

Community Energy Strategic Plan Report Primer

What is a CESP?

The McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) is a dynamic blueprint used to address the energy needs and consumption patterns of the local community. It follows the guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Energy, which establishes a framework for communities to develop strategic energy plans that promote collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and locally driven energy solutions (U.S. Department of Energy, 2013).

The CESP establishes goals, initiatives, and actions that local governments, businesses, organizations, and the community can pursue to enhance energy efficiency, promote renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, achieve broader sustainability objectives, and power system resilience. Secondary outcomes to a CESP include improved air quality and other environmental and public co-health benefits. See the graphic below (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Overview of the Community Energy Strategic Plan Process. Photo supplied by the Ecology Action Center (2019).

An Overview of CESP Goals

This section outlines the major goals and initiatives developed by Local Government Operations (LGO), Transportation (TRN), and Stationary Energy (SET) subcommittee groups. For a more comprehensive exploration of the goals, initiatives, sub-initiatives, and implementation context, please refer to the full Draft CESP document.

Goal 1 – Clean Energy Leadership

POSITION LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO BUILD A UNIFIED, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE FOR ALL PEOPLE IN MCLEAN COUNTY.

Initiative 1.1: Institutionalize Sustainability and Clean Energy Planning

Establish a coordinated, regional approach to long-term energy planning.

Initiative 1.2: Embed Sustainability Considerations into Internal Operations

Integrate energy efficiency and lifetime cost analysis into public projects and procurement decisions.

Initiative 1.3: Finance Clean Energy Initiatives

Secure dedicated funding mechanisms to support and sustain communitywide clean energy goals and initiatives.

Goal 2 – Economic Development for a Clean Energy Transition

ADVANCE THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION THROUGH A THRIVING, CLEAN ECONOMY THAT BUILDS REGIONAL PROSPERITY AND PROVIDES STABLE JOBS.

Initiative 2.1: Incentivize Clean Economic Development

Use strategic development incentives to attract projects that accelerate the clean energy transition.

Initiative 2.2: Clean Industry and Workforce Development

Strengthen the local manufacturing sector and expand training pipelines to prepare workers for clean energy jobs.

Goal 3 – Large Building Decarbonization

IMPROVE THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF LARGE BUILDINGS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS, LOWER OPERATING COSTS, INCREASE RESILIENCE, AND CREATE HEALTHIER, MORE EFFICIENT PLACES TO LIVE, WORK, AND LEARN.

Initiative 3.1: Lead by Example - Local Government Energy Benchmarking

Create a shared understanding of building energy use to support coordinated countywide action and continuous energy improvement.

Initiative 3.2: Build a Culture of High Energy Performance

Encourage large building owners to improve energy performance through incentives, education, and recognition.

Initiative 3.3: Build Energy Standards

Encourage the construction of buildings that are more efficient, affordable to operate, and prepared for a low-carbon future

Initiative 3.4: Preserve and Rehabilitate the Existing Building Stock

Support vibrant, resilient communities by keeping existing buildings productive, efficient, and in use

Initiative 3.5: Promote Energy-Efficiency in Government Buildings

Improve the efficiency and performance of public buildings while reducing operating costs and emissions.

Initiative 3.6: Promote Energy Efficiency in Commercial and Industrial Buildings

Support businesses in reducing energy use and advancing clean energy solutions through collaboration and innovation.

Initiative 3.7: Promote Energy Efficiency in Affordable Housing

Improve housing affordability, comfort, and quality by increasing access to energy-efficient and low-carbon housing investments.

Goal 4 – Clean Energy Development

CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR CLEAN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT TO FLOURISH BY MAKING CLEAN ENERGY EASIER TO DEVELOP, ADOPT, AND INTEGRATE INTO FUTURE GROWTH.

Initiative 4.1: Promote Clear Development Pathways

Establish supportive policies and processes that reduce barriers and accelerate renewable energy deployment.

Initiative 4.2: Promote Future-Ready Development

Encourage development that is designed to accommodate emerging clean energy technologies and evolving community needs.

Goal 5 – Compact and Connected Communities

BUILD COMMUNITIES DESIGNED FOR CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS, EFFICIENT GROWTH, REDUCED DEPENDENCE ON PERSONAL VEHICLES, AND MORE SUSTAINABLE AND CONVENIENT WAYS TO MOVE.

Initiative 5.1: Sustainable Growth through Land Use Design

Shape future growth through thoughtful land use decisions that strengthen communities, encourage reinvestment, and preserve surrounding lands.

Initiative 5.2: Support Alternative Transportation Use

Make it easier for residents to choose convenient, connected alternatives to driving alone.

Initiative 5.3: Explore School Transportation Opportunities

Advance cleaner and more efficient student transportation options that improve mobility for families.

Initiative 5.4: Modernize Parking Practices

Create parking systems that are easier to navigate, more efficiently used, and aligned with evolving transportation options.

Initiative 5.5: Expand Connections Beyond the County

Strengthen McLean County's standing as a connected and accessible regional hub for people and opportunities.

Goal 6 – Regional Energy Stability

ADVANCE A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE WHERE COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM REDUCED EMISSIONS, IMPROVED RESILIENCE, LONG-TERM ENERGY AFFORDABILITY, AND MORE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS.

Initiative 6.1: Government Fleet Transition

Transform government fleets into efficient, low-emission systems that are right-sized for operational needs.

Initiative 6.2: The Intersection of Transportation, Charging, and Storage

Leverage transportation electrification as an innovative resource for grid reliability and energy resilience.

Initiative 6.3: Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems

Advance solar-plus-battery storage solutions that reduce long-term energy costs, improve energy management, and strengthen energy reliability.

Initiative 6.4: Thermal Energy and Equity

Support healthier, more equitable communities through clean energy and nature-based investments.

Initiative 6.5: Grid Reliability

Promote energy stability, resilience, security, and affordability for all residents of McLean County.

Goal 7 – Resilient Natural Systems and Land Stewardship

STEWARD NATURAL SYSTEMS TO SEQUESTER CARBON, PROTECT AND PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, REDUCE CLIMATE IMPACTS, AND SUPPORT HEALTHY LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Initiative 7.1: Water Infrastructure

Safeguard communities by improving wastewater management and equitably protecting public health.

Initiative 7.2: Dual Land Use

Promote landscapes that support clean energy, environmental outcomes, and community needs.

Initiative 7.3: Habitat Restoration and Native Landscaping

Restore natural systems to support carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and ecosystem function.

Goal 8 – Community Empowerment and Education

EQUIP THE COMMUNITY WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES, AND OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED TO SHAPE THE COUNTY'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE.

Initiative 8.1: Energy Education and Adoption Support

Enable more residents and organizations to make informed clean energy decisions and confidently pursue clean energy improvements.

Initiative 8.2: Transportation Resources and Tools

Improve public understanding of and access to resources on navigating the region's transportation landscape.

Initiative 8.3: Civic Engagement

Establish a community-centered approach to advancing clean energy awareness, engagement, and ongoing leadership.

Goal 9 – Capture Existing Clean Energy in McLean County

EXPLORE VISIONARY MODELS FOR COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS AND USE RENEWABLE ENERGY ALREADY GENERATED IN THE COUNTY.

Initiative 9.1: Evaluate New Approaches to Local Energy Procurement

Leverage existing renewable energy generation to secure a net-zero future for all of McLean County.