

Proposal for Community Engagement on Workplan Priorities

The initial CEP work plan will focus on three broad goals:

- implementing 100% renewable electricity with a focus on local renewables,
- decarbonization of gas end uses, and
- implementation of energy efficiency programs with a focus on equity benefits).

We believe an engagement process designed around **shaping the implementation of work plan priorities** over the span of the year is both more practical and effective than attempting short-term engagement in a broad decision with few practical details before the initial work plan focus areas are approved.

The Community Voices Committee of EVAC proposes the following work should be done by CEP planning team, additional City and utility staff and paid community partners with the consultation and guidance of EVAC:

- Identifying communities and partners for engagement
- Developing core learning objectives, key context, key questions, and themes for dialogues
- Hosting a set of three core dialogues with each community / engagement partner – 1. issue education, 2. feedback based on community needs, and 3. discussion around actions envisioned – held in a sequence over roughly a year
- Implementing identified actions to advance work plan goals with identified community partners (ongoing)
- Evaluating the engagement process and iterating process for future and ongoing engagement

To the extent possible, the above process should be closely integrated with the community engagement work already planned for the Minneapolis Climate Action plan - eg. integrating early community education sessions, tacking on time to discuss both Climate Action plan and Clean Energy Partnership topics to feedback sessions, and having report-backs that make clear both how the Climate Action Plan commitments and commitments from the Partners and work plan priorities have been shaped by community feedback.

Please see below for a fleshed out plan that includes key insights from past community engagement work, a detailed timeline, and proposed roles of all parties involved.

The initial work plan will focus on three broad goals (implementing 100% renewable electricity with a focus on local renewables, decarbonization of gas end uses, and implementation of energy efficiency programs with a focus on equity benefits), and details will be fleshed out this year through implementation of the Eco Act and Natural Gas Innovation Act. This proposal outlines how the Community Voices Committee of EVAC suggests the Partners work together to meaningfully involve Minneapolis communities in this work - a key ingredient for achieving the ambitious goals at the heart of the Partnership.

Key Insights from Past Work:

Past engagement efforts, including the Minneapolis 100% Clean Energy Blueprint engagement sessions, Twin Cities Energy Efficiency Cohort, and two rounds of community engagement pilots have yielded many key insights about how we need to approach engagement. These include:

- Many existing programs and approaches are designed in ways that are confusing, overly technical, and culturally or linguistically exclusive. A design approach that centers the experiences of diverse communities of energy users is essential for getting programs that work.
- Existing community-based organizations and community leaders are often the most trusted channels for gathering feedback from communities and inviting action from them. Leaders and the communities they serve should be supported and compensated for their engagement. We don't expect engineering, program design, or facilitation consultants to work for free; we should not expect communities to do so either. Communities need dialogue and education using user-friendly terms and language in order to understand the context and give meaningful and grounded feedback.
- Interactions with communities need to be sustained and ongoing - one-off and transactional interactions lead to eroded trust and lack of commitment to follow through.
- Feedback needs to be not only sought, it needs to be acted upon, and the communities contributing their time and expertise need to see the outcome and impact of their feedback in terms of meaningful change in energy programs and solutions.

Approach and Key Activities:

At its core, our proposed approach is rooted around a set of three core dialogues - issue education, feedback based on community needs, and discussion around implementation - held in a sequence over roughly a year. This set of dialogues will be hosted in a series of communities in partnership with community-based organizations.. While each community will need to be involved in setting its own schedule and format for dialogues, each of the three dialogues should be grouped by stage so that evaluation, analysis of feedback, and development of action plans can occur between them. Key activities include:

- **Identification of focus group communities through (March-April 2022?):**

- a. City of Minneapolis engagement with NCR (Neighborhood and Community Relations) to identify 5-10 clusters of neighborhoods where one neighborhood can take the lead to host a series of geographically-focused conversations for residents of their neighborhoods.
- b. Partnering with cultural or constituent-based organizations, such as those who previously participated in the 100% Clean Energy Blueprint engagement process or the Twin Cities Energy Efficiency Cohort, to host a series of conversations with residents from similar cultural or constituency groups.
- c. Forming contract/ funded relationships with community partners with clear and mutual sets of expectations and priorities.
- **Developing core learning objectives, key context, key questions, and themes for dialogues including (March-May 2022?):**
 - a. The context about work plan priorities and their relevance to community health, economic development, affordability, resilience, workforce, and environmental needs that is important for communities to understand.
 - b. Exercises, conversation prompts, and framing and communication approaches for expressing context in a user-friendly and non-technical way.
 - c. Identify and structure facilitation and leadership teams that can ensure all dialogues have participation from multiple angles that can help translate across technical and community approaches to ensure deeper trust and quicker mutual understanding in dialogue).
 - d. Sets of key questions related to each of the three learning priorities that would feel most relevant to community participants, including particularly focusing on what needs or design features are most important to communities about how the priority is rolled out, how those programs/activities should be executed to best meet community needs, and how communities should be involved in implementation.
 - e. A process and timeline for when the results of different sets of sessions will be reviewed and analyzed to generate insights and inform implementation plans.
- **Dialogue 1: Initial community education sessions with each partner community with a focus on building relationships and community capacity to engage, including (May-July 2022?):**
 - a. Storytelling and sharing of lived experience among participants
 - b. Interactive and dialogue-based sharing of context about the work plan priorities and how it relates to community needs
 - c. Listening to and supporting community needs for information, context, or ongoing support (in feedback process and in work plan implementation)
 - d. Framing the types of feedback and questions that will be explored in session 2
- **Synthesis and reflection from initial community education sessions (July 2022?):**
 - a. Reviewing notes, insights, and take aways from community education sessions
 - b. Synthesize personal and Partnership learnings from sessions
 - c. Identify impacts on feedback sessions and needs to adapt approach
 - d. Identify implications for work plan priority implementation based on sessions

- **Dialogue 2: Community feedback/ listening sessions with each partner community with a focus on gathering feedback and insight from community partners (August-September 2022?):**
 - a. Clear and user-friendly framing of the key issues, potential focuses, and implications of work within the work plan priorities
 - b. Open dialogue among community members around challenges and opportunities
 - c. Direct feedback with community members on key questions identified
 - d. Framing how feedback will be used to develop proposed work plan implementation.
- **Synthesis and reflection from community feedback sessions and draft action plan development (September-November 2022?):**
 - a. Reviewing notes, insights, and take aways from community education sessions
 - b. Synthesize personal and Partnership learnings from sessions
 - c. Identify implications for work plan priority implementation based on sessions
 - d. Developing and fleshing out proposed work plan activities.
 - e. Identify how reporting/accountability sessions need to be adjusted based on feedback
- **Dialogue 3: Report-back and dialogue on action plans with each community with a focus on demonstrating accountability to community feedback, checking fit of proposed plan with community needs and goals, and engaging communities in implementation (December 2022-Feb 2023?):**
 - a. Clear reporting on how work priorities discussed in feedback sessions were shaped or tailored based on feedback and how partners hope they will be a good fit for community needs.
 - b. Open dialogue and community feedback on where conclusions are exciting and feel like a strong reflection of community needs and where they missed the mark.
 - c. Dialogue around how community-based organizations and community members want to be involved in implementing or participating in work plan priorities.
- **Process Evaluation and Informing ongoing work plan action and further workplan development:**
 - a. Evaluate successes and challenges of process
 - b. Identify real resource needs for sustaining engagement and new capacities/abilities created through it.
 - c. Identify and discuss with EVAC process for steering work plan implementation based on insights of plan
 - d. Identify and discuss with EVAC process for next work plan development

Roles of Parties:

We believe clear definition of roles and relationships is key to making meaningful engagement work. Here's how we see roles breaking out:

- **EVAC:** informs, inspires, and supports community engagement strategy and approach. Involved in helping envision and shape the general details of the plan and supporting the

Planning Team in refining its strategy. Individual EVAC members should also be invited (and we know at least some are willing to help with - though depending on level of involvement, these may extend beyond capacities of volunteer roles):

- Design and delivery of community education sessions and potentially feedback and report-back sessions
 - Development of community education curriculum, framing, and dialogue/facilitation techniques
 - Review and analysis of community feedback.
- **Planning Team (Mpls, Xcel, CenterPoint Partnership staff):** primarily responsible for translating a general strategy for community engagement into a practical plan that matches the skills and roles of the parties; including identifying necessary internal staffing, budget, community-based partners, and securing necessary financial and leadership support from the three partners. Should propose operational details for EVAC feedback and either act as project managers of an engagement process or identify and direct a project manager/project management team rooted in Minneapolis communities.
 - Project management process should include a community engagement advisory body to participate in processing community feedback and ensuring action plans are reflective of results. This body could include EVAC members, members of Green Zones/CEAC or other bodies, and members of community-based organizations. If the expected time commitment to review and advise on this body is expected to be more than [10] hours, participation should be a funded budget item.
 - **City of Minneapolis:** responsible for engaging Neighborhood and Community Relations to activate neighborhood networks and working through Green Zones and other culturally-rooted and community-based organizations as participants and co-conveners of local engagement avenues. Responsible for coordinating Clean Energy Partnership workplan engagement process with City's existing 2022 Minneapolis Climate Action Plan community engagement process (funded by the city at over \$100,000).
 - **Xcel and CenterPoint:** responsible for participating in sessions gathering, analyzing, and working with the City and community advisory body to shape actions to implement workplan priorities based on community feedback. Responsible for integrating CIP, Minneapolis Resiliency projects, and other utility innovation projects with identified priorities. Responsible for contributing funding to match City of Minneapolis Climate Action Plan engagement funds to support implementation.
 - **Community Partner Organizations:** identified by City of Minneapolis, EVAC/other advisors, participating Community Partner Organizations should be funded to support a series of community dialogues as identified in this plan targeting their existing bases and constituencies. Community Partner Organizations should be viewed as co-creators, not simply service providers, and should be seen as the experts on the methods of community engagement and dialogue that will work best for their communities.