



# PARTNERS IN ENERGY COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

## WORKSHOP 1 NOTES

Thursday, August 8, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm  
Columbia Heights City Council Chambers  
City Hall  
3989 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

### Summary & Key Takeaways

- Partners in Energy is a two-year collaboration between Xcel Energy and communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Colorado. Our stakeholder group will convene for five workshops to create an Energy Action Plan, which will then be implemented with Partners in Energy support for 18 months.
- The team reviewed demographic and energy use data for Columbia Heights. Some major insights were:
  - Fewer Commercial & Industrial premises, but higher proportional energy usage; Residential sector consumes the most overall
  - Electricity consumption stable between 2021 and 2023
  - Natural gas consumption peaked in 2022 with colder temperatures and greater need for space heating
  - Residents spend about \$1,700 annually on fuels costs on average, or about \$142 a month
  - Many residents face high energy burdens. About 41% of households in Columbia Heights earn less than 60% of AMI.
  - Residential and C&I sectors are actively participating in efficiency programs and supporting renewable energy
- The team drafted a vision statement that will guide our process.
  - *Columbia Heights strives to be a leader on energy, equity, and sustainability. This plan guides all community members and stakeholders to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, save money, and strengthen community connections to improve energy resilience. By taking action together, we will make Columbia Heights a city where everyone can thrive.*
- The team drafted “focus areas,” areas of energy action that the team wants to prioritize:
  - Energy Efficiency
  - Renewable Energy
  - Reducing Energy Burden for Low-Income Residents
  - Beneficial Electrification
- The next Partners in Energy Workshop will be Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 4:30pm – 7pm. Contact Matthew Douglas-May (Partners in Energy Lead Facilitator, [mdouglasmay@mncee.org](mailto:mdouglasmay@mncee.org)) and Andrew Bouchet (Partners in Energy Community Lead with City of Columbia Heights, [ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov)) with questions or ideas at any time.



## AGENDA

### BLOCK 1: WELCOME

Welcome & Introductions

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

What is Partners in Energy?

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Sofia Troutman, Program Manager, Partners in Energy*

### **BREAK**

### BLOCK 2: ENERGY AND COMMUNITY DATA

Review baseline energy and demographic data to set the stage for planning

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### BLOCK 3: ACTIVITIES: VISION AND ENERGY PRIORITIES

Activity: An Energy Vision for Mendota Heights

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitators*

Activity: Energy Priorities & Focus Areas

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### BLOCK 4: WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS

Check-Out & Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

## Energy Action Team (Attendees in bold)

NAME	AFFILIATION
<b>Andrew Boucher</b>	Community Lead, City Planner, City of Columbia Heights,
<b>Brooke Timp</b>	Columbia Heights Resident
<b>Cassie Leoni</b>	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Connie Buesgens</b>	City Councilmember, City of Columbia Heights
Fabricio Orellana	Staff, City of Columbia Heights
<b>Jill Bergman</b>	Pastor, First Lutheran Church
<b>Lamin Dibba</b>	Economic Development Authority Commission Member
Laurel Deneen	Planning Commission Member
<b>Lindsay Phelps</b>	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Michelle Miller Ferreira</b>	Landlord for 4422 Central Avenue NE
Nik Ahmadvand	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Paul Moses</b>	Planning Commission Member
<b>Taher Herzallah</b>	Parks and Recreation Commission Member
Tyler Schafer	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Utility Representatives and Facilitators</b>	
<b>Matthew Douglas-May</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Paolo Speirn</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Ana De La Torre</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Sofia Troutman</b>	Program Manager, Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy
<b>Adam Burr</b>	Account Manager, Xcel Energy
<b>Kathryn Knudson</b>	Local Energy Policy Manager, CenterPoint Energy



## Welcome & Introductions

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitators*

*See Slides 1-5*

Matthew welcomed the team to the first Partners in Energy workshop and introduced some key staff:

- Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
- Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
- Sofia Troutman, Partners in Energy Program Manager, Xcel Energy
- Adam Burr, Account Manager, Xcel Energy
- Kat Knudson, Local Energy Policy Manager, CenterPoint Energy

The goal of these workshops is to write an Energy Action Plan for the city of Columbia Heights. Notes will be taken each workshop and shared with the team within a week. Photos will also be taken and used to support the Partners in Energy process, including being included in the plan.

Team members shared their names and affiliations in Columbia Heights, then got into pairs and chatted about why they wanted to be on the Energy Action Team, what they are excited about regarding energy, and what will make participation worthwhile. The team came back together and shared out, and a few answers included:

- Passionate about energy from a first principles perspective
- Passionate about sustainability, including energy efficiency and saving people money
- Excited to get to know community as manager of apartment building
- I have experience building energy systems, including solar
- Homeowner and longtime resident excited to hear what's going on with energy in our community
- Ratio Apartment complex is net zero carbon footprint

Matthew shared some ground rules and best practices for being an Energy Action Team Member:

- Different people participate in these workshops in different ways. Along with speaking during the workshop, you can also fill out the provided worksheet and give it to facilitators. You're also welcome to email facilitators at any time.
- *Step up/step back.* If you're contributing a lot, "step back" to let others contribute. Alternately, if you aren't speaking much, please "step up" and share your ideas. We want to hear from you!

## What is Partners in Energy?

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator & Sofia Troutman, Program Manager, Partners in Energy*

*See Slides 6-19*



Partners in Energy is a two-year collaboration between communities and Xcel Energy to develop and support community energy goals.

- Phase 1: Planning (4-6 months) – Convene community stakeholders in workshops, draft Energy Action Plan, and have plan approved by City Council.
- Phase 2: Implementation (18 months) – Support City’s implementation of Energy Action Plan through marketing support, energy expertise, education and outreach, project management, and energy use tracking.
- Phase 3 (optional): Graduate Community – Tailor continued support for the Energy Action Plan.

Over 75 communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Colorado participate in Partners in Energy. Team members have access to these resources as part of Partners in Energy:

- Events
- Toolkits
- Webinars
- E-newsletter
- Website

Sofia shared why Xcel Energy provides Partners in Energy to communities:

- Xcel Energy is incentivized to conserve energy
- Develop better understanding of community energy needs
- Better align Xcel Energy programs and services with community initiatives
- Support communities through engagement and partnership

We will use the plan development steps and plan framework from Partners in Energy to create the final Energy Action Plan, which is the outcome of the planning phase. It is a “road map” to guide the energy initiatives that St. Anthony Village will pursue. Sofia added that having an Energy Action Plan can be a useful tool for communities to apply for federal funding through the Inflation Reduction Act, showing that the community is already planning.

To put Partners in Energy in context, Andrew explained what the City of Columbia Heights has already achieved surrounding sustainability:

- Green Steps
- The City has a number of private and public electric vehicle charging stations at City Hall
- Deconstruction
  - Working with Better Futures on deconstructing old buildings instead of demolishing to reduce landfill waste.
- The City started residential organics collection
- One of the strengths of Columbia Heights is community engagement. We have an engaged community.
- LED lighting in all City buildings
- What other sustainability initiatives are going on in the community?
  - This building (ratio), is net zero energy



- The City is using B3 to benchmark its energy use
- Michelle has solar on her building
- School system – has community solar subscription and a biodigester.
- Columbia Heights just started a time of sale inspection program – it has been well received so far.
  - It does not include an energy efficiency component yet.
  - Is there a discussion around energy efficiency requirements in rental licensing?

Paolo explained that Xcel Energy and CenterPoint energy offer energy efficiency and renewable energy programs including Residential Home Energy Squad, residential equipment rebates, commercial HVAC rebates, business energy assessments, and on- and off-site renewable energy programs. Because these are utility programs, we are able to closely measure progress made through participation in them

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## BEING A GOOD ENERGY ACTION TEAM MEMBER

- Share unique needs of Columbia Heights
- Participate consistently
- Step up/step back
- Be an ambassador to your network
- Champion part of the Energy Action Plan in implementation



### Questions & Discussion

- Question: Energy and savings from utility programs are estimated, not measured at the building right?
  - Correct. Energy savings from program participation is estimated for a single household.
  - That said, community wide energy savings is measured directly for an overall population – ie. the energy use data later in this workshop is the actual energy use in Columbia Heights. Greenhouse gas emissions are calculated based on where the energy is coming from and formulae developed by the utility and the MN Public Utilities Commission.
- Comment from Andrew: The City has laid the groundwork for a business change of occupancy process. This can create an opportunity to share resources.
- Question: Is there financing and programs for businesses?





- Yes, there are many programs available to support businesses. We will learn more about business programs later in the workshop series. There are also programs available specifically for multifamily buildings.
- Have any communities used **PACE**?
  - Yes, communities have absolutely used PACE as part of their energy action plans.

## Energy & Community Data

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

See Slides 21-49

Matthew presented demographic and energy-use data for Columbia Heights. The demographic data was drawn from the American Community Survey, and the energy use data was from Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy from 2021 – 2023.

This data will be used for three major purposes:

- Inform where the Energy Action Team wants to focus its efforts
- Make data-informed decisions about target actions and activities
- Determine baselines to measure goals. The impact of Partners in Energy will be measured against the 2021 – 2023 baseline.

## Demographic Data

### COLUMBIA HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT



POPULATION  
**21,882**

MEDIAN AGE  
**37**

RACE  
52% White  
24% Black  
13% Hispanic  
6% Asian

LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH  
**27%**



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
**\$70,470**

POVERTY RATE  
**13%**

MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE  
**\$242,100**



HOUSING UNITS  
**9,216**

HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 2000  
**86%**

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES  
**69%**

RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS  
**34%**



**PARTNERS IN ENERGY**  
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration



25

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2021 5year estimates

Key Demographic Takeaways for Columbia Heights:

- Medium-sized suburban city
- Fairly young population



- Racial diversity and languages other than English spoken
- More occupied single-family homes than renter-occupied units

### Questions & Discussion

Question: Why don't the number of single-family homes and renter-occupied homes sum to 100?

- Because there are some renter-occupied single-family homes, as well as multi-family buildings like condos that are owner-occupied.
- Comment: Columbia Heights is working to update an antiquated law/code to make it easier for homes to be improved.
- Question: What accounts for the young median age?
  - Probably a lot of young families, as well as big turnover in population in last 10 years. As of last census, only 16% of Columbia Heights' populations were seniors
  - Columbia Heights is also one of the most affordable places to buy a home in the metro. Before the pandemic, the school was having low enrollment, whereas now enrollment is quite high
  - Younger population could be an opportunity to get people interested in sustainability
  - A team member shared that in the neighborhood where he has lived since 2008, the number of elderly people has gone down significantly.
- Question: How are places of worship and schools categorized?
  - Both fall under commercial and industrial

### Energy Data

Matthew shared some key energy use terms and parameters:

- Energy consumption, energy savings, and renewable energy data is provided from Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy for planning purposes only.
- Data is pulled from 2021-2023 to create a baseline against which to measure goals.
- Energy Data Privacy Rule (applies to both Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy)
  - Must be greater than 4 entities
  - No single entity can account for more than 50% of the usage
- *Premise*: Unique identifier for location of service. It is usually a proxy for a single building. For example, a single family home is usually a single premise. That said, in a multifamily building where each unit has it's own meter, each unit may be its own premise.
- *Residential* data is drawn from single-family buildings and townhomes.
- *Commercial & Industrial* data is drawn from business premises, such as restaurants, gas stations, office buildings, and hotels.
- *Municipal* data refers to the City of Columbia Heights municipal accounts only.
- Multifamily buildings may fall in residential or commercial and industrial, depending on how they are metered.



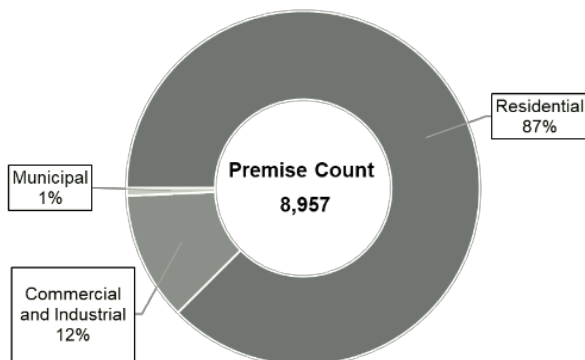
## Energy Consumption

Slides 32-40

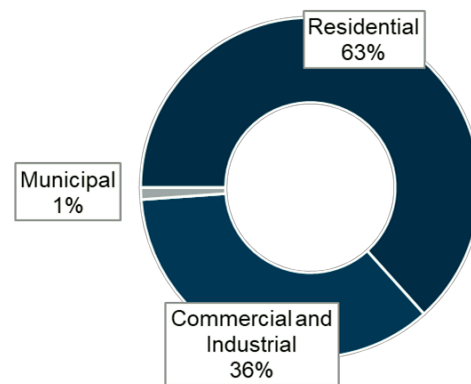
Matthew shared key energy findings and broad trends in energy use in Columbia Heights. Highlights include:

- 87% of premises in Columbia Heights are residential. However 63% of energy use is from the residential sector and 35% if from the commercial and industrial sector.
- Electricity consumption was stable between 2021 and 2023
- Natural gas consumption peaked in 2022 with colder temperatures and greater need for space heating
- Residents spend about \$1,700 annually on fuels costs on average, or about \$142 a month
- Many residents face high energy burdens. About 41% of households in Columbia Heights earn less than 60% of AML.
- Natural gas consumption makes up 65% of all greenhouse gas emissions from building energy use in Columbia Heights.

Premise County by Sector



Energy Use by Sector



## Utility Programs

Slides 41-44

## Energy Efficiency Programs



Residents and businesses are already participating in energy efficiency programs in Columbia Heights.

- Currently, an average of 684 residents and 39 businesses participate in Xcel Energy efficiency programs each year. While there are fewer Commercial & Industrial participants, their overall electric savings are more than 10 times the savings of residential participants.
- CenterPoint Energy programs have 1,860 residents and 26 businesses participate each year.
- Note that if a single home participated in two different programs, that would count as two participations for the year.

### **Renewable Energy Programs**

A variety of renewable energy programs and options exist for residents and businesses to support renewable energy.

There are two main types of renewable energy options for residents and businesses:

- On-Site Programs
  - Solar Rewards or Net Metering (Solar panels on your roof)
    - Through these options, a building's solar array is connected to the grid can sell excess energy back and buy energy when not enough is produced.
- Subscription Programs
  - The programs enable a customer to source their energy from renewables that are not on their property.
  - Renewable\*Connect Flex (formerly called Windsource) and community solar gardens.

Renewable Takeaways:

- Columbia Heights has 500 residents that subscribe to Renewable Connect Flex, while 9 businesses currently subscribe. This could be an opportunity for outreach.
- There are 17 businesses with on-site solar, and 16 businesses subscribe to community solar gardens.

### **Electric Vehicle Takeaways**

There are 199 electric vehicles registered in the 55421 zip code, and City Hall has level 2 chargers available. CH is submitting letter of support as Met Council applies for support for EV chargers.

### **Questions & Discussion**

- Question: Can we do outreach by age of housing stock?
  - This could potentially be a targeted strategy in the plan.
- Question: Does the municipal sector in these data include the water treatment plan?



- Municipal only includes buildings owned and operated by the City, like street lights, City Hall, etc. The utility account needs to be in the City's name for it to appear as municipal in our data.
- What about Minneapolis water treatment plant in Columbia Heights?
  - This likely falls under commercial and industrial because it isn't in the City of Columbia Heights' name.
- Question: Is there an average amount that energy use falls after communities undergo Partners in Energy?
  - In upcoming workshops, we will work together to make a goal for the amount of energy savings we want to achieve through implementing this plan in Columbia Heights. We will discuss what an expected amount of energy savings can be at that point.
- Question: For Energy Burden, can we get down to the building level to find out who is experiencing high energy burden?
  - We can get data to the census block (but not individual building) level and could consider outreach to these areas.
- Comment: It's worth reiterating that emissions are more influenced by natural gas use than by electricity use.
- Comment: Building owner installed mini split heat pumps in to replace loud window air conditioners. To do so, she put all units on the same electrical meter. She can track individual electrical rates to each unit and if a tenant uses more than \$50 of electricity in a month, they pay the amount beyond that.
- Question: If a home has solar, does it give power back to the grid or do those panels only power that building?
  - Yes, this is called Net Metering. On a sunny day, panels can generate more electricity than the building needs and the extra gets sold back to the grid (if the premise is on the Net Metering program). The rest of the time, the building is buying power from the grid when it uses more electricity than the panels produce.
- Is Xcel Energy updating its infrastructure plan to support us adding EV chargers?
  - Yes, Xcel Energy is working to upgrade the grid, and any actions we include in the plan can assume that Xcel Energy will be doing what it can to support that.
- Does each city have its own grid, or is the grid larger than that?
  - The grid is regional, so no city is cut off. There are a few "micro grids" that are operated independently of the grid for special facilities like hospitals, military bases, etc.

## **Activity: An Energy Vision for Columbia Heights**

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitators*

*See Slides 51-52, 56*



Matthew introduced the idea and purpose of a vision statement, a succinct, aspirational statement that paints a picture of what we want Columbia Heights to look like if our plan is successful. The vision statement doesn't need to be detailed about how we'll get there or contain specific numerical goals.

The team split into two groups. Matthew led one group in an activity to create a vision statement. Together, the group edited a rough draft vision statement that Matthew created before the workshop. The group added the values and message they felt should be in the statement. Halfway through the activity, the two groups switched and the second group finished drafting the vision statement.



The draft vision statement we created is:

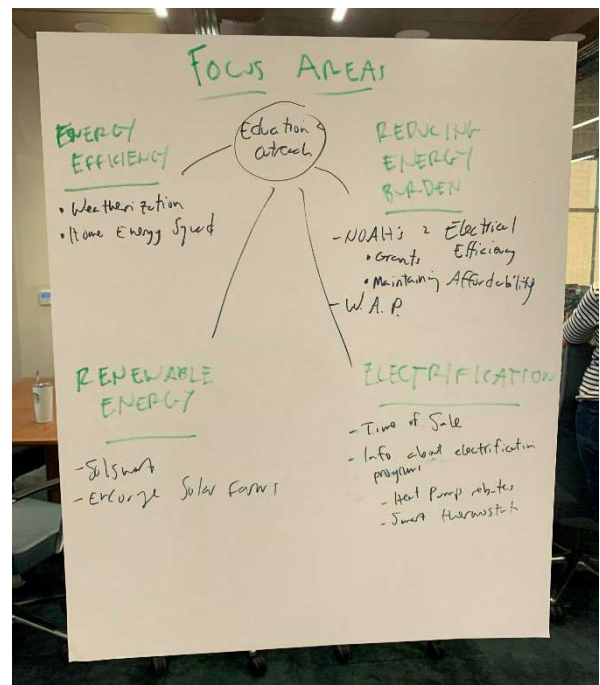
*Columbia Heights strives to be a leader on energy, equity, and sustainability. This plan guides all community members and stakeholders to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, save money, and strengthen community connections to improve energy resilience. By taking action together, we will make Columbia Heights a city where everyone can thrive.*

## Activity: Energy Priorities & Focus Areas

Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator  
See Slides 51, 53-56

Paolo described the role that focus areas play in the Energy Action Plan. Focus Areas are categories of energy action that we'll use to prioritize the kind of work we want to do. While it can be exciting to have many different areas of focus, we find the most successful plans have 3-5 focus areas.

After the team split into two groups, Paolo led an activity for the group to draft focus areas. The group started with four focus areas based on the pre-workshop survey: Residential Energy Efficiency, Business Energy Efficiency, Reducing Energy Burden for Low-Income Residents, and Renewable Energy.





The group discussed various actions and strategies they may want to take and how they might fit into the draft focus areas. Most of the group's actions fell neatly into the draft focus areas, but one additional area emerged. The group wanted to consider taking action on mini split heat pumps and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure, which would fall under beneficial electrification (the switching from fossil-fuel powered appliances to electricity-powered appliances). The group decided to consolidate the two energy efficiency areas and add Beneficial Electrification, leaving the draft focus areas as:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Reducing Energy Burden for Low-Income Residents
- Beneficial Electrification

## Check-Out and Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*See Slides 58-59*

Matthew brought the team back together to close out. Based on our first workshop, we have a very strong, engaged team, which bodes well for the next five workshops.

As a check-out questions, Matthew asked the team to share one word to describe how they're feeling after today's workshop. Responses included:

- Exuberant
- Interested
- Excited
- Hopeful
- Energized
- Curious
- Optimistic
- Committed
- Positive
- Informed
- Hopeful
- Inspired
- Plugged-In
- Enthusiastic
- Grounded
- Optimistic

Matthew shared that the next workshop is on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, from 4:30pm – 7pm. Team members can contact Matthew and Andrew at anytime with questions or ideas about this process.

Andrew thanked the group for their engagement and for being here today and encouraged people to contact him if they have thoughts or needs outside of the Partners in Energy as well.



# PARTNERS IN ENERGY COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

## WORKSHOP 2 NOTES

Wednesday, September 10, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm  
Columbia Heights City Council Chambers  
City Hall  
3989 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

### Workshop Summary

- **Community Assets**
  - The team identified “community assets,” the resources available in Columbia Heights that can help to make the Energy Action Plan successful when it is implemented. These assets will be incorporated when we start to talk about strategies in our next workshop.
- **Community-Wide Goal**
  - The team will set an overall goal for the plan. The point of this goal is to be a “headline” of the plan, a reason for community members to get interested and get involved.
  - The goal is composed of three parameters:
    - Level of ambition
    - Timeline
    - Metrics - Will the goal be expressed in greenhouse gas emissions avoided, energy saved, number of participants, etc.?
  - The team discussed these parameters, then “dot voted” to express their preferences.
  - Facilitators will work with the team’s preferences and bring back a goal to review at our next workshop.
- **Utility Programs**
  - Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy offer programs to help customers become more energy efficient and access renewable energy.
  - There are five main categories of programs: building assessments, equipment rebates, construction & remodeling, demand management and rate options, renewable energy, and electric vehicles.
  - Some Columbia Heights residents and businesses are already participating in these programs, and there is huge room for growth in participation.
  - Matthew shared programs from all of these sectors while team members noted which programs they thought would be a good fit for Columbia Heights.
- **Next workshop:** Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 4:30pm – 7pm



## AGENDA

### BLOCK 1: WELCOME AND WORKSHOP 1 RECAP

Welcome & Workshop 1 Recap

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

Finalize Vision Statement and Focus Areas

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### BLOCK 2: COMMUNITY ASSETS ACTIVITY

Brainstorm community groups, champions, and communication channels in Columbia Heights  
*Ana De La Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

**Break**

### BLOCK 3: GOAL PARAMETERS AND UTILITY PROGRAMS

Determine Parameters for Columbia Heights' Community-Wide Goal  
*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

Overview of Utility Programs and Participation Data

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### BLOCK 4: WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS

Check-Out & Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

## Energy Action Team

NAME	AFFILIATION
<b>Andrew Boucher</b>	Community Lead, City Planner, City of Columbia Heights,
Brooke Timp	Columbia Heights Resident
<b>Cassie Leoni</b>	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Connie Buesgens</b>	City Councilmember, City of Columbia Heights
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Mitch Forney	Community Development Director, city of Columbia Heights
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<b>Paul Moses</b>	Planning Commission Member
<b>Sulmaan Khan</b>	Assistant City Engineer
<b>Taher Herzallah</b>	Parks and Recreation Commission Member
Tyler Schafer	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Utility Representatives and Facilitators</b>	
<b>Matthew Douglas-May</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Paolo Speirn</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Ana De La Torre</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Sofia Troutman</b>	Program Manager, Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy
Adam Burr	Account Manager, Xcel Energy
Tyler Glewwe	CenterPoint Energy



## Welcome & Workshop 1 Recap

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

Slides 1-14

Matthew welcomed the group to Columbia Heights' second workshop. The team got into small groups and asked one another 1) What's something you remember from our first workshop and 2) What questions do you still have? Team members shared answers, including:

- Demographics of our city, including how young it is (median age 35)
- Process for crafting focus areas, vision statement, and the synchronicities between what this team wants and what city council and economic development wants.

Matthew recapped our last workshop.

- Partners in Energy is a two-year process in which Xcel Energy collaborates with communities to develop and execute an Energy Action Plan. We will hold five planning workshops to write the plan, then project manage the plan for eighteen months.
- The team learned about how much energy Columbia Heights uses:
  - Fewer Commercial & Industrial premises, but higher proportional energy usage; Residential sector consumes the most overall
  - Electricity consumption stable between 2021 and 2023
  - Natural gas consumption peaked in 2022 with colder temperatures and greater need for space heating
  - Residents spend about \$1,700 annually on fuels costs on average, or about \$142 a month
  - Many residents face high energy burdens. About 41% of households in Columbia Heights earn less than 60% of AMI.
  - Residential and C&I sectors are actively participating in efficiency programs and supporting renewable energy

## Finalize Vision Statement & Focus Areas

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

Matthew shared the updated vision statement. The group developed this vision in our last workshop, after which Andrew and the City of Columbia Heights communications team word smithed it as well. The team received it in a survey before this workshop and a consensus was reached for it to be adopted.

*Vision Statement: Columbia Heights strives to be a leader in energy efficiency, equity, and sustainability. This plan guides the community to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, save money, and strengthen community connections through education and outreach to improve energy resilience while reducing our carbon footprint.*

When asked to share what resonates or stands out, team members shared:

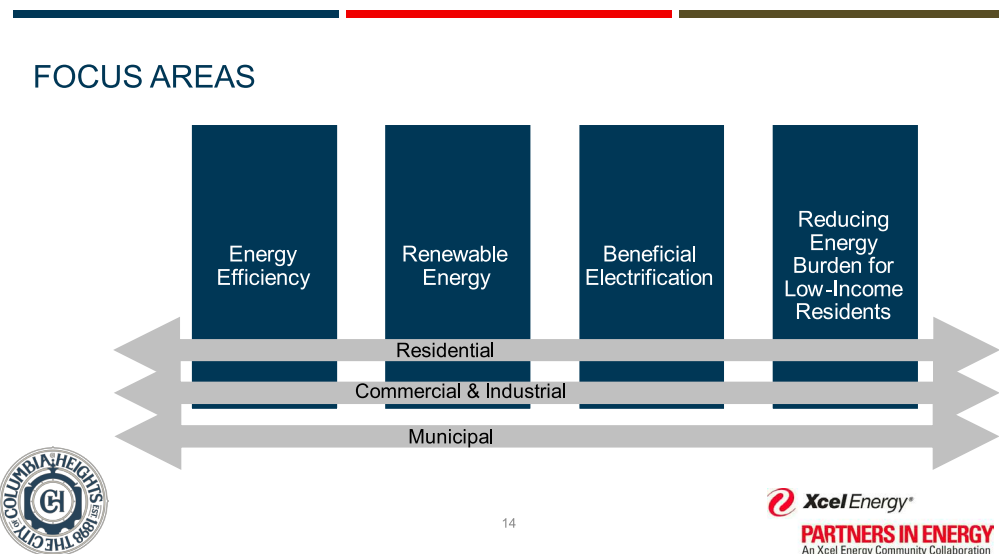


- Saving money is a good “common ground” that everyone can agree on
- Happy to see equity in this statement
- Good amount of detail – includes both what we plan to do and how we plan to do it
- Touches on a lot in a short time
- Putting energy resilience with carbon footprint is effective. It shows we are not going to compromise on either of those.

Matthew presented the finalized focus areas, which are the “chapters in the book” of the energy action plan. These are the kinds of energy action that the team would like to prioritize:

- **Energy Efficiency:** Residents and Businesses and the City of Columbia Heights accomplishing the same amount with less energy.
- **Reducing Energy Burden for Low-Income Residents:** Connecting low-income residents with programs and resources to help reduce the amount of money spent on energy.
- **Renewable Energy:** Businesses, residents, and the City accessing solar and wind energy through off-site (subscription & solar gardens) and on-site programs.
- **Beneficial Electrification:** Catch-all area for measures that switch energy use from fossil fuel to electric sources like electric vehicles and heat pumps

The group had given feedback on the focus areas in a survey before the workshop. In response, Matthew confirmed that the residential, commercial, and municipal sectors will all be impacted by the focus areas. This can be demonstrated by making each sector a “theme” that runs through each focus area. The team discussed this and confirmed that all three sectors should be themes running through all four focus areas, as illustrated below.



Matthew asked team members which focus areas they were excited about. A few responses were:



- Beneficial Electrification is exciting because now is a good time to be doing that. There is lots of development going on in Columbia Heights right now so there is opportunity to incorporate some of these standards into that development.
- It's exciting to explore the connection between Reducing Energy Burden and Energy Efficiency.
- Renewable energy, because if we have electrification we want to make sure it's coming from green sources.

### Questions and discussion

- Is geothermal heating within the scope of this plan?
  - There are two kinds of heating systems that are described as “geothermal.”
    1. Accessing heat generated by tectonic activity. This type of geothermal is not available in Minnesota, but is practiced in places like Iceland.
    2. Leveraging the relatively stable temperature underground to either heat or cool spaces, done via “ground source heat pumps.” These are available throughout Minnesota, and are economically viable only in certain situations. It is within the scope of this plan to
  - Team members shared that Columbia Heights may already have a few buildings heated with geothermal ground source heat pumps.
- Can we make sure to involve municipal in the Reducing Energy Burden focus area?
  - Yes, the city can absolutely be involved in this focus area.
  - There is also role for multifamily buildings, which fall under commercial.
  - These changes are reflected in the graphic above.
- Strategy ideas:
  - Leveraging Time of Sale to reduce energy burden
  - Changing building codes around legal nonconformity of multifamily buildings, of which there are 150 total, most of which are old.

### Activity: Community Assets Gallery Walk

Ana De La Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

Slides 15-16

Ana guided the team through a gallery walk to brainstorm community assets

“What are the resources in Columbia Heights that will help make the energy action plan a success?” This is the question the group sought to answer in a gallery walk activity led by Ana. The group circulated through four stations, each with a different question:

1. What audiences are we trying to engage?
2. What places or groups exist that are trusted messengers?
3. What community channels exist to reach community members.?



4. What stakeholders exist that could support the plan? Who could champion part of the plan?

**WHAT STAKEHOLDERS EXIST THAT COULD SUPPORT THE PLAN?**  
**WHO COULD CHAMPION PART OF THE PLAN?**

Social Media Groups \* Peaceful CH, Buy Nothing  
 School Clubs \* MCAC  
 Places of worship \* First Lutheran Church of All Nations  
 City Council \*  
 Commission & Boards \* Sustainability Commission, Parks & Rec  
 Local businesses \*  
 Local youth \*  
 passionate individual(s) \* Ashada Simula-Mayor  
 Community Groups (Pride, March Parade, etc) \*  
 Chamber of Commerce

EVENTS: ARTS & INFO  
 Contractors, permits & inspections  
 Radio → Alatas

**WHAT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS EXIST TO REACH COMMUNITY MEMBERS?**

- \* School district
- \* Will / Kat - Comm. Team
- \* City organization events - Mayor's March Parade, Art & Info Fair, PRIDE Festival, Jubilee
- \* Police / MADC, Breake & Mo
- \* Local press; The Life & Northeast
- \* Peaceful Group on Facebook, event pages, Facebook posts
- \* Lesson of Women Voters - Church Publications, - SPEAKING AT CHURCH or mosque
- \* Utilities Bill
- \* City Newsletter
- \* Youtube - City Channel
- \* Flyers (Educational) at businesses + around town
- \* Informative QR CODE at City Parks

**WHAT PLACES OR GROUPS EXIST THAT ARE TRUSTED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS?**

- FIRST LUTHERAN \* \* - teachers
- CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS \* \* - fire department
- SCHOOLS \*
- St. Timothy Lutheran Church
- MOSQUE \* \*
- THE LIONS / Rotary Group
- BUSINESS COUNCIL \*
- City Council
- Local Restaurants  
Sarnas, Golden Nuts, Millers, Roman's, The Fix Coffee
- Rail works
- \* SACA \* Food Shelf
- Commissions → Sustainability, City Planning

**WHAT AUDIENCES ARE WE TRYING TO ENGAGE?**

- \* - low income residents; renters
- \* - home owner; Time of sale
- young families
- Seniors
- environmentally active residents
- new development owner
- \* Businesses w/ aging infrastructure, appliances, remodels, lighting
- Community influencers
- \* - Faith based communities
- land lords
- HOA's
- Restaurants
- \* - Developers / prop.
- Kids / Youth Commissioners
- Schools

Images 1 - 4. Community assets generated by the team.



The team came up with the following responses to the prompted questions (\* means that a different group agrees with the response):

### **What audiences are we trying to engage?**

- Low-income residents\*
- Renters
- Homeowners\*
- Young families
- Seniors
- Environmentally active residents
- New development owners
- Businesses with aging infrastructure, appliances, remodeling, lighting\*
- Community influencers
- Faith based communities\*
- Landlords
- HOAs
- Restaurants
- Developers\*
- Kids/Youth Commissioners
- Schools

### **What stakeholders exist that could support the Plan? Who could Champion part of the plan?**

- Social Media groups\*
  - Peaceful CH
  - Buy Nothing
- School clubs\*
- Places of worship
- City council\*
- Commission and boards\*
- Local businesses\*
- Local youth\*
- Passionate individuals\*
- Community groups (pride, Monarch Pledge, etc.)\*
- Chamber of Commerce
- Events: Arts & Info
- Contractors, permits & inspections, Ratio & Alatas
- MCAC
- First Lutheran, Church of all Nations



- Sustainability commission
- Parks and Rec
- Amada Simula – Mayor

### **What Communication Channels exist to reach community members?**

- School district\*
- Will/Kat – City Communications Team\*\*
- City organization events – mayors monarch pledge, Art & Info, Fair, PRIDE Festival, Jamboree\*\*
- Police/MCAC, Brenda & Mo\*
- Local papers; the life and Northeastern\*
- Peaceful Group on Facebook, event pages, facebook ads\*
- League of women voters\*
- Church Publications\*
  - Speaking at church or mosque\*
- Utilities bill
- City Newsletter
- YouTube – City Channel\*
- Flyers (educational) at businesses and around town
- Information, QR code at city parks

### **What place or groups exist that are trusted by community members?**

- First Lutheran \*\*
- Church of all nations\*\*
- Schools\*
- St. Timothy Lutheran Church
- Mosque\*\*
- The Lions / Rotary Group
- Business council\*
- City council
- Local restaurants – Sarna's, Golden Nuts, Millers, Roman's The Fix Coffee
- Railworks\*
- SACA\*\*
- Food Shelf
- Commissions – sustainability, City Planning
- Teachers
- Fire departments



## Goal Parameters Presentation & Activity

Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator  
Slides 18-24


Paolo explained the role that the community-wide goal will play in the energy action plan. The community-wide goal serves as a headline for the Energy Action Plan that can be used to communicate with the community. The goal answers the question, how do we measure success?

The elements of a well-defined goal include:

---

### ELEMENTS OF A WELL-DEFINED GOAL

- S** **Specific** → *Who, what, where, and why*
- M** **Measurable** → *How much, how many*
- A** **Achievable** → *Goals within reach to increase likelihood of success*
- R** **Realistic** → *Goals should align with organizational strategies  
Tools to accomplish the goals should be available*
- T** **Time-bound** → *Set a timeframe for accomplishing goals*
- I** **Inclusive** → *Goal encourages participation by all community members*
- E** **Equitable** → *Increases equity in community*




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Today, the team will define the parameters for the goal. Facilitators will take those to our data team, then bring back a proposed goal for the group to consider at our next workshop.

The Parameters are:

- **Metric(s)**
  - Cost Savings, Energy Savings, Program Participation, Greenhouse Gas Emissions avoided, Renewable Energy participation, and/or Community involvement
- **Ambition level**
  - Conservative, Ambitious, or Aspirational
- **Timeline**
  - What will motivate the Columbia Heights Community the most?
- **Bottom-up Approach**

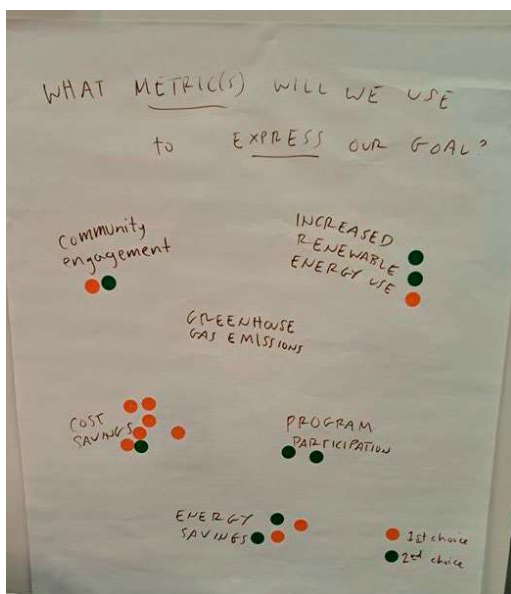


- For Columbia Heights' goal, we'll use a "bottom up" model. We'll look at Columbia Heights' current participation rates in utility program and build up a goal based on the other parameters.

The team discussed the goal parameters in small groups, then reported out. Some ideas shared were:

- Metrics
  - Strong consensus that cost savings is a useful metric.
    - Cost savings is the most relatable. The more money you're saving, the more energy efficient you are.
  - Renewable energy could be useful, but there may be equity considerations.
  - Greenhouse gas emissions is important. Could we pair cost savings with greenhouse gas emissions?
  - Cost savings and energy efficiency would go well together.
- Ambition
  - Don't want to be so ambitious that we intimidate low-income or other under-resourced people or make them feel excluded.
  - A conservative, very achievable goal will keep people engaged.
  - People in Columbia Heights like to be the best in the nation, like to be leaders. Young, vibrant, families that want to see big things in their life time. This community has the capacity to do big things.
- Timeline
  - Strong consensus that a medium-term, 2030 goal would be effective.

The team circulated around the room and voted with dots on their preferences for the overall community goal. Facilitators will finalize these parameters and work with the data team to create a goal for the team to review at our next workshop.





Images 5. Voting on which metrics to use for the goal.

## Utility Programs & Participation Data

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 29-63*

Matthew welcomed the Sustainability Commission to observe the rest of the meeting. Thank you for using some of your meeting to see what Partners in Energy is about!

Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy both offer programs for community members to be more energy efficient and access renewable energy. There are five categories of programs:

- **Building Assessments:** Help a business review and understand their energy use
- **Equipment Rebates:** Rebates for high-efficiency equipment to help reduce upfront costs
- **Building & Remodeling:** Programs to provide guidance and support on building an energy efficient building
- **Demand Management and Rate Options:** Programs to help reduce demand and options for special rates to reduce bills
- **Renewable Energy:** Programs help customers access renewable electricity sources like on-site or subscriptions
- **Electric Vehicles:** Programs helps customers install charging stations, evaluate their fleets, and access special rate options

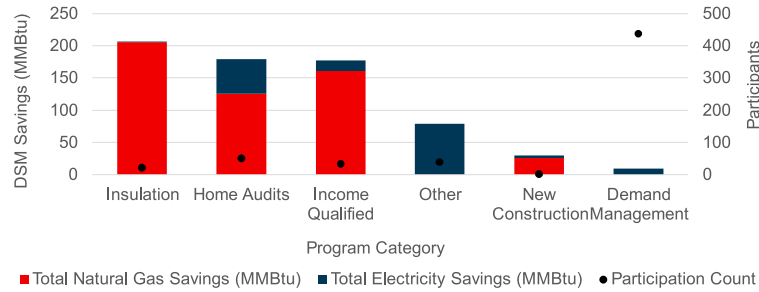
Team members used that worksheet to note which programs seem like a good fit for the Columbia Heights community and how programs could connect with the community assets from the activity earlier in the workshop.

### Residential Energy Efficiency Programs

Matthew described a range of residential energy programs, including the Home Energy Squad, rebates for heating and cooling, refrigerator recycling, and the home energy lighting program.



## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND SAVINGS (MMBTU) IN AN AVERAGE YEAR



SOURCE: Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2021 -2023 baseline, CenterPoint Energy 2021-2023 baseline

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## ANNUAL AVERAGE XCEL ENERGY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND SAVINGS

Sector	Average Participation	Average Electricity Savings (kWh)
Residential	684	87,200
Income-Qualified	9	4,900
Commercial/Industrial	39	904,500



SOURCE: Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2021 -2023 baseline

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For a full list of energy efficiency programs, see slides 37-48

### Questions & Discussion

- What is the level of income required to get a no-cost Home Energy Squad visit?
  - Here are the income qualifications for a free HES visit:



Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Income Limit	\$66,300	\$75,750	\$85,200	\$94,650	\$102,250	\$109,800	\$117,400	\$124,950

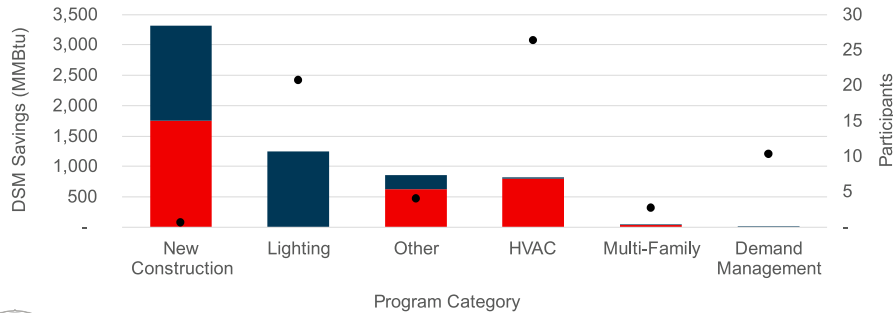
- What is actual amount of energy saved with a newer fridge?
  - ENERGY STAR's [Flip Your Fridge Calculator](#) estimates that replacing a refrigerator from 1993-2000 with a new ENERGY STAR certified model would save \$349 in energy costs over 5 years.
- How do you participate in the Xcel Energy Home Lighting Program?
  - The program simply gives you an upfront discount on LEDs when you buy them at participating retailers like Menards, Home Depot, Walmart, Costco, Sam's Club, Lowe's, Batteries Plus, Target, Dollar Tree, Ace Hardware, and Salvation Army. They also can be found periodically at Goodwill and Habitat ReStore. For more information and to find retailers near you, use the Bulb Finder Tool on Xcel Energy's website: <https://mn.my.xcelenergy.com/s/residential/home-rebates/home-lighting>.
- I have an old-style Saver's Switch and they say I can't participate in AC rewards. What's the deal?
  - Yes, you can only participate in [Savers Switch](#) or [AC Rewards](#). You can decide which to participate based on if you want to get a smart thermostat and each programs annual bill credit amount.
- Can I install insulation myself and get a rebate?
  - No, all work for rebates needs to be done by a contractor on [Xcel Energy's approved contractor lists](#).
- Does Columbia Heights have a contract with HES to buy down the cost of visits for residents?
  - Columbia Heights used to have a contract with HES but did not renew this year.
- I'm a renter, am I able to participate in any programs?
  - Yes, renters can get a home energy squad visit, for example.
- Strategy Ideas
  - Engage landlords for energy efficiency
  - Provide Xcel Energy's certified contractor list during permitting process and at other key times in development and rental process

### Commercial & Industrial Energy Efficiency Programs

Matthew described programs available to businesses in Columbia Heights, including new construction and renovation programs, commercial lighting efficiency, One Stop Efficiency Shop, Business Energy Assessments, and the Multifamily Building Efficiency program.



## COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND SAVINGS (MMBTU) IN AN AVERAGE YEAR



■ Total Natural Gas Savings (MMBTU) ■ Total Electricity Savings (MMBTU) ● Participation Count



SOURCE: Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2021 -2023 baseline, CenterPoint Energy 2021-2023 baseline

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## XCEL ENERGY COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL PER PARTICIPANT PROGRAM IMPACT IN AN AVERAGE YEAR

Program	Participants	kWh Savings per Participant	Dollar Savings per Participant	GHGs Avoided per Participant (lbs)
Small Business Lighting	12	17,260	\$1,502	8,753
Lighting Efficiency	9	18,411	\$1,602	9,337
Smart Thermostat for Businesses	6	365	\$32	185
HVAC+R Efficiency	5	1,287	\$112	652
Saver's Switch for Business	3	2	\$0	1



SOURCE: Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2021 -2023 baseline



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### Questions & Discussion

- Columbia Heights is currently hiring an Economic Development Coordinator, and business outreach on energy efficiency could be part of that position.
- We have La Belle Condos, what would be the best building efficiency program for something like that?
  - If each condo unit has it's own heating and cooling system, then a Home Energy Squad visit is likely the best fit. If the building has a central heating system, then a commercial program is likely the best fit. The Partners in Energy facilitators will follow up with Andrew on what the best program for La Belle would be.
- Are there any incentives for Xcel Energy to upgrade electrical panels? Are there rebates for upgraded panels?





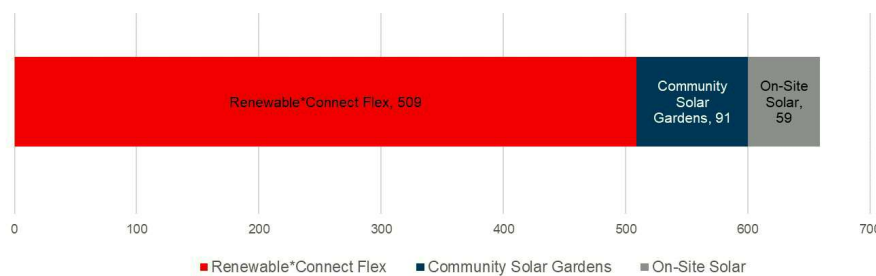
- Low-Income homes can get “pre-weatherization” measures like removal of knob and tube wiring and vermiculite remediation as well as panel upgrades, often for free.
- For market-rate housing, there are no Xcel Energy incentives but there are Inflation Reduction Act programs that we can promote.
- One overall takeaway is that there are many programs available but somewhat low participation. It seems like a major part of our work is just to do outreach and connect people with existing programs.
- Strategy Ideas
  - Incorporate energy star training and/or one-stop business blitz
  - Promote low-income Multifamily Building Efficiency program as a way to reduce energy burden.

## Renewable Energy Programs

Matthew described programs that let residents, businesses, and the City of Columbia Heights access renewable energy. Renewable energy programs fall into two categories:

- 1) **On-Site Programs** support installing solar panels on a building or site.
- 2) **Off-Site Programs** allow customers to subscribe and receive their energy from renewable sources.

### COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PARTICIPATION IN XCEL ENERGY RENEWABLE ENERGY OFFERINGS, 2023



Utility Subscription Programs	
Residential	500
Commercial/Industrial	9
Municipal	0

Community Solar Gardens	
Residential	75
Commercial/Industrial	11
Municipal	5

On-site Solar	
Residential	42
Commercial/Industrial	17

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SOURCE: Xcel Energy Partners in Energy 2023, 2023 Xcel Energy Community Energy Report

## Questions & Discussion

- Could we install solar panels on parking lots in Columbia Heights?
  - A Sustainability Commissioner shared that the cost to construct the steel structure for solar panels over parking lots usually ends up being prohibitive.
- Can we put participation metrics on the website? This would create a bit of healthy competition.



- Yes. Every 6 months we provide a dashboard with progress data, which can be shared publicly by the City. It could be included in newsletters and annual reports.
- What stood out team members about programs available?
  - The sheer number of programs available is neat, and they can be tailored to different audiences and customers.
  - The various multifamily building programs, since we have many older MFBs
  - Let's look at any opportunities to folding programs into what we're already doing

## Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slide 64-65*

Matthew thanked the group for their time and reminded them that the next workshop will be Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30pm – 7pm. If you have ideas or questions in the meantime, contact Andrew ([ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov)) and Matthew ([mdouglasmay@mncee.org](mailto:mdouglasmay@mncee.org)).



# PARTNERS IN ENERGY COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

## WORKSHOP 3 NOTES

Wednesday, October 23, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm

### Workshop Summary

- **Community-Wide Goal**

- After discussing, the team came to agreement around the following community-wide goal:
  - ***Columbia Heights will increase energy program participation by 30% between 2025 and 2030. This will save the community an estimated \$4.6 million and increase energy savings 63% by 2030.***
- The overall goal for the plan is a **simple, community-facing** goal that serves as a **headline** and **communication tool** for the work the plan will do.
- Partners in Energy modeled the community-wide goal based on the parameters the Energy Action Team decided in workshop 2:
  - Metrics: Energy Savings, Cost-Savings, and Program Participation
  - Timeline: By 2030
  - Ambition: Team was evenly divided, so facilitators chose a “middle of the road,” 3 out of 5 levels.

- **Strategy Brainstorming**

- A strategy answers the question: **What are we going to do?** It is a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim that includes an audience and an action.
- The team brainstormed strategies that will overcome barriers and leverage benefits for each of the four focus areas:
  - Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Reducing Energy Burden, and Beneficial Electrification.
- Matthew will collate the strategies the team brainstormed and present them at the next workshop, where the team will continue to refine them.



## AGENDA

### **BLOCK 1: WELCOME AND WORKSHOP 2 RECAP**

Welcome & Workshop 2 Recap

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### **BLOCK 2: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS COMMUNITY WIDE GOAL MODEL**

Columbia Heights Community-Wide Goal Model

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

**Break**

### **BLOCK 3: STRATEGIES AND BRAINSTORMING**

What is a strategy?

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

Activity: Strategy Benefits & Barriers

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

### **BLOCK 4: WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS**

Check-Out & Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

## Energy Action Team

NAME	AFFILIATION
Andrew Boucher	Community Lead, City Planner, City of Columbia Heights,
Brooke Timp	Columbia Heights Resident
Cassie Leoni	Sustainability Commission Member
Connie Buesgens	City Councilmember, City of Columbia Heights
Emile Voight	Community Development Coordinator, City of Columbia Heights
Fabricio Orellana	Staff, City of Columbia Heights
Jill Bergman	Pastor, First Lutheran Church
Lamin Dibba	Economic Development Authority Commission Member
Laurel Deneen	Planning Commission Member
Lindsay Phelps	Manager, Ratio Apartments
Michelle Miller Ferreira	Landlord for 4422 Central Avenue NE
Mitch Forney	Community Development Director, city of Columbia Heights
Nik Ahmadvand	Sustainability Commission Member
Paul Moses	Planning Commission Member
Sulmaan Khan	Assistant City Engineer
Taher Herzallah	Parks and Recreation Commission Member
Tyler Schafer	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Utility Representatives and Facilitators</b>	
Matthew Douglas-May	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Paolo Speirn	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Ana De La Torre	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Sofia Troutman	Program Manager, Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy
Adam Burr	Account Manager, Xcel Energy



## Welcome & Workshop 2 Recap

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

Slides 1-13

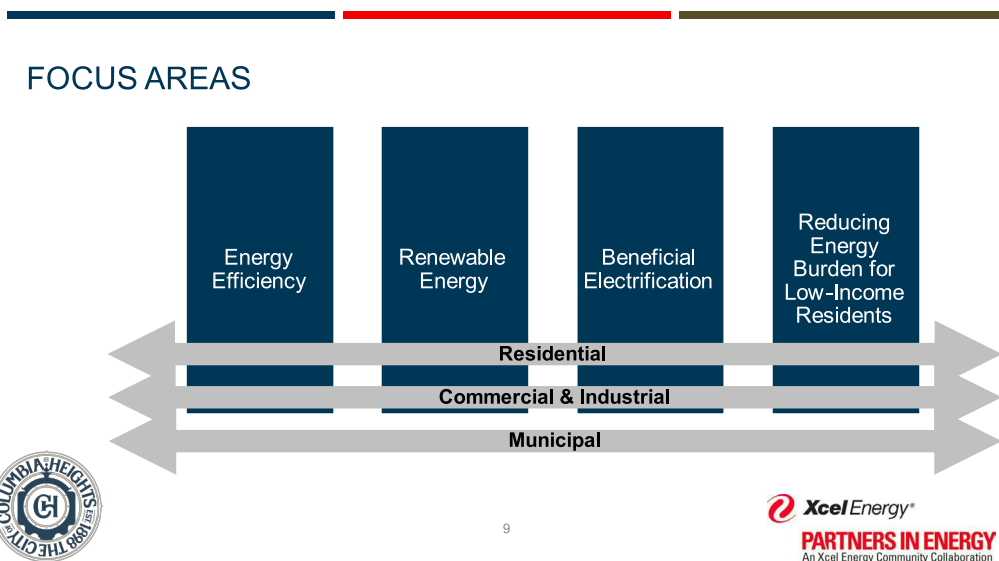
Matthew welcomed the group to the workshop, went over the agenda, and had folks do an activity to get team members thinking about energy actions. Team members wrote down their answer to the question, "What is one energy action you would personally take if money, resources, and time were not an issue?" Team members milled around the room and shared their answers with one another.

Matthew recapped the previous workshop. The team has already finalized a vision statement, decided on focus areas, learned about utility programs, and decided on parameters for the community-wide goal for the plan.

### Vision Statement

Columbia Heights strives to be a leader in energy efficiency, equity, and sustainability. This plan guides the community to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, save money, and strengthen community connections through education and outreach to improve energy resilience while reducing our carbon footprint.

### Focus Areas





## Utility Programs

Xcel Energy offers programs to help residents and businesses become more energy efficient and support renewable energy. Data is available to track participation and associated savings for these programs from utilities

Types of Utility Programs:

- **Building Assessments:** Help a business review and understand their energy use
- **Equipment Rebates:** Rebates for high-efficiency equipment to help reduce upfront costs
- **Building & Remodeling:** Programs to provide guidance and support on building an energy efficient building
- **Demand Management and Rate Options:** Programs to help reduce demand and options for special rates to reduce bills
- **Renewable Energy:** Programs help customers access renewable electricity sources like on-site or subscriptions
- **Electric Vehicles:** Programs helps customers install charging stations and access special rate options

## Columbia Heights Community-Wide Goal Model

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 15-39*

Paolo reviewed the goal modelling conversation from the previous workshop. The overall goal for the plan is a **simple, community-facing** goal that serves as a **headline** and **communication tool** for the work the plan will do. It also adheres to “SMARTIE” principles: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

At our last workshop, the team reviewed and dot-voted on four parameters, deciding on specific levels for each one:

- 1) Metrics: Energy Savings, Cost-Savings, and Program Participation
- 2) Timeline: By 2030
- 3) Ambition: Team was evenly divided, so facilitators chose a “middle of the road,” 3 out of 5 levels.
- 4) Approach: Bottom-up (for communities without existing climate goals)

The Partners in Energy team took these parameters, and modelled the following community-wide goal:



Columbia Heights will increase energy program participation by 30% between 2025 and 2030. This will save the community an estimated \$4.6 million and increase energy savings 63% by 2030.

Team members commented that the \$4.6 million figure gives great “wow” factor, but the goal also seems achievable.

Paolo described the goal modeling process and the numbers behind the community wide goal. The Partners in Energy data team looks at the baseline period of 2021 – 2023, then creates a “business as usual” scenario based on existing levels of program participation. This also accounts for the carbon reductions that Xcel Energy is making to its entire grid (80% carbon-free electricity by 2030). This scenario represented throughout the notes and slides in orange.

Then, the data team models the increases in program participation it would take to reach the goal to match the parameters laid out by the energy action team. This is represented in blue.

---

## GOAL MODELING - ASSUMPTIONS

Business as Usual Scenario	Modeled Scenario
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar participation rates and energy savings for efficiency and renewable energy programs as 2021-2023 baseline</li> <li>• Xcel Energy meets its 2030 goal of 80% carbon-free electricity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy efficiency program participation grows <b>30% overall</b> during goal period compared to baseline</li> <li>• Program participation in Xcel Energy renewable energy offerings grows by <b>20%</b> for residents and businesses</li> </ul>



Paolo showed the team how much of an increase in specific programs it would take to meet the goal. As an example, in an average year we had 860 residential participations in energy efficiency programs, and it would take 1108 participations per year to reach the goal. The team indicated that this seemed possible.



## RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY PARTICIPATION IN XCEL ENERGY OFFERINGS

Energy Efficiency Offering	Annual Participations: Business as Usual	Annual Participations: Modeled Scenario
Home Energy Audit	26	40
Home Energy Squad	24	36
Insulation Rebate	3	5
Residential HVAC	157	207
Refrigerator Recycling	28	38
Smart Thermostat	136	205



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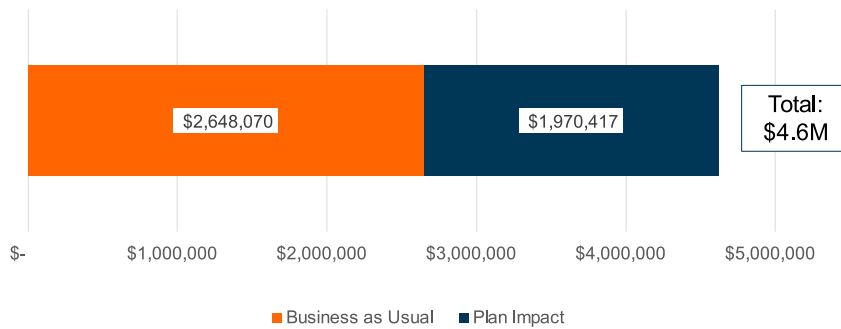
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Participation forecasts are based 2021 -2023 program participation, Partners in Energy data

Cost savings come directly from energy savings. In the business as usual scenario, Columbia Heights residents and businesses save \$2.6 million dollars. With the goal, they will save an additional \$2 million for a total of \$4.6 million dollars saved from 2025 – 2030.

## GOAL METRIC: COMMUNITY-WIDE COST SAVINGS THROUGH ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Cumulative Estimated Savings by 2030



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Cost savings forecasts are based on historical 2021 -2023 program participation, Partners in Energy and CenterPoint Energy data



## Discussion

Paolo asked the team two questions to guide the discussion:

### **What is your gut reaction to this goal? What do you like or dislike?**

Responses:

- The goal is a good challenge that makes me want to take action and engage the community.
- This seems like an achievable goal. This seems to be a relatively modest goal that we could achieve and feel good about achieving. If we are dedicated to rolling out the Energy Action plan, I think we can surpass this goal and get people to participate.
- The fact that a 30% increase in participation will increase energy savings by 63% is impactful and motivating. That seems more motivating than even the dollar savings.
- The 5 year timeline is good and tangible. We will see the returns immediately and shows we are taking this plan seriously.

### **Is there anything we could do to make this goal a better fit for the Columbia Heights community?**

Responses focused on strategies and included:

- I am thinking about how much it will cost residents and businesses to participate in the programs to increase participation by 30%. How will we help people afford these energy improvements?
  - As a team we can develop strategies to address this question. Ideas from the team included:
    - Communicating where there are cost barriers will be important. We can also highlight free programs.
    - Columbia Heights will be well poised to help its residents access the IRA rebates next year.
- It will be important to have simple, clear information for the community to help people make an educated decision about which programs are the best fit for their needs and goals.
  - The team will develop strategies to achieve this too!

Overall, the team came to an agreement that the goal is fitting for the plan and represents the work we've done so far.

## Questions

- What does a "participation" mean in the data slides?
  - A "participation" is any single program participation. If a single household participated in three different programs in a single year, that would count as three participations.
- Are these new participants?
  - One person can have multiple participations in different years. For example one person gets a Home Energy Squad visit in one year, and then installs insulation the next year.
- Can we include Hilltop in any of these calculations?



- No, we've already calculated our baseline period and goal model without Hilltop, so we aren't able to change things up this late in the process.

**Follow-Up items for the Partners in Energy team.** We will see if we can secure these numbers:

- Number of premises in Columbia Heights that have already received a Home Energy Squad visit.
- Comparison with peer communities in terms of program participation, both commercial and industrial.

## What is a strategy?

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 41-42*

Matthew described the strategy portion of the Energy Action Plan. A strategy answers the question: **What are we going to do?**

- It is a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim.
- Includes audience and action.

Strategy Examples:

- Assist residents in understanding and participating in on-site solar
- Encourage businesses to undergo lighting retrofits
- Connect seniors with low-income energy programs
- Help residents take advantage of insulation rebates

Group members got into the strategy mindset by individually thinking of a strategy in each of the plan's four focus areas (Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Reducing Energy Burden, and Beneficial Electrification).

## Activity: Strategy Benefits & Barriers

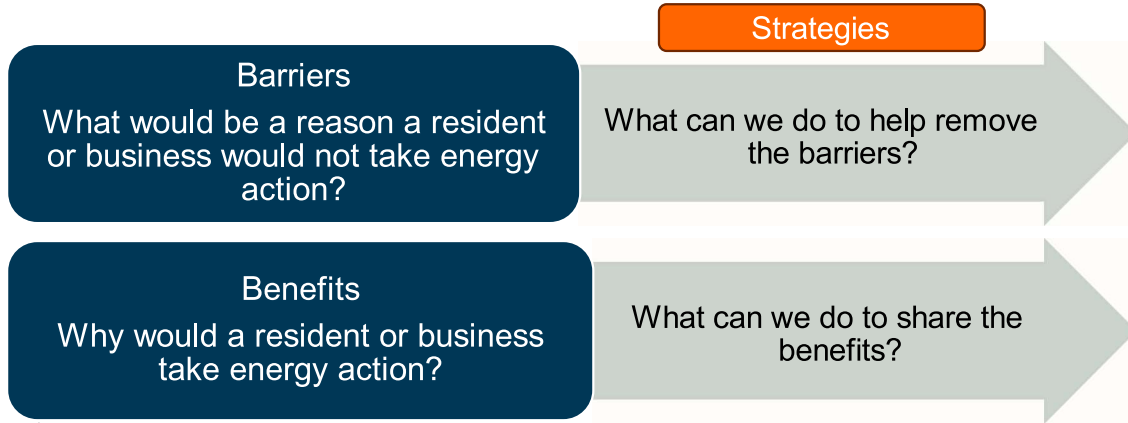
*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 43 – 46*

Matthew led an activity for the group to continue brainstorming for the plan. The team broke into small groups and brainstormed together about barriers and benefits for taking energy action, matching each with possible strategies.



## BARRIERS AND BENEFITS



44



The team developed many great strategies. Matthew will collate the strategies the groups wrote down and share them back in the next workshop.

To end the workshop, Matthew asked team members to share out one strategy they are excited to work on. Answers included:

- Workshops to train volunteers and energy action champions
- Partnering with trusted communities
- Working with mobile home parks
- Drone videos to heat map homes
- Engaging with theater community in high school – video skits to share with friends and family
- Advertising existing programs
- Highlight/compare house before and after insulation

### Check-Out & Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slide 47*

- Stay tuned for a survey before Workshop 4.
- Workshop 4 – December 10th, 2024 from 4:30pm-7pm
- **Questions?** Email: Andrew [ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov) and Matthew [mdouglasmay@mncee.org](mailto:mdouglasmay@mncee.org)





# PARTNERS IN ENERGY COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

## WORKSHOP 4 NOTES

Tuesday, December 10, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm  
Columbia Heights City Hall  
3989 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

### Workshop Take-Aways

- The team has finalized its community-wide goal: Columbia Heights will increase energy program participation by at least 30% between 2025 and 2030. This will save the community an estimated \$4.6 million and increase energy savings 63% by 2030.
- The team worked on the strategies for the plan. Strategies answer the question, “What are we going to do?” and have an audience and an action we want them to take, eg. “Encourage businesses [the audience] to undergo lighting retrofits [the action]”
- The team did three activities to generate and refine strategies begun in our previous workshop:
  - 1) With the draft strategies posted around the room, team members voted on which strategy they were excited about, which they thought should be done first, and which one they would remove if they had to.
  - 2) In small groups, the team discussed draft strategies for each focus area, answering questions like, “What’s missing?” and “Is there a strategy here you want to champion?”
  - 3) Team members brainstormed communications channels in Columbia Heights, then posted them next to the draft strategies.
- The facilitation team will compile information from all of these activities and deliver it at our next workshop, where we’ll also discuss the Energy Action Plan writing process and celebrate the team’s accomplishments!
- Next Workshop: Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. 4:30pm – 7pm, same location.

### AGENDA

#### BLOCK 1: WELCOME AND WORKSHOP 3 RECAP

Welcome & Workshop 3 Recap  
*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

#### BLOCK 2: STRATEGY REVIEW AND REFINEMENT

Overview of workshop 3 strategies and activity  
*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*



Activity: Strategy Review  
*Ana de la Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

**Break**

Activity: Strategy Refinement  
*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

**BLOCK 3: COMMUNICATION IN COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**

Activity: Communication channels for successful strategies  
*Paolo Speim, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

**BLOCK 4: WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS**

Check-Out & Next Steps  
*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

## Energy Action Team (Attendees in Bold)

<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
<b>Andrew Boucher</b>	Community Lead, City Planner, City of Columbia Heights,
<b>Brooke Timp</b>	Columbia Heights Resident
<b>Cassie Leoni</b>	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Connie Buesgens</b>	City Councilmember, City of Columbia Heights
<b>Emilie Voight</b>	Community Development Coordinator, City of Columbia Heights
Fabricio Orellana	Staff, City of Columbia Heights
<b>Jill Bergman</b>	Pastor, First Lutheran Church
Lamin Dibba	Economic Development Authority Commission Member
Laurel Deneen	Planning Commission Member
Lindsay Phelps	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Michelle Miller Ferreira</b>	Landlord for 4422 Central Avenue NE
<b>Mitch Forney</b>	Community Development Director, City of Columbia Heights
Nik Ahmadvand	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Paul Moses</b>	Planning Commission Member
<b>Sulmaan Khan</b>	Assistant City Engineer
Taher Herzallah	Parks and Recreation Commission Member
Tyler Schafer	Manager, Ratio Apartments
<b>Other Attendees</b>	
<b>Denise Johnson</b>	Sustainability Commission Member
<b>Utility Representatives and Facilitators</b>	
<b>Matthew Douglas-May</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Paolo Speirn</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Ana De La Torre</b>	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
<b>Sofia Troutman</b>	Program Manager, Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy
<b>Adam Burr</b>	Account Manager, Xcel Energy



## Welcome & Workshop 3 Recap

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

Slides 1-11

Matthew welcomed the team and asked the check-in question: What's your favorite place to spend time in Columbia Heights? Answers included:

- Sledding hill by the golf course
- Millers
- Menards
- My house, strolling the streets
- Walking in Silverwood Park
- Lomianki Park food forest
- Los Cactus
- City Hall
- Golden Nuts
- Jasmine Thai
- High School
- Silverwood park
- Church of All Nations

Matthew reviewed what the team accomplished in Workshop 3. The group had finalized the overall goal for the Energy Action Plan:

**Community-Wide Goal: Columbia Heights will increase energy program participation by at least 30% between 2025 and 2030.**

**This will save the community an estimated \$4.6 million and increase energy savings 63% by 2030.**

This goal was modelled by looking at current levels of energy program participation in Columbia Heights, accounting for Xcel Energy's decarbonization work, then using the timeframe and ambition level given by the energy action team to scale up program participation.

After finalizing the goal in workshop 3, the team worked in small groups on the strategies that will help the team accomplish its goal. Strategies are actions that answer the question, "What are we going to do?" They include both an action and an audience. Examples:

- Encourage businesses [the audience] to undergo lighting retrofits [the action]
- Connect seniors [the audience] with low-income energy programs [the action]

## Activity: Strategy Review

Ana de la Torre & Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitators

Slides 12 - 15



Ana pointed out that the strategies developed by the group are currently posted around the room. She invited team members to stroll around the room and review the draft strategies, while thinking about a few questions. Our work last workshop was in “divergent” strategy development, generating lots of ideas. In this workshop, we’ll keep expanding the number of strategies while also beginning to refine and prioritize them.



As team members strolled, Ana and Paolo invited team members to place dots on different strategies:

- 1) Which strategy are you **most enthusiastic** about? (BLUE)
- 2) What strategy should be done **first**? (GREEN)
- 3) If you had to remove one strategy, **which strategy would you remove**? (RED)

After team members voted, they reconvened and discussed the activity. Team members shared which strategies they had voted for and why.

### Questions & Discussion

- 1) Which strategy were you **most enthusiastic** about and why?
  - a. Strategy 9. Create a City program to aid in financing upfront costs of energy efficiency improvements for residents and businesses Money is important. There are so many grants and incentives available, but people aren’t aware. Communicating this to our residents, everyone wins.
  - b. Strategy 12: 12. Create a multi-lingual outreach campaign to educate residents about renewable energy
    - i. Multilingual campaign will be essential to connect with people in their preferred language. Upfront cost can be a barrier for businesses, too. Some of these upgrades have a high upfront cost. Partnering with the city to figure out a way to get the cost taken care of could make people less hesitant to begin.
  - c. *Question:* Do white roofs have much benefit? It’s less expensive than solar.
    - i. White roofs may help reduce home heat in the summer, but we can’t measure that benefit in this process. Partners in Energy can only measure efficiency and renewables improvements that go through a utility program.
- 2) What strategy should be done **first** and why?
  - a. Strategy 10: 10. Create a city website that is as a centralized hub for renewable energy resources



- i. This will give us a central place to direct people and drive all our promotion. It can be multilingual.
    - ii. The City's existing sustainability website has SolSmart strategies and info, which can be a start.
  - b. Strategy 1: Create a multi-lingual outreach campaign to educate residents and promote residential energy efficiency programs, home energy audits, rebate information, and low-income energy assistance.
    - i. Broad outreach campaign can dovetail with website
  - c. Focus on businesses could be a good place to start.
    - i. Consider using City's existing facade Grant, which includes connections with businesses, to get info out.
- 3) If you had to remove one strategy, **which strategy would you remove** and why?
  - a. Strategy 3: 3. Explore Partnering with schools to educate students and parents about reducing energy burden and improving energy efficiency
    - i. Our Schools are already doing a lot of this, and they might be overwhelmed by another partnership.
    - ii. The kids already get it. They've brought home packets from Xcel Energy. Jill has finally installed all the light bulbs she has received.
    - iii. Strategy 15: Explore creating a city program to support expanding EV charging infrastructure. We should wait on that until there are more EVs in the City first before building out infrastructure. Could be a future item, but not something we do soon. Alternately, EV requirements should be integrated into new construction building code or parking regulations, rather than in the Energy Action Plan.
    - iv. *Question:* Is there an issue with too many electric vehicles charging at the same time, that they have to manage the load.
      - 1. This team doesn't need to worry about that. Xcel Energy is responsible for the grid's capacity, so they will deliver the electricity that Columbia Heights needs.
    - v. Emilie:

## Activity: Strategy Refinement

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 17 - 22*

After taking a group photo, the team moved into another activity to work with the strategies in the plan. Team members broke into groups to work on strategies by focus area. Working with the draft strategies for each focus area, they answered questions to decide to add or consolidate strategies, begin to prioritize, and add specific action steps to different strategies.

Facilitators and team members took notes on worksheets. Facilitators will compile these strategies and bring them to the next workshop.



The Columbia Heights Sustainability Commission joined part-way through this activity and contributed ideas on two focus areas.

## Questions & Discussion

What's one strategy you're excited about? Answers included:

- Partnering with SACA – Southern Anoka Community Assistance
- Signs for residents and businesses to recognize their energy actions. Gets people talking, slight competition, snowballs into many people taking action.

## Activity: Communications Channels for Successful Strategies

*Paolo Speirn, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slides 23 – 25*

Paolo lead the group in activity to continue adding specific actions to support the strategies. First, team members solo brainstormed three things:

- 1) Where do you get your information about Columbia Heights
- 2) Who do you trust to get your information about the city?
- 3) What other channels do people in Columbia Heights use for local information? Who are other trusted messengers in Columbia Heights?
  - a.

Then, they circulated with their lists, placing their answers to these questions on the relevant strategies with post-it notes. Facilitators took photos and will add this to the compiled strategies for next workshop.

Paolo wrapped up the activity by asking the group,

Discussion: What is a communication channel that paired well with a strategy?

- Sustainability Commissioner: Add energy information to the rental permitting webpage so landlords and building managers automatically find out about ways they can make their building more energy efficient. Also add info to the Economic Development Authority section of the website.
- Videos for multilingual outreach. Have videos in many different languages: Spanish, Somali, Arabic
- Use utility bill inserts to share benefits of solar gardens or other renewable and efficiency measures.

## Wrap-Up & Next Steps

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*Slide 26*



Matthew thanked the group for their time and thoughtfulness throughout the planning process. With only one workshop left, don't hesitate to give your feedback any time.

Our fifth and final workshop will be Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30 pm – 7pm. We'll talk about finalized strategies, go over the actual writing of the plan, and celebrate together!

Matthew asked team members, "What's one work that describes how you're feeling after this workshop?" Answers included:

- Motivated
- Interested
- Excited
- Healthy intimidation
- Involved
- Hopeful
- Informed
- Gratitude
- Determined
- Excited
- Inspired
- Curious
- Impressed

If you have any questions or want to give input, don't hesitate to email Andrew ([ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto:ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov)) and Matthew ([mdouglasmay@mncee.org](mailto:mdouglasmay@mncee.org)).



# PARTNERS IN ENERGY COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

## WORKSHOP 5 AGENDA

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm

### Workshop Take-Aways

- The team reviewed all the pieces of the Energy Action Plan the team has been completed up to this point:
  - Vision Statement
  - Focus Areas
  - Community-Wide Goal
- The team engaged in an activity to evaluate the *impact* and *feasibility* of each strategy, identifying "Core" and "Stretch" strategies. **Core strategies** are high-priority actions that can be implemented right away, while **Stretch strategies** are longer-term initiatives with lower immediate priority.
- The team also participated in an Elevator Pitch activity, where they selected a strategy they were passionate about and crafted a brief pitch. The exercise highlighted why the strategy was meaningful, who would benefit from it, and the first step toward implementation.
- We reviewed the next steps in the **Partners in Energy** process, including drafting the Energy Action Plan. The team will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback before the plan is presented to the city council.
- Finally, the team reflected on their experiences, shared their key takeaways, celebrated their accomplishments, and expressed excitement for the work ahead!

AGENDA
<b>BLOCK 1: WELCOME AND RECAP</b>
Welcome & Workshop 4 Recap <i>Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator</i>
<b>Break</b>
<b>BLOCK 2: FINE TUNING STRATEGIES</b>
Activity: Impact and feasibility <i>Ana de la Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator</i>
Activity: Elevator Pitch <i>Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator</i>
<b>Break</b>
<b>BLOCK 3: NEXT STEPS, REFLECTION, &amp; CELEBRATION</b>
Next Steps <i>Ana de la Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator</i>
Reflection, and Celebration <i>Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator</i>



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## Energy Action Team

NAME	AFFILIATION
Andrew Boucher	Community Lead, City Planner, City of Columbia Heights,
Brooke Timp	Columbia Heights Resident
Cassie Leoni	Sustainability Commission Member
Connie Buesgens	City Councilmember, City of Columbia Heights
Emilie Voight	Community Development Coordinator, City of Columbia Heights
Fabricio Orellana	Staff, City of Columbia Heights
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Utility Representatives and Facilitators	
Matthew Douglas-May	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Paolo Speirn	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Ana De La Torre	Partners in Energy Community Facilitator
Sofia Troutman	Program Manager, Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy
Adam Burr	Account Manager, Xcel Energy
Ethan Warner	Regulatory Manager, CenterPoint Energy



## Welcome

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*See slides 1-3*

Matthew welcomed the team to Columbia Heights' fifth and final workshop and asked the check-in question: *What's something that stands out to you from this process thus far?*

Answers included:

- Finding good solutions
- Just the fact that we are doing this and creating a plan is a highlight!
- Seeing how this plan is coming together and moving towards implementation is exciting.
- How engaged everyone has been throughout the process
- Glad that this is here and happy to help
- Impressed with how much everyone is participating. Also hearing people say "I'd like to support implementing this strategy," is inspiring.
- Learning about the many ways residents and businesses can participate to be more energy efficient. It can make a huge impact.
- The wealth of ideas this team has

## Recap

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*See slides 4-11*

Matthew explained the agenda of the workshop and then recapped the progress the Energy Action Team has made on creating the following pieces of the Energy Action Plan.

- Vision Statement
  - *Columbia Heights strives to be a leader in energy efficiency, equity, and sustainability. This plan guides the community to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, save money, and strengthen community connections through education and outreach to improve energy resilience while reducing our carbon footprint.*
- Focus areas
  - Energy Efficiency
  - Renewable Energy
  - Beneficial Electrification
  - Reducing Energy Burden for Low-Income ResidentsThrough each of the focus areas we are going to engage each sector:
  - Residential
  - Commercial & Industrial
  - Municipal
- Community-wide goal
  - Columbia Heights will increase energy program participation by at least 30% between 2025 and 2030.



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This will save the community an estimated \$4.6 million and increase energy savings 63% by 2030.

## Strategy Action Planning Activities

Ana and Matthew introduced the two strategy action planning activities (details provided below), and divided the team into two groups to participate. Each group worked on one activity for 30 minutes before switching to the other.

### Activity: Impact and feasibility

Ana de la Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator  
See slides 14-15

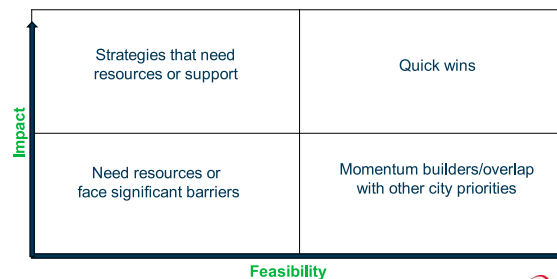
Ana led the Impact and Feasibility activity, guiding the group to evaluate each previously created strategy by placing it on a graph. The **X-axis** represented feasibility, while the **Y-axis** represented impact:

- **Feasibility:** How easy is the strategy to implement? Are there potential barriers—such as monetary, political, or logistical challenges?
- **Impact:** Potential benefits, such as greenhouse gas emissions reduced, engagement of specific community groups, quality of life improvements, or cost savings.

The process involved placing each strategy on the graph. Acknowledging that the strategies placed further to the right were deemed more feasible, and strategies placed higher on the graph were seen as having a greater impact. To show this, we divided the graph into four sections:

- Top-right corner: Quick wins (high feasibility, high impact)
- Top-left corner: Strategies that need resources or support (high impact, low feasibility)
- Bottom left corner: Need resources or face significant barriers (low impact, low feasibility)
- Bottom-right corner: Momentum builders/overlap with other city priorities (high feasibility, low impact)

### STRATEGY IMPACT AND FEASIBILITY ACTIVITY



14

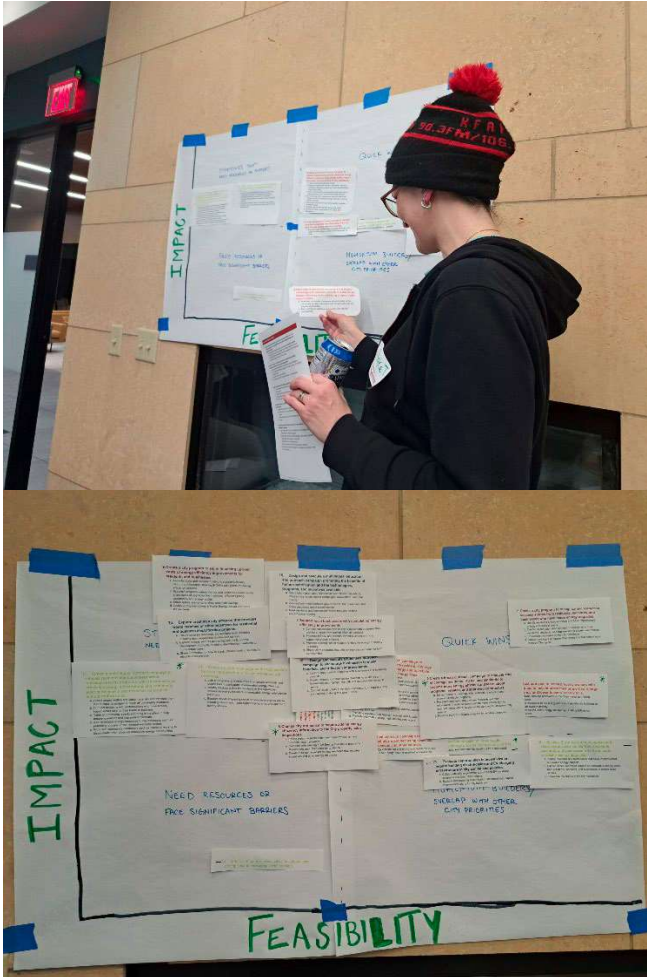


After each strategy was placed on the graph, the team determined which strategies are core strategies and which are stretch strategies.





- **Core strategies** are high-priority initiatives that can be implemented right away.
- **Stretch strategies** are longer-term initiatives with lower immediate priority.
- A green star was placed on core strategies, and a grey dash was placed on stretch strategies.



### Activity: Elevator Pitch

Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator

See slide 16

Matthew led the Elevator Pitch activity with the prompt:

- You step into an elevator with Mayor Márquez Simula. Pick one strategy you are excited about to pitch to her.
- In your one-minute pitch, answer the questions:
  - Why are you excited about the strategy?
  - Who benefits from the strategy?
  - What's the first step to getting it done?



Team members picked the strategies they were most passionate about and gave great pitches for why and how they should be implemented. The strategies that team members pitched were:

**#1 Reducing Energy Burden:** Create a multi-lingual outreach campaign to educate residents and promote residential energy efficiency programs, home energy audits, rebate information, and low-income energy assistance.

**#5 Energy Efficiency:** Create a broad outreach campaign to educate and encourage residents, HOAs, and landlords to become more energy efficient and learn about programs, rebates, and approved contractors.

**#6 Energy Efficiency:** Create a City program to recognize and showcase success stories from residents, landlords, and businesses who have made energy upgrades.

**#7 Energy Efficiency:** Support local businesses with completing energy efficiency improvements.

**#10 Renewable Energy:** Create a multilingual page on the City website that is a centralized hub for renewable energy resources.

**#13 Renewable Energy:** Create a City program to recognize and showcase success stories from residents, landlords, and businesses who have made renewable energy upgrades.

**#15 Beneficial Electrification:** Design and execute a multilingual education and outreach campaign promoting the benefits of home electrification and the technologies, programs, and incentives available.

**#17 Beneficial Electrification:** Evaluate opportunities to incentivize or require building electrification and EV charging infrastructure in city zoning and policies.

## Next Steps

*Ana de la Torre, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*See slides 18-30*

Ana described the components of the Energy Action Plan, which will be the final report containing all the work and decisions the Energy Action Team created.

- Executive Summary
  - A high level outline of the pieces of the plan. This is great for people who won't read the entire plan. Great for promoting the plan broadly.
  - **Question:** Can we translate our executive summary into Spanish?
    - Yes we can!
- Where we are now: The energy baseline data
- Where are we going: Vision and Goal
  - **Question:** Will you be able to provide us with yearly information on where we started (baseline) and the progress we've made over time?
    - Yes! We provide a data dashboard every six months to show our measured progress.



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- How we are going to get there: Focus areas and strategies.
- How we stay on course: Timeline and impact
- Work Plan
  - A timeline of when we will implement each strategy and who is responsible
- Methodology for measuring success: How we modeled the goal and track progress.
- Data touchpoints: data dashboards tracking our impact usually delivered every six months.

Then Ana outlined the process for reviewing the Energy Action Plan

- Ana, Paolo, and Matthew will be busy writing the plan starting right after this workshop.
- In April the Energy Action Team will get to review the plan
- Then in May we will take the plan to the city council for approval.

During implementation Partners in Energy offers a wide variety of support including:

- Project management
- Marketing materials creations
- Data Tracking & Measurement
- Program expertise

The Partners in Energy Networks also offers resources available to Cities and Energy Action Team members like:

- Events
- Toolkits
- Webinars
- E-Newsletters
- Website resources

All Energy Action Team members will be added to the Partners in Energy newsletter list and online portal.

## Reflection, and Celebration

*Matthew Douglas-May, Partners in Energy Community Facilitator*

*See slides 32-33*

Matthew thanked the group for their time and thoughtfulness throughout participating in the 5 workshops. He asked the group to share some highlights of their experience of this process.

### Highlights included:

- Being on the sustainability commission, we talk about a lot of ideas but rarely make plans to implement them. It's hard to take action. With Partners in Energy, it has been very motivating because we put actions with each idea.
- Giving people resources. Offering different options to people.



- Education. This has been an opportunity for me to learn about energy resources and about how we can educate the community.
- A lot has changed in 8 years since I started working on the city council. We are finally starting to take action! This is the movement forward that we had been hoping for.

### **What's something you'll take with you from this process**

- I will fix the two holes in my house that the Home Energy Squad identified. I'm also hoping to be a part implementing the plan.
- That ideas come from everyone – experts and non-experts. Having the community come together to create the plan was powerful.

### **What's an area of the plan you are excited to support?**

- Outreach portion – tabling at events with documents in different languages, and getting to know community members
- Outreach and communication – engage with people to make them feel comfortable, build trust, and be a resource
- Excited to be on city council and see these actions come forward
- Sharing this information with friends and seeing the potential. Excited to spread the knowledge around
- Excited to be working with a motivated and diverse community
- Having these conversations shows how to talk to people about energy. For example- giving people the tools that they need so they can make the best choice. I feel like I am here to help instead of trying to sell something.
- City government exists not just to enforce rules, but also to genuinely help people and advance the community. Whenever there is an opportunity to support people in a positive way - I am excited to do that.
- Outreach and organizing. Having tangible ways to focusing on details and take action, not just the big picture.
- Having resources available for the city and having them be digestible for people to absorb.

Matthew thanked the group for their participation and explained that while the planning workshops are over, we will continue to work together. Next the Partners in Energy team will put together all the input and insights from the team to write the Energy Action Plan. In April the Energy Action Team will get to review the plan.

- **Question:** What will reviewing the plan in April look like? Will we get together in-person or will it be virtual?
  - We will follow up with details. We will send the draft electronically for everyone to review on their own and provide feedback. Whether we will get together in person or not is to be determined.

When we take the plan to council, it would be great to have Energy Action Team members present to support adopting the plan!