

CJP Community Forum: Clean Energy Goal

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Meeting Notes

Attendees - in person

- John Wasiutynski - Project Staff, Mult Co Office of Sustainability
- Tim Lynch - Project Staff, Mult Co Office of Sustainability
- Monique Smiley - Project Staff, Mult Co Office of Sustainability
- Silvia Tanner - Project Staff, Mult Co Office of Sustainability
- Elaine Hart - Sylvan Energy Analytics
- Stasia Brownell - Portland General Electric
- Paul Hawkins - City of Portland
- Amanda Zuniga - ACSI member
- Simone Crowe - Centennial Community Resilience Network
- Joe D'Ambrosia - PSU Power Engineer Student

Attendees - Online

- Jairaj Singh - Project Staff, Mult Co Environmental Health
- Denise Lopez - City of Gresham
- T.J. McHugh - Portland Metro Chamber
- Amy Rathfelder - NW Natural
- Mary Rudolph-Knobbe - NW Natural
- Kellye Dundon - NW Natural
- Chris Kroeker - NW Natural
- Bob Gravely - Pacific Power
- Rohini Ghosh - Pacific Corp
- Todd Mustard - Oregon-Columbia Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association
- Randall Freisen - Columbia Pacific Building Trades
- Danny Noonan - BREACH Collective
- Nikita Daryanani - Coalition of Communities of Color
- Noelle Studer-Spevak - ACSI member
- Siraat Younas - Community Energy Project
- Jamie Johnson - Green Energy Institute
- Theordora Tsonga - OPSR
- Anahi Segovia Rodriguez - Verde
- Lexie Folkerts - DSA Ecosocialist
- Kainula Bailey - Neighbors for Clean Air
- Kate Murphy - Columbia Riverkeeper
- Chris West - PacWest Resources
- Barbara Bernstein - Rumble on the River/KBOO
- Diane Meisenhelter - Extinction Rebellion
- Leslie Kochan - Extinction Rebellion
- Lynn Handlin - Extinction Rebellion
- Elayna Trucker - Oregon Sierra Club

Intros

Metrics

- Theodora - Metrics seems to be pretty general, don't pinpoint impact of specific strategies
 - John - heard elsewhere that maybe need for a combination of outcome and output measures to help measure strategies
- Diane - Percentage, change over time, of clean energy serving community by utilities, energy transition, could include specific around microgrids or other distributed resources
- Joe - % of energy served by community based sources, the challenge of solar generation shows up as demand reduction, not how much is generated. May undercount rooftop solar.
 - Need to clarify the source of the solar data
 - Also matters how you define community based renewable, would need to clarify in front of the meter vs. behind the meter.
 - Balcony solar may catch on in Oregon, would be hard to include because there is no utility agreement, could work with retailers to gauge impact.
 - Germany may require system registration of the balcony solar
- Lexie - disaggregate data along demographics, also recommend age of homes and other dimensions. Will we look at the difference between residential and commercial, even differentiating commercial use types. Should be able to disaggregate. Potential to use rate classes?
- Lexie - City/County, very large customers, should have higher goals than mom and pops, treated differently.
- John - Oversight not to explicitly state the County's goal in the plan, walk our talk.
- Noelle - Mass Energize has a great template to look to, dynamic data
- Simone Crowe - Disconnection rates - Can these be differentiated based on the causes?
 - Silvia - Typically we talk about disconnection for non-payment, but utilities can track
 - Simone - Opportunity to also report metrics on utility performance, geographic differences in utility outages.
- Bob Gravely - A lot of the data needed here needs to come through the utilities, and can probably be made available if it is aggregated to protect privacy. Data reporting will need additional conversations to work through.
 - What data is currently available at the OPUC? Utilities have obligations, yes, but likely not at the granularity of community / zip code.
 - Looking to see the local issues and causes
- Energy burden - comes through the state's biennial report at the County level, but not currently disaggregated. Also only presents residential customers data, not small commercials.
- Kellye - Agree that a lot of the info will have to come from the utilities, but a lot is collected at the OPUC.
- Kellye - Need a metric around clean energy/enabling other clean energy, RNG, H3, biofuels. A lot of national orgs that are tracking.
- Diane - There will be disputes on which sources are renewable.
- Simone - Surprised to see that there isn't a metric to eliminate natural gas specifically. Also something that indicates whether or not hydrogen is being tested in homes. Also, is there something to measure imports, understanding the impacts of projects like Zenith. A lot of groups that want to bring energy to these issues.

- Kellye - Largest customers of natural gas are electricity generators.
- Danny - Metric - not just the types of clean energy, but also the relative carbon intensities of different types. Landfill methane for example takes a lot of energy to prepare for use. Hydrogen may or may not be from renewable sources.
 - Ultimately the goal is all about carbon reduction, it is important to be clear about the goal.
- Stasia - Really important to understand why we are measuring things. Noted storage incentives language specifically. Wondering how the metrics will actually be tracked. Storage for example, is moving the system to a cleaner grid. Is it adding resilience? Is it replacing diesel generators? Battery storage is often still backed up with diesel.
 - John - Also recognize the specific service/needs that these systems are supporting
 - Paul - Wanted to add a metric of battery storage for LI households, recognizing their multiple uses, resilience. Recognizing that batteries are new tech that are market ready, does the data show that we are connecting this resource to households traditionally left behind.
 - Stasia - Emphasis on the “why” of the metric.
 - Diane - Have talked a lot about community resilience, one place the County can start with battery metric is measuring battery deployment for neighborhood resilience.
- Simone - Metrics around technology support of air quality improvements, incentivizing business and home owners to deploy. Awareness as well.
- Holding over CEI hub conversation to Thursday's forum

Strategies

- Simone - Noted there is no strategy specifically around deploying clean energy to LI communities
- John - Acknowledge there isn't a specific strategy for Multnomah County internal goals
- Joe - Are the strategies meant to be for the County, the community or both?
 - John - strategies reflect community priorities, articulating County's specific role, and strategies that the County will lead on.
- Diane - CEI issue is that in general need to be transitioning from liquid fossil fuels. Also need to act at the household level, mentioned household and climate risks of methane. Honing in on the County's public health mandate to prioritize some of the ways to move the community. Electrification for example, which has its challenges, can be overcome.
- Diane - Net metering is something that needs to be protected, maybe be a strategy.
- Kellye - E3 study, utilities in the PNW, research resource adequacy gaps and how to fill that gap. Shows the relative usability of different technologies under cold conditions for example, batteries suitability/reliability for example. Mentioned E3 presentation to WA UTC.
 - John, staying warm is an important public health strategy, energy adequacy has some really important consequences.
 - Diane - mentioned that NWN has leaking storage for cold weather at the CEI hub, wants to see the gas network pruned to transition to a geothermal or TEN network.
 - Kellye - NWN has a pilot in Eugene, pilot in Vancouver, WA. But remember that those peaking facilities at CEI are carefully monitored. NWN is an energy company, not just a gas company.
 - John - Am I hearing the need for a strategy to support geothermal or other technology?.

- Stasia - Energy diversification is a tool, and when moving to 100% clean energy, energy diversity is helpful. Emerging tech is important, but still expensive, good to acknowledge and support investment that makes these strategies viable.
 - John - Good example is Germany, first mover to scale solar production to lead to more affordable solar/deployment. Strategic support for strategies that achieve multiple objectives.
 - Careful not to limit technologies, remaining open to new paths, in line hydro for example.
- Simone - Diversification of energy, would like to prioritize government (public) or household energy, as opposed to for profit organizations. How can communities keep their power and profits within their community. Could this mean the County investing, or supporting community based model.
 - John - Oregon is served by both IOUs and COUs, sometimes both at the same time like households in Eugene. Significant to shift in between, but other models like in Michigan that are bringing in new approaches in addition to traditional/currently serving models.
 - Simone - Pilots may be the path forward, example of Puerto Rico. Model of retrofit private business with public funds, with an obligation to stay open during adverse events.
 - Joe - Strategies name publicly owned solar. If community owned solar, is a new approach. Question how to scale up. What could/would public ownership look like? Could Multnomah County do more?
 - Tim - Public ownership language may need to be a little more nuanced, as there are a lot of ways to leverage public/private partnership to develop these projects.
 - John - Named the programs like community solar may have costs to other rate payers, need to be conscientious about that.
 - Diane - There are lots of kinds of community solar, beyond what Tim described. There are a lot of ownership models, something that is truly community owned allows for plowing that energy back into the community. Communities using solar proceeds to invest in electrifying transportation. While the utilities have moved to grabbing the name community solar, and while it is a good thing, doesn't go far enough. Want to reserve profits to plow back into building a well being economy.
- Anahi - Something the County can do, and get behind, is education about energy, bills, who is the OPUC, ETO, etc. Misperception for example that ETO is a federal program and not rate payers. Working with LI community members, they are not thinking about energy innovation, they are thinking about basic needs, child care for example. Sharing information with community members is meaningful and relatively low-cost, recognizing that the County is facing a deficit. Also recognize that some folks are facing major home repairs, but resources are only available for heat pumps, which won't be helpful if other issues are not addressed. Hosting a community workshop tonight, happy to share those resources. Community members were active in passing the FAIR energy act at the legislature. This included working across language barriers.
 - Important work, challenge to overcome barriers like language, concerns about sharing household information.

- Silvia - We can get to 100% clean, but if we do and folks cannot afford their bills, we will have failed. Folks are facing more burden today than in 2020, despite LI programs, because of raising energy rates.
- Lynn - Pleased to see fuel switching specifically called out, particularly from methane which is terrible, but switching is really hard to navigate, incentives etc. How can the County play a more direct role here?
- Diane - Electrify now is supporting a revolving loan fund to support transition, for LI and for moderate income. The County could help get this program started, and partnership with PCEF for example.
- Paul - Opportunity for a game changer strategy, which is probably investment in capital. Is there an opportunity to leverage health care and insurance companies into energy transition strategies? Leverage the County's health authority.
- Simone - How to pay for investments outside of PCEF. Eugene is looking at an alternative model of clean energy corporate tax, that avoids the state pre-emption. Taxes that don't fall regressively on community members. Given the federal cuts, it might be good to look to other budget / revenue raising opportunities.
- Simone - Stress the importance of workforce opportunities, apprenticeship. Is PCEF doing enough?
 - Named PCEF workforce options do allow for folks outside of Portland to participate in the workforce.
- John - Acknowledge that additional investments are needed. PCEF is investing in single family residential and multi-family residential but that is restricted in the City of Portland.
- Chat - Strong support for prioritizing public energy as opposed to for profit. Ownership models under community solar vary quite a bit.
- Simone - Uncomfortable quiet about transmission conversations. Also naming the need for Tribal consultation in this work.
 - John - Transmission is definitely a pain point - generators and users often don't match up. Opportunity to harness diversity of energy sources. Different types of energy require different pathways.
 - Elaine Hart - Looking at the E3 study. Haven't had demand growth in the PNW for a long time. Seeing a trickle from electrification, going to rapidly increase. Data centers are coming fast. Energy needs are stark in the near/mid term. Data centers - may not show up at all. Or if they do, can they be the first to shut down if needed. Challenges for affordability are significant.
 - Simone - Alternative is do we even need or want data centers.
 - Joe - Strategies - Maybe having a strategy about transmission is important. Forest and other projects are running through Multnomah County, and folks have a lot of strong feelings about them.
 - John - Transmission is going to be a big topic. Even if projects like Harborton aren't built, the energy demand will still be there.
 - Simone - CRAG law center is a good place for folks who want to get involved in these conversations. Want to know who is at the table for transmission and data center conversations. Feels like it is just corporations with a small group of advocates fighting it.

- Diane - One of the issues is that microgrids and local energy can help, reduce demand on transmissions. But there are push backs on the AI side, including their move to SMRs, but question about how much AI should even be happening, how should it be prioritized. Rumble on Jan 7th on data centers, opportunity to learn more. Another good reason to get as much solar on line as quickly as possible, including locally, as part of the microgrids.
- Simone - Only listing one specific advocacy call out, would like to see this broadened.
- Diane - Love that someone brought up balcony solar, no reason it can't be deployed here, as pilots and more generally.
- Simone - Comment process open for data center costs; party in East Portland resilient centennial neighborhood.
- Lynn - Would like to see the County do whatever it can to slow or stop data centers in Oregon. Not just an energy issue, also a water issue.

Google Chat Comments

- **T.J. McHugh (intros):** This is T.J. McHugh, Director of Government Affairs at Portland Metro Chamber. Unfortunately the bulk of the business community is unable to attend this meeting. As we speak, there are over 30 cross-sectional businesses and public agencies meeting at the Chamber offices to create a long-term strategy to create a clean energy economic development hub here in Portland. This partnership to create this hub was seeded with an \$800,000 in PCEF funds, as part of the \$20 million industrial carbonization grant that was co-authored by the Chamber. We welcome in the future to be included in the county's meetings on climate and with better coordination, we could have been here to participate today. Thank you. *(Director's note: the community forum meetings were set and noticed in advance, and included direct emails to a large list of interested parties, including Portland Metro Chamber staff. This meeting was one of 12 community forums held to discuss the Draft Climate Justice Plan)*
- **Noelle (metrics):** There's often a long lag time in measuring/reporting on metrics. It could be more engaging for County residents to see their actions show up on a dashboard updated every 3-6 mo. MassEnergize's system pulls data from public agencies + self-reporting by residents. Example from Wayland, MA: (click on "list")
<https://community.massenergize.org/Wayland/impact>
- **Diane (metrics):** There will be disputes on which of these are truly clean energy. We must transition away from combustible liquid fuels in general....Natural gas is important to reduce because of health risks which the county has responsibility over and the fact that in the next critical 20 years it is 80x more potent than CO2.
- **Kellye (strategies):** The electricity utilities in the PNW engaged E3 to study electricity resiliency in the area and address the relative impact of different forms of general and storage during extended cold periods when the electricity system is most strained. The information on battery storage on slide 19 in this Washington utility commissions deck may be helpful for the county when thinking about strategies regarding battery storage:
<https://www.utc.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-10/Revised%20V3%20E3%20Presentation%20RA%20Study%20September%202022%20WA%20RA%20Meeting.pdf>

- **Lynn (strategies):** Thermal energy networks.
- **Elayna (strategies):** I strongly second that point (the point from Simone to see prioritize government (public) or households energy, as opposed to for profit organizations).
- **Diane (strategies):** Referring to ownership models of community solar, Diane notes that it varies quite a bit.
- **Kellye (strategies):** link shared by Kellye -
<https://www.nwnatural.com/account/bill-discount-program>
- **Lynn:** Are all participants who are representing industry in any way labeled here? I see one nw natural person identified but it seems there may be others. Transparency is essential here
 - (Most industry folks identified themselves upon this request either via chat or verbally in person).
- **Diane (strategies):** also the AI energy demands, microgrids that state now allows and community controlled local energy helps deal with some of those transmission issues....I know there are pushbacks on the AI part (moratoriums etc.) especially because they are turning to SMRs. Definitely not clean.