

Questions & Answers from June 16, 2022 Webinar Meeting Regional Climate Targets

Question	Answer
Food waste was bootlegged from one of the biodigesters because it was determined the outputs were better with just manure. Can you explain the science behind that decision?	The decision was driven by economics. The dairy digesters are selling their RNG through the interstate gas pipeline to entities in California, under California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard program. Under that program, various kinds of RNG have different carbon values based on the emissions profile. Pure dairy manure has a very low carbon score and is thus very valuable in that market. By accepting food waste, the digester operator reduced the value of their RNG, which did not make sense financially. That said, there are local efforts to create other spots for food waste. The City of Madison just launched some compost drop off stations farmer's markets and there is ongoing discussion about more food composting opportunities, so I do expect more options over time.
What tree species are good candidates for highly urbanized areas that have a lot of concrete, compressed ground, and high sun shine?	I encourage you to reach out to the Tree Canopy group with this question as there are numerous forestry experts involved in that effort. Visit https://daneclimateaction.org/Initiatives/Tree-Canopy
Given the recent power outages we've seen as a result of severe storms (which will become more frequent and intense with climate change), have we considered decentralized, distributed electric generation and/or non-electric emergency backup systems for homes and residences?	There are a number of micro-grid studies going on right now across Wisconsin, including several in our region. These studies are funded through the Office of Energy Innovation's Critical Infrastructure Microgrid and Community Resilience Center Pilot Grant Program – see details here: https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/OEI/Energy-Security.aspx
Why is increasing the tree canopy not categorized as a conservation effort? It is habitat after all.	You're right. We identified this effort as part of the climate goal, but it is also a conservation strategy. Expanding tree canopy is a good example of a strategy where we get multiple wins from one action.

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<p>How will homeowners get assistance to convert to heat pumps? As this will take quite a while, especially for low-income homes, could adding RNG to the gas lines help reduce emissions for this sector? We certainly have a lot of organic materials to use -- lake weeds, tree leaves, food waste.</p>	<p>Relative to using RNG for home heating, UW Madison graduate students just did an analysis of this question for state officials in Minnesota. The students looked at how much RNG could be generated from dairy and other animal stocks, food waste, wastewater, etc., and their conclusion was that all of these sources could provide less than 10% of Minnesota's current natural gas usage. So it seems like we have a lot of RNG but it's relatively small compared to current methane gas usage. More, the fees digesters get from selling their RNG to entities in California is also a lot more than what households pay for fossil gas - so the economics are not as viable as you might think. Definitely we'll need programs to help homeowners convert to heat pumps – local governments, efficiency and electrification advocates are talking about how to make that happen!</p>
<p>If the digesters are selling their RNG to CA, how are we ensuring there isn't a double-counting of emissions reductions efforts?</p>	<p>The tracking of those emissions is done carefully to ensure nothing is double counted. Typically a digester sells both the RNG and the credits simultaneously, so that value passes to a buyer and cannot be double counted by any other entity.</p>
<p>How will folks get a link to the recording of this presentation?</p>	<p>The recording will be available on both the MPO and CARPC web pages. The MPO page is at https://www.greatermadisonmpo.org/webinars.cfm. We will also send a follow-up email to all participants with links to the presentation slides and recording</p>
<p>Does the County, CARPC, or Greater Madison MPO work directly with Town Governments, especially Plan Commissions, to get their assistance in proper planning and help in implementing the regional plans discussed today? Otherwise Town Planning (or lack of it) can undermine all the plans discussed here.</p>	<p>CARPC and the MPO will host a webinar later this year on Planning 101 for local plan commissioners, which will include integrating regional and local plans. CARPC has established a Proactive Planning Committee to promote implementation of the Regional Development Framework. Committee activities will include talking with local government officials and plan commission members. We are available to talk with local plan commissions as well.</p> <p>Dane County OECC is also always available to support local efforts to integrate climate action and climate resilience into local planning. We convene local government officials regularly to talk about sustainability issues of common interest; see https://daneclimateaction.org/Initiatives/Sustainability-Leaders-Collaborative for more details.</p>



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<p>Could you go into more detail as to who is tracking the RNG exchange? Who are the parties in WI and CA, and is there also a 3rd party verifier? I hate to press, but this is a very real issue all around the world.</p>	<p>The best primer on all of this is the California Low Carbon Fuel Standard materials, which are here: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/low-carbon-fuel-standard. The dairy digesters are selling their RNG into the California market. Relative to the landfill, the County sells its excess RNG to Kwik Trip and we file the renewable energy credits separately.</p>
<p>Can you discuss the climate change value of new local workforce housing given the rapidly increase cost of local housing that is pushing ordinary workers out to rural areas and neighboring counties?</p>	<p>This was live answered.</p>
<p>For transportation, why is major infrastructure plans focused on new and expanded roadways if we are trying to reduce emissions? What about local and regional rail? Was the commuter slide referring to busing or rail?</p>	<p>New and expanded roadways are just one part of the Regional Transportation Plan. As noted, there are actually very few capacity projects recommended to accommodate the large amount of growth forecasted, though some sort of capacity project might come out of one or more of the state highway corridor studies. As noted, capacity expansion is a last resort option under MPO policy and only done if consistent with all plan goals. Rural roads need to be reconstructed to urban standards to accommodate urban development, and roads accommodate other modes of transportation beyond autos. The plan does recommend inter-city passenger rail service, but BRT has been selected as the most appropriate and feasible option for high-capacity transit.</p>
<p>Also, regarding EV - what is the current percentage of fossil fuel-sourced electricity and is fossil fuel-sourced EV still a better source than gasoline (in terms of C emissions)?</p>	<p>The Union of Concerned Scientists does a nice analysis of auto emissions, comparing local electricity emissions to gas emissions in various regions of the US. Their latest data is here https://blog.ucsusa.org/dave-reichmuth/plug-in-or-gas-up-why-driving-on-electricity-is-better-than-gasoline/. When you look at this analysis it is important to remember that our electric grid is getting cleaner every year, whereas gasoline emissions remain the same into the future.</p>
<p>Can you talk about lessons we've learned from failing to meet 2020 targets? For a decade 2020 was our "too little too late" date and I hate to see those projections and goals merely shift forward again without addressing how we will do better this time.</p>	<p>This was answered live.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>Thank you for the great presentations, Kathy, Steve and Bill! Could the slides be made available so that I can share with other staff members who were not able to attend today?</p>	<p>Thanks, Yang! We will send a follow-up email to all participants that includes links to the presentation slides and recording. We will also post these items to the MPO and CARPC websites.</p>
<p>New building projects - in addition to making it easier for builders to implement sustainable practices, have governments explored net-zero or other energy requirements for development?</p>	<p>This was answered live.</p>
<p>1. How do you reconcile the dense smart growth neighborhoods being mandated where there is not sufficient footprints for heat pump fields. Also these dense developments do not typically have enough room fro much of a tree canopy .2. Has the requiements of purchasing forested land offsets to compensate for the dense buiding been considered. 3. Are you aware of the low capacity factor for sloar and its inability to power a modern economy</p>	<p>The Office of Energy & Climate Change is confident that we can increase density AND electrify buildings AND increase green spaces simultaneously. Definitely this requires thoughtful planning to ensure we meet all objectives but it is doable and it reflects the priorities of our communities.</p> <p>Relative to solar, Wisconsin’s electric utilities (along with utilities across the nation) are very bullish about their ability to power Wisconsin homes and industry with solar and wind, especially when coupled with batteries.</p>
<p>Does a prairie sequester as much carbon as a similar sized forest?</p>	<p>This was answered live.</p>
<p>Has there been any work done to look at City and other Ordinances changes/practices around manicured type lawns vs natural grasses, pollinator friendly usages, and/or urban garden use?</p>	<p>Numerous cities and villages in Dane County initiated a “No Mow May” or “Low Mow May” this year, which required some local action relative to the existing ordinances. It seems likely that this will lead to more discussions about lawn ordinances.</p>
<p>Can we do anything to decrease the use of non-recyclable plastics (which is most of it)? This is a major component of trash.</p>	<p>Akin to our slide about Climate Superpowers, there are multiple ways we can all help to address the plastic issue. As consumers and investors we can avoid these products while also encouraging broader actions to reduce the production of such products or new recycling strategies. Dane County’s proposed Sustainability Campus is an opportunity to explore local strategies for addressing this important issue.</p>



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<p>Is the county and city lobbying the state government to make legislative change regarding building codes?</p>	<p>Dane County’s Office of Energy & Climate Change is part of a statewide Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition. In recent months the Coalition has had productive discussions with state officials about the needed updates to our state building codes. Through those discussions we are making sure that state officials know how important codes are to local sustainability goals.</p>
<p>Not a question but a comment - Dane county is doing incredible work! Thank you for an excellent presentation! Such a great boost!</p>	<p>We are all part of the good work happening in Dane County – so kudos to you too.</p>

