

**Rockland Energy Advisory Committee
March 2019**



Rockland Climate Action Plan Proposal

Goals:

- 1) By 2045, the entire community of Rockland will be carbon neutralⁱ.
- 2) By 2025, the City of Rockland will obtain 100% of municipal electricity from renewable sources.

Rationale

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that the world needs to be carbon neutral by 2050 in order to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 Cⁱⁱ, avoid the worst of the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and adhere to the landmark Paris Agreement on climate changeⁱⁱⁱ. Beyond this, the benefits of renewable energy and energy independence include a cleaner environment and long-term lower costs for heating, transportation, and electricity.

How do we get there?

We have developed this list of strategies to achieve our goals. Given the large scale of changes that will be required, we are not able to predict with certainty what will need to occur to fully meet these goals and implement these strategies. We expect there will be technological and social changes in the coming years that will influence our options.

1. ***Dedicate roles and positions in city government to meet stated goals.*** Hire a full-time sustainability coordinator to create, execute, and seek funding for programs to help

achieve our energy goals. Also, hire a part-time staff member to perform marketing/public relations work to support these goals. These staff members will work closely with the public, City Council, municipal committees, city staff and other interested parties to implement these goals in a collaborative manner. Further goals and projects will be established via an accountable community-wide process working with the sustainability coordinator. This work is too important, too large-scale, and too specialized to rely solely on volunteer work.

2. ***Develop renewable, local power generation.*** A first step will be to transition the city government's energy needs to renewable sources. A next step will be to use renewable power to supply the entire community's electricity needs, for example via a municipal or regional utility. We must also identify areas of the city which could be used for wind, solar or tidal power generation.
3. ***Craft city policy to reduce greenhouse gasses and improve energy independence.*** This will include the construction and renovation of efficient buildings, zoning requirements for renewable energy development, creating a more walkable, wheelable city, and encouraging more people who work in Rockland to live here. We suggest creating a building improvement revolving loan fund via a bond and using this fund to upgrade building efficiency, insulation, and heat sources. This would be an expansion of the Weatherize Rockland program and would include incentives to encourage landlords to weatherize.
4. ***Reduce energy consumption.*** We recommend the conversion of city street lights to LED bulbs, a full audit of lighting needs, employing motion detection where appropriate, and adopting a dark sky policy which both reduces energy usage and adds to the natural beauty of the city. Further reductions in energy consumption in both the city government and community at large will help us better reach our goals.
5. ***Eliminate reliance on fossil fuels for home heating.*** This will have to be accomplished through a combination of improved efficiency and replacement of existing non-renewable heating sources with those that are more renewable (heat pumps, wood, pellets, solar, etc.).
6. ***Make our transportation energy efficient.*** There are several areas where we can take immediate steps, for instance: implementing a complete streets policy that encourages walking and cycling and is welcoming to wheelchair users, supporting the community bus and helping increase its route and ridership, subsidizing taxi services, and adding electric vehicle charging stations to strengthen the electric vehicle corridor. Any new municipal vehicle purchases should meet city-set standards for efficiency and consumption.

7. ***Develop a community outreach and education program.*** Potential partners include schools, civic and business groups, non-profits, etc. We encourage developing educational and fun outreach on issues such as: zero waste, water use reduction and water saving techniques, composting, tips for reducing energy usage, considering more plant-based diets, upcycling rather than recycling, buying used, carbon footprint and cradle-to-grave education in general on topics such as the way in which we are connected to global pollution via server farms, flying, etc.

8. ***Form alliances with regional communities and larger organizations that can help us continue towards our goals.*** We recommend joining the Global Covenant of Mayors who can provide additional resources for us. Also, there are a number of exciting opportunities on the horizon for collaboration with the state government. Teaming up with regional communities to find vendors for the LED replacement is a good current example of regional cooperation.

ⁱ **Carbon neutrality**, or having a **net zero carbon footprint**, refers to achieving net zero [carbon dioxide emissions](#) by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal (often through [carbon offsetting](#)) or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether (the transition to a "post-carbon economy"). It is used in the context of [carbon dioxide](#)-releasing processes associated with transportation, energy production, and industrial processes.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>