



# MEMO

## EPC SUMMARY – 2021

**Adopted by the EPC on March 16, 2022**

The Energy Planning Commission was created in November of 2019. The commission's mandate was described to us by the Mayor of Duluth, Emily Larson, to advise and recommend methods to help the city meet its aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals of 80% by 2050. A notable achievement of the Commission in 2021 was the edits and support provided for the City of Duluth Municipal Building Owner Performance Requirements (OPR) document. The OPR was approved this fall and will require the consideration and implementation of various energy efficiency measures in new construction projects and remodels or retrofits at City of Duluth buildings. In addition, the commission reviewed and discussed extensively Minnesota Power's IRP and were influential in informing the comments sent by the city to Minnesota Power. Finally the commission hosted initial talks with the Fleet Planner in an effort to support future Fleet planning and a push to moving towards more electrical fleet equipment and vehicles.

As we strive to better understand the energy needs and uses of the city, we are fortunate to have had many guest speakers throughout 2021 including presentations from Duluth Energy Systems, the City of Duluth Construction Services Department, Comfort Systems Conservation Program, Minnesota Power Electric Vehicle Group, and the City of Duluth Fleet Department.

The Commission greatly appreciates the direction and guidance of the Energy Coordinator, Alex Jackson, and the Sustainability Officer, Mindy Granley. Alex Jackson regularly provides updates on city buildings and major renovation projects including the City Hall, City Center West, and the Lakewalk reconstruction. Mindy Granley shares grant opportunities, progress on emission tracking, energy-related news and events, and efforts on both city and state-level energy efficiency code updates.

The committee is excited for the work that is to come over the next year. We will work to assist the city's transition to an electrical fleet with special attention for finding funding for this transition, and for other Climate Action Work Plan implementation aspects, including the addition of new renewable energy production within the city limits. A more detailed list of the commission's work and plans for 2022 are broken out below.

## **Detailed list of the Energy Planning Commission's Activities for 2021.**

The EPC is happy to see:

- Significant and consistent reductions in the carbon emissions from the Duluth Energy Systems Steam Plant as well as considerable interest and effort in renewable fuel integration.
- Establishment of a Sustainability Advisory team which involved leaders from many departments of the city.
- Sustainability Officer's activity on the Advanced Building Energy Code Group to support statewide energy efficiency updates in code.
- Plans 1.6 MW solar development within the City of Duluth through partnership with Minnesota Power. This will benefit the city through renewable generation, monetary payments to the City for lease of the land, and added tax revenue.
- City Council declare a climate emergency and the development of a Climate Action Work Plan.
- Administration and Fleet Manager's focus on adding more EV's to the City's fleet.
- Sustainability Officer, Energy Coordinator, and others' involvement in the Climate Smart Municipalities program.
- A letter to Minnesota Power's IRP supporting the following:
  - o 80% carbon reduction by 2035
  - o 100% carbon reduction by 2050
  - o Increase in renewable energy
  - o Coal plant retirements
  - o Energy efficiency and grid flexibility programs

The EPC desires to see in the future:

- The city continuing to take advantage of grants promoting electrification, renewable energy, and equity.
- Funding for electrical transition of the fleet.
- Discussions on the long-term plans for the municipal natural gas facility, Comfort Systems.
- Greenhouse gas emission data to be obtained through an accepted GHG-protocol system (following IPCC guidelines) and for clear and concise annual summaries of emissions to be hosted on the City's sustainability website.

- Consideration of up-and-coming technology for city facility renovations where possible. This appears to be the way the City Hall HVAC renovation is going as VRF and chilled beam technologies are considered.
- Continued conversation between interdepartmental staff members to emphasize the advantages and importance of long-term building investments over short-term fixes.
- Minnesota Power accelerate development of renewable electrical generation and retirement of fossil fuel-based plants and an increased emphasis on equity and environmental justice. In addition, we would like to see Minnesota Power become stronger collaborators with the City of Duluth on the energy transition to non-carbon based electrical production.