The RCC has a Community Outreach Subcommittee that plans educational programs for Fitchburg residents and businesses. Videos of RCC Outreach events are available in the “Other City Meetings and Events” section of the FACTv Streaming Media Archive.

Staff Green Team

The Staff Green Team meets every other month to discuss, plan and implement sustainability initiatives that can be incorporated into the city’s daily operating procedures.

Initiatives:

2014: State of Wisconsin 25x25 Energy Independence [Updates](#)

2013: City of Fitchburg Campus [Retro-Commissioning Project](#)

2009: Partnered with the State of Wisconsin in pursuit of the [25 x 25 goals for energy independence](#)

2008: Fitchburg Common Council adopts the [US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement](#)

Fitchburg has taken additional steps towards a greener community and has installed [solar panels](#) at City Hall and also at the Public Works Maintenance Facility. The City of Fitchburg Public Library is also partially heated/cooled by a [geothermal heating and cooling system](#). Staff are encouraged to participate in the City's [bike commuter challenge](#) and take other forms of alternative transportation.

DANE COUNTY GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS PLAN

January 2016

Introduction

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Dane County government is pursuing a goal of becoming more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable in its planning, operations, management, and policymaking. Over the last several years the county has initiated and implemented numerous efforts that are contributing to greater sustainability through energy conservation, greenhouse gas emission reductions, stormwater runoff reduction, renewable fuel vehicles, and employee wellness programs. This plan provides a more formal and comprehensive guideline for building on our existing efforts and achieving greater environmental, social, and economic sustainability across county departments and functions. Through becoming a more sustainable local government we have the opportunity to create positive impacts that go beyond our operations and our jurisdictional boundaries. In developing this plan, we are embracing several general assumptions:

1. We can set an example for the broader community by operating in the most sustainable manner possible;
2. Economic, social, and environmental well-being are mutually interdependent;
3. County policy and investment choices have long-term impacts;
4. Sustainable practices can create long-term cost efficiencies;
5. Organizational awareness, responsibility, participation, and education are key elements of sustainability; and
6. Local actions can have regional, national, and global implications.

The Dane County Board of Supervisors provided the initial direction for this planning effort with their unanimous adoption of Resolution 103, 2012-2013 in October 2012. Via this resolution, the county formally adopted a set of broad sustainability principles to provide a more systematic approach and a framework to make informed and strategic decisions regarding all aspects of county operations.

Within this plan, “sustainability” means the use, development, and protection of resources in a way that enables Dane County to meet the needs of residents and maintain a vibrant quality of life, without compromising the ability of future residents to do the same. In this context, “resources” include land, air, and water along with the inherent value of the natural resources, biodiversity, and life-supporting functions associated with them; energy and materials for development and habitation; the people who work for and with our county government to carry out its missions and deliver services to the public every day; and the economic resources that come from taxpayers and other sources, which help us serve our community.

SUSTAINABILITY

In October 2012, the county formally adopted a set of broad sustainability principles to provide a more systematic approach and a framework to make informed and strategic decisions regarding all aspects of county operations. To ensure that Dane County’s operations, programs, services, policies, and decision-making processes reflect our commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability, we will:

- Reduce and eventually eliminate Dane County government’s contribution to fossil fuel dependence and to wasteful use of scarce metals and minerals;
- Reduce and eventually eliminate Dane County government’s contribution to dependence upon persistent chemicals and wasteful use of synthetic substances;
- Reduce and eventually eliminate Dane County government’s contribution to encroachment upon nature and harm to life-sustaining ecosystems (e.g., land, water, wildlife, forest, soil, ecosystems); and
- Reduce and eventually eliminate Dane County government’s contribution to conditions that undermine people’s ability to meet their basic human needs.

These principles are intended to be applied systematically and strategically across departments, agencies, and in the policymaking body of the Dane County Board of Supervisors to achieve greater sustainability in everything we do.

Dane County Board of Supervisors 2012-2013 Resolution 103

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process for development of this plan began with the creation of the cross-departmental Sustainability Work Group, comprised of staff representatives from numerous Dane County departments and agencies. The group came together in early 2012 to work collaboratively across departments to improve the sustainability of county operations. Initially, the Work Group reviewed policies, practices, initiatives, and actions in their departments and across county government operations and asked, “Where are we meeting one or more of the county’s adopted sustainability principles and where are we violating these principles?” In other words, where are we currently operating in a sustainable manner, and where do we need to change and improve?

From this baseline inventory, the Work Group developed a “Sustainability Impacts Analysis” that identified the county’s most significant sustainability impacts and challenges across departments, facilities, and countywide operations. The Work Group then used this analysis as the basis for developing the operational categories, goals, objectives, and strategies contained in this plan.

The Dane County Sustainable Government Operations Plan was developed through a series of strategic planning meetings of the cross-departmental Sustainability Work Group and was submitted for further review and input by a team of department heads and constitutional officers convened by the Department of Administration. These groups worked to ensure that Dane County’s internal operational sustainability goals, objectives, and strategies reflect and advance the county’s commitment to sustainability. The intention of this plan is to build on and enhance numerous existing sustainable practices and resources and to provide additional strategic guidance for making county operations more sustainable, efficient, and resilient in the face of future challenges. The sharing of ideas, experience, and teamwork exemplifies the county’s dedication to working collaboratively to ensure that every aspect of sustainability is incorporated and that we are accountable for implementing these goals together in our work at the county.

The Dane County Government Sustainable Operations Plan (“the plan”) focuses on the county’s internal operations and management and is intended to guide county leadership, elected officials, and county government staff in collectively carrying out the county’s daily operations in a sustainable manner. It incorporates the county’s adopted sustainability principles across virtually all operational areas of the county—the vehicles we drive, the energy and water we consume, the construction and operation of our buildings, the products we purchase, the way in which we view and handle our “used” materials—to create a more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable county government now and into the future.

The comprehensive set of goals, objectives, and strategies identified in this plan are intended to be achievable by county staff. They are aimed at helping Dane County, as a government agency, transition to greater sustainability in its day-to-day operations. The strategies are intended to allow for flexibility and creativity in implementation in order to be most responsive to departments’ specific needs and functions. The plan recognizes that

successful implementation will rely heavily on the experience, engagement, and collaboration of staff and decision makers across Dane County operations.

Working toward greater sustainability reflects not only the county's commitment to future generations, but also to good government. Our focus on sustainability rewards efficiency and continuous improvement. Our successes in achieving sustainability goals will allow us to deal more resiliently with uncertainty and future risks by being more efficient with limited natural and fiscal resources.

PLAN FORMAT

The plan is broken into eight key operational categories. Each category represents an operational aspect of county government that spans all departments and divisions, and for which numerous staff share some level of responsibility.

Plan Categories

The following are the plan categories and goals for each category. These goals represent what Dane County aspires to be true about its operations, management, and policy-making in a more sustainable future.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION

Dane County is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by all county operations and facilities, and to planning for and implementing climate adaptation measures to build resilience in the face of current and future impacts of global climate change on government operations and our community.

2. TRANSPORTATION & VEHICLE FLEET

Dane County's on-road and off-road municipal fleet and transportation operations yield numerous environmental, social, and economic benefits. The county continually strives to enhance fleet efficiencies through education, updating infrastructure, and implementing new technologies. The county seeks to develop and support sustainable transportation choices for all Dane County employees.

3. WATER

Dane County demonstrates wise water use and promotes water conservation in all county government operations to ensure access to clean and abundant water for current and future generations.

4. WASTE

Dane County promotes sustainable materials management by reducing consumption of resources and by using resources most productively and sustainably throughout their lifecycles, from the point of resource extraction through material disposal. This approach optimizes the use of resources, reduces solid waste across county operations, and reduces associated environmental, economic, and social impacts.

5. COUNTY BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

Dane County's buildings and facilities are efficient and safe. Facilities Management uses standards, policies, and practices that promote resource efficiency and performance, with a focus on energy efficiency and performance, the use of sustainable materials, and an emphasis on occupant and user health and well-being.

6. PURCHASING

Dane County purchases and uses materials, products, and services in a fiscally responsible manner, while reducing resource consumption and waste, supporting local economic opportunities, and ensuring human health and well-being.

7. EDUCATION & OUTREACH

All Dane County employees and members of the public are strongly connected to Dane County government's sustainability efforts through wide-ranging opportunities for outreach, education, communication, and engagement.

8. EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Dane County provides a sustainable, safe, equitable, and healthy work environment that promotes and enhances the health, well-being, and engagement of all Dane County employees. Each operational category states a broad goal, objectives that have been identified to meet the goal, and a list of strategies identified to achieve the goal and objectives, including identification of parties responsible for implementation, timelines for implementation, and priority level.

Strategies identified to achieve the objectives range in ease of execution and expected timeline. High priority strategies are those that are viewed as important to initiate as soon as possible because they will have a significant impact on improving sustainability and/or because they are relatively simple to implement for various reasons. High priority strategies should begin implementation in Year 1 after passage of this plan. They may continue implementation into successive years. The medium and low priority strategies were designated as such either because they were seen as not having as immediate or significant an impact on operational sustainability as the high priority strategies and/or because they were seen as more difficult to implement, either because of financial or technical barriers that would need to be addressed first. Implementation of these strategies is intended to be initiated in Year 2 and beyond as resources are made available and after other higher priority strategies have been implemented.

Description of the Dane County Sustainable Government Operations Plan Elements

- **Goal:** General statements that describe how Dane County will conduct its operations in a sustainable future
- **Objectives:** Specific, tangible, and measurable steps by which the goals can be achieved
- **Strategies:** Specific actions, initiatives, policies, and practices that are to be taken to ensure realization of the plan's goals and objectives, with the timeline, responsible parties, and priority level identified
- **Measurements of Progress:** Metrics to determine whether improvements are occurring are identified in various strategies in the plan. For some strategies progress will be measured simply by completion of the strategy. For others, data will need to be tracked and compared with baseline information to determine whether we are achieving the stated objectives. Further metrics will need to be developed once baselines are established for specific operational areas that currently do not track or measure necessary data.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Both the Dane County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive have made achieving greater sustainability a priority for the county and have supported their commitment through numerous policy initiatives, capital improvements, and investments. This plan is a continuation of that commitment and the County Board and County Executive will lead the county in the implementation of this plan toward even greater achievement of sustainability in everything we do.

Full implementation of the plan will achieve numerous results, including but not limited to:

- Creating a more sustainable and healthy built environment;
- Increasing water and energy efficiency and energy independence;
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality;
- Minimizing waste;
- Conserving irreplaceable natural resources;
- Encouraging the growth of markets for environmental products and services;
- Increasing employee participation and decision making in workplace sustainability; and
- Reducing county expenses over the long term.

To support the full engagement of all departments and staff in achieving these successes, Dane County will offer opportunities for continuing sustainability education and develop a program to recognize employees who contribute practical and cost-effective suggestions for improving sustainability.

We also look forward to fostering partnerships in the community to assist with implementation of this plan where it will enhance our ability to achieve our sustainability goals, incorporate the most effective sustainable practices into our day-to-day operations, and multiply our successes.

The Dane County Government Sustainable Operations Plan is intended to be an adaptable plan that will be responsive to new ideas, strategies, technologies, partnerships, and available resources. This plan is expected to evolve as we learn from our experience and the research and experience of others. Major reviews and updates to the plan should occur every five years, or sooner, but smaller revisions should occur as needed based on results of outcomes monitoring and other evaluations. A departmental sustainability work group should meet on a regular basis to support plan implementation and review implementation progress.

To submit new ideas, comments, or questions regarding this plan, please contact:

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