



Cedar Rapids Taking Climate Action

Community Climate Action Plan | 1st Annual Update: FY22



CEDAR RAPIDS
City of Five Seasons®



The City of Cedar Rapids' Community Climate Action Plan, launched in September 2021, charts a future rich in community, passion, and dedication to the greater good. We are proud of this plan and the work that has been done in its first year. Working together is how we will keep Cedar Rapids growing and prospering, and how we will reach our important community goals to be carbon-free, resilient, and accessible. This report provides an update on the plan's implementation for its first year, fiscal year 2022.



The purpose of this document is to provide a summary update on the implementation of the Community Climate Action Plan for its first year, FY22.

The full Community Climate Action Plan can be viewed at CityofCR.com/Climate

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AT A GLANCE

CLIMATE RESOLUTION GOAL 1:

CARBON-FREE

This goal area focuses on reducing carbon emissions 45% by 2030 and 100% by 2050; transitioning to 70-100% clean and renewable energy by 2050; achieving 35-65% low-to-no emission transportation by 2050; eliminating coal and reducing carbon in industry by 65-90%; supporting carbon capture; and reducing methane and black carbon from diesel and goal 35% by 2050.

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- Action 1: Sustainable Neighborhoods
- Action 2: Green & Healthy Homes
- Action 3: Sustainable Businesses
- Action 4: Energy Disclosure
- Action 5: Sustainable Buildings
- Action 6: ADUs & ACUs
- Action 7: Sustainable Development
- Action 8: Transit & Mobility
- Action 9: Complete Streets
- Action 10: Solar
- Action 11: Electric Vehicles
- Action 12: Industry Collaboration

CLIMATE RESOLUTION GOAL 2:

RESILIENT & ACCESSIBLE

This goal area focuses on building resilience to flooding and climate hazards; as well as guaranteeing access to clean water and air, healthy food, high quality parks and nature, good-paying green jobs, and direct connections to City government. All of these areas have a focus and priority on vulnerable residents.

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- Action 1: Resilience Hubs
- Action 2: Resilience Programs
- Action 3: Regional Stormwater
- Action 4: Food Access
- Action 5: Hard Infrastructure
- Action 6: ReLeaf
- Action 7: Water Quality in the Watershed
- Action 8: Stormwater BMPs
- Action 9: Green Economy Plan
- Action 10: Sustainable Purchasing
- Action 11: Equitable Engagement
- Action 12: Student Engagement

Goal Area 1: Carbon Free | Vision for 2050

Objective 1A | Reduce carbon emissions 45% by 2030 and net-zero by 2050

Objective 1B | Increase renewables to 70-100% electricity

Objective 1C | Increase transport sector’s share of low-emission energy to 35-65%

Objective 1D | Eliminate coal, reduce carbon in industry 65-90%, and sequester remaining carbon

Action Number	Highlights
<p>1. Build a sustainable neighborhood program to advance sustainability achievements in each neighborhood and provide an exciting community-building opportunity for Neighborhood Associations.</p>	<p>The Green Homes Program provides a way for CR residents to engage in the CCAP by sharing their sustainable actions, committing to do more, and receiving ongoing educational materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 212 homes; Most engaged neighborhoods include Cherry Hill, Wellington Heights, Taylor Neighborhood • Top actions: Gardening, planting native flowers, conserving energy and water, recycling, composting, picking up litter, and getting a library card • Top committed actions: Grow vegetables, plant native flowers, plant a durable tree, and prepare for extreme weather.
<p>2. Create a fund to implement a green and healthy homes and small businesses program to support deep energy and water efficiency retrofits, hazard remediation, renewable energy, and vehicle and large appliance electrification, prioritizing vulnerable neighborhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$390,000 for Neighborhood Finance Corps energy efficiency program in core CR neighborhoods (source) • HACAP (LIHEAP) and Green Iowa AmeriCorps support programs including utility bill assistance, weatherization, and free energy efficiency tools
<p>3. Build a sustainable business program that enhances sustainable building practices (energy efficiency, clean energy, electrification, water, waste reduction) and sustainable land use practices (trees, green infrastructure, gardens, biking facilities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Leaders program highlights sustainability successes of organizations in Cedar Rapids • The recognition program has 33 organizations participating (source)
<p>4. Support residential energy disclosure for prospective homeowners and renters and commercial energy benchmarking to encourage energy awareness and conservation.</p>	<p>City staff are identifying opportunities to support residential energy disclosure.</p>
<p>5. Develop a sustainable building policy for new construction and major renovations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff are identifying opportunities to support a sustainable building policy • The City prioritizes Energy Star in its purchases

6.	Update land development regulations to expand missing middle housing and neighborhood scale commercial opportunities throughout the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The code was expanded to allow for additional affordable housing options, including Accessory Dwelling Units • The Age-Friendly Action plan was developed and presented to City Council
7.	Create a sustainable development policy that defines the characteristics of a 15-minute neighborhood and develops guidance and incentives to fill in missing amenities and features, prioritizing vulnerable neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff created a list of potential 15-minute neighborhoods • The City was invited to participate in a Resilience Cohort by the Local Policy Lab, and the 15-minute neighborhood will be the focus of the technical assistance provided
8.	Enhance transit and shared transportation options (micromobility and car-sharing) in under-resourced communities and high priority transit locations.	Bike and scooter-share is available to residents.
9.	Enhance the Complete Streets Policy to further community education and prioritize urban heat island mitigation and tree plantings in vulnerable neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City’s Complete Streets Policy was operationalized in 2014 • The ReLeaf program uses a tree equity score when prioritizing planting, which incorporates equity, canopy coverage, and climate into the analysis
10.	Support large-scale solar installations in underutilized areas (parking lots and rooftops) and urban reserve areas that offer multiple benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City participated in the third “Solar Group Buy,” along with partners in Johnson and Linn County, resulting in more than 477 residential solar installations • The City’s four solar installations on NW Transit and three water booster stations save \$8-10k annually in electricity costs (source) • The local electric grid will have 50% renewable energy by 2025 and 50% reduced emissions by 2030 • The City is a gold-rated SolSmart community for solar-friendly policies, programs, and utilities (source)
11.	Develop readiness in the community for electric vehicle infrastructure and emerging low-emitting technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City co-hosted its first-ever Sustainable Economy & Transportation Conference with Alliant Energy and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance • A \$100,000 MPO grant was awarded to Transit for creating an EV transition plan • Fleet services is developing an EV transition plan • The City is identifying locations for Level I EV Charging Stations at City facilities for employee private vehicles
12.	Collaborate with industry around emission reductions (carbon capture, renewable energy) and community sustainability efforts (stormwater BMPs, garden and tree plantings, philanthropy, volunteerism).	The City is updating its Targeted Industry Strategic Plan to incorporate sustainability trends to ensure long-term competitiveness and success.

Goal Area 2. Resilient and Accessible | Vision for 2050

Objective 2A | Build resilience to flooding and climate hazards, prioritizing vulnerable residents

Objective 2B | Ensure all residents have affordable and accessible food options for growing and consuming healthy, culturally relevant food

Objective 2C | Ensure equitable access to parks and natural space

Objective 2D | Ensure equitable access to clean air and water

Objective 2E | Create high-wage, green jobs and green economic development

Objective 2F | Provide direct connection to City government for vulnerable residents

	Action Number	Highlights
1.	Develop indoor and outdoor resilience hubs to provide basic amenities to residents in public spaces (information kiosks, Wi-Fi, power charging, shelter, backup power, water, food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rollin’ Recmobile provides recreational support for kids and families in City parks and partners with community service providers to share important resources for residents ● City staff started identifying locations of current amenities ● On days of extreme cold or heat, the City’s libraries open their doors to residents. Linn County Emergency Management keeps an ongoing list of shelters for hot and cold days ● The City’s participation in the Local Policy Lab’s Resilience Cohort will provide best practices and technical support to learn how City’s “15-minute Neighborhoods” Initiative can incorporate resilience hubs, mobility hubs, and basic needs
2.	Support and expand existing resilience programs to mitigate flooding and prepare residents for future climate extremes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Neighborhood PACT: The City program informs residents how they can Prepare, Act, Communicate, and Train for extreme weather events ● Neighborhood Resource Centers are locations where residents can seek basic needs following extreme weather events ● The City spent over \$45 million in FY22 on the Flood Protection System, which will protect the City from flood levels two feet above the 2008 flood ● The Stormwater Plan identified opportunities to protect the City from heavy rain events ● An emergency shelter is available to residents during extreme weather ● Increased tree canopy through the ReLeaf program helps reduce the impacts of extreme heat and anchors topsoil during flood events

<p>3.</p>	<p>Support the Stormwater Plan with a particular focus on regional detention basins and major funding gaps for hard infrastructure maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately \$100m funding needs (2018 \$130m included maintenance work; recent estimate on priority projects totaled \$92m, these are category A projects; annual budget is \$5m); working on regional detention funding strategy for developers to combine effort and work with the City to build larger projects • Regional detention basins serve to reduce flash flooding, improve water quality, and in some cases provide recreational opportunities • The City’s Stormwater Plan has identified several regional detention basin locations both in areas with existing development and in future growth areas • Some regional detention basins are currently under design and are on track to be built within the next few years, but funding for regional basins is limited • The City will continue to work toward identifying funding sources for construction of these basins in coordination with future private development plans
<p>4.</p>	<p>Develop a food access policy as part of a sustainable development approach to ensure vulnerable residents can achieve healthy and relevant food (land access, growing, consuming, selling) within a 15-minute walk (including urban farms, gardens on commercial properties, public gardens, pantries, groceries, education).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Food Access was the top priority from the Community Climate Action Plan’s second of two public surveys • The City is developing guidelines for identifying and designing 7-10 community gardens in City Parks • City staff administered a survey to solicit input from residents on garden locations and features • The City is designing the Sinclair Park Community Garden
<p>5.</p>	<p>Support conversion of underutilized hard infrastructure (parking lots, roofs, underpasses) to support gardens, cooling features, and active programming (Resilience Hubs, markets, recreation).</p>	<p>Standard City incentives for economic development include tax exemption or reimbursement for high quality jobs, brownfield/grayfield development, LEED Certification, commercial reinvestment with sustainability features, and projects with long-term benefits to the community.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Implement the City's ReLeaf program, supporting vulnerable neighborhoods with air and heat pollution challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReLeaf, the plan to reforest Cedar Rapids following the 2020 Derecho, shows the City’s plan to replant 34,221 trees in the right-of-way along 7,798 street segments • Priorities in the plan include native species, heat reduction, and under-resourced neighborhoods • 2,293 trees were planted in year one of the ReLeaf program, exceeding the year-one goal of 2,125 trees
<p>7.</p>	<p>Protect water quality by supporting source water protection initiatives and existing watershed partnerships that reduce nutrient-rich runoff into the Cedar River.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City recently completed a Phase 2 Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) utilizing guidance from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources • The SWPP is important to our climate efforts because it outlines the City’s approach to securing a safe and reliable drinking water supply well into the future, regardless of threats from a changing climate • Because the City’s water supply is heavily influenced by the Cedar River, the SWPP adopts a watershed approach to protecting water quality

8.	Support stormwater BMP cost-share and ERU reduction programs on large properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stormwater Plan identified the need for creating public-private partnerships to address some of the local stormwater needs. Stormwater management has a triple bottom line that includes economic, environmental, and social impacts. The triple bottom line concept was embraced knowing the financial piece would be needed to get large-scale buy-in • In 2016, the City created a Stormwater Cost Share Program and an ERU Reduction Program that allows private properties to financially partner with the City. Private properties that have large buildings, parking lots, and other impervious areas are known areas to target for marketing for stormwater practices. Large properties have the larger return on investment (for the private property owner and City resources), are an easier sell, and potentially have a larger environmental impact. Because of this, parcels with larger impervious areas are targeted to provide education on the City’s programs
9.	Complete and implement a green economic development plan, identifying green jobs, community strengths, and programs for equitable business and workforce development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sustainable Economy & Transportation Conference hosted by the City of Cedar Rapids, Alliant Energy, and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance brought leaders from the region together to discuss the need, vision, and progress toward a more sustainable economy • The City of Cedar Rapids has a partnership with Iowa State University for food manufacturing and processing
10.	Expand sustainability support and expectations in purchasing, contracts, and development to support circular economy, local buying, and cooperative buying.	<p>The Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines updated in spring 2022 provide guidance for City purchases that help support a range of practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiny Trash and Compost • Event waste reduction • Pesticide and chemical reduction • Energy efficiency • Transitions to electric vehicles and equipment • Native plant and tree purchasing for City properties • Electric landscape equipment (chainsaws, trimmers) <p>As of 2022, City facilities with Tiny Trash, Compost, and updated signage include City Hall, CSC, Central Fire, WPC, and Water Administration</p>
11.	Operationalize the equitable engagement toolkit to reach more under-resourced and underrepresented residents.	Building on best practices, the Equitable Engagement Toolkit is being developed with a plan to embed it in Citywide operations in FY23.
12.	Establish City-student partnerships to engage youth in plan implementation.	Forty staff positions are connected to students through job shadows, tours, internships, and interviews.

