

Concord Energy and Environment Committee  
Ready for 100% Renewable Energy  
FAQs

Q: What is the Concord Energy And Environment Advisory Committee? (CEEC)

A: The CEEC was created by the City Council in 2008 to recommend best practices regarding the City's energy use and sources, both municipal and community-wide, and other environment-related issues.

Q: What is the "Ready for 100% Renewable Energy" campaign?

A: In the spring of 2018 the CEEC submitted an Advisory Report to the City Council in which it described the negative effects of burning fossil fuels on our climate and our health, and detailed the need to transition to renewable energy for our electricity, transportation, and heating needs. The report described the rapid falling of prices of renewable energy and predicted that a conversion to 100% renewable energy would provide new local jobs, reduced and more stable costs for energy, reduced health problems and health costs from emissions, and greater local control and resiliency of our energy sourcing.

In July 2018 the City Council unanimously passed a resolution recommended by the CEEC adopting the goal that Concord would use renewable energy for 100% of its electricity needs by 2030, and for its heating and transportation by 2050. This goal is for the entire community, not just for the City's municipal needs.

Q: Does this mean that residents or businesses will be mandated to convert their heating systems to renewable energy? Or be forced to buy an electric car? Or be forced to install solar panels?

A: NO. There is no mandate at all in the resolution. Rapidly falling prices and the inherent benefits of renewably sourced energy will over time convince citizens and businesses to transition. We want the City to be prepared for the changes, and we want to facilitate and plan for the infrastructure that can help Concord achieve this goal.

Q: What is the plan?

A: In the resolution the CEEC agreed to write a "100% Renewable Energy Strategic Plan." Throughout the process of developing this plan, the CEEC has sought the input and feedback of residents, businesses, institutions, organizations, and City staff. It will have held 3 meetings of a varied group of Stakeholders, and 3 public forums to discuss and then refine the Plan.

The Strategic Plan is the 2019 version of the blueprint. It will be changed over the years as new information and new technologies emerge.

Q: How is the Strategic Plan structured?

A: The Strategic Plan begins by describing why we need to transition to 100% renewable energy, and the benefits of doing so. It emphasizes energy efficiency (EE) improvements as the simplest and cheapest first steps. It describes Concord's current energy landscape in the 3 main sectors: electricity, transportation, and heating. For each of those 3 sectors it discusses several strategies to save energy and convert to renewables, as well as a list of achievable action steps for each strategy.

Q: What suggestions does the Plan have for transitioning to renewable electricity?

A: The Plan illustrates the rapid decline in cost for solar, wind power and storage to the point that they will, in the near future, be cheaper than fossil fuels. New developments in storage mitigate the intermittency issues with solar and wind power. It shows how Concord's city government is capable of supplying all its own electricity needs through the development of solar at the capped landfill and water and waste treatment centers. It encourages solar projects throughout the community, and describes how community-solar projects and municipal aggregation to purchase renewable energy will be tools to allow the entire community, including the low and middle income community, to purchase renewable energy and take advantage of the savings.

Q: What does the Plan suggest for the conversion to clean renewable transportation?

A: The Plan describes strategies to encourage alternatives to driving vehicles such as improving bicycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and increasing opportunities for public transportation and car-pooling. It predicts that the number of electric vehicles (EVs) will increase greatly in the next ten years and emphasizes the need for planning and engineering by the City so that the necessary charging infrastructure can keep pace. It recommends that the City lead the way by converting its own municipal vehicles to EVs as soon as the Total Cost of Ownership reaches parity with combustion vehicles and the types of vehicles needed become available in EV form. And it discusses the conversion of school buses and our CAT buses to electric as they become more available and reach cost parity.

Q: What does the Plan say about renewable energy sources for the thermal sector (heating and cooling)?

A: The Plan states that nearly 40% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels to heat and cool buildings. It emphasizes the need to promote thermal energy conservation by tightening up and better insulating our buildings. It also describes several alternatives to fossil fuels including electrification through the use of heat pumps (which are particularly clean if powered by renewably sourced electricity); geothermal systems; the burning of biomass for heat; and the burning of carbon neutral or carbon free gases such as biogas or hydrogen. The Plan emphasizes the need for outreach and education to the public concerning these technologies because so many of them are new or just emerging.

Q: Does the Plan suggest ways of measuring our progress over time?

A: Yes, the Plan emphasizes that we will need to develop time-defined, quantitative, and measureable goals; and establish a monitoring process to track our progress. It recommends a web-based tool that can track and display Concord's progress toward the goals related to energy efficiency, our energy portfolio, and our carbon footprint. A couple of examples of such a system are the Vermont Energy Dashboard and MassEnergyInsight which Concord can draw from and customize to its needs. A dashboard which can track, monitor and report can help ensure that we meet our transition goals, while promoting transparency, and engaging and motivating the public.

Q: Does the Plan recommend any additional City staff to implement some of the suggestions?

A: The Plan will recommend that an energy audit be performed on all the City's municipal energy use. The CEEC recommends the hiring of a sustainability specialist who could implement the energy efficiency recommendations from the audit and oversee EE improvements. We anticipate that the savings from these EE improvements would pay for much, if not all, of the position's costs. In addition, such a staff person could be responsible for helping the City and its residents purchase renewable energy through municipal aggregation, administer an energy web page, apply for grant money, and monitor progress toward our goal.

Q: Where can I find the latest version of the Strategic Plan online? Can I read the Advisory Report that was submitted to the City Council in 2018? What else is available online?

A: The Strategic Plan, the Advisory Report, and the City Council's resolution setting the 100% renewable energy goal are all available to read on the city's website. Go to [concordnh.gov](http://concordnh.gov) > Your Government > Boards and Commissions E-N > Energy and Environment Committee > Documents.

Q: Does the CEEC need any volunteer help? I'm interested in what they are doing; how can I attend one of their meetings?

A: Yes, the CEEC would be happy to have more volunteers. They meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the second floor conference room in City Hall. Meetings are open to the public.