

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CLIMATE WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Clean Energy Workgroup:

Goal 1 – Green the electricity supplied to Montgomery County residents and businesses.

Strategy 1.1 – Work to modify existing, or develop new, laws and policies at the State level to support greening of the electricity supply

Action 1.1.1 – Support an increase in the State’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to 100%

Action 1.1.2 – Support a modification/expansion of the requirements for Tier 1 renewable sources under the RPS to ensure the development of new, clean renewable generating capacity (e.g., solar and wind).

Action 1.1.3 – Support the authority of local jurisdictions to offer Community Choice Aggregation (CCA).

Action 1.1.4 – Support a carbon pricing mechanism at the State level.

Strategy 1.2 – Develop a Community Choice Energy (CCE) program (dependent on success of Action 1.1.3)

Goal 2 – Expand the use of distributed renewable energy.

Strategy 2.1 – Establish engagement strategies, programs, and financial tools to address cost barriers to onsite renewables and storage.

Action 2.1.1 – Examine the benefits of reinstating County’s property tax credit for solar and geothermal systems.

Action 2.1.2 – Analyze the need for warranty or insurance product that covers cost of roof and PV system maintenance with the Montgomery County Green Bank and other parties.

Action 2.1.3 – Identify barriers to use of distributed energy systems in low- and moderate-income households and ensure distributed energy programs and financial tools are accessible to all.

Action 2.1.4 – Evaluate financial incentives for clean energy storage.

Action 2.1.5 – Ensure programs like C-PACE and the Montgomery County Green Bank are supported to the fullest extent possible to maximize leveraging of private capital to support distributed renewable systems.

Strategy 2.2 – Assess feasible public and private locations for solar and wind installations of various scales in Montgomery County and adjacent jurisdictions.

Action 2.2.1 – Develop a ranking system to categorize sites based on economic, environmental, and social considerations.

Action 2.2.2 – Evaluate financial incentives to encourage solar development on brownfields and other preferred solar locations.

Action 2.2.3 – Examine feasibility of solar on industrial sites like the Dickerson power and incinerator facilities.

Action 2.2.4 – Work with other jurisdictions and the State to ensure coordinated efforts related to siting renewable energy facilities.

Action 2.2.5 – Examine the feasibility and benefit of solar on utility poles.

Strategy 2.3 – Expand the use of solar on public facilities.

Action 2.3.1 – Develop a ranking system to categorize sites based on economic, environmental, and social considerations.

Action 2.3.2 – Take advantage of any federal, state, and other funding sources to support deployment of solar on public facilities.

Action 2.3.3 – Maximize use of solar on public school facilities.

Action 2.3.4 – Develop/require communication and engagement tools at all public and commercial solar facilities to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public on the benefits of solar.

Action 2.3.5 – Develop multi-site solar PV project on public facilities through Power Purchase Agreement or similar mechanism to facilitate economies of scale.

Strategy 2.4 – Support modification of the State’s net metering law, including addressing cap for individual projects (2 MW) and total project volume cap (1,500 MW).

Strategy 2.5 – Support expansion of community solar.

Action 2.5.1 – Evaluate environmental and ecological impact of using land in the agricultural reserve for solar.

Action 2.5.2 – Establish demonstration projects to co-locate PV solar with agricultural production (such as grazing) and pollinator meadows.

Action 2.5.3 – Create a new capacity target (specific to Mo. Co.) to allocate to community solar projects.

Action 2.5.4 – Create an incentive to support small (less than 300 kW DC) commercial installations or installations on non-profits’ properties.

Strategy 2.6 – Working with the Public Service Commission and electric utilities, support an assessment of the ability of utilities to incorporate additional distributed energy.

Action 2.6.1 – Examine issues of feeder capacity, safety, load control, and grid stability.

Action 2.6.2 – Ensure rate systems equitably distribute costs among ratepayers.

Action 2.6.3 – Examine impact of battery systems on grid.

Strategy 2.7 -- Review the feasibility of implementing more energy conversion efficiency technologies in Montgomery County (i.e. co-generation, co-process, and heat recovery).

Action 2.7.1 Review the feasibility of community-based energy systems and energy storage.

Strategy 2.8 -- Review the feasibility of creating/expanding other clean renewable energy technologies in Montgomery County (other than wind and solar).

Action 2.8.1 Review the feasibility of energy harvesting from WSSC's water distribution system.

Strategy 2.9 – Establish demonstration projects to co-locate PV solar with agricultural production (such as grazing) and pollinator meadows.

Strategy 2.10 – Develop clean energy incentives for LMI households in certain zip codes.

Goal 3 – Expand the use of renewable energy to power buildings.

Strategy 3.1 – Evaluate policies requiring the electrification of new, substantially modified, and existing buildings.

Action 3.1.1 – Make efforts to convert existing buildings into solar ready buildings and offer incentives for such retrofits (similar to incentives offered under EmPower MD).

Action 3.1.2 -- Evaluate feeder line expansion by utilities to account for future solar needs and installation sizes in each neighborhood.

Action 3.1.3 – Evaluate utility rate structures for disadvantaged groups and upgraded infrastructure (e.g., SMART LEDs, time of use rates for EV charging stations).

Strategy 3.2 – Evaluate policies prohibiting the use of natural gas in new, substantially modified, and existing buildings.

Action 3.2.1 – Evaluate making all newly constructed buildings to be electric only.

Action 3.2.2 – For substantial construction or major retrofit to an all electric building, evaluate the need for a comprehensive recycling program that addresses old pipes and replaced gas infrastructure.

Strategy 3.3 – Evaluate policies requiring incorporation of solar, battery storage systems, and/or vehicle charging stations in new, substantially modified, and existing buildings.

Action 3.3.1 – Modify construction codes and streamline permitting processes for different building types related to incorporation of solar, battery storage systems, and/or vehicle charging stations.

Action 3.3.2 – Evaluate distribution and adoption of solar, battery storage systems, and/or vehicle charging stations in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and address policies accordingly to encourage inclusion.

Goal 4 – Encourage economic development related to renewable energy

Strategy 4.1 – Increase education in renewable energy and sustainability.

Action 4.1.1 – Offer an Associate of Applied Science in Renewable Energy at Montgomery College (MC) and provide 100% free tuition for County residents who obtain this degree.

Action 4.1.2 – Provide incentives for solar companies, public utilities, and public agencies to offer internships for students enrolled in Renewable Energy program at MC.

Action 4.1.3 – Provide incentives for solar and other renewable energy companies and public utilities to offer apprenticeship programs/on-the-job training.

Action 4.1.4 – Provide scholarships for degrees in environmental sustainability programs at State universities.

Strategy 4.2 – Establish a Green Technology Innovation Fund to attract and support promising business start-ups offering solutions that reduce GHG emissions and/or contribute to essential clean energy infrastructure.

Strategy 4.3 – Encourage social enterprises, non-profits, and small and local businesses developing renewable energy solutions.

Action 4.3.1 – Prioritize social enterprises, non-profits, and small and local businesses developing renewable energy solutions in Montgomery County's bids and RFPs.

Action 4.3.2 – Lower tax liability and generate incentive mechanisms for any conversion to clean energy that has been worked on by social enterprises, non-profits, and small and local businesses developing renewable energy solutions.

Strategy 4.4 -- Encourage union workers to be contracted and develop renewable energy solutions.

Action 4.4.1 - Prioritize companies that use union workers in Mo Co's bids and RFPs.

Action 4.4.2 - Lower tax liability and generate incentive mechanisms for any conversion to clean energy that has been worked on by these companies.

Strategy 4.5 – Promote an economic transition that is just and fair for all workers, especially those that have been laid off by “conventional” power production.

Action 4.5.1 – Encourage the establishment of new unions organized “by sector” (i.e. a “solar workers union”, a “wind workers union”, etc.).

Action 4.5.2 – Ensure workers employed in “conventional” power production find a new satisfying and well-paying jobs with the transition to clean energy.

Action 4.5.3 – Coordinate with WorkSource Montgomery and its American Job Centers to emphasize renewable energy and efficiency career support and partnerships.

Strategy 4.6 - Emphasize the clean energy future in K-12 school curricula (see Italy example) or extracurricular programs, especially in collaboration with Thomas Edison H.S. of Technology; use solar + storage on all schools (see Action 2.3.3) to educate students on environmental and energy issues.

Strategy 4.7 - Explore more public private partnership opportunities to support innovation opportunities.

Goal 5 – Establish a dedicated, secure funding source to support renewable energy programs and financial incentives.

Strategy 5.1 - Assess and implement a carbon tax in Montgomery County.

Action 5.1.1 -- Identify the best mechanism for a Mo Co carbon tax. Look at other states and jurisdictions that have done it.

Action 5.1.2 -- Tie into the MD (state level) new bill to tax carbon.

Action 5.1.3 -- Use revenues to implement climate change solutions.

Strategy 5.2 - Develop clean energy incentives for LMI households in certain zip codes, like Prince George’s County.

Action 5.2.1 -- Identify ZIP codes that have a concentration of LMI households and provide incentives for residential installation. (If a solar installation is not suitable, give homeowner the choice for geothermal installation, or weatherization/insulation, and other clean energy technology.)