

Energy Innovation Task Force: Overview of Scope

Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) Objectives

In April 2016, the City of Asheville, Buncombe County and Duke Energy Progress formally agreed to a landmark collaboration to meet the goals of delaying or avoiding an additional fossil-fuel powered plant and co-creating a clean energy future for the region. As part of the agreement, the City, County and utility formed the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) to develop a two-year action plan to meet these goals. EITF members include representatives from the lead partners, environmental and clean energy advocacy organizations, and local businesses and institutions. The EITF's objectives are twofold:

1. Transition the Duke Energy Progress-West Region to a cleaner, affordable and smarter energy future, rooted in community engagement and collaboration, that is mutually beneficial to the community and Duke Energy
2. Avoid or delay the construction of a 190 MW natural gas peaker plant planned for 2023.

Roles of Key Partners

The roles of key partners include:

- City of Asheville and Buncombe County: The City and County will act as co-conveners, serve as critical conduits to community stakeholders, contribute to solution development and implementation in close collaboration with the community, and support community outreach and engagement efforts.
- Duke Energy Progress: Duke will act as a co-convener, provide data and conduct analysis that will enable the creation of the baseline and clear annual targets, support analytical and research needs for working groups, contribute to solution development and implementation in close collaboration with the community, and support community outreach and engagement efforts.
- Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI): With input from the City, County and Duke Energy, RMI will lead process design and facilitation, support analytical and research needs for working groups (including acting as conduit to national experts and best practices) and support strategy integration.

Major Tasks

To achieve the EITF's objectives, EITF members will need to achieve five major tasks:

- a) Process design, project management, and meeting facilitation
- b) Baseline and target development
- c) Solution identification
- d) Strategy integration and implementation
- e) Communications and community engagement

a) Process design, project management and facilitation support

Process design and project management creates the foundation on which the task force will accomplish its work. Key steps include creating a detailed workplan that structures major tasks and clarifying how various workstreams will be consolidated into an actionable implementation plan. Additionally, this includes maintaining consistency and alignment of goals among the working groups.

RMI will partner with the EITF co-conveners on this task. A significant portion of the planning work will occur in preparation for the September task force meeting, followed by ongoing refinement, including:

- Establish a work plan that will identify and sequence tasks, milestones and outcomes
- Work with working group chairs to refine the working group structure, including desired outcomes, scope of topics, and points of interconnection among groups
- Help identify initial necessary data, research and analytical needs
- Designing meeting agendas and needed process to achieve milestones

As the task force dives into evaluating and prioritizing solutions, it will become increasingly

important to have a facilitator to guide deliberations. As appropriate, RMI will facilitate task force meetings and working group sessions to move the work forward.

b) Baseline and target development

To create an implementable strategy, the EITF needs specific targets and metrics (e.g. MW, MWh, etc.) that will guide the selection and prioritization of actionable solutions. A robust baseline analysis will identify current and anticipated regional energy demand and the primary drivers of energy and peak usage (e.g. customer demand for different types of energy services and corresponding demand profiles) to define the annual needs or targets that must be met to displace the peaker plant.

The task force has established the Peaker Reduction Workgroup to work with Duke Energy's integrated resource planning (IRP) team to establish a regional baseline and targets. This analysis is planned for the September/ October timeframe and will be a critical input for other workgroups and the task force's mission overall.

c) Solution identification and development

As the baseline and targets are defined during Fall 2016, the Programs and Technologies Workgroups will research and refine a portfolio of potential solutions, building off strategies in Asheville's Clean Energy Framework and discussed at RMI's eLab Accelerator and potentially integrating models and strategies from other communities and utilities around the country. For each of the existing and new solutions, the following questions will be answered:

- What is the technical potential of the option in the region?
- What are the expected costs and benefits, advantages and tradeoffs?
- What would success look like and what would be required to accomplish that?
- What are potential barriers to success (structural, financial, regulatory)?
- Who would be responsible for implementation and what would be anticipated timing?

The goal is a cross comparison and ranking of strategies based on cost, ease/timing of implementation, and the potential impact on the established targets (e.g. contribution to peak).

d) Strategy integration and implementation

Integrating the demand and supply solutions that the working groups have identified and ranked, the task force will prioritize and test the portfolio of actions using 2-3 plausible scenarios that could affect and influence the potential timing and implementation. Through a set of working sessions, the task force will identify:

- Specific next steps and appropriate sequencing as part of a near term action plan, including metrics for ongoing evaluation and benchmarking
- Strategies required to significantly accelerate adoption, including policy, financial mechanisms, program design, community engagement, and new delivery channels
- Roles of utility, community leaders and other key stakeholder groups responsible for supporting, implementing, or influencing necessary action

e) Communications and engagement strategy

From the outset of the process, community members and groups will be engaged to ensure recommended strategies are actionable, responsive to community desires, and address current and potential realities for implementation. The Community Engagement Workgroup will work in tandem with the outputs from the three other workgroups to identify marketing and outreach gaps in the historic adoption rates for utility-sponsored programs that should be addressed to accelerate customer uptake. In addition, a branding and communications firm will develop a broad communications campaign.