

Introduction

The Community Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CARP) is the complementary plan to Eau Claire County's Operational CARP. **The Community CARP outlines strategies and action steps to leverage the current work being done in the community and how Eau Claire County can support community action to reach the County's interim goal of 30% emission reductions by 2030.** Eau Claire County's overall goal is 100% renewable energy and carbon neutrality by 2050.

This plan focuses on strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while leveraging the existing work happening in our community by utilities, municipalities, residents, non-profits, businesses, etc. Achieving these goals will require significant investment. Each implementation strategy will aim to have a potential funding source, program cost, and staff time allocation estimated in order to plan for enough resources for plan implementation.

The 3 sectors of sustainability: planet, people, and profit must be considered in a balanced manner.



Eau Claire County will consider the environmental impacts of decisions, policies, and processes.



Eau Claire County will consider the impact of decisions, policies, and processes on all members of Eau Claire County and strive to implement equitable, diverse, and inclusive solutions for sustainability.



Eau Claire County will consider the fiscal impact that all decisions, policies, and processes have on the community and County budget.

Current Impacts of Climate Change



September 22, 2016. CTH Q East of CTH K.



September 22, 2016. CTH G near Hathaway Creek.

In September of 2016, one severe storm and subsequent flooding in Eau Claire caused approximately \$300,000 in damage to public property, with additional costs to private individuals (Eau Claire County 9/21/16 Storm Damage Estimates). Roadways and other infrastructure were inundated, washed out, and even collapsed in some cases, while water levels rose in Lakes Eau Claire and Altoona by 4.5' and 2' respectively.

Once rare extreme weather events are becoming more commonplace in Eau Claire County. In July of 2019, two derechos hit Wisconsin, damaging forests across the state with particular devastation to Northeastern Wisconsin. These storms damaged 63,000 acres of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, disrupting supply chains, degrading lumber quality, and dropping the price of wood from people selling trees felled by the storm before they rot. Due to climate change, these events and similar events are likely to continue to increase in regularity. This will impact farmers, local businesses, and the people who live in Eau Claire County.



July 2019 Derecho. For the Journal Sentinel by Larry Parnass



July 2019 Derecho. For US Forest Service, from Jon Lampereur

Historical & Projected Climate Change in Wisconsin

Since 1950, statewide temperatures have risen approximately 3 degrees Fahrenheit and will continue to rise according to projections made by Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts study (WICCI). Precipitation has increased 17% in that time. This means warmer winters, wetter springs and more extreme weather events will occur. This is having a significant impact on agricultural practices in the state as it is harder to keep soil in place and protect water quality. Warmer winters has also reduced snowpack in the state of Wisconsin resulting in summer droughts and change in growing seasons.

The rise in temperature is rapidly occurring. This will affect the local ecosystems as plants and animals rely on certain weather conditions which may be disrupted to know when to migrate, reproduce, and hibernate. Weather patterns would shift as well due to the flux in climate. Aging infrastructure and housing will be disproportionately affected by climate change.

+4.7°

Average daily temperature in Eau Claire County projected to increase by **4.4-4.7° F by 2050**

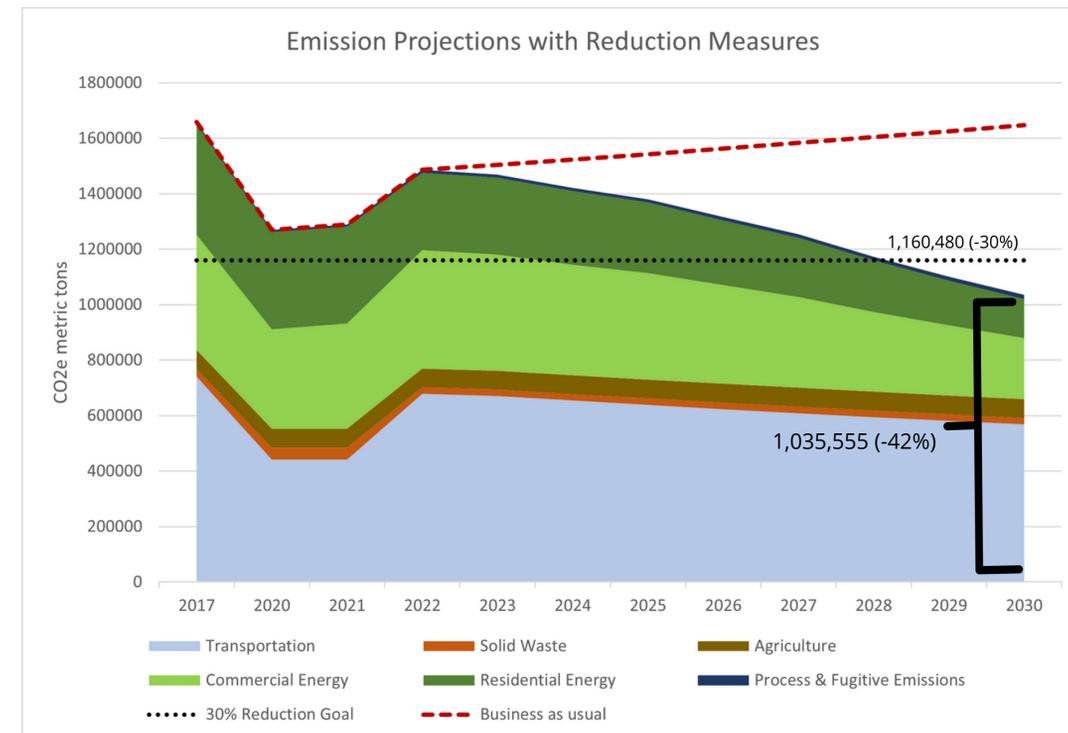
+7°

Average winter nighttime temperature in Eau Claire projected to increase by **6-7° F**

+10

Number of extremely hot days expected to increase from 5-15 per year to **15-25** extremely hot days in Eau Claire on average

Projected Plan Impacts



The emission reductions above are based on the high impact goals outlined in the plan:

- **Generate 50% of community energy from renewable resources**
- **Reduce residential energy use by 20%**
- **Reduce commercial energy use by 20%**
- **Have 7% of registered vehicles in the County be electric vehicles**
- **Reduce vehicle miles traveled(VMT) by 10%**

Introduction

Community engagement has been and will continue to be an important part of climate action in Eau Claire County. To reach a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, perspectives and lived experiences from all areas and backgrounds need to be heard. Working with the residents, businesses, community organizations, and education institutions will help to successfully implement the Community CARP.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, stakeholders and community members were given numerous opportunities to express their opinions through a community survey, community input sessions in Augusta and the Town of Washington, and topic specific focus groups with industry experts.

County staff also engaged the community and youth at community events, career fairs, etc. where individuals could describe what they felt a sustainable community in Eau Claire County looks like to them.

All this input allowed the Sustainability Advisory Committee and staff to develop a plan that addresses the needs and concerns of the community in relation to climate change and sustainability.



Learn more about sustainability in Eau Claire County and view the full Community CARP.

- April 2022**
Community survey distributed
- July 2022**
GHG inventories completed
- November 2022**
Operational CARP approved
- January 2023**
Sustainability Advisory Committee appointed
- April 2023**
Community forums hosted throughout the County
- May-Nov. 2023**
Plan development & stakeholder engagement
- Dec 2023-Jan 2024**
Plan writing & revision
- February 2024**
Open houses & community engagement
- March 2024**
Committee & County board adoption



- 
80.8% of survey respondents across the county agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for the County to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 
89.1% reported being slightly to extremely concerned about air quality.
- 
72.8% want better access to composting facilities, both by haulers and home composting
- 
84.7% reported being slightly to very concerned about mental health impacts from climate change.
- 
62.9% reported being very or extremely concerned about climate change
- 
77.5% would support increased education/outreach about efficiency programs available in the county

Key Themes



Educate

Education and community engagement are already an integral part of the Recycling & Sustainability program, but with new technologies, grants, incentives, and tax credits available to residents, businesses, local governments, and community-based organizations, a more expansive education and community engagement program is needed to reach the variety of sectors in the community that can leverage resources that will move the needle toward the county's sustainability goals.



Support

Eau Claire County acknowledges the work that is being done by members of the community to advance climate action and improve our local environment. Eau Claire County should work to leverage the momentum in the community and support and incentivize others to adopt these practices.



Lead

Eau Claire County should continue to be a leader within the community in regard to sustainability. Ensuring that county policies are created to support climate action rather than serve as a barrier. The County should continue to advocate for state policies that support local government climate action.

