



ECOLOGY
ACTION CENTER

Community Energy Strategic Plan Report

For McLean County, the City of Bloomington,
and the Town of Normal
2026





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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.

This work could not have been completed without the dedicated group of stakeholders who so freely offered their knowledge and expertise and who gave up more than the occasional evening to take part in this process. Their thoughtful contributions, diverse perspectives, and willingness to engage in open and constructive dialogue were instrumental in shaping the vision, goals, and initiatives outlined in this plan.

This plan reflects a shared commitment to building a more resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy future for our community. The recommendations found herein reflect the ideas and priorities discussed throughout the process, and we hope they provide a useful foundation for our community's next steps in addressing its energy needs and opportunities.

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, or approval through each jurisdiction's normal decision-making processes.

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.

Project Team

Michael Brown	Executive Director
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The Conditions Shaping Our Energy Future



Situating the Planning Process within the Local Context

The 2026 Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and Town of Normal in Illinois 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 Townships¹ 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 supply⁶—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 chills⁷ to prolonged, excessive heat and humidity.⁸ These events acted as bookends to a storm season⁹ that damaged homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure and that caused widespread power outages.¹⁰⁻¹²

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 report 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 and 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}



Severe weather events continued in the week leading up to finalization of this report when a fast-moving severe storm swept through Bloomington-Normal. Heavy rain and wind gusts caused widespread damage across the community. Downed trees and power lines, flooding, property damage, and extensive power outages disrupted transportation, businesses, college campuses, and health care services.¹⁷ More than 24,000 customers lost power at the height of the storm.¹⁷ In the days that followed, additional heavy rainfall brought further flooding and prompted renewed emergency declarations from Bloomington and Normal as crews continued cleanup, repairs, and damage assessments.¹⁷

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 inescapably 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 expenses¹⁸⁻²¹.



At the state level, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Illinois Power Agency (IPA), and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) released the 2025 Resource Adequacy Study²² 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 and strains regional electricity markets.²⁴

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.²⁵ 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 Illinois²⁶ 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.²⁷⁻²⁹

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 needed to achieve this aim.



Background



Introduction

What is a CESP?

The Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal is a long-range, dynamic roadmap used to guide climate action, especially as it relates to energy planning and the achievement of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.

This CESP outlines initiatives and supporting actions that can be pursued across local governments and the broader community to enhance energy efficiency, promote the adoption and development of clean or renewable energy, and achieve sustainability objectives. For the purposes of this plan, the broader community includes commercial, residential, and industrial sectors. Beyond achieving GHG emissions reduction, the CESP can also pave the way for additional co-benefits including improved air quality and other environmental and public benefits (see Figure 1).

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.

How was the CESP Developed?

The CESP was developed using the recommended framework outlined in the U.S. Department of Energy's Guide to [Community Energy Strategic Planning](#).³⁰ This guide provides a step-by-step process for creating a comprehensive, long-term energy strategy and includes engaging stakeholders, developing an energy vision, assessing the current energy profile, developing goals and strategies, identifying and prioritizing actions, and adopting and implementing the CESP (see Figure 1).



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

The “C” in CESP: Who is the Community?

The CESP Report was developed for McLean County, the Town of Normal, and the City of Bloomington as part of the McLean County Energy Improvements and Energy Planning project. This project was funded through the Illinois Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program which provided federal funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to support municipalities and counties with energy and climate planning, energy-efficiency audits, and upgrades to public buildings.³¹ The McLean County Energy Improvements and Energy Planning project combined energy-efficiency improvements for the McLean County

Health Department building with community energy planning. The project aims to achieve substantial long-term energy cost savings, demonstrate energy and environmental leadership within the county, and benefit disadvantaged communities. As a subawardee on the project, the Ecology Action Center (EAC) was responsible for completing the energy planning component through the development of a CESP for McLean County and the Bloomington-Normal area.

The CESP is also a direct response to long-standing energy, climate, and air quality priorities identified in planning documents adopted by McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal (see Table 1).

Local Government	Objective	Priority	Strategy	Planning Document	Year
McLean County	Clean air and a natural climate unharmed by human activities.	Identify and maintain acceptable levels of greenhouse gases and airborne pollutants.	Support efforts of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to monitor air quality in urban areas.	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Climate and Air Quality Policy</i>	2009
City of Bloomington	Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce air pollutants.	Maintain a greenhouse gas inventory and develop a climate action plan.	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-3.1e</i>	2015
Town of Normal	Establish a dedicated Town of Normal Sustainability Office with supporting work groups.	NA	Develop a robust Climate Action Plan (CAP), including formal targets and plans for: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 1</i>	2024

Table 1. Local Calls for the Development of a Climate Action Plan and Greenhouse Gas Reduction.
Note: A Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) may also be referred to as a Climate Action Plan (CAP).

While the geographic scope of the CESP is countywide, it is important to recognize that McLean County is comprised of a total of 21 incorporated municipalities as well as at least 14 additional unincorporated communities. This report does not claim to represent the individual perspectives or priorities of each of these areas. Rather, it place emphasis on the City of Bloomington

and the Town of Normal because, taken together, these geographies form the county’s most populated urban core and, as a result, account for the majority of GHG emissions in the county. The CESP therefore considers energy use and emissions across McLean County while giving greater attention to the areas where energy use and emissions are most concentrated.

For these reasons, strategies or initiatives identified in the CESP only explicitly name McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal where specific governmental roles or responsibilities are relevant. This does not preclude action by other municipalities or unincorporated areas within the county. Regional coordination and broad participation across all levels of government should ideally be fostered and pursued over time, with the recognition that there are varying levels of capacity and resources to advance the CESP mission and vision across the county.

The CESP Mission

The McLean County, City of Bloomington, and Town of 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.

The CESP Stakeholders and Subcommittees

Stakeholders were selected to bring a range of perspectives and professional expertise to the CESP process. They represented local government, community organizations, business and industry, utilities, and other sectors of the community. From the outset, it was important to identify and engage stakeholders who reflected the demographic diversity of McLean County. However, because the energy sector is complex, the process also required stakeholders who possessed relevant subject-matter expertise or held professional or community roles that could contribute directly to the work of the subcommittee groups.

The subcommittee groups included Local Government Operations (LGO), Transportation (TRN), and Stationary Energy (STE). The LGO subcommittee included staff or representatives from McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal and focused on developing strategies to reduce GHG emissions from government buildings, vehicle fleets, public transit, and wastewater treatment operations. The Transportation subcommittee examined energy use and emissions associated with passenger transportation as well as

opportunities to improve access to lower-carbon transportation options, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and create more connected, pedestrian-friendly communities. The Stationary Energy subcommittee evaluated emissions from all electricity and natural gas usage in the community from homes and businesses across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors and worked to identify strategies to reduce related emissions.

Stakeholders were first invited to participate collectively in a CESP Kickoff Meeting, with both an in-person and virtual option offered. Following the Kickoff Meeting, stakeholders participated in their respective subcommittee meetings. Each subcommittee met five times between January and June 2026, with meetings held monthly except in May.

Table 2 identifies the stakeholders who participated in at least one of the six CESP meetings. Participation varied among stakeholders, with some participating in a single meeting and others participating throughout the process.

A Note on the Agriculture Sector

It is important to note that the agriculture industry was not included in this iteration of the CESP or in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report for Data Year 2022,³² also completed by the Ecology Action Center (EAC).

During the early stages of both the GHG inventory and CESP processes, the agricultural sector was recognized as a vital component of McLean County's economy, landscape, and community identity. Given the importance and scale of agricultural activities across the county, appropriately incorporating the sector into an energy planning effort and developing strategies that reflect the sector's unique energy needs and opportunities would have required a more extensive process than was feasible within the scope and timeline of this project. Efforts were still made to engage stakeholders from this sector to serve on established subcommittee groups or take part in the process, including representatives from rural municipalities and the local agriculture community. However, participation was limited.

While 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.

NAME	AFFILIATION	PROFESSIONAL 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</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>NAACP Mennonite College of Nursing</i>	Instructional Experience Coordinator	Transportation
Vitaly Vladimirov	<i>Resources Innovations</i>	Market Engagement Consultant	Stationary Energy

Table 1. CESP Stakeholders Listed According to Affiliation, Professional Role, and Subcommittee.

The CESP Timeline

	OCT 25	NOV 25	DEC 25	JAN 26	FEB 26	MAR 26	APR 26	MAY 26	JUN 26	JUL 26	AUG 26	SEP 26
Stakeholder Identification and Engagement												
CESP Kickoff Meeting												
Subcommittee Meetings												
Report Writing – DRAFT CESP												
Public Comment												
Final Report Delivery												
CESP Adoption												

McLean County GHG Emissions Profile

The CESP for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal builds off of the [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report for Data Year 2022](#)³² (2022 GHG Emissions Inventory) which pinpoints changes in local emissions across key sectors, including local government operations, transportation, and stationary energy, among others. This inventory provides a foundation for understanding community energy trends and identifying opportunities for targeted action.

In Table 3, a snapshot of the 2022 GHG emissions profile is provided, showing emissions by sector and geography, along with the proportion of total emissions associated with each category. This table provides a high-level summary. For a more detailed discussion of the inventory methodology, data, and findings, please refer to the full report.

Subcommittee	Emissions Sector	Geography	Emissions (MtCO ₂ e)	Share of Total Emissions
Transportation	Vehicle Miles Traveled	Countywide	796,761	29.9%
Stationary Energy	Commercial	Countywide	683,276	25.6%
Stationary Energy	Residential	Countywide	674,186	25.3%
Stationary Energy	Industrial	Countywide	243,865	9.1%
NA	Solid Waste	Countywide	100,024	3.8%
NA	Process and Fugitive	Countywide	76,510	2.9%
Transportation	Aviation	Countywide	29,427	1.1%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	McLean County	16,126	0.6%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	City of Bloomington	14,990	0.6%
Local Government Operations	Wastewater	City of Bloomington		
Local Government Operations	Wastewater	Town of Normal	10,248	0.4%
Transportation	Rail	Countywide	8,814	0.3%
Local Government Operations	Buildings & Facilities	Town of Normal	7,795	0.3%
Transportation	Connect Transit	City of Bloomington		
Transportation	Connect Transit	Town of Normal	3,452	0.1%
Local Government Operations	Street Lights and Traffic Signals	City of Bloomington		
Local Government Operations	Street Lights and Traffic Signals	Town of Normal		
Local Government Operations	Street Lights and Traffic Signals	McLean County	1,458	0.1%
TOTAL			2,666,931	100%

Table 3. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) for sectors across McLean County and local governments.

Note: The emissions data presented in Table 3 reflect conditions in 2022 and should be understood as a snapshot of the community's emissions profile at that time. Emissions levels and the relative contribution of different sectors may have changed since the inventory was completed. For example, production levels at some industrial facilities may have changed since 2022, which could affect their associated emissions. As a result, the industrial sector's current contribution to community emissions may differ from what is shown in Table 3.

Note: A separate subcommittee was not created for solid waste or process and fugitive emissions. This was partly due to the fact that solid waste is already addressed through an established local waste management structure. The Ecology Action Center serves as the solid waste agency for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal and handles solid waste planning, recycling and waste-reduction programs, household hazardous waste coordination, and related technical services. Process and fugitive emissions were also not assigned to a separate subcommittee and were not a primary focus in this iteration of the CESP.

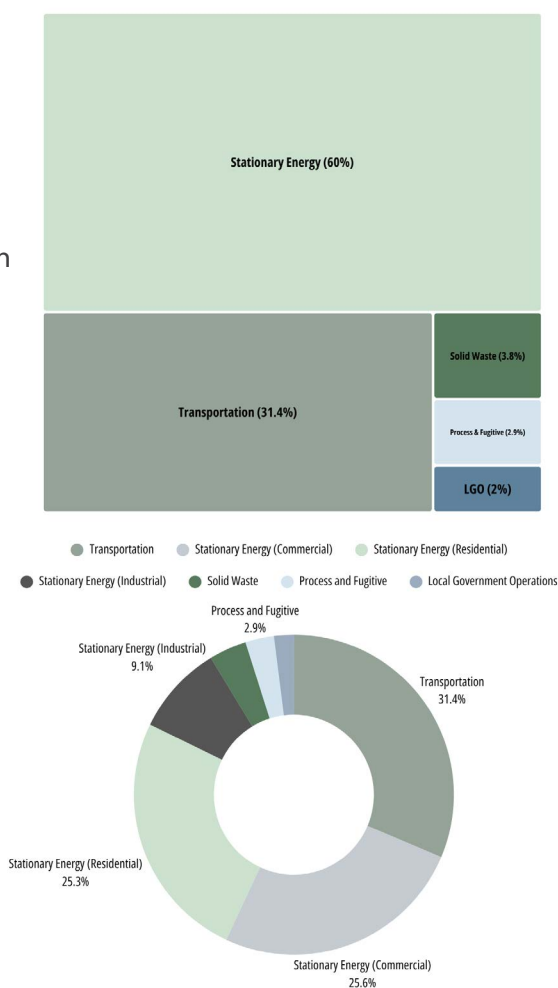
Results from the 2022 GHG Emissions Inventory reveal the following trends in emissions:

- The **transportation** and **stationary energy** sectors dominate the emissions profile, together accounting for approximately **90% of total greenhouse gas emissions across McLean County**.
- Transportation emissions represent the largest single emissions category, primarily driven by vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the total number of miles driven by all motor vehicles in a region over a one-year period. **On-road transportation** accounts for approximately **30% of total emissions**. Put another way, **nearly three out of every ten metric tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions in McLean County come from vehicles traveling on roads**.



efforts to reduce energy use across the residential sector.

- **Local government operations**, including municipal buildings and facilities, wastewater treatment, and street lighting, **account for approximately 2% of total emissions**. While a smaller portion of the overall community



- **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 60% of total emissions**.
- **Commercial buildings account for nearly as much of the county's emissions as residential buildings** despite representing a much smaller number of individual sites compared to the number of homes and residences in the county. This suggests that **commercial buildings represent a particularly important opportunity for emissions reductions**, alongside

profile, these emissions represent areas where operational improvements and efficiency investments can reduce energy use and associated costs, demonstrate the benefits of decarbonization, and inform broader community efforts to reduce emissions.

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.

GHG Emissions Projections for McLean County

The 2022 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory provides a snapshot of greenhouse gas emissions in McLean County at that specific point in time. To understand how emissions may change in the future, the CESP used the Local Governments for Sustainability's (ICLEI's) ClearPath forecasting software to develop emissions projections through 2050 under two distinct grid decarbonization scenarios. This forecasting software allows communities and local governments to establish future emissions trajectories by applying assumptions about changes in emissions-generating activity and the carbon intensity of energy sources. ICLEI recommends using population growth and electricity-grid decarbonization as starting points for developing a business-as-usual (BAU) trajectory.

What is a Business-as-Usual (BAU) Trajectory?

This section models Business-As-Usual (BAU) Trajectories under **two distinct** grid decarbonization scenarios for McLean County.

A BAU trajectory models how emissions in a region might evolve if no new climate action is pursued. It assumes that no new policies, green or clean energy technologies, corrective actions, or changes to existing habits or practices are implemented by local governments or the broader community thereby allowing current trends to continue.

To assess the BAU trajectory, population projections were used as the primary indicators for changes in energy use and other emissions-generating activities over time, consistent with ICLEI guidance. The estimated change in population is identified by ICLEI as an industry standard indicator for stationary energy use and may be applied where appropriate. Two grid decarbonization scenarios were calculated and applied to account for changes in the emissions associated with electricity consumption

as the electricity supply was estimated to become either more or less carbon-intensive.

The resulting BAU trajectories represents a reference trajectory for how emissions could change over time based on these assumptions, before additional emissions-reduction strategies are applied. They provide a baseline against which the potential impact of actions identified in the CESP can be evaluated. **The scenarios are based on specific assumptions and estimates and are subject to uncertainty. Caution should be exercised when interpreting the results.**

What is Grid Decarbonization?

Grid decarbonization refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the generation of electricity. As the electricity supply shifts away from fossil fuel generation and toward lower- or zero-carbon energy sources, the amount of GHG emissions associated with each unit of electricity consumed decreases. Grid decarbonization therefore reduces emissions associated with electricity use even when the amount of electricity consumed remains the same or increases.

For example, Ameren Illinois is one of the primary electric utilities serving McLean County, although portions of the county are also served by the electric cooperative Corn Belt Energy Corporation. Ameren delivers electricity to customers throughout the county as part of the broader regional electric grid. The carbon intensity of that electricity is influenced by the energy mix, or the generation resources supplying the grid, and how those resources change over time. Ameren anticipates changes in the energy mix to move away from coal (see Figure 2) and has established a company-wide goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, with interim goals of reducing carbon emissions 60% by 2030 and 85% by 2040, relative to 2005 levels (see Figure 3).

Ameren's Anticipated Energy Mix

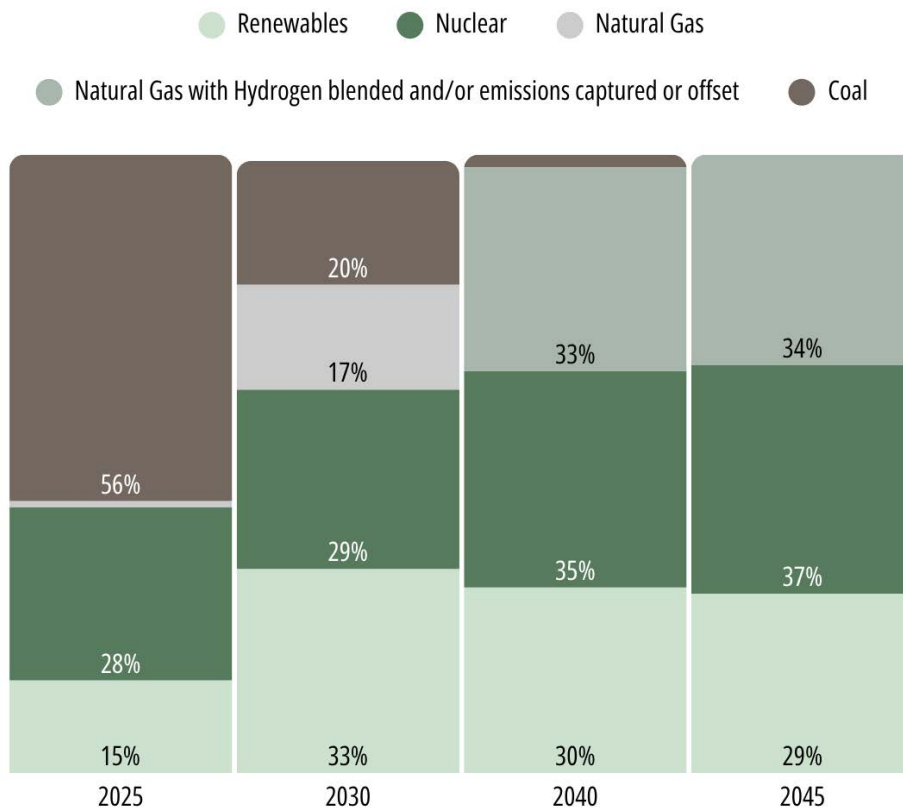


Figure 2. Ameren's anticipated energy mix for 2030, 2040, and 2045. Ameren Missouri. (2025). Ameren Missouri's preferred resource plan summary [\[Report\]](#)

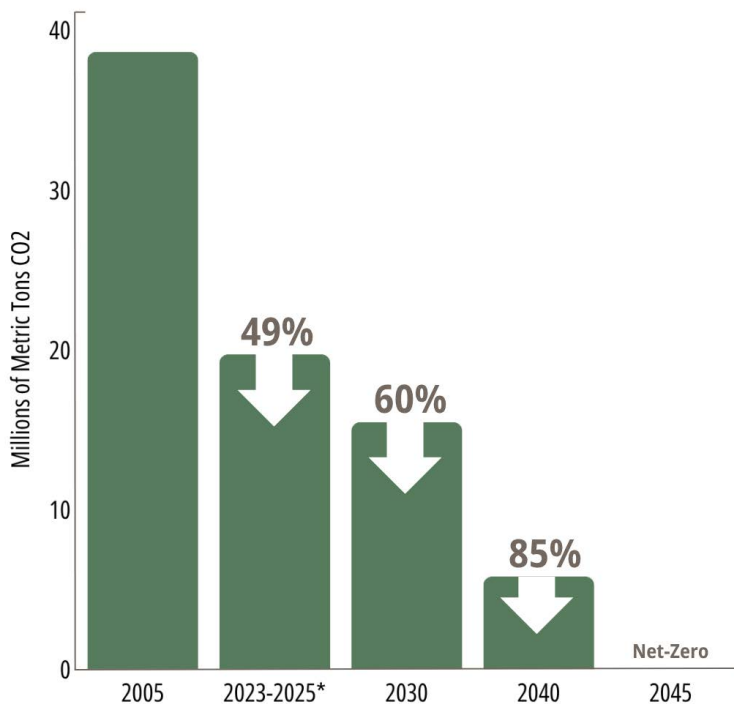


Figure 3. Ameren's proposed decarbonization pathway to target net-zero carbon emissions by 2045 with interim goals of a 60% and 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and 2040, respectively. Ameren Corporation. (n.d.). Targeting net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Ameren Sustainability. Retrieved July 31, 2026, from <https://www.ameren.com/sustainability>

*According to Ameren, this value represents the "three-year average CO2 emissions for 2023, 2024, and 2025. Ameren's goals encompass both Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions including other greenhouse gas emissions of methane, nitrous oxide, and sulfur hexafluoride."

Incorporating the Potential Impacts of Hyper-scale Data Centers and Climate In-Migration

The BAU trajectories reflect different assumptions about how population growth and grid decarbonization may affect future emissions. While the first trajectory provides a reference based on a net-zero decarbonization pathway and a stagnating-to-declining population for the county, emerging changes in regional electricity demand suggest that additional factors should be considered when evaluating potential future conditions.

Two BAU trajectories were therefore modeled. The first reflects an idealized Ameren grid decarbonization scenario in which net-zero carbon emissions are achieved by 2045 and assumes a stagnating-to-declining McLean County population. The second accounts for the potential impacts of hyper-scale data center growth on electricity demand and the pace of grid decarbonization while also

incorporating potential population growth associated with climate-driven in-migration.

The first trajectory is less representative of the conditions that may shape McLean County's emissions over the projection period because it does not account for the impacts of rapidly increasing energy demand. The proliferation of hyper-scale data centers is expected to place substantial new demands on the regional electricity system,^{22,23} creating uncertainty about the pace at which grid carbon intensity can decline. At the same time, the potential for climate-driven in-migration could contribute to population growth rather than the stagnation or decline assumed in the first trajectory. For purposes of this report, the second BAU trajectory provides the preferred reference case for evaluating future emissions and the potential impact of emissions-reduction strategies. For more in-depth information, please refer to Appendix A: Technical Appendix.



Figure 4(a) and 4(b). (a) The Local Government Operations BAU trajectory under an idealized Ameren grid decarbonization scenario where net-zero carbon emissions are met by 2045 and that anticipates a stagnating to declining population for McLean County. (b) The Local Government Operations BAU trajectory that accounts for the impact of hyper-scale data centers on grid decarbonization and energy demand as well as a population growth rate that is influenced by climate in-migration.

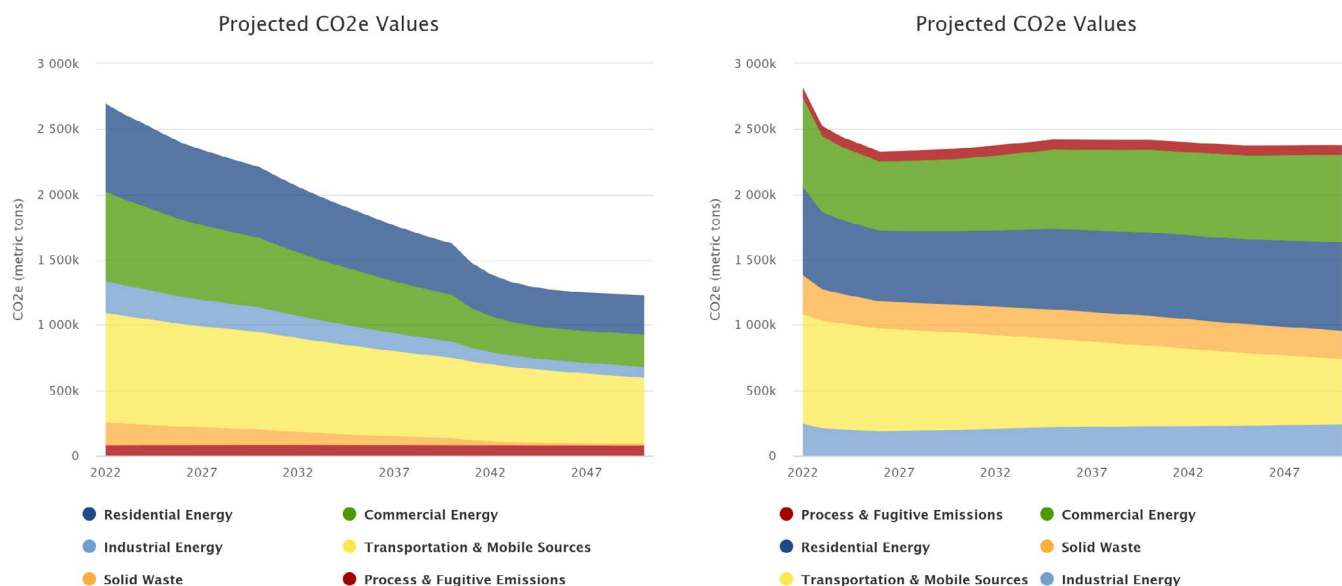


Figure 5(a) and 5(b). (a) The Community BAU trajectory under an idealized Ameren grid decarbonization scenario where net-zero carbon emissions are met by 2045 and that anticipates a stagnating to declining population for McLean County. (b) The Community BAU trajectory that accounts for the impact of hyper-scale data centers on grid decarbonization and energy demand as well as a population growth rate that is influenced by climate in-migration.

Alignment with Local and State Plans

Existing local and state plans provided an important foundation for developing the CESP's goals and strategies. Several plans identified priorities related to clean energy, energy efficiency, transportation, land use, resilience, and emissions reduction. Existing plan objectives, priorities and strategies were synthesized and reviewed by stakeholders to better ensure that the CESP reinforced or expanded upon previous planning efforts and provided an opportunity to bring these efforts together within a coordinated community energy strategy.

This alignment further provides a basis for implementation by connecting the CESP to previously adopt planning efforts across municipalities and the county. It positions local priorities within broader state

climate and energy targets and may support future opportunities to pursue state and federal funding. Taken together, these established plans provide an important policy context and grounds with which to advance the goals and supporting actions recommended in the CESP.

The CESP is not intended to replace existing plans or promote duplication of effort. Rather, it is intended to complement those efforts by identifying opportunities for collaboration and providing a community-wide perspective on energy and emissions.

Appendix B provides a detailed review of the relevant plans as well as the policies and strategies identified within them.

Guiding Principals



Guiding Principles

As noted above, many of the goals 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 challenges of implementation. While the approaches needed to achieve decarbonization targets 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.

With this in mind, during the collaborative, stakeholder-led development of the CESP Guiding Principles, the

focus was placed on identifying the elements most needed to move from strategy development to actual implementation. The resulting framework emphasizes structural approaches that strengthen energy systems, institutional capacity, and benefit the common good to support long-term progress toward net-zero emissions.

The framework underlying the CESP Guiding Principles draws on a simplified representation of the electric grid (see Figure 6). Just as generation, transmission, and distribution are essential components of the grid, energy optimization, institutional infrastructure, and common good orientation represent the complementary and interconnected dimensions of the CESP Guiding Principles. Each guiding principle is defined by multiple parameters that provide further structure and specificity.

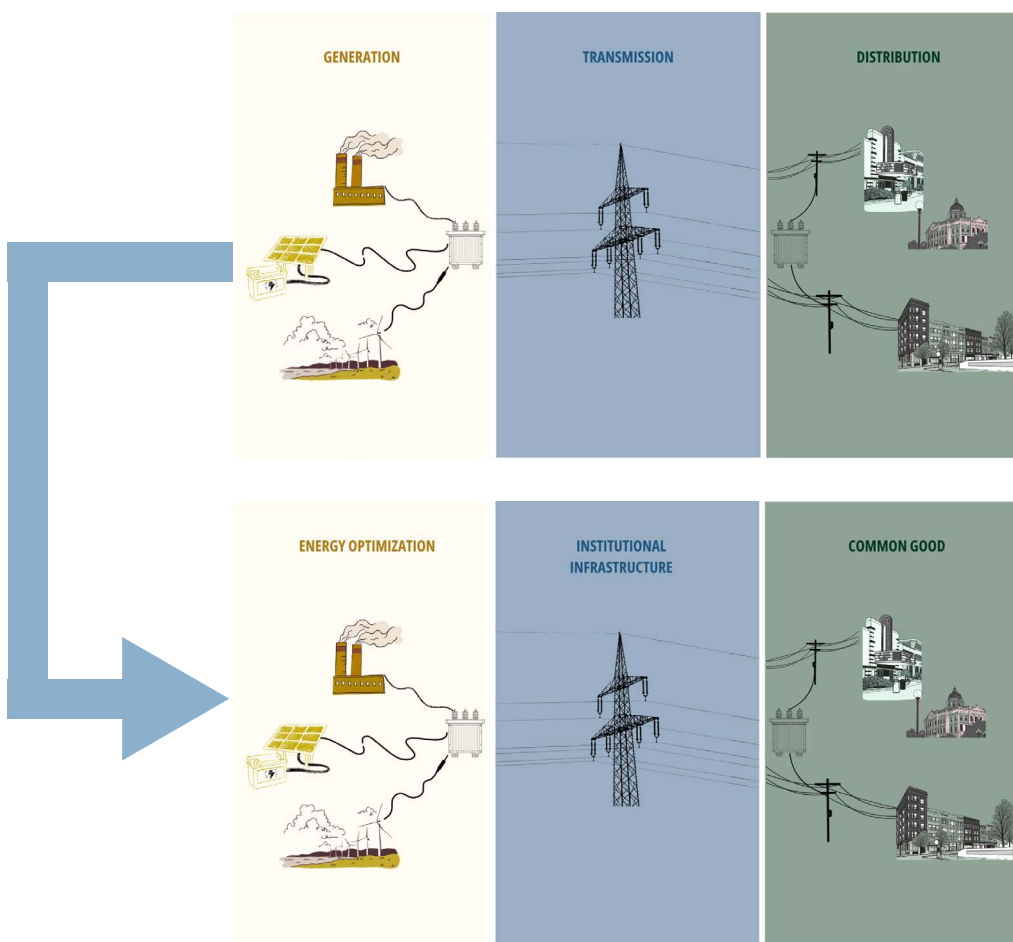


Figure 6. Conceptual framework for the creation of the CESP Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle 1: Promote Energy Optimization

Parameter	Definition: The CESP goal, initiative, or sub-initiative...
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 or infrastructure that increase the use of renewable energy sources

Guiding Principle 2: Build the Groundwork for Institutional Infrastructure

Parameter	Definition: The CESP goal, initiative, or sub-initiative...
Partnership building	Promotes inter-jurisdictional or cross-sector collaboration
Operational coordination	Streamlines information and resource sharing
Data informed	Establishes data collection or benchmarking measures to advance data-driven decision-making
Transparency and accountability	Provides the public with open, timely, and accessible information regarding institutional decisions, actions, data, or processes
Policy and regulatory integration	Integrates energy goals into local policies, codes, or regulations to support long term implementation
Alignment with state energy goals or requirements	Proactively aligns local energy planning with state-level initiatives or requirements

Guiding Principle 3: Orient toward the Common Good

Parameter	Definition: The CESP goal, initiative, or sub-initiative...
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 resources easier to access and use
Justice centered	Embeds equity, environmental justice, energy justice, energy affordability, or improved public health outcome considerations into programs or resources

These Guiding Principles provided a common framework for translating the CESP's vision and mission into specific goals and actions with a deliberate emphasis on structural approaches that pave the way for sustained climate action. Each CESP goal, initiative, sub-initiative, or supporting action embodied at least one of the three Guiding Principles, though many incorporated elements of multiple principles and parameters. The absence of goals focusing solely on individual action should not be taken to mean that individual choices and behavior were viewed as unimportant. Rather, this framework recognizes that addressing community-wide energy and emissions challenges requires using local levers to influence the policies, institutions, and infrastructure that shape and prop up individual opportunities.

Goals and Initiatives



Goals and Initiatives

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

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 community-wide clean energy goals and initiatives.

Goal 2 – Sustainable Economic Development for a Clean Energy Transition

Advance the clean energy transition through a thriving, clean economy that builds regional prosperity and provides stable jobs.

Initiative 2.1: Incentivize Clean Economic Development

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

Initiative 2.2: Clean Industry and Workforce Development

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

Goal 3 – Large Building Decarbonization

Improve the energy performance of large buildings to reduce emissions, lower operating costs, increase resilience, and create healthier, more efficient places to live, work, and learn.

Initiative 3.1: Lead by Example - Local Government Energy Benchmarking

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

Initiative 3.2: Build a Culture of High Energy Performance

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

Initiative 3.3: Build Energy Standards

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

Initiative 3.4: Preserve and Rehabilitate the Existing Building Stock

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

Initiative 3.5: Promote Energy-Efficiency in Government Buildings

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

Initiative 3.6: Promote Energy Efficiency in Commercial and Industrial Buildings

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

Initiative 3.7: Promote Energy Efficiency in Affordable Housing

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

Goal 4 – Clean Energy Development

Create the conditions for clean energy development to flourish by making clean energy easier to develop, adopt, and integrate into future growth.

Initiative 4.1: Promote Clear Development Pathways

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

Initiative 4.2: Promote Future-Ready Development

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

Goal 5 – Compact and Connected Communities

Build communities designed for connected neighborhoods, efficient growth, reduced dependence on personal vehicles, and more sustainable and convenient ways to move.

Initiative 5.1: Sustainable Growth through Land Use Design

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

Initiative 5.2: Support Alternative Transportation Use

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

Initiative 5.3: Explore School Transportation Opportunities

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

Initiative 5.4: Modernize Parking Practices

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

Initiative 5.5: Expand Connections Beyond the County

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

Goal 6 – Regional Energy Stability

Advance a clean energy future where communities benefit from reduced emissions, improved resilience, long-term energy affordability, and more sustainable energy systems.

Initiative 6.1: Government Fleet Transition

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

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

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

Initiative 6.3: Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems

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

Initiative 6.4: Thermal Energy and Equity

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

Initiative 6.5: Grid Reliability

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

Goal 7 – Resilient Natural Systems and Land Stewardship

Steward natural systems to sequester carbon, protect and preserve natural resources, reduce climate impacts, and support healthy landscapes and communities for future generations.

Initiative 7.1: Water Infrastructure

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

Initiative 7.2: Dual Land Use

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

Initiative 7.3: Habitat Restoration and Native Landscaping

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

Goal 8 – Community Empowerment and Education

Equip the community with the knowledge, resources, and opportunities needed to shape the county's clean energy future.

Initiative 8.1: Energy Education and Adoption Support

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

Initiative 8.2: Transportation Resources and Tools

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

Initiative 8.3: The Nexus of Civic Spaces, Public Design, and 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



Understanding the Implementation Framework

This section 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, 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 matrix 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 indicates funding opportunities that were known or anticipated to become available in the near term at the time the CESP was developed. These may include clean energy programs, grants, tax credits, or other funding opportunities established through legislation like the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act (CRGA) or made available through other existing sources.

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. Due to the high number of sub-initiatives included in the framework, these classifications aim to 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.

Implementation Matrix

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.

Sub-initiative	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 Evaluate best practices from the Town of Normal's Sustainability Task Force and tailor lessons learned to the specific needs and contexts of the City of Bloomington and McLean County.	Near-term		LGO	•
	1.1.1.2 Explore forming internal working groups across key municipal and county departments to better 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 initiatives.	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 coordinate on 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 development of a regional clean energy	1.1.2.1 Foster continued collaboration with jurisdictions and unincorporated communities throughout the county to identify local sustainability planning needs, priorities, or capacity.	Near-term		LGO	•
	1.1.2.2 Develop a regional sustainability planning framework that establishes shared goals, recommended actions, or planning resources that jurisdictions can adapt to local priorities and circumstances.	Near-term			
	1.1.2.3 Create shared or standardized sustainability planning tools, guidelines, or data resources to reduce the staff time and technical expertise	Near-term			

	planning framework that guides countywide sustainability planning efforts.		required for jurisdictions to develop and implement local sustainability initiatives.				
		1.1.2.4	Establish ongoing opportunities for participating jurisdictions to share resources and best practices.	Near-term			
		1.1.2.5	Explore partnerships with community organizations like Illinois State University's Office of Sustainability, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, Ameren, or 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 or staffing model for a Regional Office of Sustainability that addresses the varying levels of technical capacity and staffing availability across jurisdictions.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.3	Define core functions of a Regional Office of Sustainability such as benchmarking, reporting, policy coordination, or program implementation support.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.4	Explore intergovernmental agreements to establish roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures for coordinated sustainability management across the county.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.5	Identify opportunities to consolidate existing sustainability-related responsibilities across the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to avoid duplication of effort.	Short-term			
		1.1.3.6	Assess potential funding sources such as shared contributions, grants, and other funding mechanisms 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.

Sub-initiative	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, or collaboratively developed key performance indicators (KPIs) into capital planning and project scoping.	1.2.1.1 Develop a set of shared regional sustainability standards that can be applied across jurisdictions but that remain responsive to each jurisdiction's implementation capacity.	Near-term		LGO	
	1.2.1.3 Incorporate lifecycle cost analysis into project evaluation processes to elevate long-term maintenance, operational costs, and the social costs of carbon alongside upfront capital costs for more accurate return on investment estimates or calculations.	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 an emphasis on metrics tied to energy use, efficiency, or emissions.	Short-term			
	1.2.1.7 Integrate these considerations into existing capital planning workflows.	Short-term			
1.2.2 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should pursue a regional approach to incorporating energy efficiency, electrification readiness, or other sustainability criteria into	1.2.2.1 Establish baseline sustainability expectations that jurisdictions can reference when incorporating sustainability criteria based on project type, available resources, or local priorities.	Short-term		LGO	
	1.2.2.2 Collaboratively develop a common set of sustainability criteria that can be integrated into procurement policies, requests for proposals (RFPs), and development agreements across participating jurisdictions.	Short-term			
	1.2.2.3 Prioritize sustainability criteria that provide measurable long-term value, cost-savings, or co-benefits across social, environmental, or public health dimensions.	Short-term			

procurement policies, requests for proposals (RFPs), and development agreements.	1.2.2.4	Periodically evaluate procurement and development outcomes to refine sustainability criteria and incorporate evolving best practices, technologies, or regulatory requirements.	Medium-term			
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Initiative 1.3: Finance Clean Energy Initiatives

Secure dedicated funding mechanisms to support and sustain community-wide clean energy goals and initiatives.

Sub-initiative	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, or 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, businesses, and community organizations across McLean County to access funding based on demonstrated need, anticipated impact, or alignment with regional priorities.	Short-term			

	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	Engage Connect Transit, local governments, trail organizations, park districts, and community stakeholders in evaluating governance and funding options.	Long-term			
	1.3.2.5	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			
	1.3.2.6	Develop recommendations for implementation, including governance structure, funding approaches, service responsibilities, and performance measures.	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.

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.

Sub-initiative	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 that can be used to promote sustainable economic development into a widely accessible clearinghouse of resources. Current incentives include enterprise zones, tax abatements, tax increment financing (TIF) districts, low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), utility incentives, Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE), and others.	Near-term		LGO	*
	2.1.1.2 In collaboration with the BNEDC, jurisdictions should work together to align incentive programs to advance sustainable or clean energy 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 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	Near-term			

		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</i> or framework that clearly identifies available incentives for 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, McLean County, and the Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) should collaboratively	2.1.3.1	Engage developers, employers, educational institutions, utilities, and other regional partners to promote and advance sustainable development opportunities identified through the framework.	Short-term		LGO
		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		

implement the Regional Sustainable Development Incentive Framework to align economic development with countywide energy and sustainability goals.	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			
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Initiative 2.2: Clean Industry and Workforce Development

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

Sub-initiative	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 sustainable economic growth.	2.2.1.1 Continue to support workforce development, training, or education programs related to electric vehicles, battery technologies, advanced manufacturing, and other clean energy initiatives.	Near-term		TRN	
	2.2.1.2 Encourage expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and supporting transportation electrification initiatives throughout the region.	Near-term			
	2.2.1.3 Explore opportunities for public-private pilot projects that demonstrate innovative transportation, electrification, or related energy technologies.	Medium-term			
	2.2.1.4 Leverage regional industry expertise to support municipal fleet electrification and broader transportation decarbonization efforts.	Medium-term			
	2.2.1.5 Continue to leverage and invest in the area's educational institutions to train and develop a robust clean energy workforce that expands access to clean energy career pathways for underserved populations.	Near-term			

	2.2.1.6	Continue to coordinate with educational institutions, utilities, industry partners, and economic development organizations to align workforce, infrastructure, and sustainability initiatives.	Near-term			
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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.

Sub-initiative	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, should pursue participation in the Illinois Clean Buildings Commitment.	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	•
	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 <i>Clean Buildings Champions</i> 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, or alignment of municipal and county building energy strategies across jurisdictions.	Near-term			
	3.1.1.5	Encourage regular coordination among <i>Clean Buildings Champions</i> 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 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 Energy Sense Resilience Center (University of Illinois System), to support development of standardized benchmarking methodologies, data collection protocols, or 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 large building owners to improve energy performance through incentives, education, and recognition.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.2.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should jointly develop and maintain an incentive clearinghouse or hub	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			

	that encourages large building owners (i.e. commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily property owners) to invest in energy efficiency, building electrification, renewable energy, or other emissions-reduction measures.	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 Program</i> 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 streamline comparability of data across sectors.	Short-term			
		3.2.2.3	Partner with utilities, regional organizations, educational institutions, or 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,	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	*

and multifamily buildings that supports energy efficiency improvements, emissions reductions, and clean building outcomes.	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	If a Regional Office of Sustainability or similar entity is established, 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	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	

transparency and performance and explore opportunities for public reporting of large building energy performance.	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			

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

Sub-initiative	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 to pilot stretch code adoption in select projects to assess the feasibility for larger-scale adoption across the county.	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 stretch 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

Sub-initiative	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 or 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 renovation or retrofit projects.	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 underutilized and vacant buildings.	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 Work with property owners, financial institutions, and affordable housing organizations to establish a proactive inspection approach for vacant and at-risk properties to identify maintenance issues before deterioration requires major rehabilitation or demolition.	Short-term			
	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, affordable housing organizations, and community partners to address challenges associated with vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties.	Short-term			
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Initiative 3.5: Promote Energy-Efficiency in Government Buildings

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

Sub-initiative	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 or government 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 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 devices like 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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
3.6.1 Build a peer network among local industrial, commercial, educational, or 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, educational institutions, 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 energy efficiency 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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential ²	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, or 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, affordable housing organizations, 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 and affordable housing goals.	Near-term	✓		
3.7.2 Explore the development of a rental housing energy	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	

² Funding potential was identified for this sub-initiative because the McLean County Regional Planning Commission is currently in the process of hiring a Housing Coordinator for 2026-2027. Based on the released Request for Proposals (RFP), the responsibilities of this position overlap substantially with the action steps identified in the sub-initiative.

	performance framework that encourages landlords and property owners to maintain or improve building efficiency, electrification, or weatherization.	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			
		3.7.2.3	Coordinate with utilities, housing agencies, and affordable housing organizations 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, or 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	Explore 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			
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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.

Sub-initiative	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 changes to permitting wait times 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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
4.2.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should encourage the integration of clean energy technologies into revitalization, redevelopment, major renovation, or new development projects where feasible.	4.2.1.1 Promote awareness of long-term operational savings, reduction of the social costs of carbon, and other resilience benefits associated with integrating clean energy systems into redevelopment projects.	Near-term		LGO	*
	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, or 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, but not limited to, roof orientation, structural load capacity, or electrical system planning.	Near-term		STE	•
		4.2.3.2	Provide guidance and educational resources for developers, builders, landlords, and homeowners on low-cost design choices that enable future solar PV, battery storage, or 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 or other transit-friendly site and street design in new development and redevelopment projects.	4.2.4.1	Increase safety of bicycle travel by line striping bike lanes and by building protected bike lanes.	Near-term		TRN	
		4.2.4.2	Explore opportunities to repurpose underutilized roadway space for bicycle, pedestrian, transit, or other non-automobile uses.	Short-term			
		4.2.4.3	Encourage traffic-calming strategies that improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and support lower-speed travel like roundabouts and speed bumps.	Medium-term			
4.2.5	Local governments should collaboratively explore opportunities to encourage low-cost EV charging readiness in new construction and major renovations.	4.2.5.1	Identify opportunities to incorporate EV charging readiness into development standards for new construction and major redevelopment projects.	Short-term		TRN	
		4.2.5.2	Identify priority locations for future EV charging infrastructure to support equitable access across different housing types, neighborhoods, and community destinations.	Short-term			
		4.2.5.3	Coordinate with utilities, developers, property owners, and other partners to support the planning and installation of EV charging infrastructure in priority locations.	Medium-term			
4.2.6	Local governments should encourage the incorporation of solar	4.2.6.1	Consider solar carports as part of broader suit of transportation, fleet electrification, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure planning efforts.	Near-term		TRN	

photovoltaic carports, battery energy storage systems, and other solar-integrated parking infrastructure in new parking lot development and major parking facility redevelopments where feasible.	4.2.6.2	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			
	4.2.6.3	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			
	4.2.6.4	Evaluate opportunities to incorporate solar carports into government parking lot projects and major parking facility renovations.	Short-term			
	4.2.6.5	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			
	4.2.6.6	Evaluate opportunities to leverage future CEJA funding programs, including the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program or similar initiatives, to support solar carports and community solar projects that advance local renewable energy generation, community ownership, and energy sovereignty goals.	Short-term	✓		

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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential ³	Developed by	Strategy Type
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, or development policies to support a	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			

³ Related efforts were already pursued with the [McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan](#) in 2025 and may continue to be pursued as part of the McLean County Comprehensive Plan 2045 process led by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.

	greater diversity of affordable housing options in walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit, trails, or other pedestrian amenities.	5.1.2.3	Evaluate opportunities to encourage infill, redevelopment, and new, affordable 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, affordable housing organizations, 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.

Sub-initiative	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 areas where gaps in sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail connections limit safe access to key destinations such as schools, transit stops, employment areas, or 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, destination based transit strategies, 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, or residents living near existing transit routes.	Near-term			
	5.2.2.4 Monitor ridership trends and evaluate the effectiveness of outreach, partnership, or 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 programs in high-density employment centers through coordinated incentives or shared transportation infrastructure.	5.2.4.1	Identify priority employment hubs or high density employment centers where large 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 increase participation.	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, or employee cost-savings strategy.	Long-term			

		5.2.4.6	Encourage employers to offer or expand direct commuter incentives tied to participation in commuter programs.	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 to improve future services or offerings.	Long-term			
5.2.5	Local governments, transportation providers, employers, and	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	
	community partners should collaboratively 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.	5.2.5.2	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 commuter 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 through digital trip-planning tools or real-time information systems that help users plan for and 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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
5.3.1 School districts should explore opportunities to	5.3.1.1 Review existing transportation contract terms to identify opportunities and constraints for incorporating sustainability requirements into	Long-term		TRN	
contracting practices to create a stronger market signal for student transportation providers to invest in electric and other low-emission vehicle technologies.	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 criteria for transportation contracts across 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, or 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.

Sub-initiative	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 readily available.	5.4.2.1 Assess where and when parking management strategies may be appropriate based on the availability of transit, walking, biking, EV adoption, 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, EV charging stations, 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.

		Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
Sub-initiative	Action step				
5.5.1 In coordination with regional and state partners, local governments should explore initiatives to expand intercity passenger rail, shuttle, or 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 other 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.

Sub-initiative	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.	Short-term			
	6.1.1.3 Evaluate opportunities to share vehicles across jurisdictions where feasible.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.4 Incorporate right-sizing considerations into fleet replacement and procurement decisions.	Medium-term			
	6.1.1.5 Assess opportunities to replace multiple specialized vehicles with fewer multi-use vehicles or to create a shared fleet of specialized vehicles for use across jurisdictions 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 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.

Sub-initiative	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.	Medium-term			
	6.2.1.5	Identify priority use cases such as peak demand reduction, emergency backup power, or grid stabilization services.	Medium-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.	Short-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.	Short-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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
6.3.1 The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County should evaluate and pursue the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) 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 cool 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 (BESS) 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 BESS 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 BESS 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 costs of BESS.	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 BESS benefits.	Near-term		STE	*
		6.3.4.2	Encourage integration of BESS with existing and new solar installations through education or technical guidance.	Near-term	✓		
		6.3.4.3	Explore financial incentives, rebates, or financing tools that improve affordability of BESS, 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, or industrial sites to deploy aggregated or shared BESS 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.

Sub-initiative		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 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	Short-term			

	community open space.				
	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	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			
carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation, storm water management, air quality improvements, or community resilience while enhancing quality of life and access to nature.	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, or other 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.

Sub-initiative	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 resources, environmental quality, and community well-being.	No action steps are identified for this sub-initiative in recognition that statewide policy requires state legislation and falls outside the direct authority of local governments. The sub-initiative instead establishes a recommended policy position that can inform potential local government engagement and advocacy efforts as relevant legislation is developed and considered.	Short-term		STE	*

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.	No action steps are identified for this sub-initiative as it establishes a recommended policy position that can inform potential local government engagement and advocacy efforts as relevant legislation is developed and considered.	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 net-zero 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.

Sub-initiative	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, storm water 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.

Sub-initiative	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, or 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.

Sub-initiative	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. For example, explore the feasibility of a property tax break or credit for not treating lawns with herbicides, insecticides, or fungicides or for dedicating a percent of lawn to native vegetation.	Short-term			
	7.3.1.7 Coordinate with local conservation groups, extension services, or landscaping professionals to support implementation and best practices.	Short-term			

	7.3.1.7	Coordinate with local conservation groups, extension services, or landscaping professionals to support implementation and best practices.	Short-term			
7.3.2 Promote natural habitat restoration or native landscaping within industrial parks, corporate campuses, medical complexes, and other large institutional properties where feasible.	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 exchange to promote similar practices across large institutional or industrial campuses.	Short-term			
	7.3.2.3	Recognize entities that implement large-scale native landscaping or habitat restoration projects that contribute to sustainability or 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, storm water management, or 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.

Sub-initiative	Action step	Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
8.1.1 Develop a centralized clearinghouse of education, incentives, and financing tools to support residents in improving home energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy adoption across the region.	8.1.1.1 Consolidate and maintain a centralized, regularly updated database of residential incentives, rebates, grants, and financing programs related to energy efficiency, weatherization, electrification, renewable energy, and home energy upgrades for homeowners and renters. Explore work already underway by Rewiring America to inform efforts.	Near-term		STE	•
	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 HVAC contractors, 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 pump pilot projects and pursue external funding for their implementation.	Near-term			
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, HVAC contractors, 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 or heat pump adoption.	Short-term		STE	*
		8.1.3.2	Evaluate opportunities to bundle geothermal or heat pump 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.

Sub-initiative		Action step		Initiation Timeline	Funding Potential	Developed by	Strategy Type
8.2.1	Local governments, transportation and planning agencies, and community partners should develop and implement a coordinated public education campaign to	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, and maintaining different transportation infrastructure.	Near-term		TRN	•
		8.2.1.2	Develop a dedicated GIS layer(s) that can be integrated within the McGIS platform to help residents identify roadway ownership, maintenance responsibilities, and/or agency jurisdiction throughout the county.	Near-term			

improve community understanding of transportation governance, funding, and decision-making processes.	8.2.1.3	Incorporate transportation governance and funding education into public engagement activities associated with transportation, land use, or 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, active transportation, and trail network information into a single user platform serving Bloomington-Normal and McLean County.	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	
	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: The Nexus of Civic Design, Public Spaces, and Civic Engagement

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

Sub-initiative		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		•
		8.3.1.2	Coordinate with major redevelopment initiatives to evaluate feasibility of onsite renewable energy installations on public facilities or public spaces 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 participation in decarbonization initiatives that advance a more sustainable, collective future.	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			
		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.

Sub-initiative	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.	No action steps are identified for this sub-initiative in recognition of the significant and complex interplay of institutional and	Extended-term			
	intergovernmental decisions within legal and regulatory requirements. The sub-initiative is visionary in nature.				

From Goals to Reality



Financing Pathways

To support implementation planning, a list of potential funding opportunities was compiled. The following list is intended as a starting point rather than a comprehensive catalog of available resources. In addition, a number of the CESP goals and initiatives outlined above may be pursued through grants or partnerships, integrated into existing programs or budgets, or implemented incrementally. Others offer high potential long-term energy savings or favorable cost-benefit outcomes.

Numerous funding opportunities, financing programs, tax incentives, and technical assistance programs exist at the federal, state, and utility 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, local governments and other organizations should consult the relevant agencies and funding partners to identify the opportunities best suited to their clean energy project.

While it is understood that upfront capital costs are both a common and significant barrier to the implementation of clean energy goals and initiatives, decision-makers are urged to consider these costs alongside the consequences of inaction: increased public health and safety risks, environmental degradation, and the amplification of existing climate and energy-related harms on communities that have long borne the greatest burdens, among others. Metrics such as the [social cost of carbon](#)^{48, 49} provide one avenue through which to more comprehensively account for these broader costs and to weigh the full implications of different policy choices. At its core, decisions about the clean energy transition must account for the tension among what implementation requires, what inaction produces, and what these choices mean for the community members—current and future—who call McLean County home.

Acronyms:

- **CEJA** – Climate and Equitable Jobs Act
- **IRA** – Inflation Reduction Act
- **CRGA** – Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act
- **IPA** – Illinois Power Agency
- **IIJA** – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
- **ILEPA** – Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Note: Program descriptions followed by a numerical superscript are quoted directly from the cited source. Formatting may have been modified for consistency with this table.

Clean Energy Project	Funding Source	Entity	Program	Description	Noteable Opportunities	Noteable Challenges
Transportation Electrification	CEJA	Ameren Illinois	Community Engagement Consultation (CEC) Program	Provides technical assistance and financial assistance to develop transportation electrification plans to municipalities and communities. ³⁴	Parts of Bloomington Normal qualify as Equity Investment Eligible Communities. This designation may increase the competitiveness of the application.	N/A
Commercial Solar and Wind Projects	IRA	Clean Electricity Investment Tax Credit (Section 48E & 45Y)		Tax credit up to 30% of qualified investment costs if additional prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements are met.	Tax credit can still apply for commercial solar or wind installations	<i>Limited applicability and feasibility for future commercial solar and wind projects due to substantial restrictions, accelerated deadlines, and complex foreign entity requirements. If the project begins construction after July 4, 2026 it must be installed by December 31, 2027.</i>
Solar	CEJA		Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program	Designed to support pre-development and development of community solar projects that promote community ownership and energy sovereignty. ³⁵	May be of particular relevance for Equity Investment Eligible Communities in Bloomington Normal	<i>Grant program is currently closed but could reopen for future cycles</i>

Solar	CRGA	IPA	Solar for All Adjustments	CRGA allows for residents in income eligible and environmental justice census tracts to more easily apply for the program with income self-attestation, expanding the program to cover organizations serving low-income areas, and allowing eligible residents with master-metered buildings to apply in the public facility/nonprofit category. It will also integrate Solar for All with LIHEAP to allow participants to benefit from both solar energy and weatherization. Finally, CRGA allows eligible contractors to access up-front capital. ³⁶		
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Battery Energy Storage Systems	CRGA	IPA	Storage for All	If implemented, the program would provide incentives to encourage development of energy storage projects co-located with solar projects developed under the Solar for All program. ³⁷		
Battery Energy Storage Systems	CRGA		Storage Rebate Expansion and Net-Metering	Sets the storage rebate to \$250 per kilowatt-hour of nameplate capacity for both storage paired with community solar as well as for standalone battery storage systems under 5 MW. Utilities are required to allow net metering for behind-the-meter storage systems. ³⁸		

Battery Energy Storage Systems	CRGA		Virtual Power Plant Program	Allows utility customers to opt-in to a program to be paid to allow the grid to centrally manage energy storage systems and smart technologies during peak demand events to supply energy and reduce demand. ³⁹		
Renewable Energy Projects	CEJA		Equitable Energy Future Grant Program	Provides front-loaded funding of up to \$1 million to support development of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, businesses, community organizations, and job creation benefitting historically disadvantaged populations. ⁴⁰	Equity focused	<i>Grant program is currently closed but could reopen for future cycles.</i>

Energy Storage and Geothermal	IRA		Energy Storage and Geothermal Investment Tax Credit (Section 48E)	Tax credit up to 30% of qualified investment costs if prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements are met.	Tax credit remains largely unchanged (i.e. no accelerated deadline like in the case of solar or wind above) for technologies listed in Section 48E.	<i>Energy storage, geothermal, hydroelectric, and other non-solar, non-wind projects must begin construction by the end of 2033 to receive full technology-neutral tax credits. Projects beginning construction in 2034 or 2035 will receive reduced credits.</i>
Ground Source or Geothermal Heat Pumps	IRA		Ground Source Heat Pumps (Section 48)	Qualifies for a tax credit of 6% if the GHP is placed in service by December 31, 2022. If the GHP is placed in service in 2033 or 2044, the tax credit is reduced to 5.2% and 4.4% respectively. Bonus credits of up to 30% can be applied under specific requirements.		<i>McLean County does not qualify for the Designated Energy Community bonus credit.</i>

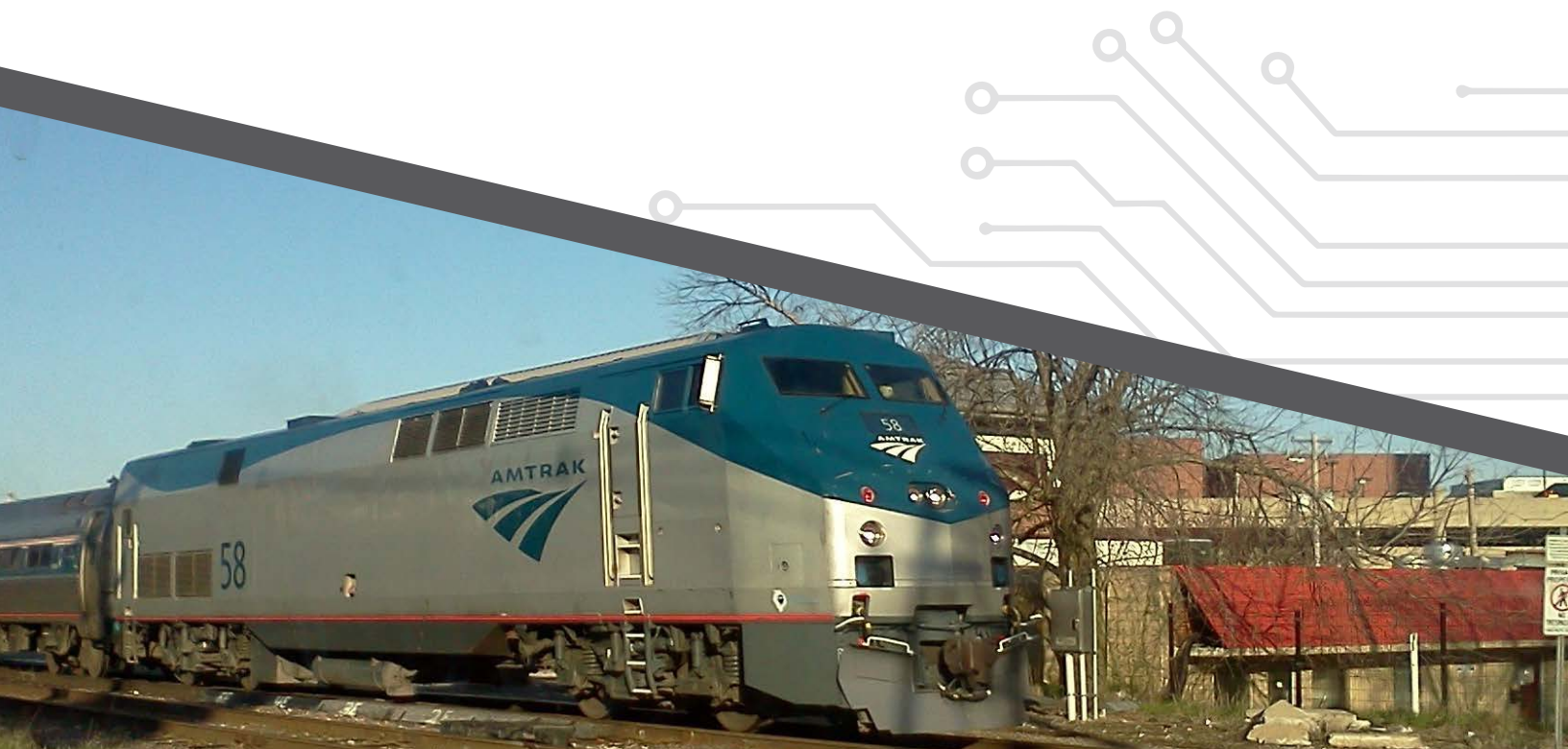
Geothermal	CRGA		Geothermal Homes and Businesses Program	Creates pilots for district geothermal projects, which can provide cost-effective, zero-indoor air pollution heat for blocks of residences. The program allocates \$10 million of the existing Renewable Portfolio Standard budget to geothermal projects for homes and businesses, with a block reserved for Equity Investment Eligible Communities . ⁴¹	Parts of Bloomington Normal qualify as an Equity Investment Eligible Community.	
Geothermal		Illinois Climate Bank	Community Geothermal Planning + Pilots Program	Designed to support the planning, development, and deployment of community-scale geothermal projects. ⁴²		

Building Decarbonization		Illinois Climate Bank	Stretch Building Code Grant Program	Designed to facilitate the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of the Illinois Stretch Energy Code by supporting municipalities with the necessary resources to navigate this process. The program will provide financial support for education, community engagement, and technical assistance to ensure that municipalities are well-equipped to integrate the stretch code into their regulatory frameworks ⁴³		
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Building Decarbonization	CRGA		Utility Data Access (Section 5-15)	All electric utilities across the state will be required to provide access to allow building owners to do benchmarking and take advantage of federal funding. This will help building owners and their service providers better understand energy use, identify efficiencies and comply with local energy benchmarking policies. ⁴⁴		
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants	IIJA	ILEPA	Public Water Supply Energy Efficiency Grant Program	Supports energy efficiency upgrades at public water supply (PWS) facilities. ⁴⁵		<i>Applications closed on May 4, 2026. However, additional rounds of funding may become available.</i>
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants	IIJA	ILEPA	Wastewater Treatment Plant Energy Efficiency Grant Program	Awards funding for the implementation of energy efficiency projects. Eligible energy efficiency measures identified in the projects must have been identified in an energy efficiency assessment. ⁴⁶		<i>Applications closed. However, additional rounds of funding may become available.</i>

Small Utility Clean Energy Planning		Illinois Climate Bank	Small Utility Clean Energy Planning Grant Program	Through this grant program, municipal and cooperative utilities will receive funding to assess their energy needs, evaluate available renewable energy options, and develop procurement strategies that align with Illinois' decarbonization goals. ⁴⁷		
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Appendix A: Technical Appendix



Technical Appendix - GHG Emissions Projections Methodology

Purpose and Scope

This technical appendix documents the methodology used to develop the 2050 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions projections presented in the McLean County Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal. The projections were developed using ICLEI USA's ClearPath 1.0 forecasting software and are based on the 2022 McLean County GHG emissions inventory.

The purpose of the projection is to establish a reference trajectory for future countywide emissions in the absence of additional local climate action. The resulting Business-as-Usual (BAU) trajectories represent a reference scenario for future emissions in the absence of additional local climate action rather than a forecast of actual future emissions. The trajectories provide a baseline against which the potential emissions impacts of strategies and actions included in the CESP can be evaluated in the future.

The trajectory period extends from the 2022 inventory baseline through 2050. Two BAU scenarios were developed to illustrate the potential effect of different rates of (a) population change for McLean County and (b) grid decarbonization broadly over time.

Note: ICLEI ClearPath 1.0 terminology (including terms such as *forecast* and *forecasting*) is used in the following sections to describe the software and methodology used to develop the emissions trajectories. In this appendix, these terms refer to the modeling process and should not be taken to mean that the resulting emissions trajectories carry the same rigorous statistical basis or predictive capacity typically associated with methods specifically designed to forecast future outcomes.

Modeling Framework

ICLEI ClearPath 1.0 is designed to support local governments in developing GHG inventories, forecasts, and climate action plans. The forecasting framework relies on the emissions records (i.e. quantity and CO₂e data) contained in a completed GHG emissions inventory. Users then apply a Growth Rate and, where appropriate, Carbon Intensity Factor, to the GHG inventory records to represent anticipated changes in emissions over the forecast period.

ICLEI's Forecasting Wizard allows Growth Rates to be entered using estimates such as the annual percentage change, numerical change in total population, change in commercial square footage, change in number of jobs, or other user-defined indicators.¹ Because the Growth Rate is used to represent anticipated changes in the quantity associated with an emissions source, selection and application of the appropriate Growth Rate depends on that emissions source. ICLEI's forecasting guidance notes that it is industry standard to use a population growth rate for residential energy use, solid waste, water and wastewater, and upstream and fugitive emissions. Estimated population or employment growth rates may be used for commercial energy while industrial energy can be assumed to remain constant or modeled using an industry-specific growth rate or population growth rate as a proxy. For transportation, a population growth rate or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) forecast serve as typical growth indicators.

The Carbon Intensity Factor is used to represent changes in emissions intensity. ClearPath 1.0 provides pre-loaded federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) growth rates for on-road transportation emissions intensity. For electricity carbon intensity, a grid decarbonization scenario can be used to represent the Carbon Intensity Factor. ICLEI recommends considering state emissions policies, renewable-generation policies, and published utility goals when developing grid decarbonization scenarios.²

Accordingly, within each McLean County BAU trajectory, growth rate and carbon intensity factor sets were created and applied to individual inventory records. This allowed for different emissions sources to increase, decrease, or remain constant depending on the assumptions selected for that source.

Model Assumptions

BAU Case 1: Stagnating or Declining Population and Ideal Grid Decarbonization Scenario Methodology Population Growth Rate

For this BAU trajectory, population growth assumptions were developed using a combination of historical estimates and long-range projections. The population for McLean County from 2022-2025 was based on US Census Bureau data, specifically derived from the Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in the United States: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2025.³ The 2026 population estimate was based on a report by World Population Review.⁴ Countywide population projections found in Appendix 65 of the Bloomington Normal Long Range Transportation Plan 2050⁶ were used for the remaining years. To select the appropriate population projection, the projected population trajectories in the Long Range Transportation Plan were compared with the observed U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2022–2025. The projection that most closely matched the observed population trend over those years was selected for the forecast. Based on this comparison, the *High Migration* scenario, represented by the solid blue line in the population projection graph (refer to Figure 1), was selected for the remaining forecast years.

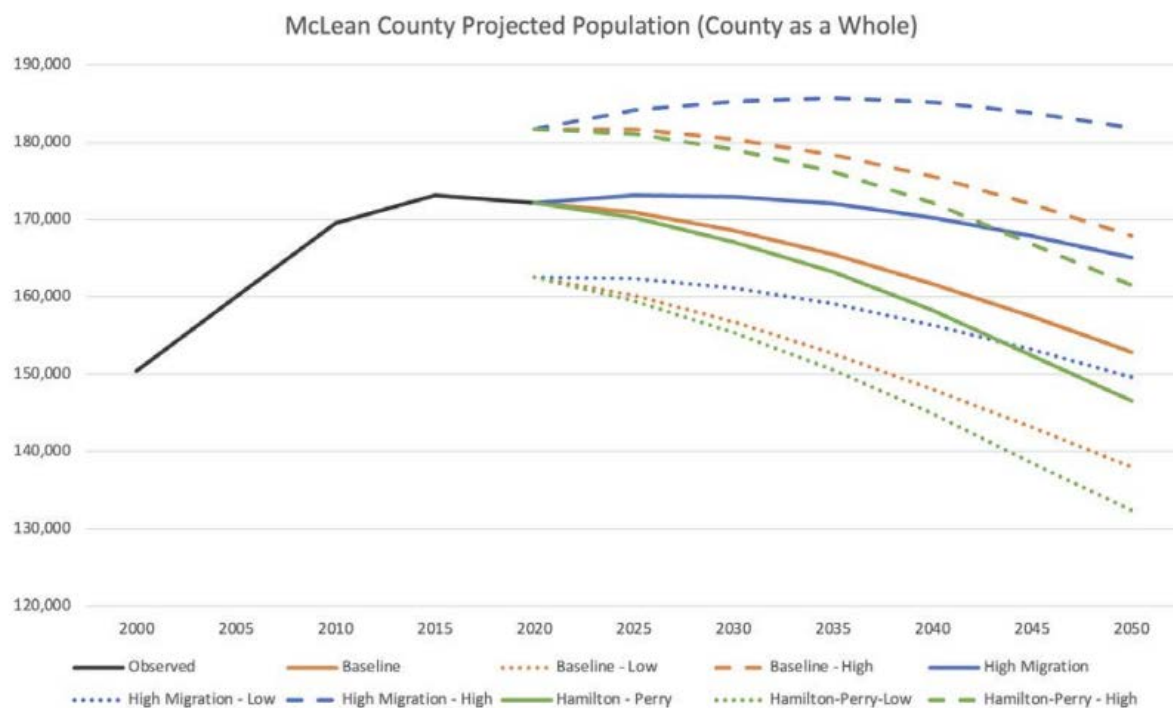


Figure 1. McLean County Projected Population from Appendix 6 of the Bloomington Normal Long Range Transportation Plan 2050. Source: McLean County Regional Planning Commission.⁵

Population values were entered into the ICLEI ClearPath 1.0 Forecasting Wizard to create a Population Stagnation and Decline Growth Rate for McLean County. The population values entered into ClearPath 1.0 are presented in Table 1 below.

Year	Value
2022	171,054
2023	170,931
2024	171,512
2025	171,419
2026	171,326
2030	174,752
2035	173,000
2040	171,000
2042	170,000
2043	169,000
2044	168,500
2045	168,000
2046	167,500
2047	167,000
2048	166,500
2049	166,000
2050	165,000

Table 1. Years and Population values used to develop the Population Stagnation and Decline Growth Rate in ICLEI ClearPath 1.0.

The resulting Population Stagnation and Decline Growth Rate was then applied to all inventory records for which population was identified as the appropriate growth indicator.

Grid Decarbonization Scenario: Ameren Ideal Case

Because Ameren Illinois is one of the primary electric utilities serving McLean County, changes in Ameren's generation mix and its carbon reduction goals were therefore determined to be relevant indicators of how the carbon intensity of electricity supplied in the county could change over the forecast period. Ameren's companywide decarbonization targets of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, along with its interim reduction targets of an average 37% reduction by 2021-2023, a 60% reduction by 2030, and an 85% reduction by 2040,⁷ were used to inform the Ameren Ideal Grid Decarbonization Scenario used in BAU Case 1.

Following ICLEI's forecasting guidance, because Ameren's emissions reduction targets are expressed relative to a 2005 baseline, the targets were first converted to values relative to McLean County's 2022 inventory base year. From these targets, Ameren's 2022 emissions intensity was estimated to be 37% below its 2005 level resulting in a value of 0.63 relative to the 2005 baseline of 1. Ameren's 2030 and 2040 targets represent emissions intensities of 0.40 and 0.15, respectively, relative to 2005. For 2045 and 2050, respective values of 0.01 and 0.001 were used to extend the decarbonization trajectory beyond Ameren's 2040 target but within the stated net-zero 2045 target. These values were included to provide additional inputs for the ClearPath forecast and maintain a continued decline in grid carbon intensity through 2050. All values were then normalized to the 2022 inventory base year and resulted in the values shown in Table 2 below.

Year	Value
2022	1
2030	0.635
2040	0.238
2045	0.0159
2050	0.001

Table 2. Normalized values for the Ameren Ideal Grid Decarbonization Scenario.

The resulting grid decarbonization scenario was applied as the Carbon Intensity Factor to all electricity-related inventory records where appropriate.

Limited Applicability and Relevance of the BAU Case 1

While the Growth Rate and Grid Decarbonization Scenario assumptions used in BAU Case 1 were appropriate for establishing an idealized baseline of future emissions, the resulting trajectory did not account for the rapid expansion of hyper-scale data centers across the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) grid and the country. The anticipated electricity demand of hyper-scale data centers represent a significant change from the conditions underlying the assumptions in BAU Case 1. In particular, the grid decarbonization scenario did not account for the potential effects of this additional electricity demand on the pace, composition, and achievability of future grid decarbonization efforts. As a result, the assumed rate of grid decarbonization was deemed inadequate for projecting future emissions under current and anticipated conditions.

BAU Case 2 was therefore developed to incorporate the anticipated impacts of hyper-scale data center growth and provide a more realistic representation of future emissions. It is the scenario adopted by the CESP as the preferred basis for evaluating future emissions and emissions-reduction strategies.

BAU Case 2: The Impact of Hyper-scale Data Centers and Climate Migration on Grid Decarbonization and Population Growth Rate Methodology

Background

It is understood that carbon emissions attributed to data centers exist as a function of both electricity consumption and the carbon intensity of that supplied electricity.⁸⁻¹⁰ This relationship is characterized by competing forces: rapidly increasing energy demand—largely driven by the AI explosion and subsequent expansion of hyper-scale data centers—versus efforts to reduce grid carbon intensity through the transition from brown (e.g. coal) to green (e.g. renewable) energy sources.⁸ The interaction among data center growth, electricity consumption, and grid carbon intensity presents a modeling challenge for the ICLEI ClearPath framework. Because the model provides limited inputs through which to capture the effects of rapidly expanding data center energy loads and the potential implications for net-zero grid decarbonization targets, these impacts must be captured indirectly through the available Growth Rate and Carbon Intensity Factor inputs.

In addition, the possible impacts of climate migration introduce another source of uncertainty into long-term population growth estimates. The Great Lakes region, for example, has increasingly been identified as a potential destination for climate-related in-migration because of its freshwater resources, relatively temperate climate, and comparatively lower exposure to certain climate hazards like hurricanes and wildfires affecting other parts of the United States.^{11,12} At the state level, Illinois has already begun planning for the possibility of climate-driven in-migration with the enactment of the Climate Displacement Act in 2025 which established a task force to study projected climate migration patterns and develop strategies for accommodating new residents.^{13,14} This legislation reflects a growing recognition that Illinois may become a destination for people relocating from areas experiencing greater climate-related risks. What is more, climate-related in-migration to Illinois could have the potential to affect population growth in communities beyond the state's primary climate-haven destinations and, consequently, population gains associated with in-migration could be expected to be distributed across the state. This provides additional support for incorporating climate migration considerations into the Population Growth Rate for McLean County.

Population Growth Rate – Energy Equivalent Population x Climate Migration Methodology

Of the top ten states with the highest data center load, Illinois ranks fourth in the nation.⁸ According to a 2024 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) report, the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of data centers' energy consumption is expected to increase by 13-27% between 2023 and 2028 following a marked increase in the rate of growth in the preceding years.¹⁵ Consistent with these findings, projections from the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) estimated that total U.S. electricity demand would increase by 62-79% between 2025 and 2050 under its Mid- and High Demand Growth Scenarios.⁹ By 2030, data centers were estimated to account for 46-59% of the total U.S. electricity demand growth under these scenarios.⁹

The scale of this projected demand growth has direct implications for electricity supply in Illinois. The *2025 Resource Adequacy Study*, prepared by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Illinois Power Agency (IPA), and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), identified data centers and other large energy users as major contributors to projected load growth and to emerging resource adequacy challenges across the PJM and MISO grids.¹⁵ Under baseline projections, MISO could face a capacity shortage as early as 2031 without additional resource development.¹⁶

Given the magnitude of projected data center electricity demand and the limited ability of the ClearPath framework to model this demand directly, the projected electricity consumption associated with data centers, particularly hyper-scale data centers, was represented as an energy equivalent population increase within the BAU Case 2 Population Growth Rate.

To develop this proxy, planned data center capacity was compiled using Cleanview's U.S. Data Center dataset.¹⁷ All planned capacity reported across the 15 states comprising the MISO footprint was aggregated. Special attention was taken to ensure planned capacity located in the PJM portion of Illinois was excluded to avoid attributing electricity demand outside the MISO system to McLean County. This resulted in a total planned data center capacity of 38,742 MW across the MISO footprint.

The total planned capacity was then converted to an equivalent number of households using a planning equivalency of 1 MW $\approx$ 1,000 homes. This assumption was based on estimates of average residential electricity demand reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration¹⁸ and comparable estimates cited by EnergySage.¹⁹ This produced an estimated 38.7 million equivalent homes associated with the planned data center capacity on the MISO grid.

McLean County's share of the MISO population was then calculated so that a portion of this equivalent demand could be allocated to the county. Using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2025 county population estimate²⁰ of 171,419 and an estimated 45 million homes within the MISO footprint,²¹ McLean County accounted for approximately 0.38% of the MISO residential population. Applying this share to the 38.7 million equivalent homes resulted in the potential for approximately 147,447 energy equivalent homes to be allocated to McLean County.

In consideration of the reality that planned data center capacity does not guarantee that projects will be constructed or reach full operation, a total 5% local capture assumption over a five year period (i.e. until 2035) was applied as a highly conservative adjustment. This resulted in approximately 7,372 energy equivalent homes to be added over a five year period. Using the U.S. Census estimate of 2.31 persons per household for McLean County,²⁰ the resulting energy equivalent population was determined to be approximately 17,028 people. This energy equivalent population value was then added to the 2026 population value for a 2035 population estimate of 188,354 people.

The total capture rate was then scaled down further to 1% over the 2035–2040 period to reflect a possible diminished relative impact of data center load growth on the grid as additional generation, transmission, and other grid infrastructure may potentially come online allowing the system to better adapt to the increased demand. This resulted in a total population increase of 3,396 people over a five year period.

Because the modeled contribution of data center demand growth is reduced after 2040 to reflect the anticipated adaptation of grid infrastructure, climate-driven in-migration is incorporated as an additional source of population growth for the remaining 2040–2050 period. Research indicates that persistent warming increases out-migration from hotter regions²², while Illinois-specific modeling identifies climate-driven migration as a potential contributor to population growth in the state by using 1% and 1.5% annual growth scenarios.²³

It is understood that climate-driven migration could increase population growth in relatively resilient inland regions, but county-level impacts will depend on migration capture, housing availability, infrastructure capacity, and local attractiveness. A scaled down annual growth scenario of 0.5% was therefore applied from 2040-2045. This growth scenario was increased to 1% from 2045-2050 to better capture the potential for climate-driven in-migration to become more pronounced and sustained by this latter period as climate migration could increasingly influence population distribution.

For a summary of the primary population-growth drivers, assumptions, time periods, and corresponding CAGR applied throughout the BAU Case 2 methodology, please refer to Table 3.

Primary Driver	Time Period	Assumptions	CAGR
Baseline/Historical Data	2022-2026	NA	+0.04%
Data Center Electricity Demand	2026-2035	Highest pressure period with rapid data center load growth.	+1.92%
		MISO/PJM resource adequacy concerns.	
		New generation, transmission, and storage are still being developed.	
	2035-2040	Continued but declining data center influence	+0.36%
		Additional renewable generation and grid investments have had more time to come online.	
		The system is adapting but the cumulative demand increase from large loads remains embedded in the electricity system.	
Climate Migration	2040-2045	Climate migration becomes the dominant demographic adjustment.	+0.5%
		Data center demand proxy is no longer the primary driver.	
	2045-2050	Increased climate migration population pressure period.	+1%

Table 3. Population growth rates and key underlying assumptions by driver and time period. Note: CAGR stands for Compound Annual Growth Rate.

This BAU Case 2 methodology for the Population Growth Rate represents population growth through two distinct mechanisms over the 2026–2050 projection period. From 2026–2040, population growth was adjusted to reflect the energy-equivalent population associated with anticipated data center electricity demand. The highest growth rate was applied during 2026–2035 and a reduced rate was applied during 2035–2040 to reflect the expected evolution of grid capacity and infrastructure. From 2040–2050, the methodology shifted to climate-driven in-migration as the primary source of additional population growth with a conservative 0.5% annual growth rate applied from 2040–2045 and an increased 1% rate from 2045–2050 to reflect the potential for climate migration to become more pronounced over time. Together, these assumptions represent the changing influence of data center expansion and climate-driven demographic growth on McLean County’s population through 2050.

Table 4 provides a summary of the resulting annual population inputs used for the Growth Rate in the ICLEI ClearPath model under the BAU Case 2 scenario. The values reflect the energy-equivalent population adjustment and climate-migration growth assumptions described above.

Year	Value
2022	171,054
2023	170,931
2024	171,512
2025	171,419
2026	171,326
2035	188,354
2040	191,750
2041	192,709
2042	193,672
2043	194,641
2044	195,614
2045	196,592
2046	198,558
2047	200,544
2048	202,549
2049	204,574
2050	206,620

Table 4. Total Population accounting for energy equivalent population scenario and climate in-migration for the McLean County Population Growth Rate under BAU Case 2.

Grid Decarbonization Scenario: Modified for Estimated Hyper-scale Data Center Impact

As described above, the 2025 *Resource Adequacy Study* identifies data center growth as a major contributor to increasing electricity demand as well as resource adequacy challenges in the MISO region.¹⁵ Resource adequacy refers to having enough available electricity-generating capacity to meet expected demand and maintain reliable service. As data center demand increases, resource adequacy pressures may make it more difficult to retire existing generation from fossil fuel sources such as coal plants before new renewable generating capacity is developed. Fossil fuel generation sources may also be required to operate more frequently to meet demand pressures. This has the potential to delay emissions reduction targets from the electric grid. In its 2022 Climate Report,²⁴ Ameren attributed increased emissions directly to greater use of coal-fired energy centers among other factors.

MISO is expected to experience a capacity shortage as early as 2031 without additional resource development.¹⁶ Additionally, over the next five year, the rapid rate of data center demand growth is projected to outpace reduction in grid carbon intensity.⁸ For these reasons, the BAU Case 2 Trajectory incorporates a modified Grid Decarbonization Scenario to account for the potential effects of data center growth on the pace of grid decarbonization.

To calculate this modified grid decarbonization scenario, Ameren's historical decarbonization rates between 2019 and 2024 were first analyzed^{24, 25} (see Table 5).

Year	Scope 1 and 2 Emissions (MtCO ₂ e)	Year-over-year Change
2019	24,476,487	-
2020	26,025,341	+6.3%
2021	28,304,870	+8.8%
2022	25,050,356	-11.5%
2023	19,968,011	-20.3%
2024	18,539,720	-7.2%

Table 5. Ameren's historical Scope 1 and 2 emissions trends by year, emissions quantity, and year-over-year percent change.

Ameren's historical Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions trend was used as a reference point for the rate of grid decarbonization. Between 2005 and 2024, Ameren's combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions declined at an average rate of approximately 2.74% annually. The reported emissions values were used for 2022–2024. For 2025 and 2026, the historical average annual decline rate of 2.74% was applied to the preceding year's emissions value. Beginning in 2026, the trajectory was modified to account for the potential effect of increasing data center electricity demand on the pace of grid decarbonization.

A capture rate was used to express the portion of the historical 2.74% annual decline that was estimated to be retained under each period. A 100% capture represented the full historical decline rate of –2.74% annually while 50% capture represented a reduced decline of –1.37%. Negative capture represented a reversal of the historical trend resulting in an annual increase in emissions. This approach allowed for the impact of data center growth to be represented as a modification of the historical decarbonization trajectory rather than as an independent emissions-growth assumption.

The capture rates were varied across the 2026–2050 projection period to reflect the expected changing relationship between data center load growth and the development of new generation, transmission, storage, and other grid resources. From 2026–2030, a 0% capture was applied, representing a scenario in which data center growth absorbs anticipated decarbonization gains and results in a flat emissions trajectory. From 2030–2035, the scenario assumes peak data center pressure and applies a –50% capture, equivalent to a +1.37% annual increase in emissions. From 2035–2040, the reversal is reduced to –25% capture, equivalent to a +0.69% annual increase, reflecting the assumption that renewable generation, storage, and transmission investments begin to catch up with demand growth. From 2040–2050, the scenario assumes a gradual return to emissions reductions, retaining approximately 10% of the historical decline rate, or –0.27% annually as additional grid resources and electrification efficiencies begin to offset the effects of continued load growth (see Table 6).

Time Period	Assumption	Capture of 2.74% Historical Decline	Applied Annual Change
2022–2024	Historic data used	-	-
2025–2026	Historical decarbonization trend continues before accounting for the modeled data center impact	100%	-2.74%/year
2026–2030	Data center growth absorbs planned decarbonization gains; grid decarbonization stalls	0%	0%/year
2030–2035	Peak data-center pressure; demand growth exceeds grid decarbonization	-50% capture (trend reversal)	+1.37%/year
2035–2040	Renewables, storage, and transmission begin catching up	-25% capture (smaller reversal)	+0.69%/year
2040–2050	Grid decarbonization efforts gradually improve	10% capture	-0.27%/year

Table 6. Historical and assumed annual change in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions under the Modified Grid Decarbonization Scenario.

All values were then normalized to the 2022 inventory base year and resulted in the values shown in Table 7 below.

Year	Value
2022	1
2023	0.7971
2024	0.7401
2025	0.70936
2026	0.67862
2030	0.67862
2035	0.72655
2040	0.75180
2050	0.73140

Table 7. The normalized grid decarbonization scenario modified for hyper-scale data center impact.

The resulting grid decarbonization scenario was applied as the Carbon Intensity Factor to all electricity-related inventory records where appropriate.

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Appendix B: Policy Framework



Policy Framework from Existing City, Town, County, and State Planning Documents

This appendix compiles strategies from local planning documents that predate and inform the McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP). The selected strategies were deemed to provide relevant policy direction and align with the CESP mission of building a resilient, clean-energy future that achieves net-zero emissions by 2050, improves air quality, and supports long-term public health. This appendix is not intended to represent a comprehensive list of all existing strategies that may support the CESP mission; rather, it highlights selected policies and actions that provide relevant context and support for advancing the goals of the CESP.

Plans referenced include the following:

- Town of Normal. (2024). *Vision 2050 Sustainability Plan*. Town of Normal. <https://www.normalil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24388/Vision-2050Sustainability-Plan>
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission. (2015). *City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035: Bring It On Bloomington*. City of Bloomington. <https://www.bloomingtonil.gov/departments/development-services/planning-zoning/comprehensive-plan>
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission. (2009). *McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan*. <https://d2gfvfkk60hy7j.cloudfront.net/file/1484/2009%20McLean%20County%20Regional%20Comprehensive%20Plan%20with%20Maps.pdf>

In addition, this appendix incorporates selected strategies from the State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan (2024) to provide broader policy context and alignment with statewide climate and energy objectives. These strategies help establish a connection between regional strategies and the broader policy direction established at the state level for emissions reduction, energy resilience, and clean energy deployment.

The plan's citation is listed below:

- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. (2024). *State of Illinois priority climate action plan*. State of Illinois. <https://epa.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/epa/topics/climate/documents/Illinois%20Priority%20Climate%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Note: The terminology used in the source planning documents varies as individual plans use different hierarchies and terms such as goals, objectives, strategies, priorities or actions. To facilitate consistency and comparison across sources, the matrices below utilize a consistent framework that maintains the intent and substance of the reference plans.

A Call to Action: Reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Source
Clean air and a natural climate unharmed by human activities.	Identify and maintain acceptable levels of greenhouse gases and airborne pollutants.	Support efforts of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to monitor air quality in urban areas.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Climate and Air Quality Policy</i>
Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce air pollutants.	Maintain a greenhouse gas inventory and develop a climate action plan.	Short-medium	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-3.1e</i>
Establish a dedicated Town of Normal Sustainability Office with supporting work groups.	NA	Develop a robust Climate Action Plan (CAP), including formal targets and plans for: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 1</i>

Guidelines for Supporting and Incentivizing Clean Energy Development

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
A stable, growing recession-resistant economy that leverages the county's central location to attract resources and markets and contributes to the quality of life of McLean County residents.	Encourage intergovernmental cooperation in supporting existing businesses and targeting and recruiting new industries and in the sharing of costs and revenue.	Support alternative energy development.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Economic Development – Economic Growth Policy</i>
		Target tourism, high-tech, and green industries, including alternative energy developments, for recruitment.		
		Support cooperative business retention and recruitment programs carried out by the Economic Development Council of the Bloomington Normal Area and the McLean County Chamber of Commerce.		
		Consider alternatives for local governments to share costs and revenues resulting from property and sales tax revenues for future economic development.		

Promote and facilitate energy conservation and alternate energy generation and resources.	Ensure at least 25% of energy use comes from renewable energy sources.	Create programs to promote alternate energy generation such as community solar and PACE programs.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>UEW-2.2c</i>
Increase affordable, energy-efficient housing stock	NA	Offer incentives for new, energy-efficient construction (tied for third most popular sustainability practice survey respondents would like to see the Town implement; 34%)	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 4</i>
Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce air pollutants.	Work to attract and provide incentives for wind, solar, geothermal, biofuel, and other types of renewable energy development.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-3.1a</i>
Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce air pollutants.	While considering new development opportunities with other public and private entities, consider the environmental impacts (oil drilling, hydraulic fracturing, or other fossil fuel production projects have an impact on the region).	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-3.1d</i>

Guidelines for Clean Energy Generation and Development

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Clean Power	Generate 40% clean energy by 2030, 50% by 2040, and 100% by 2050	Deployment of clean and zero-carbon energy (such as wind, solar, geothermal, or other zero-emission sources, both utility-scale and distributed)	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		Deployment of energy storage (including lithium-ion and other	NA	

		storage media, both utility-scale and distributed)		
		Expansion of demand response (including virtual power plants, distributed demand response, and smart electric vehicles and appliances)	NA	
		Improved energy efficiency, increasing transmission capacity (including new transmission lines and the use of grid-enhancing technologies)	NA	
Promote and facilitate energy conservation and alternate energy generation and resources.	Reduce municipal and community energy use by at least 20% by 2035.	The City shall encourage economically feasible diversity among energy sources to avoid over-reliance on any single source.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.1b
		Encourage the exploration of innovative and alternative technologies regarding energy generation and conservation (i.e. waste to energy, urban wind, solar, bio).	Short-medium	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.1c
	Ensure at least 25% of energy use comes from renewable energy sources.	Continue to purchase 100% green energy through the municipal aggregation contracts when economically feasible.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.2a
		Investigate and pursue green energy purchase for the City facilities aggregation contract when economically feasible.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.2b
		Encourage conversion of the landfill site into a solar park after its closure in 2017.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.2d

		Encourage the use of alternate energy during any brownfield redevelopment.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.2e
Increase energy efficiency and adoption of renewable energy technologies	NA	Continue to implement the energy efficiency solutions documented in the Town's Facility and Energy Master Plan.	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 Priority 6
		Install solar panels on all suitable roofs on Town property.	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 Priority 6
Establish a dedicated Town of Normal Sustainability Office with supporting work groups	NA	Help the Town to: - Develop a robust Climate Action Plan (CAP), including formal targets and plans for: - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions - Bolstering infrastructure resiliency - Mounting effective responses to climate-related emergencies including severe weather - Comply with new environmental regulations - Qualify for grant funding, including to expand our local Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network - Coordinate local events and projects - Fulfill obligations created by: - The 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act - An updated Town of Normal Environmental Stewardship Policy	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 Priority 1

		○ The National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge		
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Guidelines for Energy Benchmarking and Building Energy Efficiency

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Provide public services in a fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible manner.	Reduce City facilities' environmental footprint.	Ensure new buildings adhere to common standards for energy efficiency, balancing cost-effectiveness with environmental stewardship.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2a
		Track energy use and costs for major municipal facilities.	Medium-long	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2e
		Investigate the merits and demerits of Energy Performance Contracting to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy costs for all City facilities.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2f
		Carefully consider energy efficiency, alternative energies, and reduction of maintenance costs when expanding, remodeling, or building new community facilities.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2g
		Carefully consider re-use of existing materials during expansion of community facilities.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2h
		Use life-cycle costing in purchasing decisions made by the City.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2.2i
	Seek opportunities to co-locate community facilities to maximize efficiencies in service	NA	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 CF-2

	provision and reduce capital and operating costs.			
Promote and facilitate energy conservation and alternate energy generation and resources	Reduce municipal and community energy use by at least 20% by 2035.	Continue to adopt building codes that include high energy efficiency requirements.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-2.1a
Clean and Efficient Buildings	Accelerate stretch building code adoption by local governments	In 2021's CEJA, the Illinois General Assembly directed the state Capital Development Board to work with the Illinois EPA to create and adopt a new Illinois Stretch Energy Code that would achieve greater energy efficiency outcomes than the Illinois Energy Conservation Code. Once finalized, any municipality that is interested in achieving higher performance will be able to opt-in to the Stretch Energy Code without needing to undergo their own extensive code development process.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		To support this adoption, the state will provide implementation grants to local governments to support the transition to a stretch energy code.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
	Improve building efficiency, reaching a 33% reduction in energy use in buildings by 2050.	Public Building Decarbonization Assessment - Lead by Example. The objective of this initiative is to conduct comprehensive energy efficiency and electrification assessments for local and state government buildings, public universities, and municipalities, aiming to significantly reduce energy	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

		consumption in line with the leading targets for commercial and public buildings. The assessment will require the planning for and anticipated cost-effective retrofit of facilities to reduce energy consumption by 35% by 2035, achieve zero emissions, and support the electrification of transport.		
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Existing Building Condition and Code Enforcement

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Revitalization of and improved building conditions in downtowns and older neighborhoods, including infill development, throughout McLean County.	Discourage peripheral growth outside projected growth areas.	Encourage the use of vacant, older buildings for a new purpose, e.g., old school for business or housing.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing - Redevelopment Policy 2</i>
	Establish programs to support the revitalization of the downtowns and older neighborhoods.	Identify priority neighborhoods with greatest housing needs and focus spending in those areas.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing - Redevelopment Policy 1</i>
		Direct municipal funding toward strategic improvements in roads, sidewalks, curb cuts, etc., in priority areas.		
		Utilize business retention and development programs to strengthen and create neighborhood based businesses.		
		Establish small grant programs and educational efforts for landlords and homeowners for home improvements and neighborhood beautification.		
		Encourage education and outreach to provide information and training to		

		property owners, landlords, and trades people regarding building codes, housing rehabilitation guidelines, accessibility guidelines, available funding for housing rehabilitation, and other issues related to building conditions.		
		Support government buyouts and lending to bring properties into compliance with current zoning and building codes.		
	Support programs and efforts aimed at improving building conditions in downtowns and older neighborhoods.	Reduce existing non-conformities in land use, building use, lot size, and building codes.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing – Redevelopment Policy</i> 3
		Survey all pre-1940 housing stock to identify conservation and restoration areas.		
		Support conservation and redevelopment of homes in existing neighborhoods.		
		Utilize existing staff to focus code enforcement on priority areas.		
		Solicit local input and cooperation to target projects in priority areas.		
		Focus existing social, economic, and educational programs on priority areas.		
		Reach out to developers to assist in creating opportunities for redevelopment of priority areas.		
		Involve local lenders in providing low-interest loans to developers of priority areas.		

Clean and Efficient Buildings

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Design consistency and/or compatibility in the infill and redevelopment of downtowns and older neighborhoods throughout McLean County.	Encourage urban design that compliments measures for revitalizing downtowns and older neighborhoods and provides alternatives to peripheral development.	Incorporate energy-efficient design into new and rehabilitated housing units. Establish standards and guidelines for housing rehabilitation.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Design Consistency Policy</i>
Increase affordable, energy-efficient housing stock.	NA	Continue reviewing and updating the zoning code to promote diverse, densified and accessible housing — especially in walkable neighborhoods with access to bus routes and multi-use trails	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 4</i>
Clean and Efficient Buildings	Improve building efficiency, reaching a 33% reduction in energy use in buildings by 2050.	Assessment of Public Buildings: Perform detailed energy audits to pinpoint efficiency opportunities and electrification potentials across a wide range of public buildings.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
Revitalization of and improved building conditions in downtowns and older neighborhoods, including infill development, throughout McLean County.	Support programs and efforts aimed at improving building conditions in downtowns and older neighborhoods.	Survey all pre-1940 housing stock to identify conservation and restoration areas. Solicit local input and cooperation to target projects in priority areas. Support conservation and redevelopment of homes in existing neighborhoods.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Redevelopment Policy 3</i>
		Explore the costs, benefits, and alternatives for providing inclusionary zoning in McLean County communities to require the inclusion of a	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan

		proportionate share of workforce housing in residential development.		<i>Redevelopment Policy 4</i>
		Broaden alternative home and neighborhood design opportunities to allow a variety of housing setbacks, densities, street widths, etc., and provide alternatives for all residents, including seniors, low to moderate income populations, and persons with disabilities.		
Clean and Efficient Buildings	Community Geothermal Planning + Pilots	The state will seek to pilot new replicable and scalable models of stand-alone or interconnected community-scale geothermal networks in the public right-of-way that enable residents and businesses to opt-in to connect to a shared geothermal ground loop to heat and cool their buildings. By leveraging the Earth's temperature for energy, these systems can provide heat to buildings 5x more efficiently than gas heat, and help cool those buildings in the summer. Competitive Community Geothermal Solicitation. The state will conduct a competitive solicitation for community geothermal projects to cover the additional costs related to new technology deployment and market development.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

Incentives for Affordable Housing Development

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
A wide range of evenly dispersed, high-quality, aesthetically appealing, single-family and rental housing types, styles, and costs for all income levels, age groups, and people with disabilities.	Provide incentives for affordable housing developments.	Consider incentives for landlords and/or owner-occupied single family dwellings who maintain sound building conditions and meet or exceed building codes in priority areas.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing – Workforce Housing Policy 1</i>
		Consider incentives for well-developed higher density developments that include affordable housing and make efficient use of land and infrastructure.		
		Consider adopting inclusionary zoning to require the inclusion of a proportionate share of more affordable housing in residential development projects.		

Community Education for Clean and Efficient Buildings

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Clean and Efficient Buildings	Improve building efficiency, reaching a 33% reduction in energy use in buildings by 2050	Large Building Owner Outreach and Clean Buildings Concierge: Many multi-family and commercial property owners lack the expertise, time, and resources necessary to make strategic clean energy investments in their properties, even when tenants are seeking to lower their bill or pursue decarbonization. This initiative aims to empower large building owners by providing them with the necessary resources and guidance to identify and implement energy efficiency, retrofit, and electrification solutions with a focus on owners that may not have the internal resources to access programs	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

		and incentives. Through targeted outreach and personalized concierge services, large building owners will be equipped to navigate the complexities of decarbonization, leading to a measurable reduction in GHG emissions across the sector. By also integrating load shifting opportunities, the initiative seeks to support these buildings in significantly reducing their GHG emissions while capturing financial benefits from enhanced energy management and operational efficiency. The contractor portal will be designed to share information across agencies (application and credential/accreditation information), track contractor support opportunities at different agencies and direct contractors to them, and manage low-cost and easy to access loans and working capital. The Portal will streamline application processes and reduce administrative burdens in accessing grant and loan offerings. Illinois Climate Bank will work with Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, utilities, and the Illinois Power Agency to develop a single portal targeted at supporting low-income and disadvantaged community access to state and federal solar, decarbonization, energy efficiency, energy storage, pre-		
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		weatherization, and weatherization assistance programs.		
	Accelerate the use of efficient, all-electric heating and appliances in buildings, significantly increasing their share of new sales to between 50% and 90% by 2050.	Navigator program providing consumer outreach and clean building project support. The state will support the development of a Navigator program that educates residential customers about efficiency and electrification opportunities for their homes; supports them in identifying projects, contractors, and incentives; and works to coordinate clean energy support services across currently uncoordinated program and incentive streams.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
Increase affordable, energy-efficient housing stock	NA	Educate the public on existing programs that Ameren, Corn Belt Energy and Nicor offer to make their housing more energy-efficient, including programs specifically targeted at lower-income households	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 4</i>
Education and increased public awareness regarding utility, energy and water issues.	Provide educational and engagement opportunities.	Establish an innovation forum for information exchange regarding utilities, energy and water concerns.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>UEW-3.1a</i>
		Vision: When citizens imagine innovative solutions, they need a forum within City government where they can work with City planners to create the processes whereby new ways can effectively integrate themselves with existing Utilities, Energy and Water systems and governing methods. The Information Forum would encourage	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>UEW-3.1a</i>

		new, private and novel methods that could support: · The desire of citizens to employ cost-effective, creative and safe methods to improve how, when and where they use utilities, energy and/or water. · The goal of the city to better manage sewer and stormwater collection. · The community's goal to become ever more efficient in its use of energy. · The goals of citizens, businesses and City government to make available more effective local communication technology without introducing inordinate costs.		
		Continue to educate the community on energy, water and utility related issues.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 UEW-3.1b

Guidelines for Reducing Emissions from Transportation

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Reduce air pollutants and other impacts produced by transportation.	Ongoing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources.	In cooperation with regional partners, adopt and implement a transportation greenhouse gas reduction program.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-6.1a
		Reduce the use of fossil fuel and support renewable energy use in City vehicles and transportation facilities.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-6.1b

		Through intergovernmental coordination, reduce the use of fossil fuel and support renewable energy use in Connect Transit vehicles and facilities.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ6.1c
		Encourage use of renewable energy in all transportation modes to reduce emissions.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ6.1d
		Promote public understanding of and discourage single-occupancy vehicle use.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ6.1e
Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce air pollutants.	Expand and improve the City's public transportation network.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-3.1b
		Expand and improve the City's network of trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other walking and bicycling infrastructure.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-3.1c

Electric Vehicle Adoption

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Clean Transportation and Freight	Support adoption of passenger electric vehicles, reaching 55% of new sales by 2030, 90% by 2040, and 95% by 2050.	Pursuing this measure could include strategies such as incentives for the purchase of vehicles	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		Shared mobility programs.		
		Programmatic or financial support for charging infrastructure		
		Programs or rates to encourage smart charging, EV-to-grid technologies, or EVs as a distributed energy resource.		

Urban Design to Promote Use of Alternative Transportation

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
A network of state and interstate highway facilities to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, people and freight to, from and across the region.	Facilitate integrated land use and transportation planning that addresses land use patterns, densities and designs to accommodate and support multi-modal transportation systems.	In accordance with federal transportation legislation and regulations, incorporate multimodal transportation options in municipal and comprehensive plans and transportation plans.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – State and Interstate Highways Policy 3</i>
		Plan and implement multi-modal transportation improvements to support and complement planned areas of development.		
		Promote planning concepts that encourage the use of alternate transportation modes.		
A continuous network of arterial and collector streets that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services between existing and proposed residential areas and major activity centers, and provides linkages to the state and interstate highway system.	Design street systems to accommodate alternative modes of transportation whenever practical.	Promote planning concepts that encourage the use of alternate transportation modes.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Arterials and Collectors Policy 5</i>
		Plan and implement multi-modal transportation improvements to support and complement planned areas of development.		
		In accordance with federal transportation legislation and regulations, incorporate multimodal transportation options in municipal and regional comprehensive and transportation plans.		
		Plan and implement means for safe pedestrian crossings of major streets.		
Neighborhood units that are interconnected by arterial streets, sidewalks,	Encourage the practical use of alternative modes of transportation.	Provide for well-maintained sidewalks, sheltered transit stops, bicycle racks in convenient locations, and bicycle route connections to regional trail systems.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Historic Preservation</i>

bikeways, greenways and transit routes.		Focus the most intensive peripheral development adjacent to public transit routes.		<i>and Urban Revitalization – Transportation Policy</i>
		Support major investments in public transportation.		
Clean air and a natural climate unharmed by human activities.	Actively promote the increased use of public transit and other alternative modes of transportation through improved urban design.	Encourage the use of improved urban design to facilitate increased use of public transit and other alternative modes of transportation, such as higher densities designed around activity centers that are accessible by pedestrians, automobiles, and bicycles	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Climate and Air Quality Policy 2</i>
		Consider the adoption of regulatory measures that support pedestrian and transit oriented design with appropriate building orientations, setbacks and density patterns at selected locations.		
		Extend public transit to developing areas that feature transit oriented design.		
		Design arterial and collector streets to safely accommodate alternative modes of transportation.		
		Provide bicycle racks and other amenities for bicyclists at new commercial and government buildings.		
		Encourage the development of trails to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle transportation.		
		Consider alternative parking requirements for developments with public transit service or ride sharing programs.		

Design consistency and/or compatibility in the infill and redevelopment of downtowns and older neighborhoods throughout McLean County.	Encourage urban design that compliments measures for revitalizing downtowns and older neighborhoods and provides alternatives to peripheral development.	Support the provision of safe on-road bicycle routes and separate trails through existing neighborhoods.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing – Design Consistency Policy</i>
A system of safe and efficient off-road bicycle trails, supplemented by safe and direct on-road connections where off-road facilities are not feasible, and that connect residential areas to major activity centers, newly developing areas and other modes of transportation, including transit.	Encourage bicycling and walking as viable alternative modes of transportation.	Plan and implement expansion of the pedestrian-bicycle trail system to provide greater access and interconnection with other travel modes.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Bicycle - Pedestrian Routes Policy</i>
		Continue to provide alignment for trail locations in new development.		
		Investigate and where possible implement a system of on-street bicycle routes.		
		Design bicycle trails and routes to coordinate with transit.		
Encourage transit use as a viable alternative mode of transportation for the general population.	Support measures that would make it practical for more people to use transit.	Support the expansion of the transit system to provide improved route coverage, more frequent headways, and more inclusive schedules.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation –Public Transit Policy</i>
		Plan and implement multi-modal transportation improvements, including transit options to support and complement planned areas of development.		
		Promote planning concepts, such as transit oriented development, that encourage the use of alternate transportation modes.		

Transit development provides an alternative of choice for the general population and support for the transit dependent.	Expanded urban transit system to provide improved route coverage, more frequent route service (headways), extended service hours and schedules, accessible for transit-dependent riders and those with special needs and challenges, including the economically disadvantaged, persons without access to automobiles, the elderly, people with disabilities and regional access to urban area services.	Implement transit-oriented development.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-2.1h</i>
		Include transit operational requirements (i.e. bus stop locations and shelters, street configuration) in development review process.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-2.1e</i>
		Collect and analyze data regarding demand for paratransit and other mobility services to improve transit service for the transit-dependent.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-2.1j</i>
		Institute multi-modal transportation improvements, including transit options to support and complement planned areas of development.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-2.1k</i>
Increase reliability, convenience, safety and appeal of non-car transportation in Normal	Continue to partner with Connect Transit on investments to boost quality and quantity of bus rides in Normal, including:	Making bus stops more hospitable and accessible by incorporating shelters, good lighting and accessible pads.	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>
		Creating bus pullouts on bidirectional roads to reduce traffic interference	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>
		Establishing traffic signal priority to keep buses on schedule and moving in congested areas, like around ISU's campus	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>
	NA	Champion and advance the recommendations from Normal's 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, McLean County Regional Planning	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>

		Commission's 2021 Go:Safe Action Plan, and the League of American Bicyclists		
		Complete the Vernon Avenue reconfiguration as a model for future roadway projects	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>
		Extend the Constitution Trail into more areas throughout the community, especially on the west side along the creek	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 2</i>
A safe and efficient network of streets, bicycle-pedestrian facilities and other infrastructure to serve users in any surface transportation mode.	Maintenance and development of a continuous network of arterial, collector and local streets that provides for safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services between existing and proposed residential areas and major activity centers, maximizes walkability, and provides multimodal linkages to the state and interstate highway system.	Install street systems accommodating alternative modes of transportation whenever practical.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-1.1a</i>
	Data-driven transportation infrastructure policy and management.	Conduct and expand transportation modeling across multiple modes to enable better transportation policy and execution.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>TAQ-1.2c</i>

		Collect data to support the transportation modeling scope and capability, employing emerging data collection technology.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-1.2d
	Safe and efficient off-road bicycle trails integrated with direct on-road routes, connecting residential areas to activity centers, developing areas and all other modes of transportation.	Allocate resources for implementation of the recommendations in the City's bicycle master plan regarding both on-street routes and trail/sidepaths.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-1.3a
		As specified in the Bicycle Master Plan, implement expansion of the pedestrian-bicycle trail system to provide greater access and interconnection with other travel modes and report to BPC.	Short-ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-1.3b
		Install a network of way-finding signage.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 TAQ-1.3c

Urban Design to Promote Connected Communities

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
A wider choice of design alternatives and housing densities, including traditional design features in new developments.	Incorporate urban design into the planning and development review process to enhance the sense of community and the desirability of high quality, workforce housing.	Amend local ordinances when necessary to allow for desirable mixed land uses.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Housing – Design Alternatives Policy</i>
		Add design requirements to local zoning and subdivision ordinances.		
Future Growth and Land Use	The following principles will guide the development of the employment centers:	Parking: Divide expansive parking lots into smaller parking areas with landscaped islands and buildings. These islands will be designed to absorb storm water and sized to	Not specified	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035

		accommodate mature shade trees and provide bicycle parking.		
		Multimodal access: Include transit facilities and a transit hub where demand shows that it is needed. Ensure sidewalk/ bike path connections between buildings on campus and through parking lots to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas. Ensure variety of housing options within a mile.		
		Healthy Living: Provide active open spaces including pedestrian and bike paths on campus to promote healthy lifestyle for the employees.		

Greenways

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Safe and efficient transportation network that includes alternative modes between rural areas and the state, urban and interstate highway system.	Develop bike trails where identified in the adopted McLean County Regional Greenways Plan or otherwise desired.	Plan and implement expansion of the pedestrian-bicycle trail system.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation –Rural Roads Policy 5</i>
		Continue to provide alignment for trail locations in new development areas, and to connect to parks and other recreational facilities.		
Increase cooperation and coordination among governments, nonprofits, and businesses across the region to address shared environmental issues.	Continue to protect greenways at the regional level.	Continue to participate on the Greenways Advisory Committee.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-4.1a</i>
		Continue to play an active role in the implementation of the Regional Greenways Plan.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-4.1b</i>

		Coordinate with railroad companies to expand the use of abandoned railroad rights-of-way for greenways and trails.	Medium-long	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-4.1c
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Commute and Travel

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
A safe and efficient commuter transit system that connects Bloomington-Normal and other central Illinois communities in order to provide a viable alternative mode of transportation between communities.	Evaluate the feasibility of commuter transit between Bloomington-Normal and other central Illinois communities.	Pursue funding for further study of demand for commuter transit services between the Bloomington-Normal and other central Illinois communities.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Regional Commuter Transit Policy</i>
		Investigate the feasibility of alternative modes of commuter service.		
Improved level of passenger rail service, including the development of high-speed rail.	Promote improvements to passenger rail service, including the development of Amtrak high-speed rail.	Provide for easily accessible passenger rail facilities in municipal and transportation plans.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Intercity Passenger Rail Policy</i>
		Promote development decisions that make adequate provision for rail infrastructure.		
		Encourage the implementation of high-speed rail service serving the region.		
Convenient access among homes, workplace and the world.	Support communication, land use and transportation relationships that enhance access from the home to the workplace and from the workplace to the world.	Encourage development of high-speed rail as a viable option for long-distance and commuter travel.		McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Economic Development – Access Policy</i>
		Promote the availability and use of alternative transportation to connect		

		employment centers and residential concentrations.		
		Encourage the development of a wide variety of residential densities and supporting services, including daycare, in proximity to employment centers.		
An airport and air transportation system that provides for the safe and efficient movement of passengers and freight with minimal conflicts with adjacent land uses.	Promote the Central Illinois Regional Airport as a regional transportation center.	Provide for multimodal connections to and from the Central Illinois Regional Airport.		McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Air Transportation Policy 1</i>

Clean Transportation and Freight

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Clean Transportation and Freight	Support adoption of zero-emission light commercial, medium- and heavy-duty electric vehicles, reaching 30% of new sales by 2030, 60% by 2035, 65% by 2040, and 80% by 2050.	Pursuing this measure could include strategies such as incentives for the purchase of vehicles.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		Programmatic or financial support for charging infrastructure.		
		Workforce and operator training and development.		
		Outreach and planning efforts.		
		Programs or rates to encourage smart charging, EV-to-grid technologies, or EVs as a distributed energy resource.		
	Create a Heavy Duty Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program for Small and Medium Fleet Operators	This initiative is designed to spearhead the construction of charging infrastructure tailored for small to midsize fleet and freight operators, with a particular focus on supporting local and regional routes within high-emission urban areas. Recognizing the unique challenges these operators face, such as limited benefit from current	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

		highway-centric charging solutions and ineligibility for certain tax incentives due to their operational scale and financial structure, the program aims to provide a more accessible and equitable path towards electrification. A key aspect of this approach is the co-creation of charging projects in direct partnership with the communities they serve, ensuring local benefits and aligning with broader environmental and equity goals.		
	Support Deployment of Trackage Power to Reduce Diesel Engine Idling	This initiative entails deploying trackage power along railway tracks, eliminating the necessity for diesel generators on trains, as well as offering enhanced idling reduction programs to significantly reduce the use of diesel generators. These strategically positioned hubs can also support the transition to electrified engines in commuter trains to further advance the state's cleaner transportation goals and address environmental justice concerns in communities that are disproportionately affected by diesel emissions. The dual emphasis on infrastructure and idling reduction aligns with Illinois' broader objectives, including saving fuel costs, preventing air pollution, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, fostering economic savings, and providing environmental sustainability.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

		The initiative is dedicated to advancing the electrification of Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicles (MHDVs), with a particular focus on small and medium fleet operators who face significant challenges due to the high upfront costs of electric vehicles. By offering targeted rebates and innovative financing solutions, this program specifically addresses the accessibility and affordability barriers these operators encounter. The aim is to significantly boost adoption within this group, directly contributing to Illinois' 2030 EV goals and addressing a pivotal gap in the market. This targeted approach ensures that small and medium fleet operators, often overlooked by broader incentive programs, receive the support necessary for transitioning to zero-emission vehicles.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		Equipment Retrofits. Grant incentives for equipment retrofits. Help to extend the life of capital assets that already support decarbonization efforts but do not qualify for tax credits. Fleet Operational and Logistics Training. Training for fleets on how to optimize the life of the vehicles and further described in the initiative, Workforce Training for Fleet Operators.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

	Create a Clean Fleet and Freight Concierge	The initiative to create a Clean Fleet and Freight Concierge focuses on enhancing coordination and support for freight companies, especially those that don't have the internal resources to access programs and incentives. By guiding these companies toward economical, low-carbon technologies and practices, this program aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote cleaner transportation methods across Illinois. The Clean Fleet and Freight Concierge is not a standalone initiative but a vital component that complements and enhances a suite of efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions within Illinois. It plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of other key initiatives, including the Heavy-Duty Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program, the deployment of trackside power to reduce diesel engine idling, and the support for zero-emissions vehicle deployments among small fleet operators. By serving as a central hub for information, resources, and support, the concierge fosters a synergistic environment where the success of one initiative amplifies the impact of others.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
	Create a Freight Hub Data Collection and Analysis Program Emphasizing Monitoring and Metrics in Local Communities.	The Freight Hub Data Collections and Analysis initiative for GHG emissions aims to implement comprehensive air pollution monitoring at key distributed freight hubs that may not be served by the US EPA Clean Ports Program. By	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024

		deploying advanced tracking technologies both at these hubs and in homes located in close proximity, the program seeks to closely monitor, track, and subsequently enhance local health outcomes and air quality associated with the clean freight transition. This targeted approach allows for the quantification of GHG reduction progress over time, setting a critical baseline and tracking metrics specifically designed for this large polluting industry and the disadvantaged communities that are most affected by heavy freight emissions.		
	Air Pollution Monitoring.	Implementation of state-of-the-art air quality monitoring stations at strategic freight hub locations to gather real-time data on emissions and their impact on local air quality.	NA	State of Illinois Priority Climate Action Plan 2024
		Fund Community Trackers. Distribution of indoor air quality monitoring devices to households and local businesses in close vicinity to freight hubs, enabling the collection of data on the ambient air pollution levels they are exposed to.		

Financing and Incentivizing Transportation Strategies

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Encourage transit use as a viable alternative mode of transportation for the general population.	Support measures that would make it practical for more people to use transit.	Investigate the creation of an urban area transit district with independent taxing authority.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation –Public Transit Policy</i>
		Encourage the acquisition of green vehicles, including alternative fuel and power source vehicles, for use by transit providers.		
A continuous network of arterial and collector streets that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services between existing and proposed residential areas and major activity centers, and provides linkages to the state and interstate highway system.	Develop transportation plans and projects that are financially constrained.	Plan and implement cost-sharing arrangements to distribute the economic burden of system improvements.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Arterials and Collectors Policy 2</i>
		Identify and program funding from diverse sources, including public funding beyond transportation programs and public-private partnerships.		
		Identify opportunities for cost reduction through innovative design and materials, and the use of alternative funding mechanisms and incentives.		
Encourage the practical use of alternative modes of transportation.	Neighborhood units that are interconnected by arterial streets, sidewalks, bikeways, greenways and transit routes.	Encourage employer incentives for use of public transit, such as employer purchase of monthly bus passes.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization – Transportation Policy</i>
Clean air and a natural climate unharmed by human activities.	Actively promote the increased use of public transit and other alternative modes of transportation through improved urban design.	Consider providing incentives to public employees and private employers with approved programs for ride sharing and public transit usage.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Climate and Air Quality Policy 2</i>
		Consider developing park and ride facilities with free parking.		

		Consider providing density bonuses for transit oriented design around regional and subregional activity centers.		
A system of safe and efficient off-road bicycle trails, supplemented by safe and direct on-road connections where off-road facilities are not feasible, and that connect residential areas to major activity centers, newly developing areas and other modes of transportation, including transit.	Encourage bicycling and walking as viable alternative modes of transportation.	Where feasible, create incentives for development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Transportation – Bicycle-Pedestrian Routes Policy</i>
Urban growth areas contiguous to existing urban areas and of sufficient size to accommodate economic growth and projected population at a wide range of densities, along with supporting services.	Encourage urban development in or adjacent to incorporated municipalities that are in a position to provide essential services, and discourage urban development in areas where growth should not occur.	Consider the use of developer incentives to develop housing, retail, and business projects that use tracts of land currently within municipalities and disincentives in areas not already appropriately zoned.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Land Use - Urban Growth Policy</i>
		Offer density bonuses that allow projects to be developed at higher densities than normally permitted when project strongly supports plan objectives.		
		Consider establishing a program for tax base sharing to provide an equitable means of sharing costs and revenues from new economic development and to reduce intergovernmental competition as a factor in making land use decisions.		
		Utilize tax increment financing to encourage redevelopment in urban		

		areas and discourage development outside planned growth areas.		
Compact, pedestrian-friendly design that provides abundant opportunities for social, cultural and economic interactions.	Encourage mixed-use centers and traditional streetscapes that are both pedestrian-friendly and vehicle-friendly in downtowns and neighborhoods.	Update local ordinances to consistently provide for mixed uses and traditional neighborhood development in both infill and peripheral locations.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization – Design Policy</i>
An expanded range of shopping and professional services.	Consider financial incentives to encourage development and redevelopment in central business districts and surrounding neighborhoods.	Form partnerships among local governments and lending institutions and corporate stakeholders to offer low interest loans to developers of downtown properties.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization - Economic Growth Policy 2</i>
		Consider property tax rebates for downtown projects.		
		Reduce tap-on and other impact fees for projects in downtown locations.		
		Provide grants for preservation/rehabilitation of building facades that exceed minimum standards.		
		Consider sales tax credits for initial development related costs for downtown projects.		
		Encourage public/private partnerships to fund tree planting, landscaping, seating, and other downtown beautification programs.		

Protection of Biodiversity and Natural Areas

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Abundant open space to meet ecological and recreational needs.	Support the provision of open space and greenways consistent	Identify planned greenways as a priority land use in comprehensive plans.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan

	with the McLean County Regional Greenways Plan and locally adopted comprehensive plans and subdivision ordinances.	Adopt stream buffer ordinances for planned growth areas. Maintain a close working relationship with public, private and not-for-profit agencies that provide funding and technical assistance to aid in developing parks, open space and bikeways. Support the use of subdivision ordinances to help meet standards for new development and open space. Consider creating environmental overlay districts that include additional provisions or restrictions for identified areas within other zoning districts that contain environmental features in need of special attention.		<i>Land Use – Open Space Policy</i>
Expanded vegetation, tree cover, and species habitat	Support plans, programs, and practices for the preservation and restoration of natural vegetation, tree cover, and species habitat.	Support the implementation of the McLean County Regional Greenways Plan. Encourage subdivisions with open space as an integral component of the design. Support the restoration of habitat, including the planting of trees and grasslands on small, isolated parcels in urban and rural areas. Review and, if necessary, revise ordinances to allow natural, low maintenance landscaping. Establish backyard habitat demonstration sites in parks. Consider establishing an urban habitat program, such as the “Backyards for	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Natural Vegetation, Tree Cover, and Species Habitat Policy</i>

		Wildlife” program from the National Wildlife Federation.		
		Reserve portions of future parkland, where appropriate, for species habitat and low intensity use.		
		Consider developing individual and intergovernmental programs for the preservation, restoration, expansion, and connection of areas of major tree cover and prairie restoration.		
		Encourage the inclusion of natural areas suitable for wildlife habitat in new developments.		
		Promote existing local and state programs that aim to protect and enhance species habitat.		
Preservation of the long-term productivity of soil with minimal off-site impacts from erosion.	Proactively support existing soil conservation and farmland preservation programs.	Encourage infill development on vacant parcels, including brownfields, within existing urban and suburban areas prior to extending municipal services and developing farmland. Support urban revitalization.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Soil Policy</i>
Protect and conserve the community’s vital natural resources.	Identify and protect sensitive environmental areas and promote conservation of habitats and native species.	Maintain an updated regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Database on bodies of water, floodplains, flora and fauna and other environmentally sensitive areas.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-1.1a</i>
		Identify linkages between environmentally sensitive areas in and around the urban area.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-1.1b</i>
		Encourage development in the urban core to alleviate development pressures on farmland.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-1.1c</i>

		Carefully consider the impact of development projects on environmentally sensitive areas. Utilize the database to inform the environment aspects during the development review process.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-1.1d</i>
Future Growth and Land Use	The following principles will guide the development of the employment centers:	Sustainability: Use best practices to reduce impacts on the environmentally sensitive areas. Facilitate naturalized storm water management and make it as an amenity.	Not specified	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035
Provide public services in a fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible manner.	Reduce City facilities' environmental footprint.	Emphasize usage of the native plants and trees on public grounds.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>CF-2.2b</i>
Promote biodiversity by preserving and expanding natural habitats and planting more trees in a wider variety of species	NA	Build or restore natural habitats on public lands — like in parks, stormwater basins and along creeks. Start with converting the Kelley Detention Basin to wetlands to support larger numbers of diverse native plants, insects and animals.	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 3</i>
		Plant more trees in parks, along streets and on the Constitution Trail.	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 3</i>

Green Infrastructure

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Reduce environmental pollutants.	Identify and reduce water pollutants.	Increase the use of green infrastructure.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-3.2b</i>

Expand green infrastructure in Normal to protect sources of clean drinking water and improve stormwater and wastewater management	NA	Add green infrastructure solutions to detention basins to further improve water quality using natural design features	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 5</i>
		Install green roofs on suitable Town buildings	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 5</i>

Protection of Water Sources and Responsible Wastewater Management

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Safe, reliable and efficient water for consumption and for domestic, industrial and recreational use at a reasonable cost.	Provide public water service consistent with locally adopted land use plans.	Continue to monitor and protect water quality at Lake Bloomington, Evergreen Lake and other important water resources in the area pursuant to watershed plans and intergovernmental agreements.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Community Facilities – Water Policy</i>
		Protect local watersheds from contamination by surface runoff and other sources of pollution.		
		Continue reasonable levels of investment in municipal water supply, treatment, and distribution systems.		
		Encourage water conservation, including the promotion of conservation techniques discussed on the Ecology Action Center website at www.ecologyactioncenter.org .		
Environmentally sound wastewater treatment at a reasonable cost.	Provide wastewater treatment service consistent with regional and municipal land use planning strategies.	Encourage the use of emerging technologies in wastewater treatment to assist in effectively managing wastewater operations.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Community Facilities – Sanitary Sewer Service Policy</i>

Expand green infrastructure in Normal to protect sources of clean drinking water and improve stormwater and wastewater management	NA	Continue restoring Sugar Creek	Ongoing	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 5</i>
		Continue to work with intergovernmental partners to protect the Mahomet Aquifer	Ongoing	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 5</i>
		Encourage reduced water consumption among customers of Town water through education, incentives or technical assistance	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 5</i>
Reliable supplies of high quality potable drinking water and for recreational purposes.	Encourage the effective management of water resources.	Consider establishing aquifer protection zones, including guidelines for appropriate land uses, to protect the Mahomet, Mackinaw, and other significant aquifers.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Water Resources Policy</i>
		Consider geology and aquifer sensitivity in land use and zoning to ensure protection of groundwater quality.		
		Encourage the compilation of water quality data for planning and analysis purposes.		
		Monitor and restrict activities that can contribute to surface and groundwater contamination, including municipal wastewater discharge.		
		Support existing efforts to reduce water loss from municipal water systems.		
		Support water conservation management practices.		
		Encourage water recycling and reuse at the point of use.		

		Examine the pricing structure of water to promote water conservation.		
		Review and, if necessary, amend code requirements for water conservation.		
		Manage water as a shared resource.		
Preservation of floodplains and wetlands.	Support plans and programs to preserve floodplains and wetlands and minimize potential losses due to periodic flooding.	Adopt stream buffer ordinances for existing urban areas and planned growth areas.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Floodplains and Wetlands Policy</i>
		Develop a comprehensive set of countywide water resource management regulations to preserve and protect floodplains and wetlands.		
		Protect and preserve wetlands as an essential component of the hydrological system and wildlife habitat and restore drained wetlands where possible.		
		Raise awareness of the costs of building in the floodplains and the affects of urbanization on flooding through educational programs.		
Adequate drainage of urban and rural areas that minimizes excess runoff and subsequent impacts “downstream.”	Provide support for currently used and other innovative methods to reduce storm water runoff.	Encourage the use of storm water detention basins that compliment the natural environment, expand public open space, and increase recreational opportunities.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Natural Environment – Topography and Hydrology Policy</i>
		Promote the use of natural features to control erosion and storm water runoff.		
		Promote the adoption of new ordinances to address erosion and storm water runoff in municipalities that do not currently have such ordinances.		

Waste Management

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Provide more efficient and sustainable municipal solid waste management.	Reduce the amount of waste and toxicity going to the landfill.	Continue to actively promote Bloomington's automated single-stream curbside residential recycling program for single family homes.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.1a</i>
		Investigate means to increase recycling in small businesses and apartments with more than 6 units.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.1b</i>
		Promote source reduction of household hazardous waste.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.1e</i>
		Encourage recycling in public places, such as parks and Downtown, by providing necessary infrastructure.	Short	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.1d</i>
		Promote zero waste community events for City events.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.1c</i>
Provide public services in a fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible manner.	Reduce City facilities' environmental footprint.	Facilitate recycling in all community facilities.	Short-long	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>CF-2.2d</i>
Build a circular economy by improving the way we use, reuse and dispose of materials	NA	Establish a "zero waste" standard at its buildings and events, led by the new Office of Sustainability, both to reduce its own waste and to set a clear example for the rest of the community	Ongoing	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 7</i>
		Improve recycling and waste management in key areas, including: · Multi-family housing recycling · Commercial recycling	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 7</i>

		- Organics and food scrap recycling - Household hazardous waste, especially items containing coolant		
		Conduct regular waste audits to track progress and find new ways to improve	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 7</i>
		Support development and expansion of existing education resources on recycling and composting for residents, businesses and organizations, like EAC's Recycle Coach website	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 7</i>
		Continue to participate in the Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County	Not specified	Town of Normal Sustainability Plan Vision 2050 <i>Priority 7</i>
Provide more efficient and sustainable municipal solid waste management.	Continue to address solid waste issues at the regional level.	Continue participation in the Regional Solid Waste Committee. Bloomington Public Works.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.2d</i>
		Explore sustainable and innovative ways to address the waste generated in McLean County after the scheduled closure of the local landfill in 2017.	Short-medium	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.2e</i>
		Explore the possibility of providing a permanent household hazardous waste collection site within McLean County.	Short-medium	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.2f</i>
		Investigate sourcing during City procurement	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.2h</i>
		Devise a sustainable framework for safe disposal of electronic recycling in the County.	Short-medium	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 <i>NE-5.2g</i>

		Research methods to provide food scrap composting services to community residents.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-5.2a
		Work with area schools to increase recycling.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-5.2b
		Target recycling awareness campaigns to populations recognized as currently not being reached satisfactorily—senior citizens, lower income households, and non-homeowners.	Ongoing	City of Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2035 NE-5.2c

Inter-jurisdictional Collaboration

Objective	Priority	Strategy	Time Horizon	Document
Efficient provision of gas, electric, and telecommunication services to meet the demands of existing and future development.	Promote active coordination among local governments and utility companies.	Encourage periodic meetings among representatives of local governments and utility companies to help insure coordinated provision of services.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Community Facilities – Energy and Telecommunications Policy</i>
Modern schools that offer an excellent education, operate efficiently, and contribute to healthy communities.	Cooperate with school districts to establish well-equipped and properly staffed schools at appropriate locations that function jointly as centers of education, recreation and community activity, and are consistent with local	Continue to establish and promote schools as important neighborhood or community centers.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Community Facilities – Schools Policy</i>
		Encourage efficient land utilization in the development of schools to include green concepts and multi-storied buildings that contribute to neighborhood stabilization.		

	and regional land use and transportation plans.			
Prompt and efficient response by emergency services provided by fire, police and public service agencies.	Facilitate coordination between responders, including fire, police, and public service agencies, to enhance the level of service provided to each community.	Consider intergovernmental service agreements as needed to fill gaps in services and/or to improve efficiencies.	Not specified	McLean County Regional Comprehensive Plan <i>Community Facilities – Fire, Police and Emergency Services Policy</i>

Appendix C:

Public Comment and Engagement Report



Public Comment and Engagement Report

Background

The Ecology Action Center (EAC) released a Draft Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal to the public for review and comment on August 3, 2026. The public comment period remained open until August 14, 2026.

To facilitate public access to the draft report and support participation in the review process, the EAC created a dedicated CESP section (Community Energy Strategic Plan page) on its website for members of the public to view or download the report. This webpage served as the central public-facing resource for the CESP public review process and provided community members with access to the draft report, supplemental documents such as the 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory report, and links to surveys to share comments and provide feedback.

On August 5, 2026, the EAC added a Primer Document and corresponding survey to the CESP webpage to further support public engagement with the draft plan. The Primer Document condensed the CESP project background, key goals, and initiatives into a few pages and was intended to make the review process more accessible to a broader public audience. It also provided the public with an alternative way with which to engage with the CESP process as members of the public had the opportunity to provide feedback on the high-level CESP goals and initiatives or simply share their perspectives about energy and sustainability priorities through the corresponding primer document survey.

The EAC supplemented publication of the draft CESP on its website with active outreach through multiple communication channels. A press release was issued in addition to posts on the EAC's media channels including a post and paid promotion on Facebook, a post to the Bloomington Normal Reddit page, and a post through LinkedIn (refer to the Engagement Materials section to view a subset of these materials). CESP Stakeholders were also encouraged to promote the release of the draft report through with their networks.

Engagement Metrics

This section provides an overview of engagement metrics for posts where quantitative data—or post insights—were readily available (i.e. the EAC webpage and Facebook). As metrics were not available for all outreach channels, total engagement may have been higher than reported here.

EAC Webpage and Facebook

The Community Energy Strategic Plan page on the EAC website received a total of **805 views** during the public comment period. Meanwhile, the Facebook post received a total of **3,584 views** for an **aggregated total of 4,389 views**.

Facebook Post Insights

Post insights generated by Facebook offered additional measures of engagement including the number of viewers, post and link clicks, reach among followers and non-followers, and the age distribution of viewers.

While the post was viewed 3,584 times, a smaller subset of 1,787 unique viewers was reported alongside the initial metric. This indicates an average of approximately two views per unique viewer and suggests a degree of repeated engagement with the post.

Post engagement, measured through post reactions, comments, shares, and clicks, totaled 285 interactions. **Post clicks represented 68% of all engagement** with 194 clicks recorded. However, of those 194 post clicks, a smaller subset of 20 link clicks (10.3%) directing viewers to the EAC webpage were recorded.

The post was viewed by 2,276 non-followers (63.5%) compared to 1,308 followers (36.5%) which indicates that **non-followers accounted for nearly two-thirds of total views**.

The post audience skewed toward older age groups. **Viewers aged 65 and older represented the largest share at 27.3%**, followed by those aged 55–64 (19.9%) and 45–54 (19.1%). Viewers in the 35–44 age group followed closely behind, making up 18.8% of viewers. Together, viewers aged 45 and older accounted for 66.3% of the audience while viewers under 35 accounted for 14.9%. **The 18–24 age group represented the smallest share of the audience at 3.2%.**

Survey Overview

Two separate surveys were made available to members of the public as part of the CESP engagement process: the CESP Public Comment Form and the Our Shared Energy Future – Feedback Survey. While both surveys provided opportunities for community members to provide input on the draft CESP, they differed in their format and focus.

The **CESP Public Comment Form** provided a direct mechanism for respondents to submit comments on the draft report. The survey also collected basic information about respondents, including ZIP code and affiliation as well as optional questions regarding whether community members resided in disadvantaged or rural community status or were part of labor organizations or unions for grant reporting purposes.

The **Our Shared Energy Future – Feedback Survey** provided a broader opportunity for community members to identify energy and sustainability issues and priorities. Following the release of the Primer Document two days after the public comment period opened, this additional survey provided an alternative avenue for respondents to provide input on the draft CESP without needing to read through the entirety of a lengthy and technical draft report. The survey included questions on respondent’s ZIP codes, the energy or sustainability issues most important to them, and energy topics that should be prioritized for local action in addition to space to provide additional comments or ideas.

Taken together, the two surveys functioned as complementary mechanisms for public input. The CESP Public Comment Form was more directly oriented toward comments on the draft plan, while the Our Shared Energy Future survey offered a broader format for identifying community priorities and perspectives in addition to allowing respondents to comment on the draft CESP.

Survey Demographics and Responses

The two surveys received a combined total of 17 responses with the CESP Public Comment Form accounting for 70.6% (12 responses) and the Our Shared Energy Future survey accounting for 29.4% (5 responses). Given the limited response count, these results reflect the experiences and perspectives of survey participants rather than the broader population.

Respondents reported belonging to a total of six ZIP codes representing four communities across the county: Bloomington, Downs, Hudson, and Normal. **Bloomington accounted for the largest share of responses, with 11 of the 17 respondents (64.7%), followed by Normal with 4 respondents (23.5%). Downs and Hudson each accounted for 1 respondent (5.9%).** The CESP Public Comment Form received responses from five of the six ZIP codes represented while the Our Shared Energy Future survey received responses from four. Three ZIP codes (61701, 61704, and 61761) were represented in both surveys (refer to Table 1).

Zip Code	Corresponding Community	CESP Public Comment Form Responses	Our Shared Energy Future Responses	TOTAL
61701	Bloomington	3	2	5
61704	Bloomington	3	1	4
61705	Bloomington	2	-	2
61736	Downs	1	-	1
61761	Normal	3	1	4
61748	Hudson	-	1	1
TOTAL		12	5	17

Table 1. Geographic representation of survey responses by ZIP code, corresponding community, and survey.

Responses from the CESP Public Comment Form Survey

Summary of Affiliation Responses

The survey asked respondents to indicate their affiliation, with the option to select multiple categories. Response options included individual community member, local business or employer, community-based organization or nonprofit, labor or workforce organization, energy or utility organization, local government or public agency, educational institution, prefer not to answer, and an open-ended other option. Six respondents self-identified only as individual community members whereas four respondents reported an affiliation with a community-based organization or nonprofit and two respondents were affiliated with a local business or employer.

Summary of Community of Interest Information Responses

Respondents were also asked a series of optional questions related to community and organizational affiliation for grant reporting purposes. A summary of the responses can be seen in Table 2.

Question	No	Yes
Do you reside in a disadvantaged community?	11	1
Do you reside in a rural community?	11	1
Are you part of a labor organization?	11	1
Are you part of a union?	10	2

Table 2. Summary of Community of Interest Information survey section by questions and responses.

Responses from the Our Shared Energy Future – Feedback Survey

Summary of Energy and Sustainability Priorities

Respondents were asked to identify the energy or sustainability issues they considered most important. Responses included:

- Thinking about full life cycles for buildings (what happens after their first use)
- Protected bike paths, and promotion of more native plants
- Clean air and water, reduce carbon emissions
- Decreasing fossil fuel usage
- Regulating Energy Stability

Summary of Energy Priorities for Local Action

Respondents were asked to identify which energy and sustainability areas they believed should receive the highest priority for local action and were allowed to select up to three responses among the following options:

- Affordable energy and reducing energy costs
- Improving energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and public buildings
- Expanding renewable energy development
- Supporting clean energy jobs and economic development
- Improving transportation options and connected communities
- Strengthening energy stability
- Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship
- Providing education and resources to help the community make informed energy decisions

- Other _____

When the five responses were combined, the strongest priority was protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship (selected by four respondents). Expanding renewable energy development (selected by 3 respondents) was the next most selected priority and affordable energy and reducing energy costs and improving transportation options and connected communities were each selected by two respondents (refer to Table 3).

ZIP Code	Selection
61701	Affordable energy and reducing energy costs Expanding renewable energy development Improving transportation options and connected communities
61704	Affordable energy and reducing energy costs Strengthening energy stability Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship
61701	Improving energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and public buildings Expanding renewable energy development Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship
61748	Expanding renewable energy development Supporting clean energy jobs and economic development Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship
61761	Improving transportation options and connected communities Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship

Table 3. Responses to “Which of the following areas should be the highest priority for local action?” organized by ZIP code and selection.

Public Feedback and CESP Revisions

This section summarizes public feedback received during the CESP comment period and documents how that feedback was addressed in the final CESP Report. Where appropriate, revisions were made to incorporate public input or clarify existing content.

Survey	ZIP Code	Public Comment	Edits incorporated in the Final CESP Report
Our Shared Energy Future	61701	Advocate to phase out the sale and use of gas mowers and blowers to reduce noise pollution and improve air quality.	Initiative 7.3 and sub-initiatives 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 encourage the use of low-maintenance vegetation and reduced mowing.
		Bring back the electric buses and incentivize more solar and wind production on both small and large scale.	These ideas were already incorporated in the draft report. No edits required.
CESP Public Comment Form	61701	I'm glad you connect the built environment and the stewardship of it as an important factor in reducing carbon energy use.	No edits required.
		It seems that the Educational community, which are governmental entities, need to be considered on the same basis as the city, the town and the county. They have more square footage and plans to build more, than any other sector. The universities continue to destroy serviceable buildings.	Educational institutions were captured under the umbrella term of Large Building Owners. The "C" in CESP: Who is the Community section provides rationale for why governmental entities are explicitly named.
		To fulfill the needs identified, will require a trained workforce. The educational community needs to be ready to match any municipal program with workers who can accomplish the job. That needs to be spelled out.	Action steps 2.1.3.1, 2.2.1.5, 3.6.1.3 and sub-initiative 3.6.1 now include explicit mention of educational institutions.
		And to note the obvious, not protecting the immigrant work force will make the job of securing workers to accomplish this massive change of infrastructure impossible. That is likely the largest barrier to accomplish these goals.	Action step 2.2.1.5 now explicitly mentions underserved populations. The protection of specific workforce subsets may be more fully addressed in future Climate Adaptation Plans.
CESP Public Comment Form	61701	A load of effort has no doubt gone into this by well-meaning people who probably want it to be a great deal better than it is.	Edits are described below:
		This is boilerplate stuff, assembled-by-committee and rife with unnecessary language; someone needs to take a course on the "Plain Language" movement and be given editorial control to take a massive red sharpie to about 30% of the words on the page	Sub-initiatives and action steps were edited for clarity for the final version. Additional information was provided in additional sections and written in a manner that is more accessible.

		These are proposals from fifteen if not twenty years ago.	The Alignment with Local and State Plans section along with the Guiding Principles section now addresses this tension.
		This is hindered by byzantine language and in-speak which requires whole committees be assembled to decode it before anyone could possibly use the proposals	CESP goals and initiatives were intentionally described in accessible language. Sub-
			initiatives and action steps were edited for clarity for the final version.
		Nothing in this proposal, even at its most advanced stages, comes close to the radical change which is needed to adequately address the issue as stated	The Guiding Principles section now describes that goals and initiatives were developed with consideration for actions that are within the local influence.
		Without teeth and enforcement, this is functionally just more busywork that makes warm fuzzies and accomplishes precious little besides: less of that.	No edits required.
CESP Public Comment Form	61701	I like the overall goals. More specific action items could be helpful, or at least examples.	Action steps were provided for each sub-initiative.
		Some ideas... Start replacing 4 way stops and stoplights with roundabouts. They reduce emissions from idling, lower noise pollution from acceleration, allow for efficient driving, and are safer.	Sub-initiative 4.2.5 supporting action 4.2.5.3 now explicitly mentions roundabouts.
		Also, encourage government and businesses to mow less and plant more native plants that don't need maintenance. This reduces air and noise pollution while beautifying areas, supporting pollinators, and saving money.	Sub-initiative 7.3.1 encourages the use of low-maintenance vegetation for local government properties.
		Stripe more bike lanes and increase no car areas, such as streets in uptown Normal or downtown Bloomington or near ISU.	Sub-initiative 4.2.4 was added to incorporate these suggestions.
		Work for city ordinances that restrict or limit noise, air, and water pollution and then enforce them.	Initiative 6.5 partly addressed this suggestion as does Goal 8 broadly and Initiative 8.3 specifically.
CESP Public Comment Form	61761	No data centers and a significant reduction in Flock cameras please.	Initiative 6.5 addresses data centers. Specifically addressing Flock cameras fall outside the scope of the CESP.

Our Shared Energy Future	61761	The CESP is ambitious and comprehensive. Awesome! This isn't maybe a specific plan, but some thoughts about commuting: I like to ride my bike, but it always feels exposed and dangerous. Protected bike lanes would be nice. It seems we have a few roads that are wider than they need to be for most of the year: College, Cottage, Parkside, Main Street to name a few. Would it be possible to repurpose one lane for bike traffic as demand is lower	Sub-initiative 4.2.4 was added to incorporate these suggestions.
		on those streets? Another low-cost way to make driving more annoying and other commuting safer would be speed bumps near cross walks. Finding ways to slow down cars other than traffic citations would go a long way making non-car travel safer.	
		Another area we could improve is more native plants. We need to greatly reduce herbicides and insecticides everywhere. How about a property tax break if you don't treat your lawn or if you dedicate some percent to natives? 10% natives would reduce tax bill by 1% perhaps. Or maybe the amount spent on native plants is a property tax credit. More natives mean better water retention, cleaner air, greener lawns all summer, less chemical runoff, and more pollinators. It means more life.	Sub-initiative 7.3.1.6 now includes the property tax credit for natives or reduced herbicide/insecticide/fungicide use idea for exploration.
		Thank you for putting this plan together and taking action! Thanks for seeking input.	No edits required.
CESP Public Comment Form	61761	The goals that are most important to me to get done are State wide data center ban, or at least strict guardrails 3.4.2 and 3.7.2 - improving energy efficiency and maintenance in rental properties 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 looking at vacant lots that could be made into parks, prioritizing high-need areas 5.2.1 and 5.2.3 - adding sidewalks and bike lanes, and destination based transit strategies. It would be great to see signs at bus stops that say "take this bus to get to the library/grocery store/park" to encourage more people to ride that haven't done it before.	Sub-initiative 5.2.1.3 now includes "destination based transit strategies."

CESP Public Comment Form	61761	Speaking for myself and on behalf of [redacted] Church and [redacted] Church of Normal, I am so thankful to get this report. We are fortunate to have the Ecology Action Center working for the wellbeing of our communities. I look forward to fully engaging the report and having conversations about it around our communities. I hope we can all get beyond political talking points and divisions to weigh the merits of each part of the report. Clean air, clean water, healthy land and nature are certainly keys to our quality of life here. As Christians, it is also	No edits required.
		part of our God-given responsibility to be good stewards of creation. Thank you EAC. [redacted]	
CESP Public Comment Form	61704	Very good report overall! It hit most of the thoughts I had written down in advance. That said...	The final report now includes information regarding these emissions trajectories.
		I don't understand the graphs on pages 13-16. Why do some show reductions and others not?	
		I didn't see any plans for adaptation to extreme weather, like cooling centers or putting folks up temporarily when floods or tornados strike. Maybe this doesn't belong in this report?	These topics would be addressed in a Climate Adaptation Plan.
		There will likely be electrical distribution upgrades needed for the increased electrical demand. Should the local governments partner with local utilities on this?	The Stationary Energy subcommittee recognized the upgrades needed to the grid but focused goals and initiatives to what was more directly under local control. The Guiding Principles section now describes that goals and initiatives were developed with consideration for actions that are within the local influence and supporting actions call for coordination with utilities to support the implementation of initiatives where appropriate.
		Is there a plan for a coordinated death of gas utilities? Most fossil fuel companies were not built to shrink and could fail in ways that leave customers in the lurch.	This topic was determined to fall outside the scope of local control and was not included as a CESP initiative.

		Could Nicor be given the opportunity to participate in district geothermal pilots? I admit this is a longer-term concern.	This topic falls outside the scope of the CESP as the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act (CRGA) establishes the requirements for district geothermal pilot projects.
		Page 76, initiative 8.1: Third parties are already developing electrification clearinghouses (example: Rewiring America). We might be able to just use what is already out there.	Information on Rewiring America was included in sub-initiative 8.1.1.1.
		Any thoughts on partnering with robotic taxi companies as part of the transportation effort? Most are based on electric vehicles, and would reduce the total number of vehicles on the roads and possibly miles traveled if folks opt in to sharing trips.	The Transportation Subcommittee considered the potential role of robotic EV taxi services. However, given the early stage of the technology and uncertainty surrounding its future availability and impacts, the final CESP
			does not identify robotaxis as a standalone sub-initiative. Instead, it was absorbed by initiative 2.1 and can be revisited in future iterations of the CESP.
		HVAC contractors should be included in any plan to push residential heat pumps. Most HVAC purchases are made under duress and are completed with what the contractor has in stock. If we don't break into these transactions we won't get anywhere.	Language in the action steps of sub-initiatives 8.1.2.3 and 8.1.3.1 was expanded to explicitly include HVAC contractors.
CESP Public Comment Form	61704	Please consider working closely with affordable housing nonprofits for implementing the plan. This is great work and we deeply appreciate your team's commitment to environmental justice.	More explicit calls to partner or work with affordable housing organizations were included in the action steps of sub-initiatives 3.4.2.3, 3.4.2.5, 3.7.1.1, 3.7.1.6, 3.7.2.3, and 5.1.2.5.
Our Shared Energy Future	61704	Under Goal 6 I'm curious why 6.5.2 was left blank (using legislative and policy tools) in regards to data centers. Wouldn't this be even more helpful than 6.5.3 alone?	The previous 'NA' designation for sub-initiatives 6.5.2 has now been updated and provides a rationale for not listing supporting actions.

CESP Public Comment Form	61704	Your entire project, proposal, and plan is a waste of time, money, and resources.	Background information on the grant program funding this work is now provided under The "C" in CESP: Who is the Community? section.
		Man-made global warming is a myth.	The CESP is grounded in the established scientific evidence on climate change. The scientific consensus recognizes that climate change is occurring and that human activities are the primary driver of recent global warming.
CESP Public Comment Form	61705	Just a few. Great ideas here. Practicality concerns: costs for installation or retrofitting, maintenance, and rates on industrial, commercial, government, and residential sectors. Location impacts on existing residential areas, i.e., safety, noise, views, property values.	The Financing Pathways section of the CESP Report was edited to acknowledge cost as an important consideration for implementation and identifies potential financing approaches.
CESP Public Comment Form	61705	It's nice to be made aware of the various specific financial funding that can potentially be utilized to accomplish the goals in the Ecology Action Center's Bloomington Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan(Clean Energy Leadership/ Financing Pathways Section) so those in the community interested in using/advancing the plan know just what we have to work with.	No edits required.
CESP Public Comment Form	61736	This reads like a Communist manifesto wish list. Clearly the writers have no real world working knowledge of literally anything to do with government, electricity money people property etc...	The CESP Stakeholders and Subcommittees section was added and outlines the professional and subject matter expertise of all stakeholders involved in developing CESP goals and strategies.

Engagement Materials

The following materials are included to document the engagement activities conducted during the CESP public comment period. These include the survey questions for both public surveys, the press release, and the Facebook post used to promote the draft CESP.

Public Comment Surveys



CESP Public Comment Form

Thank you for taking the time to review the DRAFT Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal.

The public comment period is open **August 3, 2026, through August 14, 2026**. Comments submitted by **11:59 p.m. CDT on August 14, 2026**, will be reviewed and considered during preparation of the final report.

jvidal@ecologyactioncenter.org [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

What is your ZIP code? *

Used to understand geographic representation and community reach.

Your answer

Please indicate your affiliation: *

Please select all that apply

- ☐ Individual community member
- ☐ Local business or employer
- ☐ Community-based organization or nonprofit
- ☐ Labor organization or workforce organization
- ☐ Energy, utility, or energy-related organization
- ☐ Local government or public agency

☐ Educational institution

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other: _____

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Clear form

Community of Interest Information

This project is a result of a partnership with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Office of Energy and is supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Energy. As part of the grant reporting requirements, information is being collected to better understand participation from community members that may experience greater energy-related challenges, environmental burdens, or barriers to accessing energy benefits.

The following questions help document the reach of the Community Energy Strategic Plan process and inform reporting on community engagement. Responses are voluntary and will be used for planning and reporting purposes only.

Do you reside in a disadvantaged community?

*Please note: for the purposes of this project, **disadvantaged community** refers to the federal definition established by the U.S. Department of Energy. Use the map below to determine whether your area is identified as a disadvantaged community.*

<https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#8.99/40.6046/-89.0702>

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you reside in a rural community?

*Please note: for the purposes of this project, **rural community** refers to a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a population of not more than 10,000 inhabitants.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you part of a labor organization?

*Please note: for the purposes of this project, **labor organization** refers to a labor union, which is a group of two or more employees who join together to advance common interests such as wages, benefits, schedules, and other employment terms and conditions.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you part of a union?

*Please note: for the purposes of this project, **union** refers to membership-driven, democratic organizations governed by laws that require financial transparency and integrity, fair elections, and other democratic standards, and fair representation of all workers.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Clear form

DRAFT CESP Comments and Feedback

Please share any comments, feedback, questions, or suggestions regarding the draft plan. Comments may address the plan as a whole or specific goals, strategies, recommendations, or other content.

If applicable, please identify the section or topic your comment relates to.

Your answer

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Submit

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Clear form



Our Shared Energy Future - Feedback Survey

The Draft Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) Report for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal outlines potential pathways for a shared energy future.

However, we recognize not everyone has the time to read the report in full. This survey is designed to provide a more accessible way to share your thoughts and ideas. We want to hear what energy and sustainability issues are most important to you.

Your feedback will help us better understand community perspectives and will be considered as we finalize the plan.

jvidal@ecologyactioncenter.org [Switch account](#)



 Not shared

* Indicates required question

Please enter your ZIP code: *

Used to understand geographic representation and community reach.

Your answer

What energy or sustainability issues are most important to you?

Your answer



Which of the following areas should be the highest priorities for local action?

Please select up to 3

- ☐ Affordable energy and reducing energy costs
- ☐ Improving energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and public buildings
- ☐ Expanding renewable energy development
- ☐ Supporting clean energy jobs and economic development
- ☐ Improving transportation options and connected communities
- ☐ Strengthening energy stability
- ☐ Protecting natural resources and supporting environmental stewardship
- ☐ Providing education and resources to help the community make informed energy decisions
- ☐ Other: _____

Do you have any additional comments or ideas that you would like to share?

Your answer _____

Submit

Clear form

Press Release



ecologyactioncenter.org

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: August 3, 2026

Contact: Michael Brown 309-454-3169 x.11

Ecology Action Center releases draft "Community Energy Strategic Plan" to address emissions reduction strategies and local energy needs

Building upon three community greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventories including the recently released [2022 McLean County, Bloomington and Normal GHG Inventory](#), the Ecology Action Center (EAC) is seeking public comment in its draft "Community Energy Strategic Plan Report" or CESP. This plan, to be delivered to McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and Town of Normal, is composed of recommendations developed by three groups of stakeholders through an eight-month collaborative process. These recommendations strive to reduce carbon and air quality emissions while also addressing energy needs for the local community. The draft CESP report and public comment form can be found at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/cesp/>.

This process followed the guidance set by the United States Department of Energy, which defines a CESP as, "a long-term blueprint to focus and guide efforts and actions toward a defined energy vision. Such a plan articulates goals, develops strategies and actions to meet the goals, and identifies and allocates resources to assure effective completion of these strategies."

Local residents are invited to review both the [2026 Community Energy Strategic Plan Report for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois](#) and the supporting [2022 GHG Emissions Inventory Update](#). Public comment is specifically requested for the CESP and can be provided through the form at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/cesp/>.

Thirty-six stakeholders, representing different sectors, organizations, and agencies within the community provided recommendations in the process, leading to near-consensus on the strategy recommendations listed in the draft plan. Local energy sector professionals provided key guidance and perspective on local challenges and needs to inform strategy development.

In July the EAC completed the GHG emissions inventory for the 2022 data year while expanding the geographic scope of the study. Previous inventories (for 2008 and 2015 data years) included only the Bloomington-Normal urban area but for 2022 the entirety of McLean County is now evaluated.

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.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit environmental agency with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County.

###

PO Box 97, Normal, Illinois 61761

309-454-3169

Facebook Post



Log In



Ecology Action Center
August 3 at 11:53 AM · 🌐

McLean County, Illinois community energy strategic plan for public comment
🌱 Titles are generated by AI from Meta

The Ecology Action Center is extremely pleased to release the draft "Community Energy Strategic Plan Report for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois" for public comment at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/cesp/>.

Building upon three community greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventories including the recently released 2022 McLean County, Bloomington and Normal GHG Inventory (<https://ecologyactioncenter.org/greenhouse-gas-inventory/>), the Ecology Action Center is seeking public comment in its draft "Community Energy Strategic Plan Report" or CESP. This plan is composed of recommendations developed by three groups of stakeholders through an eight-month collaborative process. These recommended strategies aim to reduce carbon and air quality emissions while also addressing energy needs for the local community.

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Local residents are invited to review both the 2026 Community Energy Strategic Plan Report for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois and the supporting 2022 GHG Emissions Inventory Update. Public comment is specifically requested for the CESP and can be provided through the form at <https://ecologyactioncenter.org/cesp/>.

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**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

12

1 comment 17 shares

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Comment