

## **Energy Innovation Asheville**

### **A new partnership to create a clean energy future for Western North Carolina**

The City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and Duke Energy have come together in a cooperative partnership to plan, develop, implement, and market improved energy efficiency programs and new, clean energy technologies to Asheville-area residents and businesses.

This partnership grows out of both a long-standing effort for these partners to work more closely together and Duke Energy's Western Carolinas Modernization Plan, announced in 2015. In that plan, the company announced the closure of the existing coal fired power plant, the construction of two new 270-MW natural gas units, and the potential for a 190-MW peaking unit that might be built in the early 2020s. A key fourth component of the plan was the formation of this partnership for the express purpose of delaying or avoiding construction of the peaking unit. Following that announcement, the City of Asheville and Buncombe County adopted a joint resolution creating the partnership for the dual purpose of creating a clean energy future in Western North Carolina and delaying or avoiding construction of the peaking unit. The partnership is a collaboration through which the City, County, and Duke Energy will study, prioritize, plan, coordinate, implement, market, track, and report progress on clean energy activities in Asheville and Buncombe County.

The work of the partnership will be done by the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF), which was created by the joint resolution and is made up of community, nonprofit, and business leaders. This group anticipates developing a two year work plan by the end of 2016 to increase the penetration rate of energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as inform and engage the public. The plan will leverage utility expertise, programs, and investments; city and county resources; actions by EITF member constituencies; and the outreach and engagement capacity of all parties and other community groups.

Key to the success of the EITF and the partnership is extensive public engagement. To this end, all EITF documents are made public on the City's website, there is public comment at every meeting, and there will be several public forums to receive feedback on the plan's development and implementation. In addition, the EITF has formed work groups that will undertake research and discussion on specific aspects of the plan and that are open to any member of the public who wants to contribute in a more focused way.

The first meeting of the EITF occurred in May 2016. Prior to that, a small team representing the City, County, and Duke Energy had the opportunity to participate in the Rocky Mountain Institute's eLab Accelerator Boot Camp in April 2016. This was an intensive, four-day workshop held at the Sundance Resort in Utah where Asheville's team had the opportunity to work with and receive feedback from national experts in areas such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, new technologies, financing, and public engagement. Here, the Asheville team developed the initial framework and direction for the EITF's work, and the ideas that are reflected here and that will be in the work plan come from that work as well as the joint resolution, the City's Clean Energy Framework (adopted in 2015), and the additional work of the EITF and its work groups.

It should be recognized that this first two-year period will be a learning experience – for the City, the County, Duke Energy, and the community. No one has all the answers yet, including to such key questions as what is our energy reduction goal, how much will it cost, and where will the resources come from? In order to not limit creative thinking, the EITF has chosen to identify those programs and investments we would like to see and then determine how to make those a reality. We expect this process to reveal new ideas, unanticipated barriers, and creative solutions as we move together toward the goals. The EITF’s plan should be viewed as a living and learning document that can and should adapt as progress is made or as circumstances change.

**Goals and Objectives**

[drop in slide 7 from Jason’s presentation]

These goals should be pursued in a way that advances equity and other environmental benefits.

**EITF Members**

Environmental Advocacy	Sierra Club	Kelly Martin
Utilities	Duke	Jason Walls
Local City Government	City of Asheville, City Council	Julie Mayfield
Local County Government	Buncombe County Board of Commissioners	Brownie Newman
Nonprofits	Green Opportunities	George Jones
Institutional Users	Mission Hospital	Sonya Greck
Development	Biltmore Farms	Paul Szurek
Industrial Users	New Belgium	Jim Spencer
Hotel Industry	BCTDA	Himanshu Kavir
Institutions Higher Education	UNCA	Ed Katz
Banking	Self Help Credit Union	Jane Hatley
Local Business Association	Asheville Chamber	Toby Weas
City Advisory Board	SACEE	Sonia Marcus
Green Development	Green Building Council	Sam Ruark
Solar	Sundance Power	Dave Hollister