

Clean Energy Partnership

EVAC Q4 2019 Meeting

EVAC Discussion on CenterPoint Energy's Minnesota Community Profile Dashboard Demonstration

No.	EVAC Member Comment/Question	CenterPoint Energy In-meeting Response, November 20, 2019	CenterPoint Energy Post Meeting Response, February 18, 2020
1	What does the Home Energy Squad conversion rate stand for?	In this instance it means that an EE project occurred within a certain timeframe of having a HES visit. The dashboard will provided definitions for some of these statistics in a separate tab.	Added definition to data dictionary page.
2	Does the tableau program that CenterPoint provided function the same way the website functions? I clicked on one thing and it disappeared	Yes, generally. The view might not be the same because on the website you do not have to plan for multiple screen sizes. If you apply filters and there is no data under that filter it will all disappear. We will work on the user experience.	n/a
3	Are you able to select the areas that you want to include in your statistics?	Yes. I can select one census tract and it will recalculate and provide that information on the second view. Or you can select multiple tracts. It is a fairly intuitive UI interface.	n/a
4	When will this go public?	We are still discussing a public version of this. We are not committing to that yet. If we were to do that, we were thinking something in the 2020-2021 timeframe because the City of Minneapolis specific analysis will come before that. For this Partnership activity the scope is around doing the potential study and having this updated with data to share with EVAC, early in 2020 so we can start formulating outreach and engagement strategies. In terms of this activity, CenterPoint Energy is also committed to providing basically everybody a screenshots and also maybe spreadsheets for every census tract in the City of Minneapolis for those discussions. It's not that there won't be data available to work with in the short term, we are just not going to be able to provide a public-playable version in the near term.	n/a
5	On the control dashboard it is categorizing the census tracts by low, medium or high in energy use band. If you click within one census tract on the summary dashboard, it is giving you low, medium and high bands. Are those the same categorization, or what are those two different classifications?	In this particular instance it is probably arbitrary drawing of bands between zero to fifty, fifty to one hundred, because this is not real data. Once we have real data we will determine what makes sense in terms of banding it, and then include that documentation within the tool.	Applied the usage bands consistently across the dashboard and the bands will remain fixed regardless of the user-applied filters. Also, we'll display the actual values for each usage band (as a range) and we'll use clearer labels.
6	It would be helpful to see in comparison to other neighborhoods what is the distribution of high, medium and low, keeping them consistent across geographic area, and showing distributions within those geographic areas.	That is our intention. The band would not change per area. It would be consistent across the territory.	See response to #5

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7	Will there be something on the summary dashboard that would show the proportion of buildings that fit within each of the bands?	Yes	In addition to showing usage by year, the updated dashboard will show how many premises fit into each of 5 usage ranges (or quintiles) across all selected census tracts. This graph will show how many premises fit into a low, medium-low, medium, medium-high and high usage range as compared to the statewide numbers.
8	On the summary page, you have the energy use trend lines for 2017 to 2019. When you're talking about the average therm on top is that for 2019?	This particular statistic would be across three years, so if you wanted to get some of these single metrics where it is not showing the time horizon, on the previous page you would select a particular year to show.	n/a
9	Once you have this ready for the public, I would want to use it as a baseline rating so we can look at our accomplishments against what it was when we first took the reading. Tracking progress is a very motivating factor.	That is a good point. Maybe broadening that point to something bigger. It does seem like we should think about that type of benchmarking for the communities, i.e. what metrics are seen here or maybe if we're missing something you would like to see. There may be a way to set this up so that the standard reporting includes that as part of what you would get annually.	For now, we provide a slide deck that captures basic snapshots of the finished dashboard, which we can compare to future years. Also, we provide statewide usage values for comparing different areas to a statewide benchmark within the tool.  In addition, we will consider better ways to benchmark the data within this tool in future updates.
10	Then it would also help you know what is working and what is not. You have to get very creative at this point as to getting more people on board, and there might be things that work that you don't think will and you can track them.	Thank you. That is a good point.	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
11	I'm confused by average median household income. Isn't it just median household income? The same thing with average median home age.	You are probably right. The demographic language needs to be cleaned up as well. We want to be sensitive to how those are described.	Census data is summarized to the tract level as median income. Analysts often take an average of median income (i.e., average median) to describe a combination of tracts. Although this combination sounds odd at first, it is consistent with typical census data analysis.
12	Is this just residential users, not commercial users?	Correct. It will include one-four, but not multi-housing (above five units).	n/a

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13	It seems like you would have the underlying data for this system but I'm not sure if you have planned a display for figuring out the cross-correlations. For example, if twenty-five percent of the neighborhood has participated in HES and there's a ten percent conversion rate, it would be great to be able to see what proportion of rental property has participated, or what proportion of households with non-English speakers, or whatever the factor is. To be able to cross-correlate the different data and break it out by segments would be very interesting.	n/a	This is something we can consider in future iterations of the tool.
14	Do you have access to occupancy status, if it is rental or owned? That would be very useful to have.	No. In theory in the future we could work with the City on renter licenses and try to pair that up with this. In terms of CenterPoint Energy's internal data, the only way we can identify rentals is if there are multiple residential meters at a property. We do not have the data for single-family rentals to distinguish whether it is rental or owner-occupied property.	n/a
15	What does homeowners mean on the chart?	That is just an estimate of the census tract according to the U.S. Census.	n/a
16	Would the Census have an estimate on rental property?	It would for the area. It would include multi-family property and would also probably include people who are not our customers.	n/a
17	These are obviously not demographics that you have tied to customers. It is the same geographic area, so there will be some limits to how those cross-tabs would work because they are not tied to individual customers.	Correct.	n/a
18	(CITY) An interesting potential for this is to start tying energy use with other known demographic information for individual customers. One of the challenges is availability of data, and whether or not it can accurately be paired up with utility data. One of the first questions in this conversation was could you do something where you are able to pair CenterPoint Energy's energy use information with the City's square footage information so at an individual house level you know what energy use is? CenterPoint could then potentially know this one house is using an abnormally large amount of gas for its square footage. That is the dream. We already know there is potential there.	n/a	See response to #19

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19	You already have the home level square footage in your data dictionary, right?	Sort of. For the City of Minneapolis specific analysis we are trying to overcome the barrier where we are marrying City data with CenterPoint Energy data. What we think will be a close approximation for using this data for discussion is basically look in a census tract, what is the average energy use and what is the average square footage of a home. For the City effort we could do something more granular. Because that dream could not be delivered within just a single year, we thought it would be helpful to be able to provide this basic statistical information so we can start having a discussion about where at a high level is this telling us the high energy users are, and what are the other characteristics of those particular areas of the City, because then we can get to marketing conversations as part of the Partnership before having the nitty-gritty detail and refining that down.	n/a
20	CenterPoint Energy also has a tool where as a homeowner you can go in and enter some building information like square footage and it spits out a report. Does that ask about square footage, and could that be a way to see what the energy use is for some households?	The tool is My Energy Analyzer. That is something that could be considered.	We will consider adding additional data sources in future updates.
21	It would be great to see the age of the house tied to something code related, like stepped down IACC goals, so that we have this tied to another metric.	I agree, and that is what we intend to use this percentage old home metric for. This is not one hundred percent true, but you could basically say that anything pre-1980 is likely to be pre-code. We can definitely make sure that metric is part of this.	n/a
22	It is difficult to read the low, medium and high energy use and how it compares. Seeing them together with a range would be helpful.	Do you mean instead of seeing a division between low, medium and high you would rather see arrow bars on particular years? Does that sound good to everyone? (Yes)	see responses to #5 & #7
23	How do you rank low, medium and high? What should be my target? Knowing that would give people more incentive. If you combine them you could also add the average, or a line across. It would be nice to have it relative to something. The Regional Indicators initiative does a nice job showing different ways of comparing city energy performance to each other, carbon performance. If you were comparing averages between one city or different census tracts to each other.	We will take a look at it.	We display MN usage per year and the distribution of MN premises across the 5 usage ranges (see our response to #7 for more details on the 5 usage ranges).

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24	<p>Is there any weather normalization to the year-by-year comparison, or is there a way to include heating degree day information to cross-correlate that?</p> <p>If you are going to use it as a benchmarking tool I think you will need to, if you're going to actually measure success.</p> <p>I think being able to see both is really valuable. Having that benchmarking tool is really important.</p>	<p>That is a good question. This currently is not set up to do weather normalization, but we had a discussion about whether or not we should weather normalize it. Thoughts?</p>	<p>To be determined, but our team currently envisions incorporating weather normalized usage into the graphs displaying usage by year.</p>
25	<p>Is all the data by household?</p>	<p>To be very literal, it is basically every premise or every meter.</p>	<p>We added a definition to the data dictionary page, and changed the label to "Premises."</p>
26	<p>The size of the house matters more than the number of people for looking at data.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
27	<p>Does CenterPoint Energy do weather normalization in any of its work?</p>	<p>Yes. It submits jurisdictional reports to the Public Utilities Commission which cover a wide range of information and we weather normalize the data by sector. Ethan said he uses ten-year weather normalization for all of his reporting to the PUC.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
28	<p>Do you subtract baseload?</p>	<p>We do in some instances. We calculate the summer average and use that as the base.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
29	<p>The variables I see in some of these—how many dryers, water heaters, stoves—some people could have all of those as electric or gas or both, but it would be noticeable if you did a baseline.</p>	<p>It is true, but the majority if not most of the load is heating and water heating. Of the ninety Dekatherms that the average residential home uses in our territory, most of it is heating and water heating. Stoves and dryers are a very minor part of that.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
30	<p>In thinking about how useful this will be in the work of the Partnership, what is most useful to have on the dashboard page knowing that it needs to be high-level and giving us a sense of the progress we are making versus what kind of granular level data is actually going to help drive the program. I assume the details we are getting into about square footage of the house and the low-medium-high energy use that would lead to more sophisticated targeting for programming is not what we are going to want to show on one chart on a dashboard.</p>	<p>It could be useful for targeting for neighborhoods or cities. If a city wants to look at where their highest therms per square foot are they could do promotional efforts to that census tract.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

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31	I'm not saying it's not useful to collect that data at different levels of granularity. I'm just trying to think about what role this dashboard will play in particular versus the map (CEP Reports). The map is a great way to visualize by geography what you want to focus on. This is a good way to get a quick summary of where we are or where we are going. That summary table where you can do a lot of filtering is where the nerds are going to spend their time figuring out where we are going to design programs.	n/a	n/a
32	If one of the things we are trying to do with this is denote targeting, set marketing and try to act on how some of this data is distributed, white and non-white might not be enough to do that. Especially considering that the City is concentrating on utilizing some of this data and the actions of the Partnership towards equity, breaking down racial demographics is important in identifying interventions and outreach tactics specific to a certain culture.	That is a good point. Are there other demographic categories that you would like to see?	n/a
33	Definitely certain Latino groups; getting down to nationality would be amazing. Somalian, separating them from other East African groups. Black from an American origin rather than a close tie to Africa should be a delineation. Native American and indigenous. These are the main lines. The fine lines would be differentiations of Hispanic origins of nationality. Get to the farthest degrees of granularity.	All right. Thank you.	We provide more details around languages and ethnicities from the census data, but unfortunately we have limited data around nationality (e.g., Somalian vs other East African groups).
34	Will there be complementary information with this? Things like a profile of the census tract, churches, schools, etc. That goes to the point of painting a picture of what the community looks like.	That is a good idea. The tool is meant to be a starting point for a discussion with communities. If we are looking at a census tract with high natural gas use and lower income levels we want to have that conversation about the community and what groups are active. The statistics can be a baseline and paired with other information to provide a profile of high energy user communities.	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
35	Can you do a similar differentiation in the language category?	Yes	see response to #33

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36	Rebecca said that so far the use of this tool is to more effectively market to particularly high consumption areas that have low participation rates. She asked for a discussion about the possibility of CenterPoint Energy doing some different incentives based on the information that comes from this tool. If we can get some fairly usable demographic information on rental properties in certain areas with low participation, is there something we can do in terms of throwing more money at it by way of incentives or concierge service? Is there room for ideas?	Emma replied that there are, depending on what it is. Changing rebate levels is a CIP modification that would require an approval process. If that CIP modification is made it would also be available to other customers.	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
37	Could you propose to Commerce that if a customer's energy use is super high we will offer them a higher level or percentage of rebate than another customer?	Yes. This is speculation, but maybe if we have a benchmark for every zip code/census tract and a person is a certain percentage above that benchmark, they could get a bonus rebate. That is something we can apply broadly speaking to everyone.	n/a
38	I understand the point behind that, but generally speaking if they are using a lot of gas (windows, walls, thermostat, boiler) they are all pretty simple fixes. If they were able to get some of those things done you would see a pretty dramatic reduction. The incentive of saving that much gas is pretty huge it is almost penalizing to people who are already doing it well.	n/a	n/a
39	It's not that they don't think there is enough of a rebate. They are not aware of it and utilizing it. Would increasing that rebate increase the adoption of energy efficiency measures?	n/a	n/a
40	I would really like to see use of this as a program evaluation tool. There are a lot of things you can do looking at existing programs and rebates, who is and is not benefiting, and then as new programs are developed really intensively tracking where they are being rolled out, who are benefiting from those programs. What is it going to take to identify energy efficiency strategies and programs that really meet that need so we can learn? Being very systematic about tracking that analysis and impact measurement is a huge value of this kind of tool.	n/a	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
41	Would the tax data tell you whether it is homestead or a leased property?	The barrier is not that the data doesn't exist in various forms. It is more our service addresses do not necessarily match the service addresses of the other data set.	n/a

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42	If we're just trying to get an average of what that is, could you do it per census and say that that number is the percentage of homes that are rented?	That's a good point. I think it is feasible.	We added information about the percent of renter vs owner occupied premises for each census tract.
43	In discussing concepts of incentives and information, one idea is to offer rebates at the front end of a process. This could be employed very quickly without changing how much money is involved in a program.	n/a	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
44	Could this be used in conjunction with HES or energy advisers' visits?	Yes. CEE works as an implementer with CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy in both marketing efforts and energy adviser tactics. There could be areas where more efforts are made.	
45	Ethan said that on CenterPoint Energy's conservation programs he operates at a high level. He wonders if we can use some of this information to drill in on the neighborhood settings and have conversations with EVAC members but also other community groups to get a sense of what are the barriers and pinch-points to help more effectively target the implementation and marketing of programs. CenterPoint does not currently have that granular view into things.	Marcus Mills said the NCR department at the City has connections to cultural community specialists and neighborhood organizations that can help tap into groups that can assist.	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
46	We should focus on what will be the biggest bang for our buck on doing efficiencies in homes. We do a good job with HES from a cost-effective standard, but putting in new high-efficiency boilers is not being done because they cost more and there is usually not a payback because gas is so cheap. Are there cost-effective things homeowners can do besides huge capital investments, like removing window air-conditioners, locking windows, putting up plastic on windows?	n/a	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.
47	In this Partnership we have already articulated who it is we want to reach to some degree. This is an opportunity to validate the focus on people who qualify for low-income services, are in these Green Zones, are in communities of color. Will this give us information about whether or not those customers are being proportionately served by utility programs? If we do that second layer of once we have validated that assumption, we already have some tools that can help us. These include the upfront rebate model, which could work for smaller appliances, and the Inclusive Energy Financing pilot. I'm hoping this will help us narrow down the barriers, which could be access to financing or cultural competency in communication.	n/a	To be discussed further with EVAC at Q1 Meeting.