

Collaboration on Energy and Economic Development

Introduction

Addressing our community's energy needs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions poses an immense challenge that demands immediate action and developing a vibrant local economy that provides more good jobs is a top priority of County government. *Tompkins County Area Development*, the County's designated economic development agency, and the *Tompkins County Planning Department*, which provides analysis and planning to address community energy and greenhouse gas emissions, have agreed to collaborate on addressing long-term and immediate energy needs and emissions in ways that contribute to a vital local economy. This collaboration will include bringing a broad variety of voices to the discussion of community goals and strategies, as well as tangible steps to meet both energy and economic development goals. While both organizations believe that overall goals for strengthening the local economy and reaching our energy and greenhouse gas emissions targets are compatible and can be mutually reinforcing, we also recognize that there may be specific instances where they come into conflict. In such cases the County Planning Department's Energy Fund and the Industrial Development Agency's Tax Incentive tools outlined below will be employed in an attempt to find a mutual gains solution to the perceived conflict. It is likely that some instances will arise where no clear mutually beneficial solution can be identified and, in such cases, the attempt to meet both goals will need to be weighed in making a decision.

Meeting Long-term Goals and Intermediate Targets

Near to long-term energy planning will primarily be addressed through two initiatives:

Energy Roadmap. The County Planning Department is in the process of developing an Energy Roadmap that will consider alternative energy scenarios that would allow the community to achieve an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as well as interim goals that would indicate meaningful progress toward that goal. TCAD has agreed to be an active participant in this process and to work to bring important voices from the business community to the discussion. The Roadmap will help guide both near-term and long-term actions needed to provide a secure energy future for Tompkins County while doing this community's part toward achieving necessary GHG reductions.

Energy Focus Areas and Micro-grids. Several areas of Tompkins County are critical to the economic success of the County including downtown Ithaca, the business parks and industrial sites proximate to Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport, Cornell's Campus on East Hill, and South Hill, including Ithaca College, the South Hill Business Campus and the Emerson (Chainworks) site. TCAD and Tompkins County Planning will attempt to engage NYSEG, the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA), funders at NYSERDA, and other potential partners to evaluate energy infrastructure in these areas and devise long-term plans that will meet current and future commercial, industrial and residential energy needs while reducing GHG emissions.

The evaluation of these potential Energy Focus Areas will include options for current or future increased deployment of renewables, reduced energy demand through energy efficiency, analysis of applicability of Combined Heat and Power facilities, and establishing micro-grids to provide added resilience to the electrical supply in the event of grid failure due to storms or other unforeseen events. This approach is in accordance with the NY State Public Service Commission's *Reforming the Energy Vision (REV)* process and framework which envisions a distributed energy grid with micro-grids as integral components of our energy system.

One particular area of focus will be the area around the County Airport. County facilities in this area include Public Safety, Emergency Response, Health Department and Airport – all of which would be critical in a response to a major disaster. Businesses at the adjoining Technology Park and other surrounding industrial facilities could also potentially benefit from a more reliable and resilient energy supply.

An opportunity in this potential Energy Focus Area is that in the near future Tompkins County needs to undertake a modest expansion of the Airport Terminal to accommodate both Transportation Security Administration and airline needs. Such an expansion clearly has impacts on economic development, but also provides an occasion to rethink the energy system in that area and provide a model for reducing emissions while accommodating expanded operations. As part of this expansion the County intends to look at a wide range of options to reduce the carbon footprint of the terminal building while meeting facility energy needs.

Cayuga Medical Center, while not within one of the identified potential Energy Focus Areas, is a critical facility that may also warrant micro-grid evaluation, and others may come to light as the discussion widens in the community on this topic. Other projects outside of the Energy Focus Areas in other parts of Tompkins County can also benefit from consideration of energy alternatives, and resources of this initiative will be made available on a case-by-case basis to such projects.

Project-specific Progress and Approach

In terms of identifying more immediate issues, especially as they relate to specific economic development opportunities, the following tools will be employed:

Energy Fund. The County Legislature has provided \$20,000 in the County Planning Department's 2015 budget to be used for collaborative efforts to meet energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals. The Planning Department will work with TCAD to make a portion of this funding available to help businesses considering expansions and residential developers proposing new projects evaluate efficiency and renewable energy options that can reduce their carbon footprint while supplying the energy needed for their business operations.

IDA Incentives. TCAD provides staff support to the County's Industrial Development Agency. TCAD will work with the IDA and the Planning Department to structure an incentive program

that can provide enhanced incentives for businesses that reduce their carbon footprint as part of a job-creating expansion. Such incentives will be coordinated with other incentives that may be available from NYSERDA or others.

Broadening Awareness. TCAD and the Planning Department agree to institutionalize the consideration of economic and energy impacts throughout their work including individual project reviews, and technical and financial assistance efforts. This will include making businesses and developers aware of resources available in the community and encouraging them to consider energy options as they pursue economic development projects.

Communicating with Officials and the Public

Discourse in the community around the topics of economic development, energy and greenhouse gas emissions should be based on clear and accurate information and occur in a civil and respectful manner. There is an opportunity to provide leadership in the community on setting such a tone. Both TCAD and the County Planning Department are committed to considering the impacts of decisions on all aspects of the community and clearly communicating those considerations to others.