



Community Power
2720 E 22nd St
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Minneapolis Energy Options



Taking charge of our energy future

Community Power 2017 Minneapolis Candidate Questionnaire

Community Power invites all candidates to complete the following questionnaire to inform Minneapolis voters on positions shaping Minneapolis's energy future:

1. What role do you feel energy infrastructure, sourcing, and decision-making play in shaping livability, affordability, economic resilience and community health for Minneapolis residents and businesses? How do you propose to fulfill that role?

The city has an obligation and an opportunity to work to protect the environment, to combat climate change, and to be resilient in the face of climate change. The city enterprise has a role as a policy maker, a property owner, and an energy consumer to effect change. Cities are the last line of defense. Given ongoing uncertainty at the state and federal level, with deregulation the rollback of environmental protections and a political appetite for preemption, we have to act locally and be prepared to defend those actions.

As we work to address our housing needs, we must recognize that utility costs are also a factor in housing affordability more broadly. Similarly, utility costs impact the bottom line for businesses. Reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions is good for business. Our efforts on housing and development of all kinds must simultaneously address energy consumption.

Climate resiliency should address the root causes of vulnerability, including our persistent equity gaps and all the ways our existing policies perpetuate those gaps. Who decides what livability, affordability, economic resilience, and community health look like? Working towards climate, environmental, and economic justice also means engaging the community - including its people of color and indigenous residents, and low-income residents - in planning and implementation of these initiatives.

As council member, I will bring the perspective that every policy we consider has equity implications and that should be a consideration in every discussion. I will work to bring along both residents and businesses in the fight to combat climate change. I will work with our partners at the state legislature to defend against preemption and bring state dollars to this work. I appreciate that Community Power values a commitment to racial and economic equity in this work.

2. Do you think Minneapolis is adequately prepared to respond to climate change? If yes, how? If no, what do you think Minneapolis should do to become prepared?

The City of Minneapolis has planted many seeds towards responding to climate change, but we have not truly committed to combating climate change. While there is a great deal of planning that has occurred, we must commit financial resources to the capital investments, public education, and services required to achieve our goals.

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We must follow through on the policies we've already adopted, like our Green Fleet policy and our Green Zones policy. We must get serious about building housing, implementing transit, and connecting people with jobs in ways that drastically reduce the use of single-occupancy cars. We must commit resources to achieving zero waste and 100% clean and renewable energy consumption. We should shut down the HERC.

Further, Minneapolis does not have enough housing for its current residents, much less any significant number of climate refugees that may wish to settle here. Our basic infrastructure must be prepared to handle the possibility of population growth due to climate-induced migration.

Accessible financing for energy-related construction and improvements can create equitable access for low-income residents as well as ease adoption more broadly. Until these mechanisms are in place, it will be hard to adopt new technologies and ways of sourcing energy at a rate and scale that is adequate to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The city can also engage and empower community members and organizations by making more robust data available for public inspection.

3. Do you support a policy of 100% renewable electricity for city operations by 2021, 100% renewable electricity by 2030 for all Minneapolis energy users, and 100% renewable energy in all sectors (electricity, heating, transportation, industry) by 2050 for all Minneapolis energy users (check one)?
- Yes, by those timelines**
 - Yes, by (define years) _____
 - No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

4. What do you intend to do during your time in office to help achieve the Minneapolis Energy Vision (established by City Council in 2014) and the goals of the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership?

Minneapolis should show leadership in the state and in the country by committing to this work. I will ensure the Clean Energy Partnership is fully funded and staffed. I commit to conducting public education and outreach on the topic. I commit to direct engagement of people of color and indigenous people and low-income residents.

I commit to working in partnership with organizations like Community Power, the Center for Earth Energy and Democracy, and the Sierra Club, and the DFL Environmental Caucus. I also look forward to working with our representatives at the state legislature to move policy and resources in this work.

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I will support further exploration of small-scale energy cooperatives. Many constituents in Ward 11 are financially positioned to move ahead as property owners on currently available opportunities to access clean and renewable energy, and some neighborhoods are actively exploring collective opportunities to act.

5. Do you support securing universally-accessible financing that allows all Minneapolis energy users to make energy efficiency improvements and switch to clean energy with no upfront cost, no debt or credit checks, and monthly payments on utility bills that are overall lowered due to the energy saved?

Yes

No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

A climate justice approach dictates that marginalized people experience the same benefits of programs designed to reduce costs and take advantage of clean energy, and are prioritized for access to these programs. Accessible financing that reduces the initial investment in improvements is a strong mechanism for doing so. Further, this financing mechanism reduces the friction in adoption and increases the likelihood of success for all populations making the desired changes.

6. Do you support using the rooftops of Minneapolis public buildings to host community solar gardens that create access for low-income families as well as train and hire Minneapolis residents of color to install and maintain them?

Yes

No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

The city must use this opportunity as a property-owner to move ahead on a proven technology. It's critical to incorporate a climate justice perspective that re-invests in marginalized community members for access to this source of clean and renewable energy as well as job opportunities in this field. Further, simply installing a community solar garden doesn't necessarily create access for low-income people. We have to do the work of connecting people to those resources and ensuring that the financial commitment is addressed through inclusive financing or some other mechanism.

7. How would you advance equitable access to energy resources for renters and low-income families to ensure that all Minneapolis families have healthy, comfortable homes, affordable energy bills, and the choice to shift to clean and efficient energy?

I support inclusive financing. We also need to seek alternative sources of funds to make the initial investment in ensuring every resident in Minneapolis gets a home energy audit (either for their home

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or via their landlord) and some set of immediately accessible improvements. Energy-related improvements should be incorporated into all of the city's investments in housing.

Neighborhood associations can be a vehicle for connecting residents with access to community solar gardens and other individual and collective opportunities. We must also make a concerted effort to engage the community through other means and other organizations.

8. Would you support an increase in utility franchise fees of 0.5% of Minneapolis energy sales to be re-invested in dedicated long-term funding for local energy solutions (**check all that apply**)?
- Yes**
 - No
 - Dedicated funding could additionally/instead come from these sources:
 - These specific energy solutions need this kind of long-term funding:

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

0.5% may be enough to sustainably fund the CEP. I think a larger increase is worth considering, to give ongoing funding to other work. It's still a relatively small impact on households, and large consumers of energy like businesses and industrial customers can make their money back through conservation and reductions in consumption.

9. How should the City of Minneapolis evaluate the effectiveness of the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership as its second two year work plan ends in late 2018? What criteria or thresholds would convince you that the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership is succeeding (and should be sustained and expanded) OR is failing (and the city should pursue a different route)?

I support the approach recommended by Community Power. If we're meeting our benchmarks, I support proceeding within the framework of the CEP. If we have failed to meet them, I will advocate for exploring alternatives.

10. If Xcel Energy and/or CenterPoint Energy refused to agree to the measurable outcomes you defined in question 9, or failed to achieve them, would you support active exploration of other options by the City of Minneapolis, including: terminating the franchise agreement, securing Community Choice Aggregation, or pursuing energy municipalization (**check one**)?
- Yes**
 - Yes, under these conditions:
 - No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

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We learned from the Minneapolis Energy Options campaign that Xcel and CenterPoint were responsive to the mere idea of exploring municipalization. Further, if there is the possibility of making a different choice, it would be prudent to fully understand all the options. Even in failure, there are useful lessons; while a 10-year franchise agreement is an improvement over a 20-year agreement, because conditions are changing so rapidly, even 10 years is too long. In order for the city to be responsive and nimble, we should advocate for a 5-year agreement at most. The franchise agreement negotiation is a leverage point for the adoption of inclusive financing, amongst other things.

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