

CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING FOR ALL OF DANE COUNTY: A BRIEF HISTORY, 2007-16

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2007	On the condition that creation of a local Climate Action Plan (CAP) will be the main plank of his platform, Jon Becker accepts a belated invitation from Northside neighbors to run for City of Madison Alder, District 18; loses by a vote swing vote of ~200. Vows that he'll continue advocacy for a local CAP.
	Dane County United invites Becker, Seth Nowak (energy conservation expert), Oscar Bloch (retired staffer for WI's Public Service Commission), and Liz Wessel (environmental advocate and green tourism expert) to form a work group for creation of a county-level climate action framework. DCU workgroup decides to utilize the backcasting planning approach of The Natural Step process, setting an end date of 2050, with measurable annual sub-goals, with pre-approved auto-correctives to stay on course.
2008	Dane County United is disbanded.
	About a dozen Capital area "enviros" form an <i>ad hoc</i> organization to enhance regional planning efforts, inviting Becker to join them.
2009	The enviros name themselves the <i>Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability</i> (CRANES). Yes, 26 syllables (but nice acronym). Charter Partner Organizations include groups most active in relevant public policy advocacy, including League of Women Voters-Dane County, Madison Audubon Society, Sierra Club WI's Four Lakes Group, etc.
	After meeting with CRANES, Mayor Dave Cieslewicz and Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk endorse CAP framework, contingent on endorsement from Dane County Towns Association (DTCA). After presentation from CRANES, DTCA demurs, advising that its members are not yet convinced of the need for local climate action.
2010	CRANES incorporates as WI non-profit. At Becker's request (with support of Bloch, Wessel, and Nowak), CRANES takes on advocacy for county CAP.
	With ~30 other organizations, CRANES supports Capital Area Region Planning Commission (CARPC) application for a three-year Sustainable Communities grant from federal government (HUD/DOI/EPA); application succeeds.
2011	Falk resigns; Joe Parisi is elected county executive. Cieslewicz is replaced by Mayor Paul Soglin.
	Capital Region Sustainable Communities (CRSC) partnership is formed, eventually growing to ~40 organizations (including CRANES). Agreement is reached to operate by consensus.
	Federal funders, focused on air quality and energy, agree to CRANES request to allow formation by CRSC of an Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Work Group.
	AQGHG WG begins meeting in July; Becker elected chair. Monitored via Basecamp software by over 30 interested representatives of CRSC participant groups, AQGHG WG adopts CRANES framework for local CAP.
	On basis of UW-Madison masters dissertation showing net cost/benefit of a holistic approach to air emission pollutants, AQGHG WG decides to integrate reduction of federally designated Criterion Pollutants (CPs) and Mercury and Airborne Toxics (MATs) with reduction of climate disruptors, as part of the CAP framework.
2012	After meeting with various stakeholders, including MGE staff, AQGHG WG sets goals for a countywide, all-sector CAP, with a goal 2050 or sooner, and having these key components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100% renewable energy (w/o fossil fuels, nuclear power, polluting hydropower, food-competitive biomass) ▪ comprehensive air emissions approach for the best cost/benefit outcome: zero non-natural pollution emissions, including carbon and other climate disruptors, as well as federally-designated Criterion Pollutants and Mercury & Air Toxics Standards ▪ backcasting approach, with annual sub-goals; progress measured using international standards, and with the help of UW's climate metrics expert ▪ auto-correctives to keep us on course from trailhead to destination, pre-authorized by the community ▪ as possible, historical offsets for non-natural pollution induced by our activities since industrialization
	Late in July, shortly after AQGHG WG files its reports, CRANES sends its DANE 2100 proposal to Dane County leadership, setting out a multi-generational environmental sustainability program that includes the 20250 CAP framework as part of DANE HEALTHY SKIES.
2013	13 months after AQGHG WG completes its work, all 40 current CRSC partners endorse by consensus the CAP framework recommended by the AQGHG WG. CRSC (CARPC) staff sends letter to Dane County leadership, supporting FY14 funding for drafting of a countywide, all-sector CAP.
	The county board passes a \$40,000 FY14 budget amendment sponsored by Dave Ripp, a rural fiscal conservative supervisor, for funding of a contract for three baseline inventories for the CAP (using already budgeted Department of Administration staffing to handle contracting, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conservation/efficiency opportunities ▪ renewable energy opportunities (e.g., mapping of solar rooftop potential and wind turbine sites) ▪ air pollution emission sources (using internationally approved approach)
	On the morning of the FY14 budget vote, county Department of Administration staff inform county board it does not have the capacity to staff the CAP inventories within its budget. Board diverts some of the amendment funding to pay for staffing by the county Planning Department.
2014	In mostly rural northwestern Dane County, Abigail Wuest, makes climate action a central platform plank. Her candidacy is opposed by a handful of folks contending on right-wing talk radio that climate action planning, which they erroneously call BLUE SKIES, is part of a United Nations conspiracy. In April, Wuest easily wins election as Dane County District 28 supervisor.
	On a referral from UW-Madison Civil Engineering faculty Jamie Schauer (internationally renowned climate disruptor mitigation metrics expert), county decides to contract baseline inventories with a team led by a former UW professor now working for the University of Minnesota. With hopes for saving time over the usual RFP process, the county for the first time uses an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with U MN, made possible by the U MN's status as a land-grant institution. The Scope of Work for the contract is based closely on the CRSC framework. Due to novelty of IGA and the need for review by county corporate counsel among others, contracting takes 11 months, during which time the administrative liaison for the U MN team is replaced, and the proposed U MN researcher, a post-PhD graduate, is replaced with a masters candidate.
	In October, county planning department director Todd Violante convenes an <i>ad hoc</i> work group to monitor U MN progress on the baseline inventories CAP report comprised by a county supervisor, Becker (alternate: Caryl Terrell), and staffers from county board and county DOA, respectively Lisa MacKinnon and Dave Merritt.
2015	County <i>ad hoc</i> work group begins meeting, approximately monthly, sometimes inviting experts/guests, e.g., UW's Schauer and City of Madison's sustainability staffer Jeanne Hoffman. Following a slow moving and troubled work effort, the U MN team provides a draft report.
	In mid-November, at the urging of a climate/energy advocacy coalition organized by CRANES, the county board, with broad support from both rural and urban supervisors, passes a \$35,000 FY16 budget amendment funding the drafting of a 2050 CAP using the CRSC-endorsed framework, and informed by the U MN baseline inventories.
	In late November the U MN team provides a 'final draft' report, with several lacunae. The county embargoes the report while it is under review by staff and the <i>ad hoc</i> work group.
2016	As it has since 2011, CRANES continues outreach meetings, informing various influentials about 2050 CAP and the related countywide scenario planning, using UrbanFootprint software, to begin in 2017. Presentations are made to dozens, including execs/staffers for state-to-local level environmental organizations, co-directors of the UW-Madison Office of Sustainability, execs/staffers for GMCC and MadREP, executives for Centro Hispano and ULGM, etc.
	After several postponements, while county staff add sections on sustainability programs in four cities, as well as revision of a section on manure digesters, county announces that it anticipates completion of the U MN report by the end of June.
	Having searched nationwide for expertise in the authoring of a countywide, all-sector CAP, CRANES is able to identify only one experienced expert. The expert happens to have been lead author of the Tompkins County (NY) CAP identified by the US EPA as an exemplar to the CRSC AQGHG WG; the expert has also been lead author of the Cornell University campus-wide CAP, the best-in-category based on research to date by CRANES. CRANES urges county use of a single-source contract to the Tompkins/Cornell lead author for drafting of the 2050 CAP. In February, county informs CRANES that an RFP will be let.
	In June, county executive's office advises CRANES that it intends to divert the majority of FY16 funding for the drafting of the 2050 CAP to contract—apparently on a sole provider basis—with a graduate student in the UW-Madison La Follette School, for an inventory of county government climate action to date, as well as preliminary work organizing all-county climate action planning. It is unclear if the latter effort will use the 2050 CAP framework already endorsed by almost 50 community organizations, or the U MN baseline inventories that were based on the 2050 CAP framework.
	As of July 18, the county's final approval and release of the U MN report on the baseline inventories remains pending.