

Memorandum

To: West Chester Area Council of Governments Energy Planning Advisory Group
From: Cadmus
Subject: Summary of Findings from Stakeholder and Community Engagement Process
Date: August 15, 2019

Overview of WCACOG's Energy Planning Process Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Cadmus is supporting the West Chester Area Council of Governments (WCACOG) with a study to inform the development of the West Chester Area Regional Community Energy Transition Plan. Throughout the research and planning process, Cadmus is engaging with an Advisory Group comprised of representatives from each WCACOG municipality that is participating in the study as well as the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). The purpose of the Advisory Group is to provide critical input, feedback, and local knowledge to Cadmus throughout the Renewable Energy Planning process.

In addition to the ongoing input from the Advisory Group, Cadmus recently conducted a series of engagement efforts to ensure that forthcoming research and analysis is grounded in local goals and perspectives. These engagements included:

- **Interviews:** Conducted one-hour intake interviews with six Advisory Group members and one additional stakeholder. During these conversations, interviewees provided feedback on what excites them and concerns them about the transition to 100% renewable energy, as well as their vision for the West Chester Area's energy future and strategies they feel will help them reach their goals.
- **Advisory Group workshop:** Facilitated an in-person 2.5-hour workshop with the full Advisory Group on July 11th to solicit further feedback from members and prepare for a Community Visioning Workshop held in West Whiteland Township later that day. The workshop provided a forum for the group to discuss their priorities for the Renewable Energy Plan, determine an appropriate bounding definition of clean energy for the purposes of this study, and consider renewable energy pathways the West Chester Area may pursue.
- **Community workshop:** Held a Community Visioning Workshop during which the Advisory Group members and the Cadmus Team facilitated conversations with community members to begin defining a community energy vision for 2050, to identify different community priorities for municipal energy goals and priorities, and to discuss the community's specific needs, challenges, and desired outcome for the project. The workshop had approximately 60 attendees, who were divided into seven breakout groups for discussions.
- **Advisory Group conducted stakeholder interviews:** To further complement Cadmus' above-listed engagements, the Advisory Group members also conducted additional interviews with several stakeholders from local businesses, institutions, and municipalities.

Key Themes from the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Process

The key themes from the above engagement efforts are grouped into five categories that together comprise the remainder of the document:

1. Energy Planning Process
2. Results of the Energy Planning Process
3. Vision for the West Chester Area's Energy Future
4. Barriers and Solutions to Vision for the West Chester Area's Energy Future
5. Pathways and Policies to Enable the West Chester Area's Energy Future

Additionally, a list of interviewees as well as the community workshop agenda are available in the appendix.

1. Energy Planning Process

This section covers the key priorities and opportunities shared by stakeholders and community members related to the study and associated energy planning process. The following qualities of an ideal energy planning process emerged from the discussions:

- **Collaborative and fostering a sense of community.** Stakeholders and community members envisioned municipalities within the COG working together to achieve shared goals and fostering a greater sense of community in the process.
- **Transparent.** A clear priority for the process of renewable energy planning and execution was openness and transparency. Community members would like to be informed on the process and involved where possible.
- **Leading.** The planning process offers the chance for the WCACOG jurisdictions to become local and regional leaders on climate action. Stakeholders and community members expressed hope that this process can serve as a model for other communities working towards similar goals and as an opportunity to be creative to address barriers. Due to their role on the energy planning process, Advisory Group members expressed excitement to be a part of the process by providing local context and, in some instances, technical expertise. Most Advisory Group members view this as a learning process for themselves and expect to bring this knowledge back to their communities.
- **Addressing climate change.** Constituents have expressed growing concern over climate change due to increasingly unusual weather and greater awareness of the issue. This greater awareness is partially due to the efforts of an active Ready for 100 Team that is dedicated to educating the community on the importance of renewable energy. As such, it will be critical to ensure that the energy transition serves as an opportunity to address climate change and communicate on that topic with community members.

2. Characteristics of the Energy Plan

This section highlights key priorities voiced by stakeholders and community members related to the renewable energy transition plan itself (e.g. what they envision for the overall structure of the plan). Key priorities include:

- **Action-oriented.** Advisory Group members articulated that they would like a Renewable Energy transition plan that includes both a long-term roadmap, and concrete, actionable, feasible, short-term steps they can take. They would like the plan to be collaborative and sufficiently granular by party so that they can begin advancing their transition immediately. Advisory Group members also feel like an actionable plan with clear steps will set them up best for success. One component of an actionable plan is clearly denoting what actions lie within as well as beyond local control or sphere of influence. Some discussions provided specific examples of what actions may entail, such as updating building codes or drafting new legislation with specific renewable energy goals.
- **Includes both near-term and long-term strategies.** In line with their vision of a plan that includes a long-term roadmap and short-term steps, Advisory Group members discussed strategies, policies, and programs that they expect will come out of the energy transition planning process in both the near-term and the long-term. In the near-term, they envision pursuing strategies within the electricity sector, such as public education, energy purchasing options, and a solar PPA that is similar to the City of Philadelphia’s PPA. In the long-term, Advisory Group members envision pursuing strategies focused on decarbonizing other sectors, including buildings and transportation. Relatedly, the long-term strategies would necessarily involve building institutional infrastructure for meeting local renewable energy goals.
- **Emphasizes consensus and community engagement.** Advisory Group members stated that they hoped the plan would help develop consensus and drive community engagement with residents and businesses. They hope that the regional collaboration would drive continued meetings on implementation. Similarly, both community members and Advisory Group members emphasized that to build consensus, it will be important to frame this work as generating more energy options, rather than a mandate for individual-level actions.

3. Vision for the West Chester Area’s Energy Future

The below section outlines themes that arose regarding what an ideal energy future would look like for the West Chester Area.

- **Utilization of renewable sources of energy generation.** Stakeholders and community members described an energy future in which conventional sources of electricity have been retired, and clean renewable energies dominate the industry. Wind and solar energy were frequently cited as the leading energy sources in West Chester’s energy future.
- **Large-scale electrification.** Discussions highlighted the importance of transitioning to a greater reliance on electricity as a means to improve the utilization of renewable energy sources. Community members also described complimentary key advancements, such as improved energy efficiency and grid reliability, that will support such a transition. Transportation and building electrification were noted as likely challenges given the region’s context.

- **Improved quality of life and public health.** Improved public health and quality of life came up in several breakout groups and interview discussions. Key concepts such as clean air, clean water, less pollution (including noise pollution), and easily accessible and efficient public transit systems were often mentioned, in addition to a sense of community pride and accomplishment.
- **Affordable and equitably distributed resources.** Financially viable energy sources that enabled equitable access to renewable energy and technologies was another key theme. Equity was defined to encompass both equitable outreach in target communities and equitable access to renewable energy resources. Community members envisioned a future in which clean energy resources are affordable and cost-effective, perhaps supported by local incentives.
- **Enhanced resilience.** Advisory Group members highlighted the importance of a resilient energy supply system that will remain constant and reliable even in the face of natural disasters or other potential threats.

4. Barriers and Solutions to the Vision for the West Chester Area Energy Future

Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement process, the Cadmus team sought input on what barriers may exist to achieving the community’s envisioned energy future. Additionally, the Cadmus team solicited input on the types of solutions that could address key barriers. The following table outlines the key barriers and solutions discussed.

Category	Barriers	Solutions/Strategies
Technological Barriers	Technological barriers of renewable energy were described as a principal roadblock to a successful energy transition. These barriers include intermittency and siting issues with wind and solar, storage capacity, the amount of renewable energy that would be necessary to replace the nuclear baseload, and how to manage excess energy, land requirements, and aging infrastructure.	Solutions to many of these key barriers, like intermittency and storage, were not always identified. To address the land requirements barrier, participants proposed more abundant and accessible federal and state grants for land purchase or conservation easements for solar arrays. One suggestion was establishing community solar when rooftop solar is unattainable, due to climatic/geographic variables or otherwise.
Dual Barriers of Lack of Awareness and Technical Complexity	<p>The general lack of awareness for existing renewable energy programs, benefits, and alternatives was noted as a key barrier. Additionally, there was a concern that the challenge is complex and could overwhelm people who are new to the issue, thereby derailing action.</p> <p>The information gap spans from property owners, who may not know where to start or have fundamental questions about cost, to elected officials with insufficient</p>	Many participants proposed community outreach efforts to promote greater awareness and incentivize action. These educational events would bring greater understanding of renewable energy, its costs and benefits, what incentives or programs are available, etc. Suggestions for increasing awareness ranged from public campaigns led by local representatives, establishing a sustainability coordinator or committee, greater social media outreach and digital marketing (e.g. factsheets or videos with easily reproducible steps). Additionally, some participants mentioned energy and

	<p>knowledge of the industry. Some participants also highlighted the lack of education and even misinformation around climate change and renewable energy technologies as a barrier.</p>	<p>environmental education in schools. To bridge the knowledge gap on climate change, participants suggested clearly outlining the consequences of climate change and relating the impact in monetary values.</p>
<p>Political Barriers</p>	<p>Political barriers, particularly at the state and national government levels, were cited as a chief barrier to largescale adoption of renewable energy. For example, lack of support from the federal government and pushback from climate change opposers makes it challenging to draft effective policies.</p> <p>Political barriers also exist at the local level. Advisory Group members pointed out that some local officials are wary of clean energy investments and that additional political buy-in from these officials is necessary. Furthermore, limited ability to drive change at the local government level, and the challenge of working across jurisdictions were also cited as political barriers.</p>	<p>Holding open discussions with elected officials was mentioned as a strategy to generate greater awareness and attention that could lay the groundwork for political action. Greater outreach and education for the general public was consistently posed as means of reducing resistance for climate change legislature. Additionally, queued State Bill 630¹, currently pending in the legislature, was mentioned as a favorable example of forward thinking and proactive policies.</p> <p>Fostering a sense of generational responsibility frequently came up as a priority and value. Community members noted a sense of obligation to preserve the planet for future generations. Building on this sentiment may help address barriers of political will among the general population.</p> <p>Additional solutions include hiring a sustainability coordinator and/or establishing a legal body that is responsible for executing the solutions identified in the plan.</p>
<p>Regulatory Barriers</p>	<p>Some stakeholders flagged that due to Pennsylvania’s deregulated electricity market context, PECO does not own electricity generation, and its energy procurement process is highly regulated. These factors pose some limitations to the utility’s ability to support renewable energy goals (note: these limitations do not apply to all pathways to support renewable</p>	<p>Stakeholders cited actions the utility has taken to support renewables. These actions include: starting both a Distributed Energy Group that facilitates the installation of renewables and a Utility of the Future team that is studying the implications of distributed energy on the utility business model, as well as the future needs of the grid, which may be impacted by the integration of distributed energy resources, aging infrastructure, or extreme climate events.</p>

¹ This Bill paves the way for the transition to renewable energy by imposing duties on the Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies regarding energy consumption and renewable energy generation. Bill 630 also establishes a Clean Energy Transition Task Force, Just Transition Advisory Committee, Clean Energy Workforce Development Fund, among others, and provides for interim limits on energy produced from nonrenewable resources.

	<p>energy goals, such as opportunities to improve interconnection of distributed generation).</p>	<p>Stakeholders also raised that PECO’s ability to support renewables is largely influenced by the regulatory environment in which it is operating. Changes to the regulatory environment may enable, or in some cases require, PECO to take more action. One example cited by stakeholders is Act 129². This Act currently focuses on energy efficiency, but some stakeholders expect it may be expanded to include renewable energy targets as well. This may be an opportunity for West Chester Area jurisdictions to collaborate with the utility to advance renewables. Stakeholders flag, however, that changes to the regulatory environment are often under the authority of decisionmakers, such as the Public Utility Commission.</p> <p>Stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds also indicated an interest in open communication and collaboration between the utility, local governments, and community members.</p>
<p>Cost Barrier</p>	<p>Cost arose as a barrier that prevents households, particularly low-to-moderate households, from participating in renewable energy programs. In addition to the high upfront costs, economic uncertainty from financial incentive programs and technologies were also presented as deterring participation.</p>	<p>Technological improvements and innovations were often cited as a means of improving performance and therefore minimizing the costs. Furthermore, community members proposed more funding for financial incentives and subsidies, in addition to federal grants for land purchase, to increase access to renewable energy for a broad spectrum of the population.</p>

5. Pathways and Policies to Enable the Vision for the West Chester Area’s Energy Future

While the focus of community and stakeholder engagement efforts was not to generate specific policy options for increasing renewable energy, one aspect of the Advisory Group workshop was a focused policy discussion. The below table summarizes core areas of interest from the Advisory Group, segmented into three categories (represented by three columns). These areas will be researched in depth during the policy and strategy analysis that Cadmus will undertake during the coming months.

² Act 129, passed by the General Assembly and implemented by the PUC, requires electric distribution companies, such as PECO, to develop energy efficiency and conservation plans to achieve electricity consumption and peak demand reduction targets. The Act is implemented in phases, and is currently in Phase III until 2021. Stakeholders interviewed shared the Phase IV negotiations will begin soon.

Local Government	Collaboration Beyond Local Government	Alternative Purchasing Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building permit form changes • Local incentives • Zoning ordinances (uniform) • Incentives • Multi-municipal aggregation • Aggregation with universities, shopping complexes • SolSmart participation • Simplify permitting and inspection processes for renewable energy installations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with developers • Work with the state legislature • Bulk purchasing • Demonstration project with PECO • Educational Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) • Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

Finally, the Advisory Group workshop also included a brief discussion on the appropriate definition of renewable energy in the context of this study. While the Advisory Group recognized that it is a nuanced question, it recommended focusing less on nuclear, biomass, and RECs for the purposes of this study. In contrast, some other stakeholders highlighted the role of nuclear in the renewable energy transition and expect it will be necessary to fill some of the gaps caused by the intermittency of renewables. One nuance raised was that the low cost of natural gas may forestall use of nuclear and renewables.

Next Steps

Cadmus will utilize the results from the stakeholder and community engagement exercises to inform its policy and strategy research and evaluation process the WCACOG.

In the immediate term, a survey will be distributed to community members as a follow-up to the community workshop. In the Fall, Cadmus and the Advisory Group will host a second open workshop to share the results of the research and analysis.

Appendix

This appendix includes the list of interviewees as well as the community workshop agenda.

Interviewees

Name	Title	Organization
Kerry Campbell	Environmental Program Manager	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Liz Compitello	Manager, Local Initiatives	DVRPC
Mimi Gleason	Township Manager	West Whiteland Township
Dianne Herrin	Mayor	West Chester Borough
Scott Neumann	External Affairs Manager	PECO
Shaun Walsh	Supervisor	West Goshen Township
Will Williams	Sustainability Director	West Chester Borough
Jim Wylie	Executive Committee Chair	Sierra Club, Southeastern PA Chapter

Community Workshop Agenda

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION	MATERIALS
6:00 – 6:15	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Herrin • Township Manager Gleason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank participants • Introduce 100% Renewable Energy Planning Process and consulting team • Reiterate WCACOG goals for RE transition • Share importance of work to occur this evening and issue call to action to participants 	
6:15 – 6:20	<p>Introduction, Agenda, Meeting Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farrah Andersen, Cadmus 	<p>Cadmus team members will introduce the evening’s agenda and the objectives for the meeting, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key drivers and priorities for renewable energy implementation • Begin developing a collective vision of success • Problem-solve ways to overcome obstacles • Inform the subsequent analysis that will occur <p>The Cadmus team members will also use this period to introduce ground rules for the session and discussions. These rules are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up, step back – Allow everyone a chance to speak • Be present – Step out to take email or phone calls • Be open – Welcome new ideas and perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint
6:20 – 6:40	<p>Introductory Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Cook, Cadmus 	<p>Cadmus to provide an overview of 100% Renewable Energy Planning process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of work, deliverables, and goals of the project • What 100% renewable energy transitions mean for communities • Success stories <p>Cadmus will introduce the parameters for the breakout groups, which will be designed to collect feedback on priorities, vision of success, and potential obstacles.</p> <p>Cadmus will facilitate ten minutes of clarifying questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint

<p>6:40 – 6:50</p>	<p>Transition to Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators lead groups to breakout rooms 		
<p>6:50 – 8:00</p>	<p>Breakout Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cadmus and Advisory Group Facilitators Attendees 	<p>A Cadmus or Advisory Working Group facilitator will lead each breakout group. Each group will be provided with a series of three exercises to complete:</p> <p>Postcard from the Future (20 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will be asked to write a “Postcard from the Future.” This will entail imagining it is 2050 and the Greater West Chester Area has achieved its 100% renewable energy goals. Facilitator will collect, shuffle, and redistribute cards. Each participant will read someone else’s card aloud to the group. Facilitator will lead group in discussion on key themes. Questions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What themes are you hearing in these visions? What about these visions surprised you What are you excited about? <p>Priorities Identification (20 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator will prompt group to draw upon the visions they discussed and identify three priorities they have for the plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group members will write them on cards and place them in the center of the table. Facilitator will lead group in discussion on themes, asking probing questions on key topic areas (15 mins). Questions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me more about [topic]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator worksheet Cards for group exercises Pens

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does that [topic] mean to you? • Is anything missing from the priorities we've identified? • Are there any priorities you'd like to share more detail on with the group? <p>Barriers and Solutions (20 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator will prompt group to identify what barriers exist to achieving their vision and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members Cards with barriers on cards and place them in the center of the table • Facilitator will ask group to select one barrier and discuss ways to overcome it (note: repeat exercise for additional barrier as time allows). Questions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about [barrier]. What does this look like in your community? • How might we overcome this barrier? • What options are available to us? <p>Facilitator will highlight key themes throughout the discussion, thank participants for their feedback, and remind them of how it will be utilized. Facilitator will lead groups back to main meeting room.</p>	
8:00-8:30	<p>Report Out and Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farrah Andersen 	<p>Cadmus will ask participants to lead attendees in a turn and talk exercise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will share with a partner their biggest takeaway from the evening. • Cadmus will ask for volunteers to share their takeaways with the group. <p>Cadmus will offer closing words on how the feedback gathered over the course of the evening will be incorporated into the 100% Renewable Energy planning process. Cadmus will highlight that there will be stations around the room where attendees can add additional thoughts they want to share on their way out.</p>	

CADMUS

		WCACOG Representative will offer next steps and final thank you's.	
8:30-9:00	Additional Feedback Stations	Participants with additional ideas to share will be able to stop by a feedback station. There will be one station per topic area for the evening (Vision, Priorities, Barriers and Solutions) with sticky notes at each.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easels• Pens