

Executive Summary of Report of the February 13th, 2020 League of Women Voters Climate Crises Workshop

Purpose of this Report of LWV Climate Crisis Workshop 3:

The report presents the results of participants' engagement and prepares us for future discussions that will clarify the findings from this Climate Crisis investigation focused on our local area while being aware of how we are connected to our geographic region.

- ❖ **What are the climate change impacts/threats to our NE Ohio/Great Lakes Region and how are they currently being addressed?**
- ❖ **What are the challenges facing Hudson and its supporting environment from our changing climate?**
- ❖ **What policies and actions will we in Hudson develop to achieve integrated Climate Crisis Adaptation and Mitigation strategies as we work to achieve a healthy and sustainable future?**

Categories of Concern identified from the Workshop:

- ***Transition to Sustainable/Renewable energy system***
- ***Managing Water (storm water run-off, pollution, wastewater, flooding)***
- ***Land Development Code***
- ***Education and Modeling of Best Practices***
- ***Public Health Threats and Risk Management***
- ***Planning for a sustainable future, including food security and pollinator protection***

Anticipated next steps:

1. Our first step is to ask you to review the report and think about what we have learned.
2. What recommendations do you believe we should pursue and with whom should we work to achieve actions? Who are the relevant actors/deciders who can help foster policy change/implement actions?
3. Thirdly, let us know (1) What you think and (2) How you would be willing to assist in helping flesh out proposals for addressing a given problem/opportunity/issue of concern.
4. We will then develop a set of Work Groups that will focus on specified problem areas

Resource experts from the City of Hudson and the Hudson City School System:

Frank Comeriato, Assistant City Manager - Energy Issues. **Brad Kosko**, City Engineer - Water Quality, Flooding and Storm Water Management. **Nate Wonsick**, Assistant City Engineer, - Planning and Land Development Code. **Greg Hannan**, Community Development Director, - Growth and Connectivity. **Chief Jerry Varnes**, Hudson Fire Department and EMS, - Hudson's risk management strategies via the city's emergency response plan and center. **Christina Wooley**, Curriculum Coordinator, - educational strategies for climate change science within school's programs while meeting state science standards. **Chuck Shilling**, Facilities Manager, - how the school systems' facilities model green design, including solar technologies.

Other expertise resides with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Summit County, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cuyahoga Restoration as well as other adjacent communities that impact Hudson.

1. Transition to Energy Efficiencies and Renewables: How can we foster relevant technologies and equipment to make the shift to alternative renewables?

a. Transitions from Fossils: Can Hudson meet a 2035 or 2050 100% Fossil Free Deadline

- Need education for the public and decision makers
- Need to make the Land Development Code friendly to renewables
- Need to know commitment of current city leaders

b. Energy Efficiencies: How can we foster relevant technologies and equipment and policies in Hudson to enable use of alternative renewables? How can Hudson provide more accessible information about how individual families can purchase “green” energy? This can be done through contacting ECOSMART and/or the City’s power consultant?

Hudson’s Energy Realities: At present, through AMP, Hudson is under contract to purchase coal-generated electricity for the lifetime (estimated to be 50 years) of the Prairie State power plant in Illinois. Mr. Cameriatto mentioned that citizens are asking what the City is going to do about a shift to renewables, questioning the coal commitment. We are going to have to address this over time. “We need a much larger percentage of renewables in the City’s energy portfolio” was a finding from the previous workshops.

c. Solar Energy Enabling: What are barriers that need to be removed to encourage/enable residential solar and how can we do that?

d. Goals/recommendations arising from Discussion of Participants:

Builders of homes and commercial buildings must work with the city to promote renewable energy: for example, make roofs solar-panel-ready. Educate citizens about options for transitioning to renewable energy. ECOSMART—advocate: customers can buy renewable energy credits. Need financial/tax incentives from local, state and federal government to engage citizens/businesses in making transitions to renewable and sustainable energy systems.

2. Managing Water (storm water run-off, pollution, wastewater, flooding)

Mr. Kosco discussed specific issues that need to be addressed in Hudson to limit flooding and storm water run-off including wetland protection, as well as specific regulatory and incentive based actions. Storm water management involves multiple partnering and interfaces with other communities and organizations (Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Ohio EPA, Cuyahoga River Restoration, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Watershed associations, bordering communities, etc.). Many Storm Run-off Management Issues were also identified in previous workshops.

a. Flood zones are inadequately delineated and protected:

- Standing water arising from storm events is a risk in new places as well as those areas historically impacted. We need better identification of flood hazard areas.
- Overbuilding and impermeable surfaces impact flooding
- More enforcement of existing regulations, less use of exemptions is needed

b. Wetland and Water Quality Protection Issues

- Hudson has permitted wetlands development. We need to designate riparian corridors (areas immediately adjacent to waterways) and their acceptable uses.
- Retention and detention basins are not adequate, increased erosion results.
- Educate the public on the causes and effects of algal overgrowth. Algae blooms in local lakes, cyanobacteria, potential for toxins in water

- Need eco-friendly lawns and plantings to reduce fertilizer nutrients and pesticide run-off
- Habitat protection is needed

c. Water and Sewer Issues

- Storm water runoff has increased resulting in more flooded areas, including bridges and roadways
- Flooding/riparian zone protection is inadequate
- Extreme precipitation changes creating more storm runoff, removing good soil. More 100+ year floods.
- Problems with ground water levels
- Jeopardizes recreational use of water
- Overuse of fertilizers and pesticides, i.e. golf courses and lawns
- Management is complicated and expensive; don't know what Hudson is doing; need models

d. Pollution control

- Water run-off not adequately controlled in Hudson. Increased intensity of rainfall results in more pollutants being carried into bodies of water.
- Inadequate separation of sanitary and storm sewers results in greater impacts from storms as sewage overflows into water supplies. Fewer regulations result in increases in release of naturally occurring bacteria and fungi, as well as manufactured toxins
- The current hotter, more humid climate in our region results in increased toxic algal blooms in lakes and ponds as well as increased issues with fungi and mildew
- Sustainable potable water supply issues represent challenges
- *E. coli* washes into water and Lake Erie after storms, mercury in streams, acid rain, toxic algal blooms, fungi and mildew
- Storm water contains farm and urban fertilizers, wastes from livestock
- Rural vs urban tensions arise due to both surface and groundwater quality and allocation of supply

e. What are our plans to ensure long-term sustainable water supplies for Hudson?

3.Land Development Codes/Planning/ Building Codes.

How well does the current LDC –

- Support the application of renewable energy systems to residential and commercial uses?
- Riparian protection zone regulation to limit damage from erosion and storm events?
- Manage growth that is sustainable?
- Have floodplain management policies that are current with respect to flood hazard zones that must accommodate more frequent major flood events?
- Address stormwater management challenges related to more intense storm events?
- Adequately protect remaining wetlands and their ecological functions?
- Address public health risks due to air pollution and the changing ranges of disease carrying insect pests (e.g., dengue fever, tick borne diseases, etc.)?

Mr. Kosco encouraged the group to pursue creating a climate change policy that could interact with the Land Development Code. Mr. Hannan noted that there are two specific ways that the city can support efforts to deal with climate change: via Codes and regulations. Both the City and the School System can be models for investing in facilities that address issues of concern.

4.Education and Modeling of Best Practices

- Publicize innovations already in place, maintain a positive “do it” attitude; snowball effect of Greta Thunberg and others. Step out of our “bubble”. Foster/model use of renewable energy
- Learn how to influence government for positive change; learn how to organize for change
- Learn the science; learn how to identify disconnect of fact and what is said
- Scientific farming; learn alternatives to pesticides and fertilizers, Hudson High’s hydroponic garden
- Loss of bees and other pollinators; issues of growing cycle and wetness, how to attract pollinator
- Model new ways of recycling; emphasis on reuse and recycling

5. Public Health Threats and Risk Management

- Use of high sulfur coal create health threats and contribute to increase rate of climate change. Eliminating use of fossil fuels would improve air quality.
- EPA standards have been lowered, while citizens want stronger not weaker regulation of air quality. Number of vehicles and their emissions have become huge problem
- Impact on those with respiratory illnesses, sports teams and heat stress
- Fracking chemicals: both in use and being transported through Hudson pose health risks

Vector Borne Diseases

- Increase in Lyme and other tick-borne diseases due to migration of both vectors and hosts
- Increase in allergies and asthma—problems for both present and future generations.
- Increase in mosquito population and related diseases: EEE, West Nile, Dengue Fever as the climate heats up.
- How can we in Hudson prepare for infestations and vector borne diseases that will increase as the climate warms?

Emergency response/evacuations and Transport corridors/systems

- Need more information on Hudson’s risk management strategies.
- Need for evacuation plans for chemical spills, as well as shelter in place protocols for storm events that are well known by the citizens.
- Communication concerns—how will threats due to climate change be communicated to the public?
- What advance preparations/education will be needed for storm event preparedness?
- What are the publicly known emergency procedures to follow in Hudson if there is a severe weather or other event due to climate impacts, including an evacuation? Evacuation centers have been identified.

Chief Jerry Varnes presented Hudson’s alerting systems, personal and public communication. The present emergency plan is fully documented HEOP, in line with Summit Co. and State of Ohio. See www.ready.go/FEMA

6. Planning for a sustainable future, including food security and pollinator protection

Individual Responses/Actions to address Climate Changing behaviors to limit impacts include

- Reuse, Recycle, Reduce Waste: clothing, plastics, waste from electronic devices, grocery bags, water bottles
- Retrofit – Restore: solar panels, water irrigation system, clothes lines, reset thermostats, eat local and organic when possible, energy efficient appliances, less lawn, more natural vegetation. Energy efficient windows, plant foliage. LED bulbs.
- Eat less meat, more permeable surfaces, more hike and bike trails, less traffic, carpool
- Composting
- Getting away from plastics

Community planning

- Tree planting program focused on Climate change impact on current species
- Natural landscaping of lawns and city spaces, use of water-permeable surfaces
- Waste Management
- Need more recycling or reuse options, recycling is complicated
- Need programs for food waste/composting
- Want more locally produced foods
- **How will Hudson consider the above and develop Integrated Sustainability Strategies?**

Sustainable Business Strategies

Agriculture
Commercial
Recreational
Industrial
Forest/Woodlot
Public Spaces

Sustainable Life Support Systems

Watershed Management
Air Quality Protection
Pollinator Protection
Protection of fish, wildlife, native plants
Human Health
Green space/ landscape design

Some Driving Questions:

1. Does Hudson have the tools/capacity and political will to work toward a Ready for 100% Renewable Energy Commitment and if so, in what time frame?
2. Communication, Education, Leadership and Collaboration with stakeholders are key for making significant change to adapt to climate realities. As we think about how to address the problems/issues we've identified, we need to determine how we are using these tools to continue to engage our citizens in this journey toward sustainability.
3. If Hudson acting alone does not have the authority, tools or resources to undertake a specific initiative, what other organizations or entities need to be engaged and how can their cooperation be sought?
4. How can I be helpful?