

Climate Action Collaborative for the Eagle County Community

Purpose & Principles for Collaboration

Sept. 10, 2017

This Climate Action Collaborative Purpose and Principles for Collaboration document is considered to be a living document that will be changed as necessary with input from stakeholders.

Background

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the Eagle County Community was completed in December 2016 with input and support from 30 stakeholders from local governments and organizations. The goal of the CAP aligns with that of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - to reduce global GHG emissions 80% by 2050.

The first interim target is 25% reduction in emissions by 2025, which requires elimination of ~350,000 metric tons of emissions per year. To put this target in general perspective, a large rooftop solar array on a family home reduces electricity emissions by about 7 tons per year. Leaving the car at home reduces vehicle fuel emissions by about 3 tons per year.

Data modeling and projections provided by Western State Colorado University suggest a “business as usual” scenario would result in double the current emissions by 2050. To meet the CAP goals we will need scaled and coordinated actions by local governments, businesses, and organizations. The Climate Action Collaborative will serve this need in our community.

Purpose

The Climate Action Collaborative (CAC) for the Eagle County Community joins local governments, businesses, schools, neighborhood HOA's, and nonprofit organizations to meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets set forth in the 2016 “Climate Action Plan for the Eagle County Community.” The CAC provides education, technical support, and funding for strategies that significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our community.

Vision

Reducing climate pollution is an urgent priority. The actions of the Climate Action Collaborative help to protect for future generations what we enjoy now - reliable snowfall and streamflows, a flourishing year-round economy, and a healthy resilient ecosystem that enhances the wellbeing of all. Through the work of the CAC, the Eagle County community will meet the community targets to reduce GHG emissions 25% by 2025, and 80% by 2050 (baseline 2014).

Guiding Principles

The CAC will:

- Rely upon scientific consensus and data to inform goals, strategies, and actions around climate change
- Proactively implement strategies outlined in the 2016 “Climate Action Plan for the Eagle County Community”
- Serve as a “crossroads” of shared resources, education, and outreach to support community-wide climate action
- Foster opportunities for collaboration and use collaborative meeting processes that encourage participation, sharing, transparency and inclusiveness
- Facilitate effective and efficient meetings and use best-practices to ensure continued long-term engagement of all stakeholders
- Produce consensus decisions for the betterment of the entire Eagle County community
- Balance economic, social, and environmental considerations in our recommendations
- Be accountable for our actions and use data to measure and monitor collective impact
- Proactively communicate with one another to maintain productive relationships across political and organizational boundaries to ensure collective success in accomplishing GHG reduction goals
- Report on progress within the CAC and externally to the Eagle County community

Expectations

Participating CAC stakeholders will:

- Allocate staff time and other resources, both financial and in-kind, to implement GHG reduction initiatives
- Develop a consistent system to measure and monitor annual GHG reductions within their respective entity or jurisdiction
- Develop plans, projects and policies that empower our community to reduce GHG emissions
- Proactively integrate GHG reduction actions into all organizational planning, decisionmaking, infrastructure, and community assets

Existing Resources

A huge success of the CAP has been widespread adoption of the plan within municipal governments, businesses, and local organizations. The CAC is in a good position to support and leverage existing efforts. Although not meant to be an all inclusive list, below are some existing or past resources and commitments dedicated to CAP implementation:

Town of Avon: Created internal CAP Work Team; investing \$300,000 into EV charging, bikeshare program, CLEER partnership, solar on facilities, adopted exterior energy use regulations, and has made CAP initiatives a Tier-one priority for Avon Town Council.

Town of Basalt: Town of Basalt has budgeted \$100,000 to invest in EE improvements in facilities and operations, \$10,000 to CORE, \$1500 to High Five campaign, \$30,000 to Green Team.

Town of Eagle: Plans to invest in EE for operational savings, include CAP in future community survey to help prioritize.

Town of Gypsum: Gypsum is home to 150-kw income-qualified solar PV system, 11.5 MW woody biomass plant, largest RE systems in Eagle County.

Town of Minturn: Community solar farm site planning; Xcel Partners In Energy Savings (PIES) Energy Action Plan in development, utilizing 4 Xcel staff / consultants

Town of Vail: Town of Vail has invested \$4.5 million in energy efficiency projects in facilities over the last 7 years; is in the process of achieving the first sustainable destination certification

Eagle County: Eagle County contributes \$135,000 toward Energy Smart Colorado rebates, \$110,000 for administration of Energy Smart Colorado program, \$24,000 toward the Actively Green business program, \$54,000 to support community waste diversion efforts, and \$26,000 for CAP implementation (internal staff, composting, and other capital and fleet investments in support of Environmental Policy goal of 5% GHG reduction per year not included).

Vail Resorts: 100% renewable energy goal, net zero by 2030; net zero impacts to natural areas and wildlife habitat, net zero landfill waste by 2030, continued EE investment.

Walking Mountains Science Center: Department team of sustainability professionals and programs dedicated to reducing GHG emissions, and creating a valley-wide culture of environmental sustainability through education and community engagement. Provides GHG reduction programs: Energy Smart Colorado, Actively Green sustainability business and training program with built in management system, zero waste events, and other related educational programs.

Additional resources:

- *Compact for Colorado Communities/ACCO* (Association of Climate Change Officers) - online and in-person training modules for local government staff and elected officials
- *CC4CA* (Colorado Communities for Climate Action) - a coalition of local governments advocating for state and federal policies
- Holy Cross Energy rebates, grants, energy audits, renewable energy power supply, and technical assistance
- Xcel Partners In Energy technical assistance and outreach grant with Town of Minturn
- *CEO* (Colorado Energy Office) - grants and programs that reduce energy use
- Governor Hickenlooper's 2017 Executive Order - supports climate initiatives
- Energy Smart Colorado - a network of nonprofit organizations providing home energy assessments and financial incentives for residential energy efficiency
- Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER) - technical and project mgt services, GHG inventory for Eagle County, manages activities of Garfield Clean Energy (GCE)
- Community Office for Resource Efficiency (CORE) - technical and project mgt services
- Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) - policy, planning and technical services

Immediate Needs

Significant resources will be required to implement the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and achieve the 2025 target. While many resources exist to support focus areas identified in the CAP, gaps exist to move specific strategies forward to the scale necessary. In 2017 the Climate Action Collaborative will gather the resources necessary to provide the following community services:

1. **Provide Community Education:** Providing clear and consistent messaging about CAP efforts and ways for residents and visitors to get involved and reduce their energy use, providing reports on policies and progress, and an annual report are all potential strategies to keep the CAP in the forefront of locals and retain relevancy as programs and strategies evolve. May include digital communications platform, social media campaigns, newspaper and radio advertisements, events, and other social movement engaging activities.
2. **Accelerate Residential Energy Improvements** - Homes contribute 28% of total GHG emissions, and most homes in the region are aging, leaky, and do not meet current energy code requirements. Major expansion of the the Energy Smart Colorado residential program is identified in the CAP as a leading strategy. Since the program began in 2012, approximately 8% of existing homes in Eagle County have received a Home Energy Assessment and 6% have made energy improvements.
3. **Expand Commercial Building Initiatives** - Commercial buildings and commercial energy uses account for 32% of total GHG emissions in the community. Additional resources are needed to improve the energy efficiency of the many commercial buildings in the region, a major source of GHG emissions. We'll need technical experts to provide engineered building audits, project management support for retrofits, commissioning (tuning buildings and equipment to operate as designed), and energy training for building operators.
4. **Transportation** - The transportation sector is focused on strategies to increase bus ridership, walking, biking, and electric vehicle sales and public charging infrastructure. As a function of land use, the transportation sector also will require assistance in partnering with local governments in land use regulations and land use development plans which support multi-modal and alternative transportation modes.
5. **Waste Diversion** - To achieve the near-term goal of 30% waste diversion by 2020, successful launch of the proposed centralized composting system and additional waste reduction and recycling efforts will be necessary.
6. **Power Supply** - Working with our utility partners at Black Hills Energy, Xcel, and Holy Cross Energy will be necessary to achieve dramatic renewable energy and GHG reduction goals from electricity and natural gas efficiency measures.
7. **Project management: facilitation of meetings, follow-up, recruitment and retention of partners, organization and administration for stakeholders, sector teams, etc.** Keeping

the partners engaged, setting up meetings, following up, convening conference calls, webinars, recruiting new partners, coordinating multiple schedules, and organizing all of the moving parts is a significant and fundamentally important component of CAP implementation. Administration of potential future financial resources Expansion of this scope of work is a natural outcome and need of the program and essential to goal achievement.

Membership, Working Groups, etc.

The CAC will function as a county-wide collaborative committee, and will govern itself and its members. The CAC will strive to have a balanced membership of stakeholders representing entities (local governments, special districts, businesses, utilities, schools, nonprofits) with the influence and/or authority to significantly reduce GHG emissions within the boundaries of Eagle County.

The core CAC membership will be limited to 30-40 entities. Membership in sector-based small working groups is open to additional stakeholders who will bring needed expertise and resources to ensure success of sector working group goals. Sector-based working groups may include: 1) education and outreach, 2) residential buildings, 3) commercial buildings and industrial, 4) transportation and mobility, 5) waste and landfill (materials management), 6) energy supply, and others as determined by the CAC. Walking Mountains Science Center (WM) is currently contracted (during 2017) by the Eagle County Board of County Commissioners to serve as the project manager, convener and facilitator of the CAC.

In this role WM will: set meeting dates and agendas for three stakeholder/collaborative meetings, prepare and provide CAC meeting notes, communicate progress to the broader community by writing two editorial to submit to the Vail Daily newspaper, host one annual climate action open house, convene and facilitate the education and outreach sector working group, support formation of the commercial buildings sector working group, maintain the webpage to openly communicate and maintain historical memory of the CAC, and other roles as mutually determined.

Structure

The structure of the CAC can theoretically take various forms in order to leverage existing resources, provide a meaningful platform which supports consensus-based decision-making, and provide additional needs to help meet our goal of 25% GHG reduction by 2025. Research of other community climate action initiatives show various models, scope, and structure which are as unique as the communities themselves.

The Georgetown Climate Center published a synthesis report with lessons learned from regional climate collaboratives: <http://www.georgetownclimate.org/reports/lessons-in-regional-resilience.html>.

As it relates to structure the lessons learned in the Georgetown Report include:

- Consider formalizing the collaborative for long-term sustainable funding. Three options available (pending CO state laws):
 - Creation of a regional government entity or joint powers agency,

- Some states allow creation of a nonprofit corporation authorizing local governments to coordinate regionally with eligibility for tax exempt 501(c)3 status (ex. Northwest Colorado Council of Governments?)
- Continue to operate through fiscal agents (such as existing regional entity or nonprofit)
- Consider the following when determining structure:
 - Eligibility to take in funding
 - Goals and roles of the collaborative (eg. implementation, education, lobbying etc.)
 - Membership - allowing for local governments, businesses, nonprofits, etc.
 - Politics - many collaboratives express interest in maintaining a more flexible network-type structure to avoid perception on the powers and responsibilities of local governments in their regions

The following are some structure examples of CAC groups working on similar goals and community challenges elsewhere:

1. Voluntary stakeholder group -- current structure:

Pros:

- Simple, flexible
- Little work or commitment necessary, already in place

Cons:

- Need additional resources and funding to continue
- May not be effective structure to optimize partnerships
- Lack of commitment, questionable longevity

2. Roll into an existing organization:

Pros:

- Establish commitments and organization, no need to create new entity
- Utilize partner agreement to document structure, commitment
- Utilize other benefits of existing organization
- Sign on / commitment voluntary and flexible

Cons:

- May need separation from a single existing entity
- Partner control / commitments less strong perhaps

3. Establish a separate non-profit organization:

Pros:

- Can provide clear role and vision mission

- Provides clear structure for organization governance, partners, resources
- Can operate as independent entity with clear focus

Cons:

- Requires work to create new entity, bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc.
- May require additional costs / redundancy not directly focused on CAP goals
- May be redundant / overlap with other existing non-profits

4. Energy Authority:

Created through an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) between multiple local governments to create a special district which represents each of them, and can include businesses and organizations as well. Garfield Clean Energy is a local example of an energy authority as shown in the case study below:

Pros:

- Can effectively coordinate and leverage multiple governmental and non-governmental entities
- Provides stronger level of commitment through IGA or MOU from partners
- Participation still voluntary
- Provides a strong structure, possibly better longevity

Cons:

- Establishing another government or special district may seem as threatening
- Some partners or potential partners may be turned off by joining an 'authority'
- While non-governmental entities can join, it is more of a government-specific approach
- May require longer process to get consensus and buy-in
- Associated time and cost to create authority

Case Study – Garfield Clean Energy Collaborative

Authorities are entities formed (via Intergovernmental agreement) to address large community problems or needs that, because of their complexity and cost, cannot be addressed effectively by single municipal governments or organizations acting independently. Each member organization has investment and a voice in the operation of a regional system, program or initiative.

A Solid Waste Authority may be responsible for providing landfill management, regulatory support for public safety, education, and waste diversion programs for a large region. A Transit Authority provides residents in a region with transit services and trails. The Eagle County Housing and Development Authority provides affordable housing in the valley. Similarly, a “Climate Action Authority” can provide a structure for our community to reduce climate pollution.

The Garfield Clean Energy Collaborative (GCE) has been in operation for ten years and serves as a local model for pooling and investing community resources in energy efficiency and renewable energy for homes and commercial buildings. Members include towns of Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Garfield County, CMC, and the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority, who voluntarily contribute in aggregate approximately \$300,000 per year to support consulting, project management, energy audits, communications and marketing to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the respective communities and organizations.

The Garfield Clean Energy Collaborative is an example of a local authority working to reduce energy costs and emissions for the communities in a region. The GCE model can be replicated, or expanded to include the Eagle County community.

Recommendation

A recommendation for providing structure to the Climate Action Collaborative is to move forward with Option 2 above, where a CAC advisory board or committee operates within Walking Mountain Science Center's existing 501-c-3 non-profit to guide and support efforts to implement the Climate Action Plan in Eagle County. While this entity would be tied to Walking Mountains Science Center, it would have the ability to expand into Option 3: Establish New Non-Profit or 4: Establish an Energy Authority in the future as initiatives and/or scale may grow and additional sovereignty becomes necessary.

Recommended would be establishment of a CAC Advisory Board and adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which would include representation from each of the established stakeholders to guide efforts, funding, appropriation, and strategic planning.

The CAC Advisory Board would contract Walking Mountains Science Center to provide an annual scope of services such as overall CAC project management, serving as a fiscal agent, oversight of education and outreach campaign initiatives, and other responsibilities as mutually determined. Walking Mountains Science Center would not be the primary entity responsible for securing the financial support for the CAC operational scope of services but could support fundraising efforts as new opportunities arise for grant partnerships with private foundations, corporate sponsorships, and individual philanthropists.

While a separate non-profit or energy authority could make sense in the future, this current recommended structure could move forward in 2017-2018 and expand without the time and cost of creating a new legal entity, as well as perhaps reduce confusion and/or redundancy of efforts.

Next Steps

1. Develop consensus and direction of CAC.
2. Consensus supporting CAC structure.
3. Develop a 2018 work plan and budget.