



DRAFT PLAN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT



2026 COMMUNITY ENERGY STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT FOR MCLEAN COUNTY, BLOOMINGTON, AND NORMAL, ILLINOIS

This program is offered in partnership with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Office of Energy and supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Energy

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This CESP builds upon three greenhouse gas emissions inventories conducted by the Ecology Action Center including the original baseline emissions inventory performed by the EAC over 10 years ago. This plan was performed on behalf of McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal under multiple service agreements.

Intent and Limitations of this Report

This Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report is intended to provide information and recommendations to support future energy-related planning and decision-making in McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal. The report is intended as a resource for elected officials, staff, community organizations, businesses, and residents.

The recommendations presented in this report are non-binding and are provided for consideration by the participating jurisdictions and other stakeholders. Any potential future adoption or publication of this report does not authorize expenditures, appropriate funding, establish policy, or commit any participating jurisdiction or organization to implement any recommendation. Any future actions would be subject to separate review, prioritization, funding availability, and approval through each jurisdiction's normal decision-making processes.

Note to the Reader

This report has been released as a draft for public review and comment. During the review period, updated draft versions may be issued to improve clarity, correct errors, incorporate additional supporting information, or address questions identified through ongoing review. These updates are intended to enhance the report's presentation and usability and are not expected to materially alter the overall findings, goals, or recommended strategies.

Following the close of the public comment period, all comments received will be reviewed and considered in the preparation of the final report. A summary of the public comments received and a description of how they were addressed, where appropriate, will be included with or accompany the final report.



About the Ecology Action Center

The Ecology Action Center is the nonprofit environmental sustainability agency for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois. The mission of the Ecology Action Center is to inspire and assist the community in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance. Primary areas of focus include waste reduction and recycling, clean water protection, energy efficiency and renewable energy, air quality improvement, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

CESP Project Team

Michael Brown	Executive Director
Juliana Vidal	CESP Coordinator
Kelsey Bomboy	Group Facilitator

Situating the Planning Process within the Local Context

The 2026 Community Energy Strategic Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois (CESP) process took place from October 2025 to August 2026. Within that same timeframe, the region faced a series of climate change-related disruptions and energy challenges that reinforced the need for coordinated planning to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions driving climate change while concurrently strengthening energy stability, resilience, and affordability.

From prolonged dry conditions that led to the restoration of burn bans in Mt. Hope and Funks Grove Townships (1) to severe drought pressure that prompted voluntary water conservation requests by the City of Bloomington (2) (3) and that persisted despite winter snowfall (4) (5)—only easing after substantial March rainfall that restored the local water supply (6)—water resources, their availability, and the challenges of stewarding them amid a rapidly changing climate emerged as tangible points of concern and local examples of climate-related impacts unfolding across the region, affecting community decisions, and impacting the daily life of those that call McLean County home.

This period was also marked by extreme temperature conditions ranging from bitter cold and dangerously low wind chills (7) to prolonged, excessive heat and humidity (8). These events acted as bookends to a storm season (9) that damaged homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure and that caused widespread power outages (10) (11) (12). What is more, the season's combination of abundant precipitation, fluctuating temperatures, and atmospheric conditions favorable for severe storms also contributed to an especially active tornado season across Central Illinois (13).

Shortly before the draft of this plan was released for public comment, Bloomington, Normal, McLean County, and most of Illinois experienced a period of hazardous air quality associated with wildfire smoke from Canada with an index reading considered unhealthy for all populations (14), with heightened concerns for sensitive groups including children, older adults, pregnant people, individuals with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, people with diabetes, and those with greater exposure due to outdoor work or socioeconomic conditions (15) (16).

Beyond the immediate impacts of these events, the underlying climate conditions contributing to their severity shape energy needs in direct and familiar ways. During freezing winter days or unescapably hot summer days, the need for heating and cooling increases substantially. This, in turn, drives increased energy demand and oftentimes contributes to higher energy costs for households, businesses, and local governments. Power outages associated with severe weather can further strain communities by disrupting access to essential energy-dependent services and compounding challenges related to grid stability. The role of energy in community resilience, however, is not solely limited to whether power is available when it is needed. The ways in which energy is produced and consumed have broader, systemic implications for community well-being, especially in regards to air quality, long-term public health outcomes, and energy and environmental justice.

In addition to the above, the nexus of local energy challenges and opportunities exists alongside an interconnected, global energy landscape. The emergence of geopolitical conflict within this strategic planning process timeline, namely the 2026 U.S.-Iran war and the subsequent disruption of the Strait of Hormuz, underscored the continued vulnerability of fossil fuel-dependent energy systems and challenged domestic narratives of energy dominance. For many residents of McLean County, the

ensuing energy market volatility was felt most directly in household budgets and at the gas pump as rising fuel prices increased transportation costs and placed additional pressure on everyday expenses (17) (18) (19) (20).

At the state level, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Illinois Power Agency (IPA), and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) released the *2025 Resource Adequacy Study* (21) which examined the state's current and projected ability to maintain sufficient electricity resources while advancing clean energy goals. The study identified emerging and cascading resource adequacy challenges across the PJM Interconnection (PJM) and the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) regional transmission organizations including increased electricity demand, significant projected load growth from data centers and other large energy users, the retirement of existing generation resources, and the time required to develop new energy infrastructure (22). Under baseline projections, MISO is expected to experience a capacity shortage as early as 2031 without additional resource development (23). Illinois consumers could face higher electricity bills as demand growth from large electricity users places additional pressure on available supply (24) and strains regional electricity markets (25).

Hyper-scale data centers drew increasing public and policy attention both across the country and within McLean County, where grassroots mobilization became an increasingly visible component of community conversations and public forums. Many community members voiced opposition based on concerns about the environmental and social dimensions underlying hyper-scale data center development (26). These concerns reflected broader debates surrounding the rapid expansion of hyper-scale data center infrastructure including questions related to electricity demand, grid impacts, water use, land use, the pace of development, energy affordability, community benefits, the (in)evitability of the so-called AI revolution, and power asymmetries across not only Central Illinois (27) but the nation. Locally in McLean County, grassroots mobilization contributed to a local government response that included the implementation of detailed zoning requirements for data centers at the county level, municipal moratoriums adopted by the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, and continued public engagement efforts through community forums (28) (29).

Taken together, these moments of disruption, transition, and potential transformation reflect a broader reality: communities are increasingly required to navigate complex and interconnected challenges shaped by climate change, evolving energy systems, and power. Because energy decisions are inextricable from the larger dynamics that shape community life, the work ahead requires preparing for the future and strengthening our community's capacity to shape it. This CESP represents the first of many steps ahead to achieve this aim.

Introduction

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.



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

The McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal CESP builds off previous Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Inventories for inventory years 2008, 2015, and, most recently, 2022 that were completed by the Ecology Action Center (EAC). The GHG Inventories pinpoint changes in local emissions across key sectors, including transportation, electricity, and natural gas, and provide a foundation for understanding community energy trends and identifying opportunities for targeted action.

Rather than serving as a one-time report, the CESP is intended to guide decision-making and investment over time. As energy technologies, policies, and community needs evolve, the plan can and should be revisited and updated to incorporate new information, priorities, and opportunities.

The “C” in CESP: Community Focus

The geographic scope of the CESP includes the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County. However, the agriculture industry is not included in the current process. During the early stages of the CESP process, the agriculture sector was recognized as a vital component of McLean County’s economy, landscape, and community identity. Given the importance and complexity of the agricultural sector, appropriately incorporating the agricultural sector into an energy planning effort would require a dedicated approach that considered the diversity of farming operations, energy consumption patterns, equipment and fuel use, land management practices, and other sector-specific factors. Meaningful engagement with agricultural stakeholders also requires intentional outreach and long-term relationship-building to better understand local priorities and perspectives.

Given the importance, complexity, and scale of agricultural activities across McLean County, fully incorporating the sector into the current CESP process would have required additional time, resources, and stakeholder engagement beyond what was feasible or available in the scope of this project. Narrowing the scope in this manner allowed the current CESP to be completed.

Future efforts to address agricultural energy opportunities are encouraged and must be developed with the appropriate capacity and level of engagement needed to accurately represent and support the sector.

The CESP Mission

The McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan seeks to advance a resilient, clean-energy future that delivers net-zero emissions by 2050, improves air quality, and supports long-term public health.

The CESP Vision

McLean County and Bloomington-Normal are leaders in the development and implementation of renewable energy and emission reduction programs that encourage community well-being, create local jobs, and strengthen resiliency. McLean County and Bloomington-Normal are an inspiration to other communities to participate in efforts to reduce carbon emissions and stabilize the future.

Stakeholder Section

Name	Affiliation	Role	Subcommittee
Abigail Jahiel	<i>Illinois Wesleyan University</i>	Professor of Environmental and International Studies	Stationary Energy
Allen Grussing	<i>Village of Bellflower</i>	Mayor	Local Government Operations
Anthony Corso	<i>Carle Health</i>	Sustainability and Energy Manager	Stationary Energy
Arunima Bollampally	<i>Ferrero</i>	Industrial Sustainability Environment and Energy Specialist	Stationary Energy
Bernie Anderson	<i>Nicor Gas</i>	Regional Manager Community Affairs	Stationary Energy
Brady Lange	<i>Connect Transit</i>	Chief Executive Officer	Transportation
Chris Miller	<i>Heartland Community College</i>	Distinguished Professor of Renewable Energy	Stationary Energy
Deacon Kevin Jackson	<i>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)</i>	Environmental and Climate Justice Chairperson	Stationary Energy
Elisabeth Reed	<i>ISU Office of Sustainability</i>	Director	Local Government Operations
Emily Fuller	<i>Ferrero</i>	Industrial Sustainability Energy and Environmental Manager	Stationary Energy
Grace Paulette	<i>Ferrero</i>	Industrial Sustainability Environmental and Energy Specialist	Stationary Energy
Jerry Stokes	<i>McLean County Highway Department</i>	County Engineer	Transportation
Jennifer Sicks	<i>McLean County Regional Planning Commission</i>	Transportation Planner	Transportation
Jessie Hinshaw	<i>Office of Illinois State Representative Sharon Chung</i>	Chief of Staff	Local Government Operations

Jeff Woodward	<i>McLean County Museum of History</i>	Retired	Local Government Operations
John Bishop	<i>McLean County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors / Farnsworth Group, Inc.</i>	Treasurer Principal, Architecture	Stationary Energy
Joe Priestley	<i>Corn Belt Energy</i>	Vice President, Department of Utility Services	Stationary Energy
Joshua Crockett	<i>Office of Illinois State Senator David Koehler</i>	Director of Constituent Outreach	Local Government Operations
Kyle Glandon	<i>Hewn Architectural Studio</i>	Principal Director of Design	Stationary Energy
Larissa Armstrong	<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Illinois Renewable Energy Program Manager	Stationary Energy
Mark Adams	<i>Bloomington Normal Community Land Trust</i>	President	Transportation
Mark Clinch	<i>Town of Normal Inspections and Facilities Management</i>	Director	Local Government Operations
Mark Kotte	<i>Village of Hudson</i>	Mayor	Local Government Operations
Marty Behrens	<i>Ameren</i>	Retired	Local Government Operations
Meghan Reha	<i>West Bloomington Revitalization Project Natural Power</i>	Director Principal Engineer	Stationary Energy
Michael Dougherty	<i>Illinois State University</i>	Professor of Sociology	Stationary Energy
Mike Raikes	<i>International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 197</i>	Business Manager	Stationary Energy
Mose Rickey	<i>City of Bloomington Public Works Department</i>	Director	Transportation
Nora Harrison	<i>Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council</i>	Senior Community Development Manager	Local Government Operations

Patrick Dullard	<i>Friends of the Constitution Trail</i>	President	Transportation
Philip Dick	<i>McLean County Building and Zoning</i>	Director	Local Government Operations
Quinlan Tisdale	<i>Strong Towns Bloomington Normal</i>	Secretary	Transportation
Raymond Lai	<i>McLean County Regional Planning Commission</i>	Executive Director	Local Government Operations
Shannon Fulton	<i>Straight Up Solar</i>	Vice President of Preconstruction	Stationary Energy
Shayla Dennis	<i>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Mennonite College of Nursing</i>	Instructional Experience Coordinator	Transportation
Vitaly Vladimirov	<i>Resources Innovations</i>	Not specified	Stationary Energy

The CESP Timeline

	OCT25	NOV25	DEC25	JAN26	FEB26	MAR26	APR26	MAY26	JUN26	JUL26	AUG26	SEP26
Stakeholder Identification and Engagement												
CESP Kickoff Meeting												
Subcommittee Meetings												
Report Writing – DRAFT CESP												
Public Comment												
Final Report Delivery												
CESP Adoption												

Implementation of the CESP partly depends on funding opportunities that become available over time. Because funding landscapes can shift, a CESP identifies a range of strategies including those that can be integrated into existing programs or budgets, pursued through grants or partnerships, or implemented incrementally. Other strategies offer favorable cost-benefit outcomes such as energy savings, operational efficiencies or other co-benefits that reduce the need for extensive external funding.

McLean County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile – 2022

A snapshot of the 2022 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions profile for McLean County is presented below.

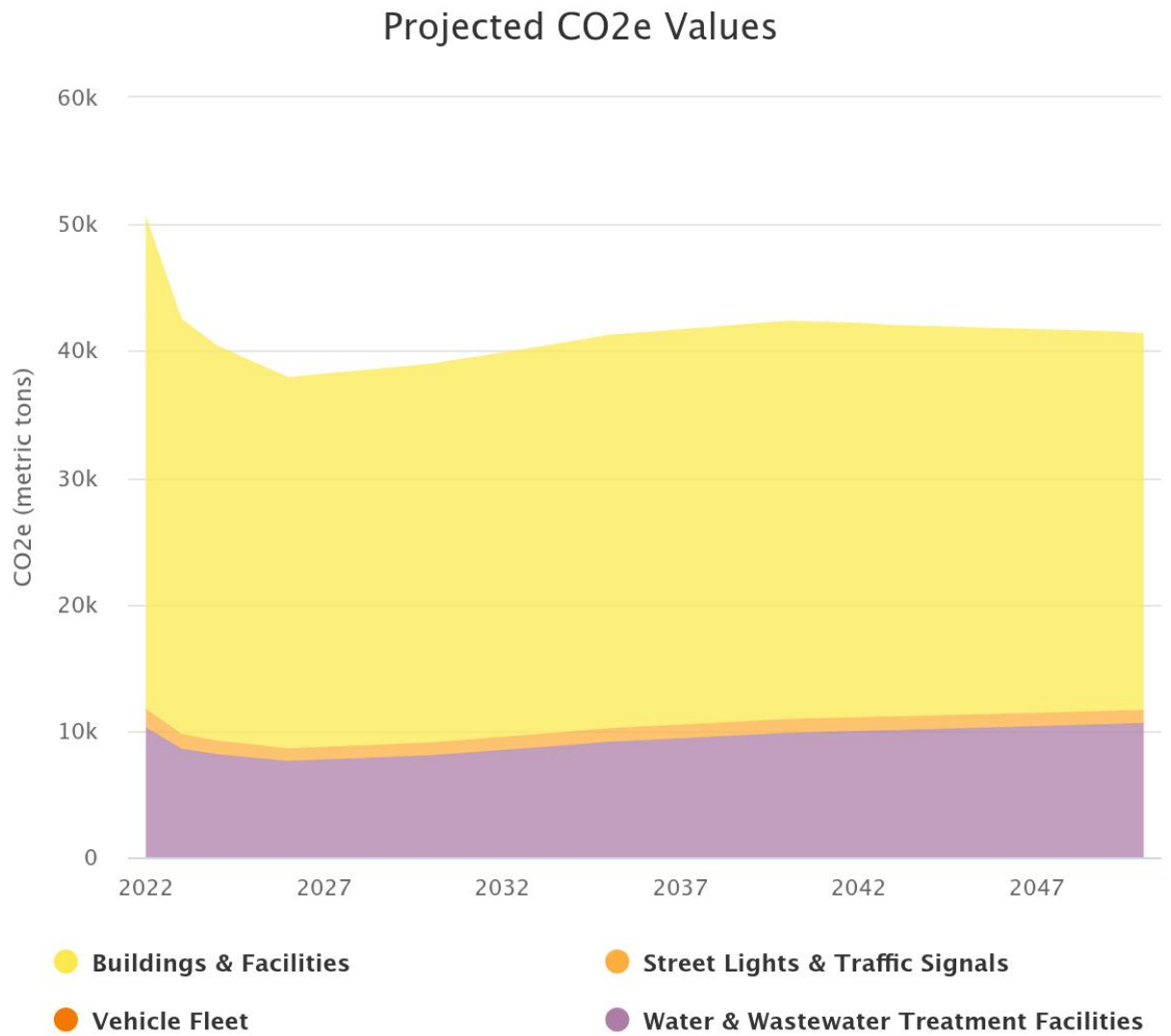
Results from the 2022 GHG Inventory reveal the following trends in emissions:

- The **Transportation and Stationary Energy sectors dominate the emissions profile**, together accounting for approximately **89% of total community greenhouse gas emissions**.
- **Transportation emissions** represent the largest single emissions category, primarily driven by vehicle miles traveled (VMT). On-road transportation accounts for approximately **29% of total community emissions**, highlighting the influence of travel patterns and vehicle use on the county's overall emissions profile.
- **Stationary Energy emissions**, which include electricity and natural gas use in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings, represent the largest combined source of emissions at approximately **58% of total emissions**. Commercial and residential buildings are the largest contributors within this sector, emphasizing the importance of building efficiency, energy conservation, electrification, and renewable energy adoption.
- **Local government operations**, including municipal buildings and facilities, wastewater treatment, and street lighting, account for approximately **1.8% of total emissions**. While a smaller portion of the overall community profile, these emissions represent areas where operational improvements and efficiency investments can reduce energy use and associated costs.

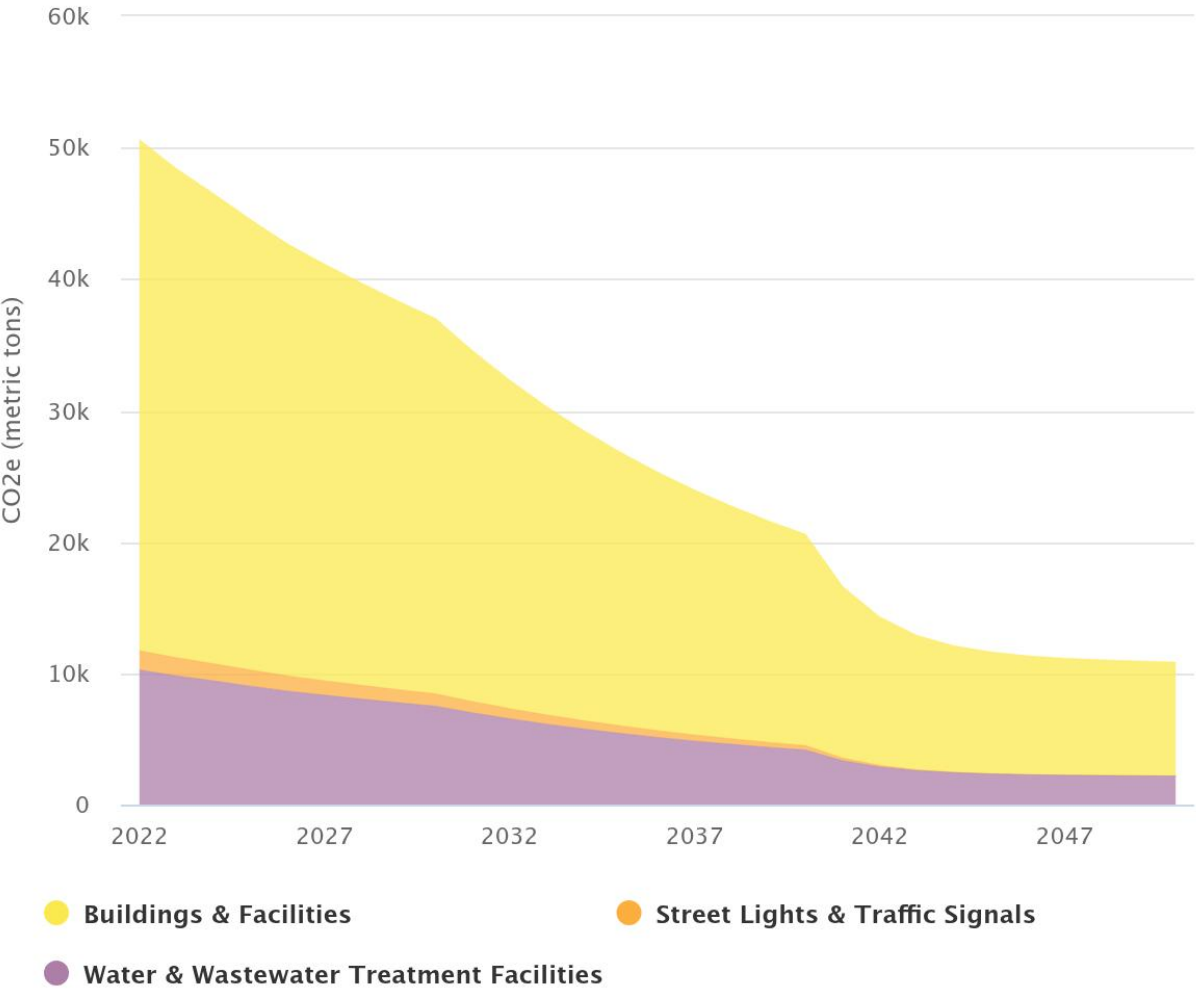
Overall, the emissions profile suggests that long-term greenhouse gas reductions in McLean County will depend primarily on strategies that address energy consumption in buildings and transportation-related emissions, while incorporating targeted improvements across additional sectors.

Subcommittee	Category	Government Entity	MTCO2e Emissions	Proportion
Transportation	VMT Emissions	McLean County	796,761	29.05%
Stationary Energy	Commercial	McLean County	683,276	24.91%
Stationary Energy	Residential	McLean County	674,186	24.58%
Stationary Energy	Industrial	McLean County	243,865	8.89%
NA	Waste	McLean County	175,786	6.41%
NA	Process/Fugitive	McLean County	76,510	2.79%
Transportation	Aviation	McLean County	29,427	1.07%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	McLean County	16,126	0.59%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	Bloomington	14,990	0.55%
Local Government Operations	Wastewater	Bloomington Normal	10,248	0.37%
Transportation	Rail	McLean County	8,814	0.32%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	Normal	7,795	0.28%
Transportation	Connect Transit	Bloomington Normal	3,452	0.13%
Local Government Operations	Street Lights/Traffic Signals	McLean County	1,458	0.05%

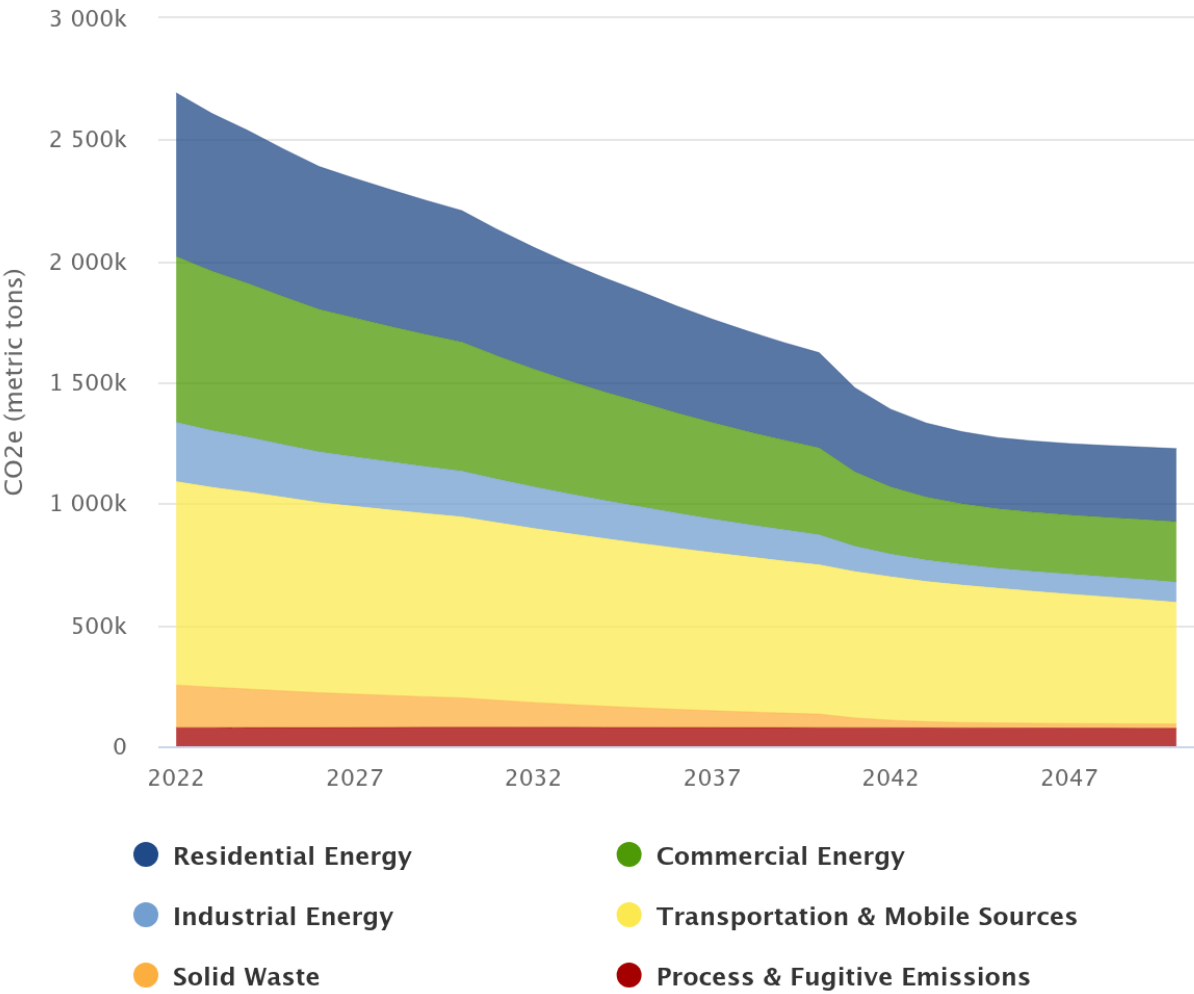
Forecasting



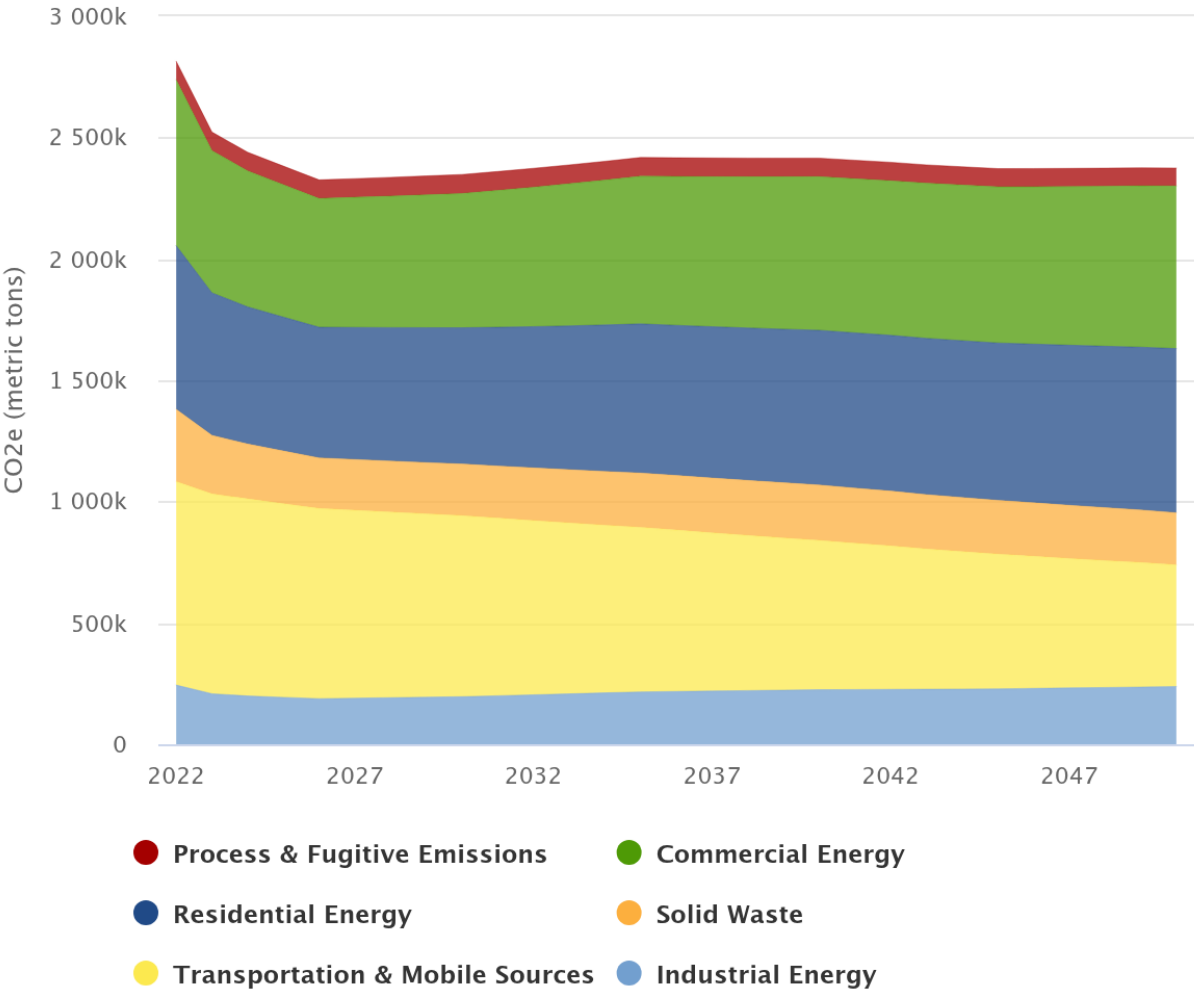
Projected CO2e Values



Projected CO2e Values



Projected CO2e Values

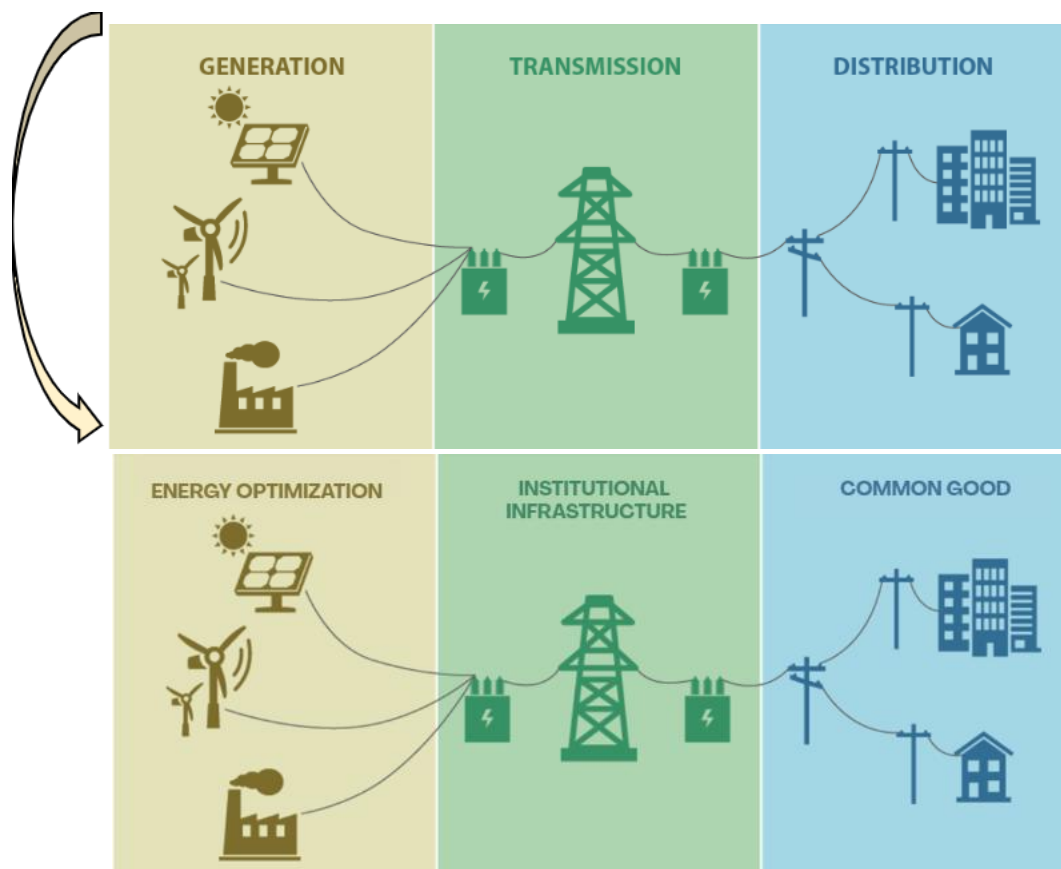


Alignment with Local and State Plans

Guiding Principles

Many of the strategies identified within the CESP reflect priorities and approaches already established in existing local planning efforts. This overlap reflects the presence of well-understood pathways for advancing decarbonization, improving energy efficiency, and strengthening community resilience. At the same time, the continued identification of these strategies across multiple planning efforts highlights the complexity of implementation. While the approaches needed to achieve meaningful progress are increasingly understood, putting them into practice requires navigating technical, financial, regulatory, and institutional considerations, as well as the practical realities of community capacity and available resources.

When developing the Guiding Principles for this plan, the focus was on identifying the foundational elements needed to move from strategy development to meaningful implementation. The resulting framework emphasizes structural approaches that strengthen energy systems, institutional capacity, and community participation to support long-term progress toward net-zero emissions.



Guiding Principle 1: Promotes Energy Optimization

Parameter	Definition
Energy efficiency	Uses less energy to perform the same task
Energy conservation	Reduces energy use by changing behaviors or reducing demand
Energy resilience	Adds diversity, redundancy or local control to the existing energy mix
Renewable energy development	Advances projects and infrastructure that increase the use of renewable energy sources

Guiding Principle 2: Builds Groundwork for Institutional Infrastructure

Parameter	Definition
Partnership building	Promotes inter-jurisdictional or cross-sector collaboration
Operational coordination	Streamlines information and resource sharing
Data informed	Advances data-driven decision-making through collection or benchmarking measures
Transparent	Provides the public with open, timely, and accessible information regarding institutional decisions, actions, data, or processes
Local policy and regulatory alignment	Integrates energy goals into local policies, codes, or regulations to support long term implementation
Proactive energy coordination with state energy goals or requirements	Aligns local energy planning with state-level initiatives

Guiding Principle 3: Oriented to the Common Good

Parameter	Definition
Community empowerment	Increases community agency through education, awareness, or coalition building initiatives
Fiscal responsibility	Manages financial resources wisely to ensure effective use of funds
Environmental stewardship	Protects or conserves natural resources' ability to deliver environmental, social, or economic co-benefits
Barrier reduction	Facilitates participation by making energy or sustainability programs and initiatives easier to access and use
Justice centered	Embeds equity, environmental justice, energy justice, energy affordability, or improved public health outcome considerations into programs or initiatives

Goals-at-a -Glance

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 {XX}

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 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.

Implementation Framework

The following implementation framework organizes the goals, initiatives, sub-initiatives, and action steps identified throughout this plan into a consolidated strategy matrix. The framework

is intended to support implementation planning by providing additional context on anticipated timing, potential funding opportunities, responsible stakeholder groups, and strategic importance.

The matrix is not intended to serve as a prescriptive implementation schedule. Rather, it provides a roadmap to help guide coordination, prioritization, and future decision-making as opportunities, resources, and local priorities evolve. The information presented is intended to identify potential sequencing considerations and highlight strategies that may help build capacity, leverage available resources, and advance broader clean energy goals.

The following definitions describe how each column within the implementation framework should be interpreted:

Initiation Timeline

The Initiation Timeline identifies the ideal timeframe when work toward an initiative could begin. This timeframe is intended as a planning guide and does not indicate that sub-initiatives must begin or be completed within the identified period.

- **Near-term:** 2026–2030
- **Short-term:** 2031–2035
- **Medium-term:** 2036–2040
- **Long-term:** 2041–2045
- **Extended-term:** 2045–2050

Funding Potential

The Funding Potential column identifies known clean energy programs, grants, tax credits, or other funding opportunities that are available or anticipated to become available in the near term through CRGA.

A funding opportunity was identified for **Initiative 3.7, Subinitiative 3.7.1** because the McLean County Regional Planning Commission is currently in the process of hiring a Housing Coordinator. Based on the released Request for Proposals (RFP), the responsibilities of this position overlap substantially with the action steps identified in the subinitiative.

Initiative 5.1, Subinitiative 5.1.1 was also identified as having funding potential because related efforts are already underway, including efforts associated with the Strategic Land Use Plan.

A grayed-out box indicates that no known clean energy grants, funding programs, or tax credits were identified to support the specific action steps at the time of review. However, this does not preclude future eligibility for funding or the use of alternative funding sources.

Developed By

The Developed By column identifies the stakeholder subcommittee responsible for proposing each strategy.

- **LGO:** Local Government Operations Subcommittee
- **TRN:** Transportation Subcommittee
- **STE:** Stationary Energy Subcommittee

Strategy Type

The Strategy Type column identifies strategies categorized as either **Bridging Strategies** or **Priority Strategies**. Given the number of sub-initiatives included in the framework, these classifications help identify strategies that may be particularly important for implementation sequencing and overall impact.

- **Bridging Strategies (•):** Actions that strengthen organizational capacity and establish foundational elements needed to advance more complex, longer-term strategies. These may include improving data collection, building partnerships, and supporting cross-jurisdictional or cross-sector collaboration (e.g., energy benchmarking).
- **Priority Strategies (*):** Actions that may have an outsized impact by enabling the implementation of additional sub-initiatives and advancing broader energy goals.

Financing Pathways

This list is intended as a starting point rather than a comprehensive catalog of available resources. Numerous additional funding opportunities, financing programs, tax incentives, and technical assistance programs exist at the federal, state, utility, and nonprofit levels. For example, the Illinois Climate Bank regularly launches new grant and financing programs, and federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continue to offer competitive funding opportunities. Because programs and eligibility requirements evolve over time, organizations should consult the relevant agencies and funding partners to identify the opportunities best suited to their projects.

Energy Storage and Geothermal Investment Tax Credit (Section 48E)

Unlike solar and wind, energy storage and geothermal projects **do not face the accelerated construction deadlines**.

Key Provisions

- Tax credits remain largely unchanged.
- Projects are still subject to **material assistance Prohibited Foreign Entity (PFE)** requirements.
- **Energy storage, geothermal, hydroelectric, and other non-solar/non-wind technologies:**
 - Receive full technology-neutral tax credits if construction begins **by the end of 2033**.
 - Receive reduced credits for projects beginning construction in **2034 or 2035**.

Ground Source Heat Pumps (Section 48)

Commercial geothermal heat pump (GHP) installations remain eligible under the Inflation Reduction Act Investment Tax Credit.

Credit Amounts

Installation Year	Credit
Jan. 1, 2022 – Dec. 31, 2032	6%
2033	5.2%
2034	4.4%

The credit is based on the total qualifying improvement expenses in the year the system is placed in service.

Bonus Credit Note

- **McLean County does not qualify as a Designated Energy Community**, so Energy Community bonus credits are not available.

Illinois Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act (CRGA)

Geothermal Homes and Businesses Program

- Allocates **\$10 million** from the existing Renewable Portfolio Standard budget for geothermal projects serving homes and businesses.
- Includes a funding block reserved for **Equity Investment Eligible Communities**.
- Portions of **Bloomington-Normal** qualify as Equity Investment Eligible Communities.
- Eligibility generally corresponds with Illinois' **Restore, Reinvest, Renew (R3)** community designation.
- Establishes pilot programs for **district geothermal systems**, providing cost-effective, zero-emission heating for neighborhoods.

Storage for All Program

CRGA directs the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) to evaluate and potentially implement a **Storage for All** incentive program that would encourage energy storage projects paired with Illinois Solar for All developments.

Storage Rebates and Net Metering

Battery Storage Rebates

- **\$250 per kilowatt-hour** of nameplate capacity.
- Applies to:
 - Community solar paired storage
 - Standalone battery systems under **5 MW**

Net Metering

Utilities must allow **behind-the-meter battery storage systems** to participate in net metering.

Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) Adjustments

CRGA expands access to Illinois Solar for All by:

- Allowing income self-attestation for residents in:
 - Income-eligible census tracts
 - Environmental justice communities
- Expanding eligibility to organizations serving low-income communities.
- Allowing residents of master-metered buildings to apply under the public facility/nonprofit category.
- Integrating Illinois Solar for All with **LIHEAP** so participants can receive both weatherization and solar benefits.
- Providing eligible contractors with access to upfront capital.

Utility Data Access (Section 5-15)

CRGA significantly improves customer access to utility data.

Requirements for Utilities

Utilities must:

- Retain at least **five years** of customer energy usage data.
- Share historical usage data upon request.
- Transmit customer-approved usage data directly to authorized third parties.
- Provide aggregated usage data for qualifying buildings, including:
 - All associated meters
 - Data necessary for quality assurance
- Accept online data requests.
- Use authentication methods no more burdensome than existing customer portals.
- Deliver data in standardized formats compatible with approved benchmarking tools.
- Large electric utilities must upload data directly into benchmarking platforms.
- Provide timely, ongoing, corrected data at **no cost** to recipients.

Potential Impact

- Promising advancement for **energy benchmarking** and building performance analysis.

Funding Opportunities for Water and Wastewater Facilities

Public Water Infrastructure Energy Efficiency Assessments

Facilities Assessed

Wastewater Treatment Plants

- Bloomington-Normal

Water Treatment Facilities

- Heyworth
- LeRoy

Program Overview

Over the past eight years, the Illinois EPA has partnered with the EnergySense Resilience Center and the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center to provide **no-cost energy assessments** for publicly owned water and wastewater facilities.

Program Results

- **281 facilities assessed**
- Approximately **\$6 million** in estimated financial savings
- **63 million kWh** in projected energy savings
- Approximately **430,000** greenhouse gas emissions avoided

The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's State Energy Program.

Public Water Supply Energy Efficiency Grant Program

Provides funding for energy efficiency improvements at public drinking water treatment facilities.

Eligible Improvements

- Lighting upgrades
- Control systems
- Pump and drive replacements
- HVAC improvements

Previous Funding Round

- **\$483,000** awarded
- Three Illinois facilities funded
- Projected annual savings:
 - Over **715,000 kWh** of electricity

Application Deadline

- **May 4, 2026**

Wastewater Treatment Plant Energy Efficiency Grant Program

Current Status

- Application period closed.

Previous Funding

- Grants ranged from **\$20,000 to \$500,000**.
- Available to publicly owned wastewater treatment plants.
- Eligible projects required recommendations from an energy efficiency assessment.
- Applications were scored based on:
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Energy savings per dollar invested
 - Energy cost impacts

This program may reopen in future funding cycles.

Illinois Climate Bank Funding Opportunities

Small Utility Clean Energy Planning Grant Program

Provides funding to municipal and cooperative utilities to:

- Assess energy needs
- Evaluate renewable energy opportunities
- Develop procurement strategies aligned with Illinois decarbonization goals

Community Geothermal Planning + Pilots Program

Supports the planning, development, and deployment of **community-scale geothermal projects**.

Stretch Building Code Grant Program

Assists municipalities with adopting and implementing the Illinois Stretch Energy Code through support for:

- Education
- Community engagement
- Technical assistance
- Code implementation and enforcement

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Grant Programs

Status: Both programs are currently closed but may reopen in future funding cycles.

Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program

Supports the pre-development and development of community-owned solar projects that promote local ownership and energy sovereignty.

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program

Provides **up to \$1 million** in front-loaded funding to support:

- Energy efficiency projects
- Renewable energy projects
- Clean energy businesses
- Community organizations
- Workforce and job creation initiatives

Projects must primarily benefit **historically disadvantaged populations**.

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
1.1.1 The City of Bloomington and McLean County should explore establishing internal sustainability task forces modeled after the Town of Normal Sustainability Task Force.	1.1.1.1 Assess the Town of Normal Sustainability Task Force structure to identify successful operational frameworks that can be tailored to the specific organizational needs of Bloomington and McLean County.	Near-term		LGO	•
	1.1.1.2 Explore forming internal working groups across key municipal departments to ensure energy and efficiency efforts are coordinated rather than isolated.	Near-term			
	1.1.1.3 Facilitate regular information-sharing among staff to increase baseline awareness of municipal or county sustainability opportunities.	Near-term			
	1.1.1.4 Create communication channels between the Town of Normal's task force and any new groups in Bloomington and the County to streamline regional energy initiatives.	Near-term			
1.1.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County, in collaboration with jurisdictions across the county, should lead the	1.1.2.1 Establish a collaborative process with jurisdictions throughout the county to identify local sustainability planning needs, priorities, and capacity constraints.	Near-term		LGO	•
	1.1.2.2 Develop a regional sustainability planning framework that establishes shared goals, recommended actions, and planning resources that jurisdictions can adapt to local priorities and circumstances.	Near-term			

	development of a regional clean energy planning framework that guides countywide sustainability planning efforts.	1.1.2.3	Create shared sustainability planning tools, guidance materials, and data resources to reduce the staff time and technical expertise required for jurisdictions to develop and implement local sustainability initiatives.	Near-term			
		1.1.2.4	Establish ongoing opportunities for participating jurisdictions to share resources, coordinate efforts, and lessons learned.	Near-term			
		1.1.2.5	Explore partnerships with community organizations like Illinois State University's Office of Sustainability, McLean County Regional Planning Commission, and others to provide technical assistance and support.	Near-term			
		1.1.2.6	Support jurisdictions in developing or updating local sustainability plans using the regional framework and shared resources.	Short-term			
1.1.3	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore establishing a Regional Office of Sustainability to coordinate and advance regional energy, emissions reduction, and sustainability initiatives.	1.1.3.1	Evaluate models for a shared or jointly coordinated Office of Sustainability, including staffing structures, governance options, and funding approaches.	Near-term		LGO	*
		1.1.3.2	Develop a representative governance and staffing model for a Regional Office of Sustainability that addresses varying levels of capacity and staffing availability across jurisdictions.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.3	Define core functions of a regional sustainability office, such as benchmarking, reporting, policy coordination, and program implementation support.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.4	Explore intergovernmental agreements to establish roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures for coordinated sustainability management.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.5	Identify opportunities to consolidate or coordinate existing sustainability-related responsibilities across the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to ensure alignment and avoid duplication of effort.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.6	Assess potential funding sources, including shared contributions, grants, and external funding opportunities, to support staffing and operations.	Short-term			

Initiative 1.2: Embed Sustainability Considerations into Internal Operations

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
1.2.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should incorporate project sustainability considerations, lifecycle cost analysis, and collaboratively developed key performance indicators (KPIs) into capital planning and project scoping.	1.2.1.1 Develop a set of shared sustainability standards that can be adapted to each jurisdiction's implementation capacity while maintaining regional consistency.	Near-term		LGO	
	1.2.1.3 Incorporate lifecycle cost analysis into project evaluation processes to consider long-term maintenance, operational costs, and return on investment alongside upfront capital costs.	Short-term			
	1.2.1.4 Collaboratively develop a focused set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide project selection and evaluation with support from technical experts or advisory bodies as needed.	Short-term			
	1.2.1.5 Prioritize KPIs that are practical, decision-relevant, and limited in number to reduce administrative burden while improving consistency in evaluating project outcomes.	Short-term			
	1.2.1.6 Use KPIs to inform project scoping and design decisions with emphasis on metrics tied to energy use, emissions, and operational performance.	Short-term			
	1.2.1.7 Integrate these considerations into existing capital planning workflows to minimize additional procedural burden on staff.	Short-term			
1.2.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should pursue a coordinated regional approach to incorporating energy	1.2.2.1 Establish baseline countywide sustainability expectations while allowing jurisdictions to strengthen or adapt criteria based on project type, available resources, and local priorities.	Short-term		LGO	
	1.2.2.2 Collaboratively develop a common set of sustainability criteria that can be incorporated into procurement policies, requests for proposals (RFPs), and development agreements across participating jurisdictions.	Short-term			

efficiency, electrification readiness, and other sustainability criteria into procurement policies, requests for proposals (RFPs), and development agreements.	1.2.2.3	Prioritize sustainability criteria that provide measurable long-term value such as energy efficiency, electrification readiness, operational performance, and lifecycle costs.	Short-term			
	1.2.2.4	Periodically evaluate procurement and development outcomes to refine sustainability criteria and incorporate evolving best practices, technologies, and regulatory requirements.	Medium-term			

Initiative 1.3: Finance Clean Energy Initiatives

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
1.3.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore the creation of a regional Green Fund to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainability, and resource conservation initiatives across the county.	1.3.1.1 Evaluate potential funding sources, governance structures, and administrative models for establishing a Green Fund, including public funding allocations, grants, utility partnerships, private contributions, or other financing mechanisms.	Near-term		STE	*
	1.3.1.2 Engage local governments, institutions, utilities, businesses, community organizations, and residents in identifying funding priorities and developing a long-term approach for developing and maintaining the Green Fund.	Near-term			
	1.3.1.3 Identify eligible project types and funding priorities, such as energy efficiency improvements, clean energy projects, building upgrades, community resilience initiatives, and other strategies aligned with regional sustainability or energy goals.	Short-term			
	1.3.1.4 Develop transparent eligibility criteria and application processes that allow unincorporated areas, municipalities, schools, nonprofits,	Short-term			

		businesses, and community organizations across McLean County to access funding based on demonstrated need, anticipated impact, or alignment with regional priorities.				
	1.3.1.5	Ensure the Green Fund structure equitably provides opportunities for smaller municipalities and communities with limited staffing or financial capacity to participate and access resources for sustainability initiatives.	Short-term			
	1.3.1.6	Coordinate Green Fund investments with existing incentive programs, utility offerings, grant opportunities, and regional sustainability initiatives to maximize impact and complement existing resources.	Short-term			
	1.3.1.7	Establish transparent reporting and evaluation processes to track funded projects, energy savings, emissions reductions, community benefits, and overall progress toward regional sustainability goals.	Short-term			
1.3.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate the creation of a unified regional mobility authority that combines the planning, funding, management, and expansion of the public transit system and regional trail network. ¹	1.3.2.1	Evaluate governance models that combine responsibility for public transit and regional trail systems under a single agency or regional authority.	Long-term		TRN	
	1.3.2.2	Assess the feasibility of establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to provide stable revenue for transit and trail operations, maintenance, and expansion.	Long-term			
	1.3.2.3	Evaluate opportunities to coordinate transit service, trail development, maintenance activities, and capital planning under a unified mobility framework.	Long-term			
	1.3.2.4	Assess potential benefits related to multimodal connectivity, operational efficiency, system expansion, and long-term financial sustainability.	Long-term			
	1.3.2.5	Engage Connect Transit, local governments, trail organizations, park districts, and community stakeholders in evaluating governance and funding options.	Long-term			
	1.3.2.6	Engage the community through transparent outreach and education on the costs of maintaining and expanding regional mobility systems, existing funding limitations, and the potential benefits and tradeoffs of alternative funding approaches.	Long-term			

¹ This strategy emerged through the Transportation Subcommittee stakeholder process and reflects an aspirational concept for future consideration. It does not represent a proposal from any single stakeholder. Further evaluation and community discussion would be needed before any future action is considered.

	1.3.2.7	Develop recommendations for implementation, including governance structure, funding approach, service responsibilities, and performance measures.	Long-term			
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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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
2.1.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should direct the Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) to incorporate regional sustainability and energy goals into its current economic development strategies.	2.1.1.1 In collaboration with jurisdictions, the BNEDC should lead the identification and compilation of existing development incentives and tools such as enterprise zones, tax abatements, tax increment financing (TIF) districts, low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), utility incentives, Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE), and other mechanisms into a widely accessible clearinghouse of resources.	Near-term		LGO	*
	2.1.1.2 In collaboration with the BNEDC, jurisdictions should work together to align incentive programs to advance sustainable development outcomes including but not limited to expanding the use of housing incentives to promote affordable, energy-efficient housing.	Near-term			
	2.1.1.3 In collaboration with jurisdictions, universities, and other community partners, the BNEDC should lead the development a Capital Stacking Toolkit. The toolkit should identify opportunities and eligibility for	Near-term			

		developers to layer incentives, financing mechanisms, and funding sources for their projects. The aim should be to leverage capital stacking as a means to encourage developers to pursue comprehensive sustainable development that delivers broader community benefits while advancing a net-zero emissions future.				
	2.1.1.4	Building on the Capital Stacking Toolkit, the BNEDC should proactively identify high-opportunity development sites where layered incentives, financing mechanisms, and funding sources can be leveraged to attract investments that advance clean energy goals alongside additional regional priorities.	Near-term			
	2.1.1.5	Further establish the BNEDC as the primary regional resource for sustainable development by increasing awareness and education about where businesses and developers can go to access incentives, technical assistance, and resources.	Near-term			
2.1.2	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should direct and support the Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) to lead the collaborative creation of a Regional Sustainable Development Incentive Framework that promotes alignment between economic development activities and regional energy and sustainability goals.	2.1.2.1	Promote a unified countywide approach to sustainable economic development to minimize inter-jurisdictional competition while strengthening the county's overall competitiveness.	Short-term		LGO
		2.1.2.2	Work collaboratively with jurisdictions to identify and establish sustainability-related incentives that governing bodies are willing to offer at the outset of economic development efforts so as to better ensure that incentives are integrated into the development process rather than added after development decisions have been made.	Short-term		
		2.1.2.3	Develop a standardized set of sustainability-related incentives and eligibility criteria that provides consistency for developers while allowing flexibility for jurisdictions to tailor incentives to local opportunities.	Short-term		
		2.1.2.4	Develop a <i>regional sustainable development incentive package or framework</i> that clearly identifies available incentives to allow developers to understand and pursue opportunities early in the site selection and project planning process.	Short-term		
2.1.3	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County, and the Bloomington Normal	2.1.3.1	Engage developers, employers, utilities, and other regional partners to promote and advance sustainable development opportunities identified through the framework.	Short-term		LGO

Economic Development Council (BNEDC) should collaboratively implement the Regional Sustainable Development Incentive Framework to align economic development with countywide energy and sustainability goals.	2.1.3.2	Coordinate with jurisdictions across the county to ensure the framework remains consistent with regional energy and sustainability priorities and evolving incentive programs.	Medium-term			
	2.1.3.3	Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the framework in encouraging sustainable development and recommend updates based on implementation experience and evolving opportunities.	Medium-term			

Initiative 2.2: Clean Industry and Workforce Development

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
2.2.1 Continue to leverage the region's position as a center for electric vehicle manufacturing to support transportation decarbonization, workforce development, clean energy deployment, and more	2.2.1.1 In collaboration with jurisdictions, the BNEDC should lead the identification and compilation of existing development incentives and tools such as enterprise zones, tax abatements, tax increment financing (TIF) districts, low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), utility incentives, Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE), and other mechanisms into a widely accessible clearinghouse of resources.	Near-term		TRN	
	2.2.1.2 Support workforce development and training programs related to electric vehicles, battery technologies, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy.	Near-term			

sustainable economic growth.	2.2.1.3	Encourage expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and supporting transportation electrification initiatives throughout the region.	Medium-term			
	2.2.1.4	Explore opportunities for public-private pilot projects that demonstrate innovative transportation, electrification, and energy technologies.	Medium-term			
	2.2.1.5	Leverage regional industry expertise to support municipal fleet electrification and broader transportation decarbonization efforts.	Medium-term			
	2.2.1.6	Coordinate with utilities, educational institutions, industry partners, and economic development organizations to align workforce, infrastructure, and sustainability initiatives.	Short-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.1.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County, in collaboration with unincorporated areas and other municipalities,	3.1.1.1 Conduct early outreach and engagement with representatives of unincorporated areas and rural municipalities, including but not limited to the McLean County Mayors Association, to encourage widespread participation in the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment initiative from the outset, foster countywide buy-in, and identify participation incentives or pathways.	Near-term	No cost	LGO	•

should pursue participation in the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment.	3.1.1.2	Identify and designate <i>Clean Buildings Champions</i> to represent jurisdictions and communities across McLean County, potentially including elected officials, city or county staff, sustainability personnel, or members of relevant working groups or task forces. Representation should reflect countywide perspectives and may include individuals serving on behalf of multiple jurisdictions.	Near-term			
	3.1.1.3	Coordinate participation of Clean Buildings Champions in the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment to ensure consistent regional engagement and shared objectives.	Near-term			
	3.1.1.4	Use the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment framework to facilitate peer learning, information sharing, and alignment of municipal building energy strategies across jurisdictions.	Near-term			
	3.1.1.5	Encourage regular coordination among designated champions to track progress, share best practices, and identify opportunities for joint action.	Near-term			
	3.1.1.6	Integrate insights and tools from the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment into existing regional benchmarking, reporting, and energy management efforts.	Near-term			
3.1.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should lead the establishment of a standardized energy benchmarking and reporting framework for government facilities and operations.	3.1.2.1	Provide opportunities for interested municipalities, unincorporated areas, and regional organizations to inform or participate in the development of a standardized energy benchmarking and reporting framework that promotes regional consistency while recognizing differences in local capacity, governance, and implementation Initiation Timelines.	Near-term		LGO	•
	3.1.2.2	Identify appropriate staff or technical lead(s) to champion benchmarking and reporting efforts within participating jurisdictions. Where individual jurisdictional capacity is limited, explore shared staffing or representatives capable of serving multiple jurisdictions.	Near-term			
	3.1.2.3	Utilize existing technical assistance and applied research programs, such as the EnergySense Resilience Center (University of Illinois System), to support development of standardized benchmarking methodologies, data collection protocols, and reporting frameworks.	Short-term	No cost		
	3.1.2.4	Leverage free or low-cost benchmarking tools and resources from university, utility, state, or federal entities to support accessible and consistent implementation across jurisdictions.	Short-term			

	3.1.2.5	Adopt a common energy tracking and benchmarking platform system across jurisdictions to ensure standardized data collection, reporting, and comparability of governmental energy performance.	Short-term			
	3.1.2.6	Engage technical assistance providers to support staff training, capacity building, and best practices for continued energy data management and reporting.	Short-term			
	3.1.2.7	Use benchmarking outputs to identify opportunities for energy efficiency improvements and operational cost reductions across government facilities.	Short-term			
3.1.3 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should implement a standardized energy benchmarking and reporting protocol for all municipal or government buildings and other relevant public assets on an annual basis.	3.1.3.1	Identify and maintain a consistent inventory of municipal or government facilities and assets to be benchmarked.	Near-term		LGO	*
	3.1.3.2	Determine responsibility within each jurisdiction for data collection and reporting.	Near-term			
	3.1.3.3	Use benchmarking results to identify energy efficiency and electrification opportunities.	Short-term			
	3.1.3.4	Share annual results in a consistent format across all three jurisdictions to support regional comparison and transparency.	Short-term			

Initiative 3.2: Build a Culture of High Energy Performance

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
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3.2.1	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should jointly develop and maintain an incentive clearinghouse or hub that encourages large building owners (i.e. commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily property owners) to invest in energy efficiency, building electrification, renewable energy, and other emissions-reduction measures.	3.2.1.1	Consolidate information on energy-efficiency programs, rebates, tax incentives, financing opportunities, and technical assistance available through the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, McLean County, utilities, and state and federal programs.	Near-term		LGO	•
		3.2.1.2	Identify common eligibility criteria and incentive structures across jurisdictions.	Near-term			
		3.2.1.3	Explore the creation of additional non-financial incentives such as expedited permitting for qualifying projects.	Short-term			
		3.2.1.4	Regularly review and update incentive programs across jurisdictions to minimize disparities that could unintentionally influence where development occurs within the county.	Short-term			
3.2.2	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should encourage voluntary energy benchmarking and reporting among large commercial, institutional, industrial, and multifamily properties and evaluate opportunities for future benchmarking and disclosure policies.	3.2.2.1	Create a regional recognition or <i>high performance building</i> program to publicly acknowledge properties that voluntarily benchmark and demonstrate strong energy performance or improvement over time.	Short-term		LGO	*
		3.2.2.2	Provide access to existing benchmarking tools and resources, and encourage alignment with the benchmarking platform used by local governments (e.g., ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager or comparable systems) to ensure consistency and comparability of data across sectors.	Short-term			
		3.2.2.3	Partner with utilities, regional organizations, and technical assistance providers to offer free or low-cost support for property owners to complete energy benchmarking and reporting.	Short-term			
		3.2.2.4	Collect and analyze aggregated benchmarking data (where voluntarily provided and appropriately anonymized) to assess regional building energy performance trends and inform future policy development.	Short-term			
		3.2.2.5	Evaluate the feasibility, legal authority, and stakeholder implications of future benchmarking and disclosure requirements, including potential phased or threshold-based approaches for large buildings.	Medium-term			

3.2.3	Develop and implement a large building performance pilot program for commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily buildings that supports energy efficiency improvements, emissions reductions, and clean building outcomes.	3.2.3.1	Research existing municipal and government building performance programs and ordinances (e.g. the Healthy Buildings Ordinance adopted by the City of Evanston) to identify applicable best practices and lessons learned.	Near-term		STE	*
		3.2.3.2	Design and launch a pilot program for large buildings participating in benchmarking efforts to identify energy efficiency and electrification opportunities.	Short-term			
		3.2.3.3	Establish voluntary performance targets or improvement pathways for participating buildings based on benchmarking results and building characteristics.	Short-term			
		3.2.3.4	Provide building owners with access to technical assistance, educational resources, and information on available incentive programs.	Short-term			
		3.2.3.5	Recognize participating buildings that achieve measurable energy performance, emissions reduction, or healthy building outcomes.	Short-term			
		3.2.3.6	Evaluate pilot program outcomes and identify opportunities for future expansion, incentives, or building performance policies.	Short-term			
		3.2.3.7	Upon establishment of a Regional Office of Sustainability or similar entity, utilize the coordinated regional energy resources hub to connect participants with benchmarking tools, financing opportunities, technical assistance providers, and peer learning networks.	Medium-term			
3.2.4	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should develop an incentivized energy benchmarking program for large commercial, institutional, industrial, and multifamily properties to increase participation in energy benchmarking and energy data sharing	3.2.4.1	Identify and evaluate financial, technical, and recognition-based incentives that encourage voluntary participation in energy benchmarking and energy data sharing.	Short-term		LGO	
		3.2.4.2	Partner with utilities to increase awareness of available rebates, incentives, and energy benchmarking resources.	Short-term			
		3.2.4.3	Evaluate participation rates and data coverage annually to assess program effectiveness and inform potential future benchmarking or disclosure requirements.	Short-term			

3.2.5	Establish a countywide standard for assessing large building energy transparency and performance and explore opportunities for public reporting of large building energy performance.	3.2.5.1	Utilize data and lessons learned from local government and pilot benchmarking programs to inform broader building energy assessment efforts.	Short-term		STE	
		3.2.5.2	Explore opportunities to develop a consistent methodology for calculating and comparing building energy performance across participating properties.	Short-term			
		3.2.5.3	Assess opportunities to aggregate and share building energy performance information in a manner that protects confidential information while increasing awareness of community-wide energy use trends.	Short-term			
		3.2.5.4	Utilize existing technical assistance resources and programs to assist with data collection, analysis, and reporting.	Short-term			
		3.2.5.5	Evaluate opportunities for future public disclosure or recognition programs that encourage participation and continuous improvement in building energy performance.	Medium-term			
3.2.6	Explore the development and implementation a <i>fee-bate</i> style incentive structure for large building development and major renovations that rewards high-performance, low-emission design while applying proportional fees to lower-performing projects.	3.2.6.1	Explore legal, administrative, and financial feasibility of implementing performance-based fee adjustments within existing development fee structures.	Medium-term		STE	
		3.2.6.2	Define building performance criteria that could be used to structure incentives, such as energy use intensity (EUI), electrification readiness, renewable energy integration, or recognized green building certifications.	Medium-term			
		3.2.6.3	Evaluate opportunities to apply reduced development fees, permit incentives, or expedited review processes for projects that meet or exceed established high-performance thresholds.	Medium-term			
		3.2.6.4	Consider applying higher fees or mitigation charges for developments that fall below defined performance benchmarks with revenues reinvested into sustainability programs or county green funds.	Medium-term			
		3.2.6.5	Align fee-bate structures with existing benchmarking, pilot building performance programs, and incentive clearinghouse efforts to ensure consistency across initiatives.	Medium-term			
		3.2.6.6	Pilot the approach in select development categories (e.g. commercial or multifamily projects) before considering broader application.	Medium-term			

	3.2.6.7	Engage developers, builders, and financial stakeholders to assess market impacts and identify performance metrics that are practical, measurable, and enforceable.	Long-term			
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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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.3.1 Support the adoption of the Illinois Stretch Energy Code as a pathway to improved building energy efficiency and long-term emissions reduction.	3.3.1.1 Identify opportunities for early or voluntary application of stretch code principles in select projects to assess feasibility and implementation considerations.	Near-term	✓	STE	•
	3.3.1.2 Align stretch code considerations with existing benchmarking, pilot building performance programs, or incentive structures to ensure consistent policy development across initiatives.	Near-term	✓		
	3.3.1.3 Engage builders, developers, utilities, or other stakeholders to increase awareness of potential implications, return on investment, and implementation pathways.	Near-term	✓		
	3.3.1.4 Coordinate among local jurisdictions to align understanding of the code and evaluate opportunities for consistent or compatible adoption approaches.	Near-term	✓		
	3.3.1.5 Provide education and technical resources to support preparedness for higher-efficiency building standards.	Near-term	✓		

Initiative 3.4: Preserve and Rehabilitate the Existing Building Stock

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.4.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should prioritize the renovation, rehabilitation, and modernization of existing operational buildings over demolition and replacement, where structurally and economically feasible, to extend asset life and improve energy performance.	3.4.1.1 Evaluate existing municipal buildings for rehabilitation potential prior to considering demolition or replacement.	Near-term		LGO	
	3.4.1.2 Incorporate lifecycle cost analysis and embodied carbon considerations into facility planning and capital improvement decisions.	Near-term			
	3.4.1.3 Prioritize energy efficiency upgrades, electrification retrofits, and building envelope improvements as part of modernization efforts.	Near-term			
	3.4.1.4 Develop criteria to guide decisions on when renovation is more cost-effective and sustainable than new construction.	Short-term			
	3.4.1.5 Integrate modernization opportunities into scheduled capital maintenance and asset management planning.	Short-term			
	3.4.1.6 Pursue funding opportunities that support building rehabilitation, energy efficiency upgrades, and decarbonization of existing facilities.	Short-term			
	3.4.1.7 Coordinate across jurisdictions to share best practices for building retrofit projects and procurement approaches for modernization efforts.	Short-term			
3.4.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should develop a proactive property preservation approach that prioritizes timely repairs, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of	3.4.2.1 Evaluate opportunities to use code enforcement as a preservation tool that supports early intervention, rehabilitation, and continued building use while maintaining safety standards.	Near-term		LGO	
	3.4.2.2 Explore staffing, partnerships, and other capacity needs required to support regular inspections and monitoring of vacant or underutilized properties.	Near-term			
	3.4.2.3 Establish a proactive inspection approach for vacant and at-risk properties to identify maintenance issues before deterioration requires major rehabilitation or demolition.	Short-term			

underutilized and vacant buildings.	3.4.2.4	Develop incentives and assistance programs that encourage property owners to address maintenance issues before conditions escalate.	Short-term			
	3.4.2.5	Improve coordination with property owners, financial institutions, and community partners to address challenges associated with vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties.	Short-term			

Initiative 3.5: Promote Energy-Efficiency in Government Buildings

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.5.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should create an energy reduction challenge that engages departments within and across jurisdictions in friendly competition to reduce energy use and improve operational efficiency in municipal facilities.	3.5.1.1 Develop a consistent methodology for normalizing and comparing energy use across departments and jurisdictions (e.g. per square foot, per facility type, or per employee).	Short-term		LGO	
	3.5.1.2 Establish a periodic energy reduction challenge that includes participating departments across Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County.	Short-term			
	3.5.1.3 Provide regular performance feedback dashboards or reports to participating departments to track progress and encourage engagement.	Short-term			
	3.5.1.4 Recognize top-performing departments or most improved facilities across jurisdictions through shared awards or public acknowledgment.	Short-term			
	3.5.1.6 Encourage sharing of successful strategies and operational best practices between departments and jurisdictions to replicate effective energy-saving actions.	Short-term			
3.5.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should	3.5.2.1 Assess government facilities and energy systems to identify opportunities where power-down practices can be effectively incorporated.	Medium-term		LGO	

develop or update standardized power-down procedures to reduce energy use in government buildings during off-hours.	3.5.2.2	Coordinate with facility managers and building occupants to support implementation and promote consistent energy management practices.	Medium-term			
	3.5.2.3	Coordinate across jurisdictions to share best practices for effective implementation in different building types.	Medium-term			
	3.5.2.4	Track energy use before and after implementation to measure reductions in off-hours consumption and overall savings.	Medium-term			
3.5.3 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate and update temperature set-point practices across government facilities to improve energy efficiency.	3.5.3.1	Review building HVAC system performance to identify and address temperature inconsistencies that may lead to occupant use of supplemental devices.	Medium-term		LGO	
	3.5.3.2	Train facility managers and building operators on optimal temperature control strategies to balance energy efficiency and occupant comfort.	Medium-term			
	3.5.3.3	Evaluate existing heating and cooling set-point practices and establish energy-efficient operating ranges for government facilities that account for building type, occupancy patterns, seasonal conditions, and occupant comfort.	Medium-term			
	3.5.3.4	Encourage occupant communication and education on appropriate building temperature policies and energy impacts of space heaters and fans.	Medium-term			
	3.5.3.5	Track energy use changes following implementation to assess reductions in electricity and heating demand.	Medium-term			
	3.5.3.6	Support facility managers with targeted guidance to identify low-cost and no-cost energy reduction opportunities.	Medium-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.6.1 Build a peer network among local industrial, commercial, and other large energy users to share knowledge, coordinate on clean energy adoption, and support decarbonization pathways related to operations, electrification, and grid interconnection.	3.6.1.1 Convene periodic forums or working groups for large industrial and commercial energy users to share best practices related to energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy procurement, and operational decarbonization.	Near-term		STE	•
	3.6.1.2 Facilitate knowledge exchange on grid interconnection processes, utility coordination, demand management, and emerging energy technologies.	Near-term			
	3.6.1.3 Encourage participation from major regional employers, industrial facilities, and utilities to promote alignment on clean energy infrastructure and capacity considerations.	Near-term			
	3.6.1.4 Identify common barriers to clean energy adoption and explore opportunities for joint problem-solving or coordinated engagement with utilities and regulators.	Near-term			
	3.6.1.5 Share case studies and lessons learned on successful decarbonization projects, including process improvements and technology adoption strategies.	Near-term			
	3.6.1.6 Explore opportunities for collaborative or aggregated clean energy procurement where feasible including renewable energy and power purchase agreements.	Short-term			
	3.6.1.7 Coordinate with technical experts, research institutions, and workforce development partners to support information sharing and capacity building.	Short-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.7.1 In coordination with efforts from local governing bodies or economic development entities, develop a centralized clearinghouse of incentives, rebates, and financing tools to support energy efficiency, electrification, and sustainable development investments across the region with an emphasis on resources available to affordable housing developers and investors.	3.7.1.1 Partner with housing agencies, economic development organizations, municipal agencies, and financial institutions to compile and maintain a centralized, regularly updated database of local, state, utility, and federal incentives, rebates, grants, and financing tools related to energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy, and sustainable building practices.	Near-term	✓	STE	*
	3.7.1.2 Provide user-friendly access to the clearinghouse through an online platform or shared regional resource hub.	Near-term	✓		
	3.7.1.3 Coordinate across jurisdictions to ensure consistent information and avoid duplication of incentive offerings or messaging.	Near-term	✓		
	3.7.1.4 Highlight and prioritize incentives and financing tools that are applicable to affordable housing developers, including low-income housing tax credits, green financing programs, and energy upgrade incentives.	Near-term	✓		
	3.7.1.5 Offer technical assistance or referral pathways to help developers navigate eligibility requirements and application processes.	Near-term	✓		
	3.7.1.6 Regularly evaluate gaps in available incentives and identify opportunities for program expansion or new funding mechanisms to support decarbonization goals.	Near-term	✓		
3.7.2 Explore the development of a rental housing energy performance framework that encourages landlords and property owners to	3.7.2.1 Consider mechanisms that improve building energy transparency for tenants such as providing accessible information on property condition compliance or energy use intensity where applicable.	Short-term		STE	
	3.7.2.2 Evaluate existing local, state, and federal rental housing guidelines to identify potential opportunities to better support energy efficiency and building performance in rental housing.	Short-term			

maintain or improve building efficiency, electrification, or weatherization.	3.7.2.3	Coordinate with utilities and housing agencies to identify rental housing segments with the highest potential for energy savings and electrification improvements.	Short-term			
	3.7.2.4	Align rental housing energy performance efforts with broader building benchmarking, incentive, and retrofit programs.	Short-term			
	3.7.2.5	Ensure strategies are designed to support both emissions reductions and housing affordability goals.	Short-term			
3.7.3 Explore the development of a complementary landlord support framework that provides financial, technical, and programmatic assistance to encourage energy efficiency upgrades and electrification of rental housing units while incorporating safeguards to protect housing affordability and prevent disproportionate cost burdens on renters.	3.7.3.1	Explore incentive structures that reward energy performance improvements and building decarbonization in rental housing properties.	Medium-term		STE	
	3.7.3.2	Coordinate with utilities, contractors, and financial institutions to expand access to low-cost financing options for building retrofits.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.3	Create a centralized resource hub of incentives, rebates, financing tools, group-purchasing options, technical assistance, and eligibility criteria for building electrification, energy efficiency retrofits, and clean heating and cooling upgrades specific to rental housing.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.4	Support targeted outreach for small and medium landlords who may face higher barriers to upfront investment.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.5	Explore mechanisms to bridge institutional eligibility gaps in state and utility programs to expand property owner access to existing funding pools.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.6	Identify pathways for affordable rental owners to access income-qualified rebates for energy upgrades on the condition that the long-term benefits protect tenant stability and affordability.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.7	Encourage transparency in how public incentives are used and how resulting cost savings from energy efficiency improvements are shared between owners and tenants where possible.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.8	Recognize or highlight landlords who achieve significant energy efficiency or electrification improvements in their properties while maintaining stable and affordable rental costs.	Medium-term			
	3.7.3.9	Align landlord support tools with broader municipal and regional decarbonization programs to ensure consistency and accessibility.	Medium-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
4.1.1 When feasible, the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore opportunities to coordinate updates to zoning regulations, building codes, and permitting processes to reduce barriers and encourage the development of renewable energy projects.	4.1.1.1 Pursue proactive public engagement and education on renewable energy to address misconceptions, improve transparency, and strengthen community support for renewable energy projects before regulatory changes are introduced.	Near-term		LGO	
	4.1.1.2 Review existing zoning ordinances across Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County to identify and address inconsistencies or restrictions that may limit renewable energy deployment.	Near-term			
	4.1.1.3 Evaluate potential incentives or expedited permitting pathways for projects that include renewable energy or net-zero-ready design features.	Short-term			
	4.1.1.4 Evaluate opportunities to streamline permitting processes for renewable energy systems.	Near-term			
	4.1.1.5 Explore the development of unified or model zoning and permitting guidelines to improve consistency across jurisdictions while preserving local control.	Short-term			
	4.1.1.6 Consider updates to building codes and development standards to better accommodate renewable energy technologies.	Short-term			
	4.1.1.7 Coordinate with utilities, state agencies, and regional partners to ensure local regulation updates align with interconnection requirements and broader energy system planning.	Short-term			

	4.1.1.8	Provide clear, centralized guidance for developers and property owners on permitting requirements and approval processes for renewable energy projects.	Short-term			
4.1.2 Local governments should adopt Solar Automated Permit Processing+ (SolarAPP+) to streamline permitting processes for residential and small-scale solar and distributed energy systems.	4.1.2.1	Consult with the City of Washington, Illinois to understand lessons learned from its grant-supported SolarAPP+ implementation and identify best practices applicable to Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County.	Near-term	No cost	STE	•
	4.1.2.2	Coordinate adoption of SolarAPP+ across the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to provide a consistent, automated permitting process for eligible residential solar and distributed energy systems at no cost to participating jurisdictions.	Near-term			
	4.1.2.3	Review and update local permitting policies, procedures, and administrative processes as needed to support successful SolarAPP+ implementation.	Near-term			
	4.1.2.4	Track permitting Initiation Timelines and application outcomes following implementation to evaluate effectiveness and identify opportunities for refinement.	Near-term			
	4.1.2.5	Coordinate with local building officials, contractors, installers, and utilities to support implementation and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.	Near-term			

Initiative 4.2: Promote Future-Ready Development

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
4.2.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should	4.2.1.1 Promote awareness of long-term operational savings and resilience benefits associated with integrating clean energy systems into redevelopment projects.	Near-term		LGO	*

encourage the integration of clean energy technologies into revitalization, redevelopment, major renovation, and new development projects where feasible.	4.2.1.2	Incorporate sustainability expectations into public incentives, development agreements, and other discretionary approvals where appropriate.	Short-term			
	4.2.1.3	Identify opportunities within local planning and permitting processes to incentivize the incorporation of clean energy technologies during revitalization and redevelopment projects.	Short-term			
	4.2.1.4	Recognize projects that demonstrate leadership in energy efficiency, electrification, or renewable energy integration through existing local programs or incentives.	Medium-term			
	4.2.1.5	Explore the feasibility of requiring major redevelopment projects receiving public financial assistance to incorporate clean energy or energy efficient technologies.	Medium-term			
4.2.2 Local governments should incorporate large-scale geothermal feasibility considerations into land use planning and redevelopment strategies to support future deployment of and investment in community-scale geothermal networks.	4.2.2.1	Collaborate with technical experts to create resources and develop criteria that help local governments identify and evaluate opportunities for shared geothermal systems.	Short-term		STE	•
	4.2.2.2	Collaboratively identify areas where shared geothermal infrastructure could provide the greatest community benefit, considering factors such as energy costs, existing development patterns, and opportunities to direct clean energy investments toward communities experiencing higher energy burdens or historic disinvestment.	Short-term			
	4.2.2.3	Research ownership, governance, and long-term maintenance models for community-scale geothermal systems.	Short-term			
4.2.3 Local governments should promote low-cost solar-ready or electrification-ready building design practices in new construction and major renovations.	4.2.3.1	Encourage solar-ready design considerations in new construction and major renovation projects, including roof orientation, structural load capacity, and electrical system planning.	Near-term		STE	•
	4.2.3.2	Provide guidance and educational resources for developers, builders, and homeowners on low-cost design choices that enable future solar PV, battery storage, and electrification upgrades.	Near-term			
	4.2.3.3	Evaluate opportunities to incorporate solar-ready and electrification-ready design principles into local development review processes or building guidance materials.	Near-term			

	4.2.3.4	Integrate solar-ready design considerations into broader sustainability, benchmarking, and incentive programs where applicable.	Short-term			
	4.2.3.5	Engage the development and construction sector to support awareness and adoption of future-ready building design practices.	Medium-term			
4.2.4 Local governments should collaboratively explore opportunities to encourage low-cost, transit-friendly site design and infrastructure in new development and redevelopment projects to improve access to transit and support multimodal travel options.	4.2.4.1	Identify opportunities to incorporate EV charging readiness into development standards for new construction and major redevelopment projects.	Short-term		TRN	
	4.2.4.2	Identify priority locations for future EV charging infrastructure to support equitable access across different housing types, neighborhoods, and community destinations.	Medium-term			
	4.2.4.3	Coordinate with utilities, developers, property owners, and other partners to support the planning and installation of EV charging infrastructure in priority locations.	Medium-term			
4.2.5 Local governments should encourage the incorporation of solar photovoltaic carports, battery energy storage systems, and other solar-integrated parking infrastructure in new parking lot development and major parking facility redevelopments where feasible.	4.2.5.1	Consider solar carports as part of broader suit of transportation, fleet electrification, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure planning efforts.	Near-term		TRN	
	4.2.5.2	Incorporate solar-ready design principles into major transportation and public infrastructure projects by evaluating low-cost design and engineering features that would facilitate future solar carport installation when funding and project conditions allow.	Near-term			
	4.2.5.3	Promote the use of comprehensive lifecycle cost analyses when evaluating solar carports and other solar-integrated parking infrastructure, recognizing long-term operational, maintenance, energy, and pavement preservation benefits in addition to upfront capital costs.	Short-term			
	4.2.5.4	Evaluate opportunities to incorporate solar carports into government parking lot projects and major parking facility renovations.	Short-term			
	4.2.5.5	Partner with local universities, industries, utilities and developers to identify locations where solar-integrated parking infrastructure may provide the greatest energy and operational benefits.	Short-term			
	4.2.5.6	Evaluate opportunities to leverage future CEJA funding programs, including the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program or	Short-term	✓		

	similar initiatives, to support solar carports and community solar projects that advance local renewable energy generation, community ownership, and energy sovereignty goals.				
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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.

		Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
Subinitiative	Action step				
5.1.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should pursue a unified development framework to guide future sustainable growth that preserves agricultural and natural lands and encourages more compact development patterns.	5.1.1.1 Review comparable counties and regions that have implemented growth boundaries or compact development frameworks to identify best practices.	Near-term	✓	LGO	•
	5.1.1.2 Engage unincorporated areas, municipalities, developers, agricultural stakeholders, and residents to gather input on potential benefits and concerns.	Near-term	✓		
	5.1.1.3 Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating elements of a green belt or donut growth model into the McLean County Comprehensive Plan update process.	Near-term	✓		
	5.1.1.4 Explore other policy tools that could support compact development such as conservation easements or targeted infrastructure investment strategies.	Near-term	✓		

	5.1.1.5	Coordinate with the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to align growth management strategies across jurisdictional boundaries.	Near-term	✓		
5.1.2	Local governments should pursue a coordinated approach to updating land use regulations, zoning codes, and development policies to support a greater diversity of affordable housing options in walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit, trails, or other pedestrian amenities.	5.1.2.1	Explore opportunities to align zoning updates, comprehensive plans, and growth strategies so that housing and mixed-use development opportunities are distributed in a manner that reflects shared regional goals and local context.	Near-term		TRN
		5.1.2.2	Coordinate among jurisdictions to identify shared principles or guidance for transit-supportive and walkable development patterns, while allowing flexibility for local implementation.	Short-term		
		5.1.2.3	Evaluate opportunities to encourage infill, redevelopment, and new housing in areas with existing or planned access to transit, trails, employment centers, or community services.	Short-term		
		5.1.2.4	Consider development standards that improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between housing, transit, and key destinations, supporting a more integrated transportation network.	Short-term		
		5.1.2.5	Engage regional planning partners, transit providers, and neighboring communities in ongoing collaboration to help align infrastructure investments with anticipated growth and development patterns.	Short-term		
5.1.3	Local governments should support higher-density and infill development to improve the long-term viability of transit and other multimodal investments, particularly in areas with strong existing or planned transportation connectivity.	5.1.3.1	Identify priority areas for higher-density and infill development based on existing or planned transit service, active transportation networks, and infrastructure capacity.	Near-term		TRN
		5.1.3.2	Evaluate zoning and development regulations to identify and reduce barriers to compact, mixed-use, and higher-density development in appropriate locations.	Near-term		
		5.1.3.3	Coordinate land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning to support development patterns that improve transit viability and reduce transportation-related energy use and emissions.	Short-term		
		5.1.3.4	Prioritize higher-density development in areas with strong transportation access including transit service, major corridors, and connected active transportation networks.	Near-term		

Initiative 5.2: Support Alternative Transportation Use

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
5.2.1 Local governments should continue efforts to expand and improve the network of trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, complete streets, or other multimodal transportation infrastructure to provide safe and accessible alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel.	5.2.1.1 Identify and prioritize gaps in sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail connections that limit safe access to key destinations such as schools, transit stops, employment areas, and community services.	Near-term		TRN	
	5.2.1.2 Improve connectivity between existing facilities to create a more continuous active transportation network.	Short-term			
	5.2.1.3 Evaluate opportunities to enhance design standards and maintenance practices to support safer and more comfortable walking and biking conditions.	Short-term			
5.2.2 Foster coordinated partnerships between Connect Transit and employers, educational institutions, businesses, or community organizations to amplify the promotion of transit use and rider engagement.	5.2.2.1 Collaborate with Connect Transit, employers, educational institutions, community organizations, and other partners to promote transit through coordinated outreach and messaging.	Near-term		TRN	•
	5.2.2.2 Support community-wide marketing campaigns that increase awareness of transit services, benefits, and available mobility options.	Near-term			
	5.2.2.3 Coordinate with community partners to identify and engage populations with high potential for increased transit use such as students, employees, seniors, and residents living near existing transit routes.	Near-term			
	5.2.2.4 Monitor ridership trends and evaluate the effectiveness of outreach, partnership, and promotional initiatives to inform future transit engagement efforts.	Near-term			

5.2.3	Explore the feasibility of creating and implementing a destination-based transit pilot with the Downtown Farmer's Market to support scalable application at similar community destinations.	5.2.3.1	Collaborate with Connect Transit, the City of Bloomington, event organizers, and community groups to establish a Downtown Farmers Market pilot that advances destination-based transit access strategies.	Short-term		TRN	
		5.2.3.2	Engage Farmers Market attendees to learn more about their travel origins/destinations and transit access needs to better assess opportunities for transit service, stop locations, and potential circulator routes.	Short-term			
		5.2.3.3	Identify existing transit routes that serve downtown and evaluate opportunities to improve awareness, access, and convenience for residents who could use public transit to attend the Downtown Farmers Market.	Short-term			
		5.2.3.4	While abiding by existing regulatory frameworks, explore opportunities for a temporary or event-based short-loop or transit circulation concept that operates during market hours to improve frequency, convenience, and ease of access.	Short-term			
		5.2.3.5	Partner with Farmers Market vendors and local businesses to explore transit-linked incentives such as discounts or promotional offers for attendees who arrive by transit.	Short-term			
		5.2.3.6	Evaluate the outcomes of the Farmers Market pilot and identify opportunities to adapt and expand successful destination-based transit strategies at other community destinations and events.	Short-term			
5.2.4	Develop employer-supported, hub-based commuter mobility programs in high-density employment centers through coordinated incentives and shared transportation infrastructure.	5.2.4.1	Identify priority employment hubs or high density employment centers where high concentrations of workers create strong conditions for shared commuting strategies.	Medium-term		LGO	
		5.2.4.2	Collaborate with residents, community organizations, Connect Transit, university partners, employers, and property owners to develop a hub-based commuter program pilot that facilitates cross-employer carpooling based on geography, commute timing, and destination rather than employer affiliation alone.	Long-term			
		5.2.4.3	Integrate flexible participation models such as formal carpools and dynamic ride matching programs to reduce perceived risk for employees.	Long-term			
		5.2.4.4	Coordinate with transit providers and mobility services to strengthen first/last-mile connectivity and multimodal commuting options at hub locations.	Long-term			

	5.2.4.5	Engage employers as program partners by positioning participation as a workforce benefit, retention tool, and employee cost-savings strategy.	Long-term			
	5.2.4.6	Encourage employers to offer or expand direct commuter incentives tied to shared commute participation.	Long-term			
	5.2.4.7	Track performance at the hub level, including participation rates, employer engagement levels, parking demand shifts, and estimated commute trip reductions.	Long-term			
5.2.5	Local governments, transportation providers, employers, and community partners should explore opportunities to improve first-mile/last-mile connections to make public transit and other alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel more practical and convenient.	5.2.5.1	Assess gaps in first-mile/last-mile connectivity to transit stops, employment centers, educational institutions, commercial areas, and recreational destinations.	Short-term		TRN
		5.2.5.2	Coordinate with unincorporated areas, municipalities, regional planning organizations, and Connect Transit to identify priority corridors or zones where first-mile/last-mile improvements could have the greatest impact on transit ridership and energy reduction goals.	Short-term		
		5.2.5.3	Explore opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connections that improve safe and comfortable access to transit stops and key destinations.	Medium-term		
		5.2.5.4	Evaluate opportunities to align first-mile/last-mile improvements with broader investments in sidewalks, trails, bicycle networks, and transit-oriented development strategies.	Medium-term		
		5.2.5.5	Evaluate the feasibility of integrating or expanding shared mobility services (such as rideshare partnerships) to complement fixed-route transit service.	Long-term		
		5.2.5.6	Explore partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and major trip generators to support transportation demand management programs that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips.	Long-term		
		5.2.5.7	Assess opportunities to improve wayfinding, digital trip-planning tools, and real-time information systems that help users navigate multimodal trips more easily.	Short-term		

Initiative 5.3: Explore School Transportation Opportunities

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
5.3.1 Local governments should continue efforts to expand and improve the network of trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, complete streets, or other multimodal transportation infrastructure to provide safe and accessible alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel.	5.3.1.1 Review existing transportation contract terms to identify opportunities and constraints for incorporating sustainability requirements into future contract renewals and negotiations.	Long-term		TRN	
	5.3.1.2 Assess opportunities for school districts to incorporate fleet electrification, vehicle emissions performance, or other sustainability considerations into student transportation service contract evaluations where appropriate.	Long-term			
	5.3.1.3 Evaluate opportunities to align transportation contract specifications among school districts to strengthen market demand for low-emission or electric school bus services.	Long-term			
	5.3.1.4 Coordinate with Connect Transit to better understand lessons learned from electric vehicle deployment efforts and fleet transition initiatives.	Medium-term			
	5.3.1.5 Use electric school bus deployments as opportunities to support student learning related to transportation, energy, engineering, and sustainability.	Long-term			
5.3.2 School districts and Connect Transit should explore opportunities to better coordinate student transportation services with public transit where appropriate.	5.3.2.1 Evaluate opportunities for existing or modified Connect Transit routes to better serve student transportation needs while minimizing impacts on existing transit service.	Long-term		TRN	
	5.3.2.2 Identify schools, grade levels, or geographic areas where public transit could effectively supplement dedicated student transportation services.	Long-term			
	5.3.2.3 Coordinate with school districts, Connect Transit, municipalities, and families to evaluate operational, safety, and accessibility considerations associated with expanded student transit use.	Long-term			
	5.3.2.4 Explore funding opportunities and pilot programs to test public transit partnerships for student transportation.	Long-term			

Initiative 5.4: Modernize Parking Practices

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
5.4.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore smart parking technologies, including real-time occupancy and wayfinding systems in parking garages and high-demand parking areas.	5.4.1.1 Evaluate parking facilities and high-demand areas to identify opportunities for smart parking technologies.	Medium-term		TRN	
	5.4.1.2 Assess potential partnerships, funding opportunities, and implementation approaches for deploying smart parking technologies.	Medium-term			
	5.4.1.3 Integrate parking data and technology solutions with broader transportation planning and mobility initiatives where feasible.	Long-term			
5.4.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore opportunities to implement parking management strategies that discourage unnecessary single-occupancy vehicle use once robust transportation alternatives are available.	5.4.2.1 Assess where and when parking management strategies may be appropriate based on the availability of transit, walking, biking, and other transportation options.	Extended-term		TRN	
	5.4.2.2 Review parking policies and pricing approaches used by comparable communities to identify strategies that reduce unnecessary vehicle trips while supporting local businesses and equitable access.	Extended-term			
	5.4.2.3 Engage residents, businesses, employers, and other stakeholders to understand potential impacts and inform the development of parking management strategies.	Extended-term			
	5.4.2.4 Coordinate parking policy changes with investments in transit, pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle facilities, and other transportation alternatives.	Extended-term			
	5.4.2.5 Explore opportunities to use parking-related revenues or savings to support transit, walking, biking, and other transportation improvements.	Extended-term			

Initiative 5.5: Expand Connections Beyond the County

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
5.5.1 In coordination with regional and state partners, local governments should explore initiatives to expand intercity passenger rail, shuttle, and bus connections to improve regional mobility options.	5.5.1.1 Identify and communicate local demand patterns to state and federal partners to strengthen the case for expanded regional rail and bus investment.	Medium-term		TRN	
	5.5.1.2 Support the expansion of charter or commuter bus services connecting the region to nearby cities and transportation hubs.	Medium-term			
	5.5.1.3 Explore opportunities to improve first- and last-mile connections to intercity transit services through local transit, rideshare, and mobility partnerships.	Medium-term			
	5.5.1.4 Explore expanded passenger rail service and improved schedules that better serve regional travel needs including potential off-peak or late-night service options where feasible.	Extended-term			
	5.5.1.5 Coordinate with regional transit providers, airports, and transportation agencies to explore opportunities for dedicated or scheduled shuttle services to major airports.	Extended-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
6.1.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate opportunities to right-size municipal fleets to better align vehicle quantity and type with operational needs, reduce unnecessary fuel consumption, and support long-term emissions reduction goals.	6.1.1.1 Conduct periodic fleet utilization assessments to identify underused, redundant, or oversized vehicles across departments.	Near-term		LGO	
	6.1.1.2 Establish criteria for determining appropriate fleet size and vehicle type based on operational needs and service demands.	Short-term			
	6.1.1.3 Evaluate opportunities to consolidate vehicle use across jurisdictions where feasible to reduce duplication.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.4 Incorporate right-sizing considerations into fleet replacement and procurement decisions to ensure vehicles match functional requirements.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.5 Assess opportunities to replace multiple specialized vehicles with fewer multi-use or shared assets where operationally appropriate.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.6 Coordinate across jurisdictions to share best practices and explore potential opportunities for joint procurement or shared fleet resources.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.7 Integrate fleet right-sizing efforts with broader fuel reduction and electrification strategies to maximize emissions reduction benefits.	Medium-term			
6.1.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should pursue a coordinated transition of government fleet vehicles away from internal combustion engines toward low- and zero-emission alternatives, where	6.1.2.1 Pursue the Ameren Illinois Community Engagement Consultation (CEC) Program to create a Transportation Electrification Plan (TEP) and potentially receive financial support.	Near-term	✓	LGO	*
	6.1.2.2 Evaluate vehicle types and duty cycles to identify where electrification or alternative fuel vehicles are most feasible in the near and long term.	Near-term	✓		
	6.1.2.3 Assess and plan for necessary charging and fueling infrastructure to support fleet electrification across jurisdictions.	Near-term	✓		
	6.1.2.4 Pilot electric or low-emission vehicles in select departments to evaluate performance, cost, and operational suitability before broader deployment.	Short-term			

operationally and economically feasible.	6.1.2.5	Explore available federal, state, utility, and grant funding programs to offset the upfront costs of fleet transition.	Short-term	✓		
	6.1.2.6	Coordinate across Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County to identify opportunities for joint procurement or bulk purchasing of fleet vehicles and infrastructure.	Medium-term			
	6.1.2.7	Explore opportunities for cross-jurisdictional fleet sharing and coordination among the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to reduce overall vehicle demand, improve utilization rates, and support a more efficient transition to low- and zero-emission vehicles.	Medium-term			
	6.1.2.8	Track and report fleet fuel use, emissions, and cost savings as part of municipal sustainability and energy reporting efforts.	Near-term			

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

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

Subinitiative		Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
6.2.1	Explore opportunities to pilot bidirectional electric vehicle charging and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) applications that allow electric vehicles to function as distributed	6.2.1.1	Evaluate the feasibility of pilot programs using bidirectional charging-capable electric vehicles in municipal, transit, or fleet applications.	Medium-term	TRN	
		6.2.1.2	Coordinate with utility providers to assess grid interconnection requirements, rate structures, and regulatory considerations for vehicle-to-grid applications.	Medium-term		
		6.2.1.3	Explore potential collaboration with regional electric vehicle manufacturers to identify technical capabilities, pilot opportunities, or demonstration projects related to bidirectional charging.	Medium-term		

energy storage resources when not in use.	6.2.1.4	Assess opportunities to integrate V2G-capable vehicles into local government fleet electrification planning and future procurement specifications.	Long-term			
	6.2.1.5	Identify priority use cases such as peak demand reduction, emergency backup power, or grid stabilization services.	Long-term			
	6.2.1.6	Engage research institutions and technical partners to support evaluation of performance, cost-effectiveness, and scalability of V2G systems.	Medium-term			
	6.2.1.7	Monitor evolving state and federal policies related to distributed energy resources and bidirectional charging to inform implementation pathways.	Medium-term			
6.2.2 Local governments, utilities, and large fleet operators should collaboratively explore the development of solar-plus-storage microgrids to support large-scale vehicle fleet charging.	6.2.2.1	Evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of solar-plus-storage microgrids including potential impacts on charging costs, peak demand, energy resilience, and grid operations.	Medium-term	✓	TRN	
	6.2.2.2	Identify public and private fleet facilities where solar-plus-storage microgrids could support large-scale electric vehicle charging and reduce barriers to fleet electrification.	Medium-term	✓		
	6.2.2.3	Coordinate with utilities, fleet operators, local governments, and community partners to identify appropriate project models, funding opportunities, and implementation pathways for solar-plus-storage microgrid deployment.	Medium-term	✓		

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
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6.3.1	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate and pursue the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on government facilities and properties to reduce operating costs and advance renewable energy adoption.	6.3.1.1	Conduct assessments of governmental buildings and properties to identify opportunities for rooftop or ground-mounted solar arrays.	Near-term		LGO	•
		6.3.1.2	Prioritize solar installations where energy demand, site conditions, and project feasibility create the greatest potential for emissions reductions and cost savings.	Short-term	✓		
		6.3.1.3	Coordinate across jurisdictions to identify opportunities for joint procurement, shared vendor contracts, or bulk purchasing to reduce installation costs.	Short-term			
		6.3.1.4	Explore available federal, state, utility, and grant funding opportunities to support project financing and improve project viability.	Short-term	✓		
		6.3.1.5	Evaluate ownership models such as direct municipal ownership, power purchase agreements (PPAs), or third-party leasing structures.	Short-term			
		6.3.1.6	Integrate rooftop solar considerations into facility renovation and capital improvement planning processes to reduce incremental installation costs.	Near-term			
		6.3.1.7	Track and report solar generation and associated emissions reductions as part of local government energy benchmarking efforts.	Short-term			
6.3.2	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate and implement alternative rooftop strategies in cases where rooftop solar photovoltaic installation is not feasible.	6.3.2.1	Assess opportunities for cool roof coatings or green roof installations on government buildings that are unsuitable for rooftop solar.	Near-term		LGO	•
		6.3.2.2	Evaluate lifecycle costs, energy savings, and maintenance requirements of green roofs versus reflective roofing systems to guide selection.	Short-term			
		6.3.2.3	Prioritize high-heat-load facilities and buildings with high cooling demand for rooftop heat reduction interventions.	Short-term			
		6.3.2.4	Incorporate cool roof or green roof options into facility maintenance, capital improvement, and roof replacement schedules.	Medium-term			
		6.3.2.5	Explore available funding sources, rebates, and technical assistance programs that support cool roof and green infrastructure implementation.	Short-term			
		6.3.2.6	Coordinate across jurisdictions to share best practices and potentially align procurement for roofing materials and installation services.	Short-term			
		6.3.2.7	Track and document energy savings and related benefits as part of local government energy and sustainability reporting.	Short-term			

6.3.3	The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate opportunities to invest in battery energy storage systems (BEES) at government buildings where economically and technically feasible to improve energy resilience, reduce peak demand costs, and support renewable energy integration.	6.3.3.1	Assess local government facilities for technical and economic feasibility of battery energy storage system installation, prioritizing high-energy-use and critical facilities.	Short-term		LGO	*
		6.3.3.2	Evaluate pairing battery storage with existing or planned renewable energy systems, such as rooftop solar, to optimize on-site energy use.	Short-term	✓		
		6.3.3.3	Consider participation in demand response or utility incentive programs that provide financial benefits for load shifting and peak demand reduction.	Short-term			
		6.3.3.4	Explore ownership and financing models, including direct municipal investment, third-party ownership, or utility-led programs.	Short-term	✓		
		6.3.3.5	Incorporate battery storage considerations into capital planning and facility upgrade processes to identify cost-effective integration opportunities.	Short-term			
		6.3.3.6	Coordinate across jurisdictions to identify joint procurement or shared contracting opportunities to reduce system costs.	Short-term			
		6.3.3.7	Track performance benefits, including peak demand reduction, outage resilience, and emissions reductions, as part of municipal energy reporting.	Short-term			
6.3.4	Promote and advance the adoption of battery energy storage systems (BESS) across residential, commercial, and industrial buildings to maximize renewable energy utilization and/or improve energy resilience.	6.3.4.1	Promote awareness of residential, commercial, and industrial battery storage benefits.	Near-term		STE	*
		6.3.4.2	Encourage integration of battery storage with existing and new solar installations through education, technical guidance, and incentive program design.	Near-term	✓		
		6.3.4.3	Explore financial incentives, rebates, or financing tools that improve affordability of battery storage systems, especially when paired with solar.	Near-term	✓		
		6.3.4.4	Integrate solar-plus-storage systems into broader building energy, electrification, and resilience programs and incentive frameworks.	Near-term	✓		
		6.3.4.5	Identify opportunities for residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and industrial sites to deploy aggregated or shared storage solutions where appropriate.	Near-term			
		6.3.4.6	Support contractor and workforce training related to installation and maintenance of integrated solar and battery storage systems.	Near-term	✓		

Initiative 6.4: Thermal Energy and Equity

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
6.4.1 Local governments should explore opportunities to use vacant or underutilized land unsuitable for infill development for community-scale geothermal systems that support clean energy goals while increasing equitable access to parks and open space.	6.4.1.1 Conduct an analysis that inventories vacant or underutilized parcels in block groups or neighborhoods with limited existing park access or green space.	Near-term		STE	*
	6.4.1.2 Overlay this analysis with block groups or neighborhoods that are energy burdened to identify priority sites for dual-purpose community-scale geothermal networks.	Near-term			
	6.4.1.3 Evaluate the technical feasibility of installing block-scale or community geothermal well fields in these priority sites.	Near-term			
	6.4.1.4 Prioritize pilot projects in areas where redevelopment constraints limit traditional infill but where community benefits from green space and clean energy expansion would be significant.	Near-term	✓		
	6.4.1.5 Coordinate land use, parks, and infrastructure planning to support integrated site design that combines renewable energy systems with community open space.	Short-term			
	6.4.1.6 Explore long-term ownership, maintenance, and stewardship models for sites that combine energy infrastructure with public space.	Near-term			
	6.4.1.7 Position the county to pursue future state and federal funding opportunities for community-scale geothermal pilots by factoring in program requirements and eligibility criteria during project planning.	Near-term	✓		
	6.4.1.8 Document outcomes from pilot projects to inform future equitable land use and clean energy planning strategies.	Short-term			

6.4.2	Increase equitable access to green infrastructure parks or nature-based solutions that support carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation, stormwater management, air quality improvements, or community resilience while enhancing quality of life and access to nature.	6.4.2.1	Identify neighborhoods and communities with limited access to parks, trails, and green space.	Near-term		STE	*
		6.4.2.2	Prioritize green infrastructure park investments in areas where access gaps are greatest.	Short-term			
		6.4.2.3	Engage residents in planning and design processes to ensure investments reflect community needs and priorities.	Short-term			
		6.4.2.4	Integrate green infrastructure parks or nature-based solution considerations into redevelopment, land use, and infrastructure planning processes.	Near-term			
		6.4.2.5	Incorporate carbon sequestration, heat mitigation, and ecosystem benefits into project evaluation criteria.	Short-term			

Initiative 6.5: Grid Reliability

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
6.5.1 Consider supporting a statewide ban on new hyper-scale data center development as the most effective policy approach to protect energy reliability, water	NA	Short-term		STE	

	resources, environmental quality, and community well-being.					
6.5.2	Support statewide legislation, including the POWER Act or similar measures, that establishes robust safeguards for hyper-scale data center development where a statewide ban is not enacted.	NA	Short-term		STE	*
6.5.3	Establish interim regional guardrails to manage any proposed hyper-scale data center developments in the absence of state action. See corresponding Action Steps for a non-exhaustive list of proposed guardrails.	6.5.3.1 Bring Your Own New Clean Energy Plus (BYONCE+): Data centers must bring 100% renewable energy plus offset a percentage of existing McLean County energy needs. 6.5.3.2 Data centers must commit to zero net water impact. 6.5.3.3 Data centers must meet LEED Platinum certification. 6.5.3.4 Data centers must utilize closed-loop cooling or better. 6.5.3.5 Data centers must meet ethical battery supply chain certification standards. 6.5.3.6 Data centers must not use diesel backup generators. 6.5.3.7 Data centers must be subject to strict limits on emergency generator use within permitted hours. 6.5.3.8 Data centers must agree to a decommissioning fund to return land to its original state.	Short-term		STE	*

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
7.1.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should continue efforts to separate combined sewer systems where feasible to reduce sanitary sewer overflows, improve wastewater treatment efficiency, and enhance long-term water quality and system resilience.	7.1.1.1 Identify and prioritize remaining areas with combined sewer systems for phased separation based on environmental impact, infrastructure condition, and cost-effectiveness.	Near-term		LGO	
	7.1.1.2 Incorporate sewer separation projects into long-term capital improvement planning and coordinated infrastructure investment schedules.	Near-term	✓		
	7.1.1.3 Pursue state and federal funding opportunities, including water infrastructure grants and clean water financing programs, to support project implementation.	Near-term	✓		
	7.1.1.4 Coordinate sewer separation efforts with road reconstruction and other utility upgrades to reduce construction costs and disruption.	Near-term			
	7.1.1.5 Evaluate opportunities for green infrastructure (e.g. bioswales, permeable pavement, stormwater retention) to complement traditional sewer separation approaches.	Near-term			
	7.1.1.6 Track reductions in overflow events and improvements in water quality as part of ongoing wastewater system performance monitoring.	Near-term			

Initiative 7.2: Dual Land Use

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
7.2.1 Explore countywide development standards that encourage native landscaping, habitat enhancement, and dual land use practices for large-scale renewable energy projects.	7.2.1.1 Explore opportunities to incorporate dual-use land practices such as agrivoltaics and compatible agricultural activities into solar project design and site management.	Near-term		STE	
	7.2.1.2 Engage landowners, agricultural stakeholders, clean energy developers, conservation organizations, and local governments to identify practical, coordinated, and effective implementation strategies.	Short-term			
	7.2.1.3 Assess approaches used by other jurisdictions to promote habitat enhancement, soil conservation, and ecological benefits associated with large-scale clean energy development.	Short-term			
	7.2.1.4 Evaluate potential countywide development standards that encourage the use of native vegetation and pollinator-friendly landscaping within large-scale clean energy projects when appropriate.	Short-term			
	7.2.1.5 Evaluate opportunities to align clean energy development standards with broader county goals related to farmland preservation, conservation, habitat restoration, and climate resilience.	Short-term			
	7.2.1.6 Consider mechanisms for monitoring and documenting environmental outcomes associated with native landscaping and dual-use clean energy development practices.	Medium-term			

Initiative 7.3: Habitat Restoration and Native Landscaping

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
7.3.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should encourage the use of low-maintenance, locally adapted native vegetation in landscaping practices on public and private property.	7.3.1.1 Update or review landscaping standards and guidance to encourage the use of native and drought-tolerant plant species where appropriate.	Near-term		LGO	
	7.3.1.2 Incorporate low-maintenance native landscaping practices into public right-of-way, park, and municipal facility landscaping plans.	Near-term			
	7.3.1.3 Encourage reduced mowing practices in appropriate public areas, including roadside corridors and utility easements where safety and visibility allow.	Near-term			
	7.3.1.4 Provide educational materials and outreach to private property owners on the benefits of native landscaping, including cost savings and environmental performance.	Short-term			
	7.3.1.5 Implement and promote a “No Mow April” program (or similar seasonal reduced-mowing initiative) that encourages the growth of native and pollinator-friendly vegetation, with a voluntary registration system to prevent code enforcement conflicts during participation.	Near-term			
	7.3.1.6 Explore incentive programs or recognition efforts for private property owners who adopt pollinator-friendly or native landscaping practices.	Short-term			
	7.3.1.7 Coordinate with local conservation groups, extension services, and landscaping professionals to support implementation and best practices.	Short-term			
	7.3.1.8 Evaluate opportunities to align municipal landscaping procurement and maintenance contracts with native and low-maintenance vegetation goals.	Short-term			
7.3.2 Promote natural habitat restoration or native landscaping within industrial parks,	7.3.2.1 Promote replacement of high-maintenance turf grass with native prairie, pollinator habitat, and other low-input vegetation where appropriate.	Short-term		STE	
	7.3.2.2 Identify and utilize ongoing restoration efforts on industrial or institutional sites as demonstration projects and source of information	Short-term			

corporate campuses, medical complexes, and other large institutional properties where feasible.		exchange to promote similar practices across large institutional or industrial campuses.				
	7.3.2.3	Recognize entities that implement large-scale native landscaping or habitat restoration projects that contribute to sustainability and climate goals.	Short-term			
	7.3.2.4	Encourage industrial parks, corporate campuses, medical complexes, and other large institutional properties to evaluate opportunities for natural habitat restoration or native landscaping on underutilized or low-activity portions of their sites.	Near-term			
	7.3.2.5	Coordinate with conservation organizations, educational institutions, and technical experts to support planning, implementation, and long-term stewardship of restored landscapes.	Medium-term			
	7.3.2.6	Explore opportunities to integrate habitat restoration, stormwater management, and carbon sequestration objectives into site planning and campus redevelopment efforts.	Short-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
8.1.1 Develop a centralized clearinghouse of	8.1.1.1 Compile and maintain a centralized, regularly updated database of residential incentives, rebates, grants, and financing programs related to	Near-term		STE	•

education, incentives, and financing tools to support residents in improving home energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy adoption across the region.		energy efficiency, weatherization, electrification, renewable energy, and home energy upgrades.				
	8.1.1.2	Prioritize clear, accessible information tailored to different housing types, income levels, and eligibility categories, including income-qualified programs.	Near-term			
	8.1.1.3	Coordinate across jurisdictions, utilities, and state/federal programs to ensure consistent and up-to-date information is provided to residents.	Near-term			
	8.1.1.4	Provide an easy-to-use public-facing platform or portal where residents can search available programs based on project type or household needs.	Short-term			
	8.1.1.5	Partner with utilities, community organizations, and contractors to support outreach and awareness of available residential energy programs.	Short-term			
	8.1.1.6	Include guidance on how to combine incentives and financing tools to reduce upfront costs for home energy improvements.	Near-term			
	8.1.1.7	Regularly update the clearinghouse and evaluate opportunities to expand awareness through community events, workshops, and targeted outreach campaigns.	Near-term			
8.1.2 Build the knowledge, partnerships, and technical capacity needed to support broader deployment of geothermal and heat pump systems across the county.	8.1.2.1	Develop new or promote existing educational resources that increase public awareness and understanding of residential and community-scale geothermal or heat pump technology including costs, benefits, and available financing resources.	Short-term		STE	●
	8.1.2.2	Identify and integrate geothermal and heat pump adoption resources within broader building decarbonization education and technical assistance efforts.	Near-term			
	8.1.2.3	Strengthen partnerships among utilities, technical experts, local governments, educational institutions, and community organizations to expand coordinated outreach to support geothermal and heat pump adoption.	Short-term			
	8.1.2.4	Prioritize outreach, technical assistance, and partnership opportunities in communities experiencing high energy burdens, historic disinvestment, or other barriers to clean energy investment.	Near-term			
	8.1.2.5	Work with interested communities experiencing high energy burdens or historic disinvestment to identify locally supported geothermal or heat	Near-term			

		pump pilot projects and pursue external funding for their implementation.					
8.1.3	Lower barriers to geothermal or heat pump adoption by aligning incentive programs, education efforts, and group purchasing or bulk procurement models that reduce upfront costs.	8.1.3.1	Work with local governments, economic development entities, utilities, financing partners, and geothermal installers to identify opportunities for coordinated incentive programs that reduce upfront installation costs for both individual and community-scale geothermal adoption.	Short-term		STE	*
		8.1.3.2	Evaluate opportunities to bundle geothermal incentives with broader electrification, energy efficiency, or building performance programs.	Short-term	✓		
		8.1.3.3	Explore development of group purchasing or bulk buy programs for geothermal system installation to reduce equipment and installation costs.	Short-term			
		8.1.3.4	Identify neighborhoods, developments, or institutional clusters where group purchasing or shared geothermal systems may be most cost-effective for targeted outreach.	Near-term	✓		
		8.1.3.5	Prioritize energy-burdened or underserved communities for targeted outreach.	Near-term	✓		
		8.1.3.6	Track participation and cost savings from group purchasing programs to evaluate scalability and future expansion potential.	Short-term			
8.1.4	Promote informed solar adoption by ensuring residents have access to accurate information, trusted technical assistance, and pathways to identify qualified solar providers.	8.1.4.1	Expand awareness of existing trusted technical assistance resources from community organizations that can provide residents with unbiased guidance on residential solar development.	Near-term		STE	•
		8.1.4.2	Coordinate with community organizations, utilities, and solar industry partners to educate residents about common deceptive solar sales practices, fraudulent claims of affiliation, and other tactics that may mislead consumers when evaluating residential solar opportunities.	Near-term			
		8.1.4.3	Evaluate opportunities to establish voluntary recognition programs or other approaches that identify solar professionals meeting defined quality or consumer protection standards.	Short-term			
		8.1.4.4	Explore the feasibility of implementing incentive-based approaches to encourage use of qualified solar installers such as reduced permitting fees or expedited review processes.	Short-term			

Initiative 8.2: Transportation Resources and Tools

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

		Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
Subinitiative	Action step				
8.2.1 Local governments, transportation and planning agencies, and community partners should develop and implement a coordinated public education campaign to improve community understanding of transportation governance, funding, and decision-making processes.	8.2.1.1 Develop a countywide public education campaign that explains which federal, state, regional, county, and local agencies are responsible for planning, funding, constructing, operating, and maintaining different transportation facilities.	Near-term		TRN	•
	8.2.1.2 Develop a dedicated GIS layer/maps that can be integrated with the McGIS platform to help residents identify roadway ownership, maintenance responsibilities, and/or agency jurisdiction throughout the county.	Near-term			
	8.2.1.3 Incorporate transportation governance and funding education into public engagement activities associated with transportation, land use, and infrastructure planning initiatives.	Near-term			
	8.2.1.4 Partner with schools, community organizations, chambers of commerce, employers, or civic organizations to expand the reach of transportation education efforts.	Short-term			
	8.2.1.5 Utilize multiple communication platforms, including websites, social media, public meetings, newsletters, and local media, to reach diverse audiences.	Near-term			
	8.2.1.6 Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the public education campaign and refine outreach strategies based on community feedback and participation.	Near-term			
8.2.2 Develop and maintain an integrated community mobility app that combines public transit,	8.2.2.1 Encourage collaboration among Connect Transit, local governments, educational institutions, and community organizations to improve the availability and accessibility of transportation and trail network data under a unified platform.	Short-term		TRN	

active transportation, and trail network information into a single user platform serving Bloomington-Normal and McLean County.	8.2.2.2	Assess opportunities to integrate public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and trail network information into existing or future trip-planning and navigation platforms.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.3	Explore partnerships with local community colleges and universities to evaluate opportunities for the long-term development and management of the digital community mobility platform.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.4	Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating real-time transit information, route planning capabilities, and multimodal travel options into a community mobility app or other digital resources.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.5	Explore opportunities to include information on trail systems, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and other alternative transportation infrastructure that support both recreational and transportation-related trips.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.6	Consider opportunities to incorporate accessibility information, including ADA-compliant facilities and routes where feasible.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.7	Support efforts to utilize university expertise in geographic information systems (GIS), computer science, engineering, transportation planning, and data analytics to improve mobility information and user experience.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.8	Evaluate opportunities to pursue grants, research funding, public-private partnerships, and other funding sources that support the creation and long-term maintenance of the platform.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.9	Encourage the use of digital tools and transportation information platforms to increase awareness of transportation alternatives that can reduce vehicle miles traveled, transportation-related emissions, and energy consumption.	Short-term			
	8.2.2.10	Explore opportunities to incorporate future mobility services, shared transportation options, electric vehicle charging locations, and other emerging transportation resources into integrated community mobility platforms as appropriate.	Medium-term			

Initiative 8.3: Civic Engagement

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

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
8.3.1 Integrate clean energy and public education features into major civic redevelopment and park projects.	8.3.1.1 Identify public or civic facilities or redevelopment projects that could serve as demonstration sites for visible clean energy development.	Near-term		STE	•
	8.3.1.2 Coordinate with major redevelopment initiatives to evaluate feasibility of onsite renewable energy installations on public facilities early in the design phase.	Near-term			
	8.3.1.3 Develop community energy education stations modeled on existing examples (e.g. Twin Grove's Lookout) focusing on renewable energy generation, efficiency, and sustainability concepts.	Short-term			
	8.3.1.4 Explore opportunities to pair renewable energy installations with real-time or interpretive public dashboards that display energy generation and environmental benefits.	Near-term			
	8.3.1.5 Engage designers, engineers, educators, and community members to ensure public-facing renewable energy displays are accurate, accessible, and engaging.	Short-term			
	8.3.1.6 Ensure installations are designed to be durable and integrated into broader community programming and outreach efforts.	Short-term			
	8.3.1.7 Explore opportunities to connect educational installations with school curricula, public tours, or community engagement events.	Medium-term			
8.3.2 Strengthen public education, community engagement, and grassroots mobilization to build broad community support and	8.3.2.1 Develop accessible educational resources that explain local emissions reduction opportunities, costs, benefits, and available incentives for residents, businesses, and institutions.	Near-term		STE	*
	8.3.2.2 Coordinate outreach across local government agencies, utilities, and local organizations to provide consistent and accessible information on clean energy opportunities.	Near-term			

participation in decarbonization initiatives that advance a more sustainable, collective future.	8.3.2.3	Partner with community organizations, nonprofits, and other trusted groups to expand access to sustainability resources and connect with communities that may face barriers to participation.	Near-term			
	8.3.2.4	Create meaningful opportunities for residents and community organizations to participate in planning, decision-making, and implementation of decarbonization initiatives.	Near-term			
	8.3.2.5	Evaluate outreach and engagement efforts to identify gaps, improve effectiveness, and inform future community education strategies.	Near-term			
8.3.3 Foster institutional leadership that recognizes clean energy investments as core, long-term community infrastructure that increases resilience, improves public health, and strengthens civic stewardship in quantifiable and intangible ways.	8.3.3.1	Partner with technical experts to develop practical guidance, decision-support tools, and evaluation frameworks that quantify the long-term costs, benefits, and community impacts of clean energy investments.	Short-term		STE	*
	8.3.3.2	Develop educational programs and training opportunities that equip elected officials, institutional leaders, and staff to apply these resources when evaluating policies, projects, and capital investments.	Short-term			

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.

Subinitiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
9.1.1 The City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore establishing an intergovernmental renewable energy procurement partnership to evaluate the feasibility of jointly entering into long-term power purchase agreements that connect electricity demand with renewable energy facilities ideally located in the county.	9.1.1.1 Evaluate legal, governance, and procurement structures for establishing an intergovernmental renewable energy procurement partnership among local governments and other eligible public or institutional partners.	Long-term		STE	
9.1.2 The City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County should explore the feasibility of establishing a McLean County Public Power Authority.	N/A	Extended-term			

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