

We Have Met the Heroes and they are Us! - Now the Real Work Begins!  
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We last wrote about Climate Change in the Sneak Preview following a very successful Climate and Energy Action Challenge event in November 2015. The work has continued. The concept of a Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) for Ashland came as a result of dedicated work of the Climate Change subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. Subcommittee members met for a year prior to the formal start to lay the groundwork for the Mayoral appointed CEAP ad-hoc committee. Working with our consultant Cascadia the ad-hoc CEAP Committee developed the Climate and Energy Action Plan.

Early in 2016 Mayor Stromberg appointed the CEAP Ad-Hoc committee, which was comprised of 11 voting members, and 3 important non-voting high school student members. Councilor Rosenthal chaired the committee, and City staff played a key role in planning, and coordinated closely with Cascadia.

Over 18-months, and thirty meetings, three public events (where we harvested highly valuable citizen input), and many hours of Cascadia plan development sessions, the Committee presented a final Draft to City Council for approval. With a unanimous vote, Council approved the CEAP at its March 7, 2017 meeting.

The CEAP contains a strategy for reaching defined goals and targets to reduce carbon emissions and to prepare the community to adapt to predicted local climate changes. We are committing to meet the challenge of a climate science-based requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions an average of 8% per year (beginning this year) until 2050. This is a tall, but essential, order that will allow all of us citizens of our planet to avoid the very worst of global heating that will be upon us if we do not act in a big way today.

In order to facilitate reaching these prodigious greenhouse gas reduction goals, the CEAP calls for several actions to take place in 2017-2018.

**Create, fund and recruit for a full-time, permanent City CEAP staff position.** This individual will provide high-level management oversight, direction, coordination, and continuous improvement toward the successful implementation of the CEAP. On June 20<sup>th</sup> the Council approved the CEAP staff position funding for the 2017-2019 biennium.

**Form and convene a permanent CEAP Commission** to provide guidance and oversight of the implementation of the CEAP. On June 19<sup>th</sup> the Council discussed the pros and cons of merging with, or not, the Conservation Commission. There is broad Council support for having both Commissions. Council will be reviewing a proposed CEAP Commission ordinance in the near future.

**Formalize the city's commitment** to CEAP actions and goals via an ordinance. The Ad-Hoc Committee members feel strongly that an ordinance is needed to give some “teeth” to the plan. The City Attorney is drafting an ordinance that hopefully will be considered at a near future City Council meeting.

**Create an internal City Climate Action Team** for City operations actions and to assist in coordinating the implementation of community actions. This team will be led by the new CEAP staff position.

**Designate potential funding sources** for individual actions and identify additional funding needs and opportunities for ongoing plan implementation.

**Establish CEAP progress indicators** and corresponding baselines and targets (including equity indicators).

**Incorporate equity considerations** into plan implementation.

**Begin near-term CEAP actions.**

We have always been a resilient community. Ashland has an opportunity to be a national leader in climate protection. For the sake of the future of our wonderful city and its inhabitants, it is imperative that we move the CEAP forward. We are obligated to do what we can do to protect our climate and environment for future generations. We must evolve with new ways of thinking that support each other, our businesses, and our posterity if we are going to continue to prosper and flourish. We urge you to join us in the critical unfolding of Ashland's vision to be a community that has net zero greenhouse gas emissions, embraces equity, protects healthy ecosystems, and creates opportunities for future generations.

We have met the heroes and they are us... Ashland. Let the real work begin!