

Annual Report 2019

Morgantown Municipal Green Team

Submitted to City of Morgantown City Manager on January 16, 2020

Active Members:

Jim Kotcon (Chair), Pamela Cubberly (Vice-Chair), Jing Zhang (planning chair), Joseph Kanosky (NETL), Karen Kalafat, Vanessa Reaves, Sarah Cayton, Lynn Castro, Mark Brazaitis, and Jenny Selin (City Council).

In 2019, the Green Team:

- Participated in educational events on sustainability
- Followed up on implementation of recommendations of 2016 energy audits of 7 City buildings
- Researched potential for installing LEDs in city streetlights
- Submitted a City of Morgantown Climate Action Plan for City Council consideration and action
- Developed with the City a proposal for West Virginia recycling assistance grant (funded)
- Supported continued action to expand use of renewable energy

Public Information and Education

Accomplished:

Recycling brochure. Reviewed and submitted comments on Republic Services' proposed recycling brochure.

Public events. Team members participated in the following public outreach events:

At the April 20 Earth Day event at the Farmer's Market, the Green Team, working with local advocacy organizations, shared information on recycling and handed out recycling brochures to interested visitors.

For future public events, the team is acquiring display equipment (shelter, brochure/flyer stand, etc.) for use at outreach events. *Potential impacts:*

Potential Impacts:

Team efforts on public information helped residents to recycle properly and reduce landfilling of contaminated recycling.

By developing the means to organize green public information tables more widely at public events, the team hopes to broaden its reach "beyond the convinced" in the future.

Participating engineering students received experience grappling with real issues and challenges faced by the City in becoming a sustainable community with ramifications for future career choices and work decisions.

Next steps:

A major focus will be the upcoming recycling education campaign.

Renewed Team Effort to Divert More Waste from Landfills

Accomplished:

The Green Team's Reduce/Reuse/Recycle (RRR) Working Group worked actively with City Grant Writer Robyn Hess to complete a WV Department of Environmental Protection Recycling Assistance Program (REAP) grant application, submitted July 1, 2019 for implementation from January 2020 to February 2021. The final award of \$36,786 to the City for the RecycleRight Campaign breaks down as follows:

- Recycling Manager (half-time for 14 months) at \$25,000
- Travel by manager to an annual recycling conference at \$750
- City-Wide Curbside Anti-Contamination Campaign (ACC) implementation at \$8,363
- City Schools Recycling Projects (3) totaling \$2,400

The multifaceted REAP grant proposal targets improper recycling behavior by implementing a proven program to reduce contamination of recycling bins and divert increasing amounts of recyclable materials from the landfill. A subproject would focus on helping three public schools expand recycling and composting efforts.

As part of the proposal development and in collaboration with the WVU office of Sustainability, a pilot education effort, recycling and waste audit was conducted at a student housing complex. Experience gained and data collected helped identify key challenges and opportunities for recycling in multiplex housing units. This information can be used to help shape future recycling initiatives.

The Green Team's RRR Working Group also worked with the WVU Reed College of Media to develop educational materials for the REAP project, with a major emphasis on reducing contamination of recycling bins by non-recyclable materials.

An additional project involved a WVU MDS class which conducted surveys of downtown businesses in Fall 2019 to evaluate the interest in programs to reduce the amount of single-use plastics. The class surveyed a number of businesses, and summarized their results in a report to the Team in December.

Potential impacts:

The REAP grant will support a major City effort (managed by the City with Green Team collaboration) to address proper/increased recycling. Proven methods could bring the community together in reducing landfill waste and carbon emissions, contributing to reaching CAP goals.

Communication and learning among stakeholders across Monongalia County could lead to better collaboration and planning for addressing long-term issues in solid waste management.

Next steps: The RRR Working Group will submit promotional and educational materials developed by the students from the WVU Reed School of Media to provide support for a recycling manager to be hired to oversee the grant.

The Team will work with WVU and the Monongalia County Solid Waste Authority on ways to expand the RecycleRight program county-wide, and to evaluate the potential for a composting operation.

Additional initiatives will be developed to reduce and reuse wastes, in addition to proper recycling of discarded materials.

The Team will also continue to evaluate the potential to reduce waste from single-use plastics and encourage local businesses to adopt more environmentally friendly practices. A potential program to award a “green business” sticker is being discussed.

IAC Energy Audits and Recommendations

Accomplished: City Manager Paul Brake budgeted \$50,000 in the 2019 budget for implementation. The City has already implemented a number of the IAC recommendations, such as installing motion sensors and LED lighting.

Potential impacts: The initial 2018–19 City effort to take advantage of “low-hanging fruit” has been a good start and will reap energy savings immediately by reducing costs. The 2019-2020 budget continues and expands on this investment in energy efficiency.

Next steps: Full implementation of the IAC recommendations would significantly contribute to the CO₂e reduction metrics for the city’s proposed Climate Action Plan (CAP). The reduction would be around 300 tons CO₂e/year. Therefore, the Green Team will propose that the City repeat the budgeted amount for implementing IAC recommendations of \$50,000 for 2020–21, to cover remaining expenses predicted in the IAC report. The Green Team believes that, to achieve the goals of the Paris Accords, the City must make these cost-effective investments as soon as practicable.

LED Street Light Conversion

Accomplished: A graduate student completed an independent study project in collaboration with the Green Team to evaluate energy and cost savings associated with transitioning city street lights to LED lamps. A final report is in review.

While the City has acquired a number of LED street lights as part of High Street renovations, city-wide conversion would require a tariff from our utility, Mon Power, which has been a major stumbling block for a number of years. Settlement of a case before the WV Public Service Commission resulted in an Order by which MonPower is likely to propose a tariff for LED streetlights early in 2020. Such a tariff will help evaluate the costs and benefits of a complete transition.

Potential impacts: The economic benefits in pursuing an LED tariff with Mon Power are uncertain and will depend on the rates they propose; however, there are energy use / CO₂e reduction benefits. LED streetlight conversion would substantially contribute to the CO₂e reduction metrics for the City’s CAP. The reduction would be around 980 lb. CO₂e/year/light when replacing high-pressure sodium lights with LEDs. The team will continue monitoring for any new opportunities for an LED tariff in the next year or two.

Next steps: The team will look for other opportunities to reduce energy use/costs of streetlights, in particular, identifying City outdoor or indoor lights not owned by Mon Power.

Climate Action Plan for City Council (Working Toward the Goals of the Paris Climate Accord)

Accomplished: Jim Kotcon organized a CAP Working Group that involves community members and, at the City Council’s January 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, presented its action plan on specific

actions the City can take to meet the goals of the Paris Accords. Key initiatives on this list include several Team-initiated projects either proposed or under implementation by the City.

Potential impacts: The team hopes the City and City Council will adopt and press forward on this action plan in 2019, with appropriate funding, especially as measures will save the City money in the long term.

Next steps: Recommendations in the team's January 2020 presentation to council will focus on actions that influence municipal emissions. Priorities for 2020 include implementation of energy efficiency measures in municipal buildings and transitioning to LED street lights. The Team will continue to develop programs whereby the City can incentivize greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the commercial and residential sectors.

Renewable Energy: Mountaineer Country Solar Co-op

The Green Team co-sponsored the newest proposal for a solar co-op and the third in which the team has been involved. The Mountaineer Country Solar Co-op is serving as a buying club to provide economies of scale to local residents who wish to invest in rooftop solar installations. Forty participants were identified and bids for eleven installations totaling 103 kW were accepted.

Accomplished:

The Green Team co-hosted an information workshop at the Morgantown Public Library for local residents interested in going solar.

Several members participated in Solar Open house events in October to share information on their solar installations, and recruit additional participants in the co-op.

Potential impacts:

Solar co-ops are a cost-effective way for residents to purchase solar power installations and take advantage of economies of scale in buying bulk.

The Mountaineer Country Solar Co-op is the third in the Morgantown area co-sponsored by the Green Team in the past four years. The two previous co-ops resulted in 29 installations totaling 184 kW of installed capacity. All three solar co-ops resulted in 40 households mounting solar panels representing a combined total of 281 Kilowatts of installed capacity.

Green Space Protection

The Green Team continues to monitor potential impacts to the Rail Trail from a proposed hydropower development at the Morgantown Lock and Dam.

The Team also monitored and developed comments on the proposal for a water pipeline through White Park.

Comments in support of the MMMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan were developed and will be submitted.

Air Quality

The Team submitted comments to WV Department of Highways to advocate for mass transit and vehicle electrification funding as part of a settlement with Volkswagen regarding engine emissions testing violations.

The Team developed comments to West Virginia Public Service Commission supporting plans for closure of the MEA power plant. The proposal will reduce truck traffic in downtown Morgantown, as well as reduce power plant emissions.