"Our County Energy & Climate" Public & Private Sector Workshop Summary

Workshop Overview

UCLA convened public and private sector leaders across Los Angeles County to provide input on the County's energy system and regional climate change impacts. The "Energy & Climate" workshop, held on July 31st, 2018 at the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, attracted attendees from public agencies, businesses (including utility companies) and members of the Our County Stakeholder Engagement Team. The three and a half-hour workshop engaged 47 individuals representing 39 organizations. Stakeholders participated in breakout sessions to provide input on Energy and Climate-related goals and strategies that they most want the Our County plan to address.

The L.A. County Chief Sustainability Office began the workshop by providing an overview of the Our County plan development process. UCLA followed with a presentation covering key background information, data, and regional findings related to energy production, storage, distribution, and management. This presentation included a focus on greenhouse gas emissions, climate change data and impacts, and policymaking around L.A. County. The stakeholders in the room also received an accompanying briefing document that provided greater detail. The stakeholders received this document ahead of time to review; the stakeholder engagement team also provided copies at the workshop.

After the group presentations, workshop participants met in breakout groups to provide feedback on general Energy and Climate goals that were included in the briefing and framed the discussion. Facilitators sorted goals in order of importance at the participants' direction. This activity provided the foundation for the group's conversation about the Plan's goals. Facilitators took notes on butcher paper in addition to recording detailed notes in a typed document. Each breakout group shared their discussion in a brief report back to the larger group.

The second breakout session featured a series of prompts evoking cross-cutting sustainability themes. Participants voted on the three prompts that they felt should be prioritized and developed a list of sustainability strategies based on those prompts. Again, the participants shared these results in a report back to the larger group.

The final breakout session consisted of each attendee from the public sector pairing off with an attendee from the private sector. The public-private pair developed a concept for an Energy and Climate-focused public-private partnership opportunity relating to the prompt. The L.A. County Chief Sustainability Office delivered closing remarks and to wrap-up the workshop and participants completed a feedback survey.

This summary report is a compilation and synthesis of nearly 500 comments that the Stakeholder Engagement Team was able to capture through butcher paper notes, typed transcription, and written note cards as well as written feedback received after the workshop.

Key Takeaways

- Participants prioritized the need to **decarbonize fuel sources** as critically important. Though many shared that achieving it would also be a significant challenge, participants agreed that decarbonizing fuel sources and end uses is critical to achieving nearly all Energy and Climate-related sustainability goals. Participants particularly noted decarbonization's positive impacts on health and workforce and economy.

- Participants want to see L.A. County use its influence to **increase workforce development** opportunities in the energy sector by corralling industry participation wherever possible. Stakeholders expressed their interests in increasing access to green job training, partnerships with educational institutions, and succession planning for an aging workforce.

- The needs to **incentivize sustainable, resilient infrastructure and retrofit existing buildings** were mentioned in every breakout group. Many felt this effort should start with ensuring all of L.A. County's own facilities are zero emissions. Experts focused on the need to strategically identify funding sources for this, and to ensure costs are not passed down to those who are already financially disadvantaged.

- Public and private sector stakeholders agreed on the need for L.A. County to take leadership on yielding **improved regional and statewide coordination**. Participants stated that the multi-jurisdictional nature of these problems makes coordination with regional, state, and interstate bodies essential. Hopes were shared that L.A. County can identify areas where sustainability plan goals align with those of other regulatory and funding agencies.

- Several conversations led to discussion around the importance of **identifying key champions** to promote and support the 'Our County' plan. Some shared the City of Los Angeles's Sustainable City pLAn as an example, which has a public face in Mayor Garcetti. Although the 'Our County' plan might have the support of the Board of Supervisors, they will need to identify ways to amplify their voice and recruit public-facing champions to speak for the plan. Several participants noted their appreciation regarding this process and its transparency and inclusivity relative to other sustainability plan efforts in the region.

Draft Goals

Stakeholders responded with a lot of feedback regarding the goals and the way they were organized. Participants were encouraged to prioritize the goals in order of importance and relevance, change the wording of goals, and add and remove goals as they relate to the topics of energy and climate. Overall, stakeholders prioritized the need to modernize the local energy system and infrastructure; decarbonize fuel sources; and reduce energy consumption and improve demand management.

Stakeholders had strong feelings regarding the relationships between each goal. Some participants felt that the number of goals seemed high and were difficult to track. Some suggested that certain goals, like decarbonizing fuel sources and modernize the local energy system and infrastructure, could be merged together. Others felt that the three prioritized goals could become the primary goals, with the remaining three goals incorporated as actions under them. Multiple participants noted that, while the goal around health and disadvantaged communities is a very important one, the primary means of achieving it is by working towards the other goals, especially decarbonization. Feedback went on to include that better noting the importance of equity, reliability, and resiliency of energy systems into all of these goals could take away the need to frame just one of the goals around it.

Below is a summary of feedback regarding each goal with additional notes from the goals breakout session:

Goal A: Eliminate health related impacts of energy, especially on disadvantaged communities.

Some participants noted that one primary mechanism for achieving this goal is by making progress towards meeting the other goals listed here. They urged consideration on the definition of a disadvantaged community, and an idea was shared to change the term to "vulnerable populations." One group suggested revising the goal to add vulnerable and at-risk populations.

Goal B: Provide access to clean and affordable energy.

Feedback was given to emphasize access to technology, stressing the need to make those technologies available to everybody. Some shared that a goal of "providing access" is too ambiguous, and that more clarification is necessary as to who and which industries increased access is intended. Stakeholders highlighted the need for a stronger affordability component of this goal in order to keep energy accessible. Additionally, stakeholders wanted to prioritize examination of the current infrastructure to assess where clean and affordable energy needs and opportunities lie. The potential role of community choice aggregators was discussed as a means of providing more people with a greater range of energy options, and of ensuring long-term energy independence for communities. Participants stressed the need to include outreach to the public as a key component of providing access.

Goal C: Decarbonize our fuel sources.

Some stakeholders suggested adding "and end uses" to this goal. Participants stressed that this goal was extremely important and that it was achieving it would also be a significant challenge. The effect that this goal could have in reducing the health impacts of energy was also noted. Additionally, feedback was shared that noted how decarbonization will result in an increased need for development and deployment of energy storage options.

Goal D: Reduce energy consumption and improve demand management.

A few participants framed this goal as perhaps the easiest to achieve, though there was not much follow up regarding this sentiment. It was also noted that reducing consumption is reliant on modernizing the energy system, which is listed as a separate goal; some felt these goals could be merged together. One participant urged modification of the goal to stress increasing efficiency over reducing consumption, because it is a more tangible indicator to track.

Goal E: Modernize the local energy system and infrastructure.

Some stakeholders cautioned that there is a need to be careful with the term "modernization" because the word does not always include renewable energy sources and only somewhat infers, rather than directly implies, a target for greater sustainability. One person wanted to modify the goal, to read "Modernize the local energy system and infrastructure, while improving resiliency." Another wanted to add conservation and efficiency to this goal. It was also stressed that a large component of achieving this goal would involve changes to the transportation sector. The difficulties in achieving improved energy storage options were discussed at length.

Stakeholders engaged in extended discussion about the difficulty of managing waste from new technologies, urging the County to get clearer direction from the State on what to do with batteries from electric cars at the end of their lifespan. Because the electric vehicle supply equipment infrastructure is so expensive, this could be a huge burden, especially when more medium and heavy-duty vehicles become electrified. This comment noted that electric vehicles will add pressure to the grid, and that utilities should be engaged as partners with which to work on these issues because they have knowledge in this area and can provide input on making repurposing and recycling batteries.

Goal F: Improve energy governance structure for better accountability transparency, and community involvement.

Stakeholders shared how effective contributions in this area will facilitate progress for all of the other goals. It was noted that the Clean Power Alliance is an improvement that makes progress towards this goal. A few participants brought up how coordination between utilities that extract and/or deliver natural gas is essential to this goal. A question arose around local agencies, as stakeholders debated what authority do local agencies have to implement and sustain new technologies and solutions. They noted that local government is limited in scope of power in this arena and don't want to see as much of a trickle-down system as we have now. Comparisons were made between this area and that of water supply, where local systems often do not have the capacity to manage everything they need to guarantee clean water.

Other Goals and Related Feedback

Throughout the workshop, various stakeholders noted aspects of energy and climate that were not included in the above goals and felt should be incorporated:

- Experts want to prioritize increasing local clean energy jobs, and better emphasize opportunities of local energy sources and creating a robust local green energy job market through the goals.

- A desire for more focus on adaptation was mentioned, wanting to see this be more explicit in the goals.

- Feedback was shared to consider how energy goals affect other goals in the sustainability plan. Examples shared included how energy goal achievement affects natural habitat, especially if energy efforts remove vegetation or extract natural resources.

- Feedback was shared that from design to implementation

Recommended Strategies

To improve L.A. County's energy and climate sustainability practices, stakeholders suggested several specific strategies for achieving progress towards sustainability goals focused around several aspirational prompts. While brainstorming specific recommendations, stakeholders were interested in several key major themes throughout, including community engagement, public/private partnerships, and assiduously considering competing perspectives, such as those of open space proponents and those of housing advocates.

Resilient Infrastructure: Invest in Infrastructure to maintain and enhance services, even when facing shocks and stresses	- Assess the County's infrastructural vulnerabilities. Include consideration of which infrastructure is below ground, how data can be made useful, and making data public. - Find new ways for L.A. County to influence emergency operation centers. L.A. County should act as a grand convener for emergency management and communication, filling gaps where they exist. - Promote minimum green building requirements for new and expanded buildings. Provide funding for retrofits of existing buildings. - Develop distributed microgrids so citizens are not reliant on grid all the time. - This is especially important for emergency preparedness. - Require energy benchmarking for buildings of smaller square footage than what's required by state law. - Promote buildings that are succeeding (and potentially shame those the owners of those that are not). - Incorporate redundant systems both through microgrid systems, but also by including plans for pipelines and other conveyance systems. - Diversify energy supplies. - Enhance services, especially with regard to power outages during heatwaves. - Encourage utilities to improve demand management and disseminate information about existing demand management programs.

Economy & Workforce Development: Accelerate a diverse, prosperous economy built on a competitive skilled workforce and support innovation for green industry	• Use L.A. County's influence and cross-sectoral partnerships to spur better access to job training. • Partner with local community or trade colleges to provide bridge programs and internships in green industries. • Create an internal training and succession planning for the aging workforce. • Approach workforce development so that workers can move horizontally across sectors, rather than be pigeonholed in one area. • Set goals, such as greenhouse gas targets, but do not force the means for reaching them. Do not pick winners by promoting specific technologies • Connect to people through informal education, such as through volunteer programs at the Natural History Museum. Leverage County volunteer opportunities and contextualize volunteer experience within the green economy. • Provide incentives for certain types of jobs that meet workforce needs and assign priority to business that support a greener workforce. • Create a green industry advisory council to keep L.A. County abreast on emerging technology and workforce opportunities. L.A. County can convene various groups, like local governments, LARC, and community organizing groups. • Articulate and disseminate L.A. County's green workforce goals in a "playbook." Because cities don't always have resources and staff time to lead workforce development programs, such a playbook could provide templates for a training program, an outreach program, a grant framework, community engagement, and education. • Take actions to ensure that local energy jobs are safeguarded from employment outsourcing. • Focus on opportunities for green collar jobs for the most vulnerable populations, especially the re-entry population, such as GRID providing employment opportunities for non-violent offenders.

Open Space, Recreation, Biodiversity & Habitat: Ensure parks and open spaces are accessible for all, integrate natural and urban needs, and account for the inherent value of the environment.	• L.A. County Supervisors and public figures should continue to lead conversations with the intrinsic value of natural systems and biodiversity. • Incorporate natural systems and biodiversity in and around L.A. County facilities, and focus on improving current ecological hardships that L.A. County facilities perpetuate. • Address open space at the airport does have open space, on which they work with the Bay foundation. • Make sure to address the L.A. River. • Integrate concepts such as green roofs and open courtyards and do this through the lens of equity. • Improve transit access to connect people to trails, campgrounds and beaches, while at the same time ensuring that there are places that are "hidden gems" within the County. • Promote stewardship and education. • Think both about what open and green spaces to community members, and about habitat needs of natural species.
Funding & Financing: Develop innovative funding and financing tools	• Incentivize all of the energy and climate goals for populations who will be disproportionately tasked with executing these goals, particularly when it comes to financing though rebates, tax incentives, etc. • Utilize cap and trade financing. • Improve PACE financing because interest rates are not as competitive as they should be. • Use matching funds and bonds. • Seek federal funding. • Push the Clean Power Alliance to use the rate structure to incentivize and administer rebate programs. • Increase public-private partnerships.

| Waste:

Accelerate a waste free future through a comprehensive approach for resource recovery | • Support policies and agreements that yield to production of renewable methane through waste-to-energy. Consider this as part of a full cycle approach to waste: reduce waste, divert, reuse, and reduce emissions.

• Regionalize collection and processing infrastructure so that trucks are driving shorter distances to get to waste facilities.

• Ease land use regulations on waste diversion/reuse facilities, because they currently face a burdensome permitting process.

• Phase out or tax single-use plastics but be mindful of the need for them for people with disabilities.

• Foster a local domestic market for recyclables / recycled materials.
    ○ Especially because China is no longer accepting U.S. recycled material, this sector is ripe for innovation.

• Partner with material manufacturers to reduce waste.

• Create an L.A. County-funded and led campus-like incubator focused on waste and energy innovation, along with re-use and low-waste living.

• Refine waste streams for collection
    ○ Look to Korea and Japan as examples.

• Distribute digesters across urban areas.

• Examine the possibility of breaking up waste monopolies without losing oversight accountability of the services they provide and their waste reduction. |
| Public Health and Wellbeing:

Improve well-being in all communities by reducing disparities in health outcomes in the face of a changing climate. | • Ensure that energy-related decisions do not place a disproportionate burden on any one neighborhood. Consider easing zoning regulations where this will promote distribution while preventing risk that after zoning regulations are eased, there may be reduced protections for neighboring residents.

• Find ways to balance the regulation of facilities without worsening disparities, including using pre-existing industrial land and building on top of closed landfills. |

Housing:	• Increase transit-oriented development to reduce vehicle usage, utilizing publicly-owned land around Metro stations.
Ensure that all people can secure healthy, safe, accessible and affordable housing.	• Be a stronger voice in the region to champion increased housing density.
	• Find incentives to encourage people to use transit, especially those who live close to existing transit.
	• Look to encourage developers to build affordable housing through new land ownership mechanisms, such as community land trust, publicly-owned land or changes to the Proposition 13 - enforced tax structure.
	• Investigate the implications for housing costs and affordability of the California Energy Commission's rooftop solar mandate.
	• Consider altering the minimum parking requirements, especially within the context of increased ride shares, which should reduce parking demand.
	• Increase the availability of housing near places of work.
	• Decouple housing and parking prices and overcome the issue of people without cars subsidizing those who do.
Healthy Buildings:	• Create a toolkit for cities and homeowners to learn how to address the challenges of issues of solar siting, water efficiency, and seismic risk.
Ensure buildings are retrofitted and designed to support human health and wellness.	• Collaborate with private sector partners to come up with a model to better package the delivery of retrofits in order to make decisions and technologies easier to adopt. The current model requires too much knowledge and information on the part of the homeowner/resident.
	• Aggregate demand for retrofit services in order to bring down costs.
	• Enact penalties for not achieving Energy Star ratings; offer incentives for those who do.
	• County could model after LA City's existing buildings ordinance
	• Ensure L.A. County-owned facilities are all achieving Energy Star ratings.

Opportunties for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

The following are some ideas for initiatives that public and private sector stakeholders expressed interest in collaborating on:

- Making a commodity of organic waste by using public sector supplies and private sector funds to create new methods to capture biogas

- Creating a Joint Task Force on renewable energy that would advise on siting, permitting, and implementation

- Bringing together the ports with technology vendors to create an incubator that develops innovative ways port system can be more energy and environmentally efficient while companies create new innovative products

- Create a model for public space investment that provides money for community reinvestment.

- County partners with real estate, Metro and local transit agencies, engineering firm, clean tech community, philanthropy to promote affordable housing, jobs near work, and efficient, resilient infrastructure

- Offer discounted ground leases of County-owned parcels in exchange for affordable housing and clean energy

- Create P3 "microgrids" with disadvantaged communities, supported by an advisory council, that can create a scalable pilot project

- Private consulting firms should offer municipalities discounts on climate action and adaptation planning

Comparative Assessment

Comparing the feedback from the Public & Private Sector Workshop to the summary report from the concurrent Nonprofit Sector Workshop reveals overlaps and a few key differences in stakeholder input. Note that the Public & Private Sector Workshop incorporated the topics of both Energy and Climate, while the Nonprofit Sector Workshop focused solely on Energy. Therefore, there was more feedback around climate impacts at the Public & Private Sector workshop.

- In comparison to the Nonprofit Workshop, feedback from participants at the **Public & Private Sector Workshop** featured:
- Greater emphasis on opportunities to create public-private partnerships
- Focus on the link between housing and energy consumption, particularly as it relates to density, housing-to-job proximity, transit accessibility, and affordability.
- Interest in changing zoning and permitting as a means to balance the regulation and availability of local facilities without worsening disparities on communities
- Discussion on the link between freight / the goods movement industry and carbon emissions
- Concern for climate change impacts on the energy sector and the need to create energy systems that are better equipped to absorb shocks and stresses

In comparison to the Public & Private Sector Workshop, feedback from participants at the **Nonprofit Sector workshop** featured:

- Greater emphasis on economy and workforce development
- Interest in creating a locally-owned energy system and decentralizing energy production and storage
- Concern over how energy investments that increase value of properties can lead to gentrification and displacement
- Strong focus on increasing literacy around energy production and consumption
- More conversation around reducing health impacts created by energy generation, storage, and transport

Feedback at **both workshops** featured many similarities, including:

- The need for a more robust green economy workforce, created through incentives for targeted recruitment and training programs
- Emphasis on local hiring, and the hiring of people from frontline communities, to meet green economy goals
- Support for retrofitting the built environment through strategies such as building electrification, solar, and cool roofs
- Desire for increased literacy amongst homeowners and energy consumers to raise consciousness of consumption and ease adoption of new technologies