Community Engagement
Board Learning Topic

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Preface

This paper is part of a series that describes a variety of topics identified by Energy Trust of Oregon's Board of Directors as potentially influential to the organization during the time period of its next strategic plan (2020-2024). This series of papers will educate and inform the Board about the potential impact of these topics and enable its Directors to better to assess risk, identify opportunity and guide the direction and goals of Energy Trust.

Remaining current on potentially significant and influential developments in the clean energy industry is critical to the fundamental role of the Board. These topics have been identified because of their potential to influence, impact or otherwise affect Energy Trust's ability to serve the ratepayers of Oregon and Southwest Washington. These papers should not be interpreted as policy proposals or recommendations for roles in which Energy Trust intends or desires to be directly involved.

Introduction

Energy Trust provides comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions for 1.6 million utility customers. Growing interest in energy among communities and municipalities and their members presents an opportunity for Energy Trust to leverage local efforts for greater energy savings and generation. When local governments, community organizations and neighborhoods take action to save or generate energy, they can create local jobs, stimulate business development, foster energy independence, realize environmental benefits or simply reflect the will and interest of residents and business owners. When communities are ready to act, Energy Trust programs can assist, achieving multiple benefits including acquisition of cost-effective energy savings and renewable energy generation.

While community engagement is a necessary and long-used strategy of Energy Trust, opportunities exist to evolve, customize, broaden and deepen community engagement to increase responsiveness and effectiveness, ensure ongoing relevance, provide more equitable support and increase impact.

This board learning topic explores community engagement in preparation for development of the 2020-2024 strategic plan. During the planning process, the board will assess strategies

and opportunities that could be leveraged to achieve organizational goals. As part of this exploration, the board may want to assess additional ways community engagement could be leveraged to achieve energy savings or generation goals.

I. Community Engagement – Definitions and Framework

A. What is Community?

Community is a fluid concept. Individuals identify with and participate in multiple communities. Community can be broadly defined as "a group of people united by at least one but perhaps more than one common characteristic, including geography, ethnicity, shared interests, values, experience or traditions."[1]

Others broaden the definition, describing community by the people, as well as the social relationships, ties and networks among those people, and the systems (natural, social, governmental, economic) in which they participate.[2] Whether highly integrated or loosely connected, these networks and systems function to meet, or fail to meet, community needs. As noted in a report by the National Association for Environmental Educators,[3] "understanding of the interlocking systems is a critical foundation for building people's capacity to create a healthy, sustainable and resilient future."

Culture is also key component of community. Culture "shapes, identifies and fosters notions of community, and it shapes how individuals and groups relate to each other, how meaning is created and how power is defined."[4] This has implications for effective engagement strategies.

Communities that Energy Trust might work with through an engagement strategy include:

- *Geographic and natural*: urban to rural, in a vast range of ecosystems. Of note, there are multiple ways to define rural that range from population under 50,000 to under 2,500, and that take into consideration proximity to an urban area, population density, land use, commuting patterns and other factors.[5]
- *Demographic and cultural*: people across age, economic status, education level, professional, religious/spiritual, racial and cultural identities.

- *Organizational*: community-based organizations and institutions in nonprofit, business and government sectors (city, county, regional, state, national) working in environment, energy, housing, workforce development, business development, education and more.
- *Social and political*: local or virtual networks whose interests intersect with Energy Trust.

Energy Trust has expressed a commitment to deeper engagement with low-income, rural and communities of color through its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative. This initiative is an effort to understand gaps in participation, and identify opportunities to effectively engage diverse customers in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. A successful engagement strategy might explore the intersections of these communities, as well as others described above, and seek to listen, build relationships and address barriers to engagement. Energy Trust may find it useful to closely integrate DEI planning with community engagement planning.

B. What is Community Engagement?

Definition: Community engagement has many definitions. It operates as both a process and an outcome.[6] This definition is adapted from the health field:

> The process by which individuals and organizations work collaboratively to identify community needs and priorities, build relationships, mobilize resources and catalyze change in structures, policies, programs and practices. Community engagement is a powerful vehicle for bringing about individual, organizational, community and systems changes aimed at improving the well-being of the community and its members.[7]

Framework: Community engagement and collaboration is best represented on a continuum. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) community engagement continuum[8] is commonly utilized to identify the level of engagement that aligns with the desired outcomes of the effort. Approaches will vary based on goals, phase or target of the engagement.

CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

	INFORM	***CONSULT***	***INVOLVE***	***COLLABORATE***	***EMPOWER***
ENGAGEMENT LEVEL IN ACTION	Some community involvement Communication flows one way; informing Provides community with information Entities share information	More community involvement Communication flows to community, then back; answer seeking Gathers information or feedback from the community Entities seek input from each other	Active community involvement Communication flows both ways; participatory Ensures community issues and concerns are understood and considered Entities coordinate with each other	Community leadership Communication flow is bidirectional; collaborative Establishes shared leadership on each aspect of project from development to solution Entities collaborate on common goals	Community ownership Final decision-making is with community; empowering Prioritizes community-driven solutions and shares power Entities form strong partnership structures with shared accountability
OUTCOMES	Communication channels established. Community is informed.	Connections expanded. Community is heard and better understood.	Cooperation is active. Community issues and concerns influence decisions and plans.	Increased trust. Decisions and plans are co-created.	Strong trust. Community owns and leads process and outcomes.

Increasing level of community engagement, communication flow, trust, and potential for impact

Figure 1: Continuum of Community Engagement (adapted from IAP2 and CDC frameworks)

A Bridgespan Group report on engagement[9] suggests starting with input and once comfortable with real input, experimenting with co-creation and ownership. It also emphasizes making an organization-wide commitment, being inclusive and continuously learning and adapting.

II. Community Engagement – Trends and Insights

A. Community Engagement Trends

Current trends in community engagement practices are driven by the recognition that social and environmental challenges are increasingly complex. Strategies to address those complex challenges must be collaborative, and lasting solutions must include and be led by those affected. Five intersecting key trends emerge in the literature:

1) **Systems-oriented**. Applying a systems perspective that explores the people, culture, structures and conditions of a community is considered best practice. Patrick McCarthy, president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, made this point at a 2014 forum: "An inhospitable system will trump a good program—every time, all the time."[10]

5 Key Trends

1. Systems-oriented
2. Data-driven
3. Networked and collaborative
4. Inclusive and trust-based
5. Sustained, yet adaptive engagement

2) **Data-driven.** Collective Impact[11], a widely utilized framework for collaboration on complex social problems, focuses on gathering data and establishing shared metrics as central to aligning collaborative initiatives and achieving outcomes. Community engagement is core to successfully using data to drive action and accountability.[12]

3) **Networked and collaborative.** Successful engagement requires organizational, political and public leadership, networking and collaborating across sectors. Leaders who operate in this way are shifting historic roles and dynamics, building trust, growing strategic networks, fostering leadership and achieving significant impacts.[13] [14]

4) **Inclusive and trust-based.** Simply stated, change is more likely to be successful and sustainable when the individuals, community-based organizations and institutions it affects are involved in initiating and leading it.[15] [16] [17]

5) **Sustained, yet adaptive engagement.** Collaborating with communities to create change takes time and requires a commitment over the long haul. Sustained commitment means building local capacity and cultivating community leadership.[18] Sustained commitment does not mean static engagement, but rather continuous learning and adaptation.

B. Oregon Community Leader Interviews

In 2017, Energy Trust conducted a number of interviews with community leaders in Oregon to explore effective diversity, equity and inclusion engagement strategies. Interviewees offered general information on how Energy Trust could most effectively engage in communities, and reinforced much of what surfaced through external literature reviews on community engagement for this paper.

Diverse community leader interviewees were clear about the importance of investing in relationships with local leaders and community-based organizations working with the populations Energy Trust wants to serve. Many reinforced the value of having a local presence and connection to assist Energy Trust in building trust, establishing credibility, reinforcing messages, being visible and gaining access in local communities. One interviewee said, "Community outreach and engagement relies upon asking the right questions and listening to the answers. Acting upon what is said matters even more…" Feedback through these interviews on best community engagement strategies included these concepts:

- Establishing local connections and credibility;
- Leveraging communication strategies, channels and access points;
- Gaining access through community-based organizations, particularly housing groups; and
- Connecting through workforce development opportunities.

C. National Scan of Community-Based Education Efforts

A 2017 literature review by Grounded Research and Consulting for Energy Trust included a scan of successful programs delivering energy education. They found that community-based education efforts can be an effective investment option for driving participation in programs or behavior change. Community education efforts also can help organizations reach deeper into communities across diverse audiences. Models of community education efforts were identified, (Figure 2), which share similarities with the engagement continuum (Figure 1). While these models are related to energy education, they are relevant to deploying program services and energy-related offers.

Municipal champion-led model	A model that builds a stable network of municipal partnerships that can be leveraged year over year
Community-based organization-led bottom-up model	A small grants-based model for grassroots education by organizations with ties to the community
Implementer-led top-down model using "stacked activities" that include community organizations	Outreach through top-down model led by an implementer using "stacked activities" that include community organizations

Figure 2: Models of community engagement identified by Grounded Research

Their research identified numerous organizations using community-based education to drive engagement in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Figure 3 includes three examples from the research along a continuum, from inform to empower.

NATIONAL EXAMPLES ON THE CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

INFORM	*INVOLVE*	*EMPOWER*
Renew Boston (Mass.) Renew Boston targeted both residential and business customers in 2010-2011, with the goal of increased participation in existing audit and rebate programs. This effort was led by the City of Boston's Mayoral office. The effort engaged program administrators, implementation contractors and a network of community-based organizations. City of Boston representatives were responsible for developing marketing and outreach materials, maintaining the website and providing overall marketing and outreach coordination. *Renew Boston* dedicated staff who worked on-the-ground with community groups on managing and customizing outreach across the city of Boston and community partners.	**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (N.Y.)** This model engages local organizations in specific regional economic development regions. NYSERDA's Community Energy Engagement Program recruits ten local organizations (one in each of 10 Economic Development Regions) through a competitive bid process to drive targeted low and moderate income customers to energy efficiency and renewable programs. NYSERDA tracks the amount of funding received by customers, the number of partnerships, the number of customers assisted with clean energy applications, the number of completed loans and the number of projects completed.	**Connecticut's Clean Energy Communities (Conn.)** This effort challenges cities and towns to make a 20 percent reduction in energy in municipal and board of education buildings. To date 158 of 169 Connecticut communities have pledged to reduce energy. Cities and towns receive grants based on residential and business participation. There is also a Sustainable-Energy Community level that towns can achieve when they continuously engage in outreach and energy-efficiency campaigns with their residents, community organizations and businesses; integrate *eesmarts*™ curriculums into the schools; and have achieved 30 percent residential-program participation as well as 20 percent commercial-program participation, among other requirements.

Increasing level of community engagement, communication flow, trust, and potential for impact

Figure 3: Examples on the Continuum of Community Engagement

III. Community Priorities in Oregon

For this paper, Energy Trust leveraged expertise at Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to understand community priorities at the county level. Energy is not necessarily the top priority

for many Oregon communities, but understanding local needs and areas of focus highlights how energy can be incorporated and Energy Trust can engage most effectively.

A. Summary of Economic Development Priorities in Oregon Counties

To outline common economic development priorities around the state, AOC drew from recent research commissioned by the Oregon Rural Development Council.[19] This research examined several economic development agendas established by:

- Oregon's Economic Development Districts' through their Comprehensive Development Strategies (CEDS) reports. These reports are the result of locally-based, regionally driven planning processes required of districts funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration;
- The regional Advisory Committees of Regional Solutions, an intergovernmental coordination program in the Governor's office that focuses on advancing economic development policies and projects at the local level; and
- County Commissioners and county staff through a survey conducted by AOC.

The diverse economic development priorities called out predominately fell into one of four categories:

I. **The need to augment general approaches to economic development in Oregon**, which included topics such as improving incentives for business recruitment and expansion, increasing access to capital so companies can grow, identifying new export opportunities and confronting regulatory challenges;

II. **Focusing on strategies that support business and job growth** such as revitalizing downtowns and strengthening community amenities, expanding support services for entrepreneurs and emerging businesses and developing alternative energy sources or new tourism attractions;

III. **Addressing infrastructure and land base issues** such as the affordability of housing, the quality of public infrastructure including roads, bridges, public transit systems, ports, airports and water/sewer systems, and improving access to industrial lands; and

IV. **Developing Oregon's workforce** by expanding vocational training opportunities, and further aligning career and technical education programs from primary school through higher education.

Although the individual context for each community is unique and important, there are several cross-cutting economic development priorities called out throughout the state. They include:

- Emphasizing and investing in recruitment, retention and expansion of businesses;
- Improving the quantity, quality and affordability of housing, particularly for middle- and low-income working families;
- Expanding vocational training so Oregonians are prepared for the jobs in their communities;
- Improving access to “shovel-ready” industrial lands;
- Addressing permitting and regulatory barriers;
- Developing support services for entrepreneurs and emerging businesses;
- Maintaining and modernizing our road network infrastructure and improving access to public transit options; and
- Ensuring broadband is available in every community.

These priorities continually lead to unique ideas and initiatives throughout the state. In turn, they present complementary opportunities for Energy Trust to build partnerships and engage Oregonians in saving energy and generating renewable energy. Most specific to Energy Trust, many regions called out the development of alternative energy sources as an economic development priority, including South Central Oregon (Klamath and Lake Counties), the Southern Willamette Valley & Mid-coast region (Benton, Lane, Lincoln and Linn Counties), the Mid-Columbia Gorge (Hood River, Sherman and Wasco Counties), as well as Umatilla and Coos Counties.

B. County-Based Case Studies

See Appendix for Association of Oregon Counties case studies on energy-related engagement opportunities in three counties, Douglas and Jackson Counties (energy focus), and Clackamas County (housing development focus).

IV. Current State – Energy Trust Activities, Benefits and Challenges

A. Highlights of Energy Trust Community Engagement Activities and Initiatives

To achieve energy saving and generation goals, Energy Trust engages communities across its service territory. It also partners with utilities and other organizations to extend its reach. These engagement approaches are reflected on the continuum and are critical to meeting annual goals and maintaining awareness of offers and services.

Range of current engagement efforts. Community engagement objectives and activities utilized at Energy Trust are primarily designed to reach energy saving and generation goals. The activities are listed here from lower to higher on the continuum of engagement, though each could be adapted or scaled to shift the level of engagement:

- Community awareness: presentations, marketing, sponsorships, events;
- Community outreach: presentation of services or offers at a community level;
- Community capacity-building: interns, training, tools and materials;
- Community-based staff: staff embedded in or serving specific communities;
- Community-blitz: community offers provided for a sustained period;
- Community planning and implementation support: providing data, content on programs and other services, as well as supporting community planning efforts;
- Community delivery: leveraging local organizations with access to members, resources, communications; delivering services and outreach in communities.

Examples of Energy Trust efforts driven or sustained by communities. In addition to efforts led by Energy Trust to reach customers across its service territory, Energy Trust has engaged in efforts driven or sustained by communities. Highlights of some of those efforts include:

- **Corvallis Energy Challenge**: a yearlong community-wide effort to foster energy efficiency and renewable energy in Corvallis with evaluated results (2008-2009).
- **Making Energy Work for Rural Oregon**: a workshop series led by Sustainable Northwest to engage participating communities and local governments in energy planning and opportunities to save and generate energy (2015-current).

- **Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps interns**: support for interns with an energy focus placed in communities in Energy Trust service territory, which is similar to capacity building programs provided by supporting interns placed at businesses (2015-current).

- **Energy planning or policy development**: upon request, Energy Trust provides communities with expertise, data and information to assist their planning, as resources allow. Ongoing, Energy Trust responds to requests for information from stakeholders working on local energy policies. Examples include City of Portland Home Energy Score and City of Portland Benchmarking, and Hood River Energy Plan.

- **Georgetown Energy Prize cities (Bend and Corvallis)**: support in the form of program staff engagement, data and incentive offerings. Additionally, similar challenge efforts in other communities have been supported by Energy Trust in the past (2014-2016).

- **Solarize**: an effort to help residents overcome the financial and logistical hurdles of installing solar power through bulk purchasing at the neighborhood or community level (2010-ongoing as initiated by communities or contractors).

- **Living Cully Community Energy Plan:** Living Cully is a collaboration formed in 2010 between four community-based organizations to leverage resources and create greater impact for residents of the Cully neighborhood in Northeast Portland. Living Cully engaged Energy Trust as a technical expert and community partner in 2017 to develop an energy plan.

Assessing the value and challenges of community engagement is important for Energy Trust or other organizations leveraging these approaches, particularly given cost and policy constraints associated with public purpose charge dollars.

B. Value and Benefits of Community Engagement

Maintaining credibility, trust and relevance across customers, stakeholders and the energy industry is critical to Energy Trust's mission. Community engagement often leverages the joint assets of multiple stakeholders and creates and/or maximizes opportunities for mission impact.

Key Benefits

- Increase participation across diverse audiences
- Leverage other resources
- Adapt to community
- Generate momentum
- Grow credibility and trust
- Ensure relevance
- Maximize opportunities for impact

In addition to benefits already outlined in this paper, the 2017 Grounded Research effort identified additional benefits of community-based efforts:

- **Increased program participation**. Community-based efforts have been shown to be very effective in increasing participation in programs and reaching new and diverse audiences.
- **Leverage non-program resources.** When partnering with community organizations, those organizations often lend their networks, staff or other sources of funding to the effort.
- **Adapt to community.** Statewide efforts do not always take the specific needs of a community into account. However, by approaching outreach on a smaller scale, the effort can be tailored to reach each community in the most relevant ways.
- **Generate momentum.** By aligning interests and taking mutually reinforcing action, community engagement and collaboration can generate momentum beyond what an entity can do on its own.

D. Challenges of Community Engagement Activities

Grounded Research also identified challenges of community-based education efforts.

- **Community-based efforts can be costly in terms of staff resources and efforts**, especially if not well-designed. In addition, past efforts point out the importance of having a thoughtful tracking system to understand what is happening in the community.

- **Ramp-up time can be an issue**. Often community based efforts take time to ramp up, but the program cycle is not long enough to allow for program success.
- **Not all communities are a good fit**. The best organizations have knowledge of the community they are planning to serve. Past efforts have been required to shift tactics when they developed a program model first and then tried to apply it to a particular community, rather than first understanding the community's needs and then using the available resources to develop an appropriate program.[20]

Key Challenges

- Can be costly in staff time
- Ramp up time
- Not all communities are a fit
- Can be difficult to measure
- Community interests may not align with Energy Trust offers
- Best methods of engagement may not align with current Energy Trust structure

Additional challenges observed by Energy Trust staff include:

- **Some efforts are difficult to measure, evaluate or establish attribution**. Not all community engagement efforts result in direct Energy Trust program savings or generation. Responding to data or information requests as communities consider policy changes or take on energy planning may increase Energy Trust program engagement, but it may not be clear how to value our involvement or attribute benefits.
- **Community interests may not align with current Energy Trust offers**. Based on the need or interest of a community, the energy offer they seek to promote may not be available or designed in a way that the community members will take advantage of, or in a way that the community can easily promote.
- **The best method of engaging the community may not align with Energy Trust's current structure**. Programs that have been designed to effectively serve particular market segments may not be well designed to serve communities. Similarly, delivery channels that have been optimized for cost-effectiveness may not be optimized for community engagement.

V. Planning for the Future – Considerations for Energy Trust

A. Potential to Expand Community Engagement Activities

Communities and municipalities increasingly have expressed interest in energy and climate issues, and have engaged Energy Trust to explore opportunities for participation in programs and services. Recent requests by communities seeking Energy Trust engagement fall in six categories:

1. Provide data for various uses (e.g. strategy, education, funding proposals, energy plans, advocacy);
2. Participate in community events and challenges;
3. Package Energy Trust offers to be presented to community members, and potentially by community-based organizations;
4. Participate in energy planning efforts;
5. Serve as a connector to resources and networks, and help navigate across entities;
6. Develop an ongoing partnership model with clear points of contact and sustained support.

Energy Trust can continue supporting these community requests at the level it does today. Alternately, opportunities exist for the organization to choose a greater degree of investment with potential for greater outcomes over the long-term. Energy Trust can consider approaches across the continuum, from inform to empower. Going beyond traditional “inform and educate” approaches would require building relationships and partnerships of trust and mutual interest that shift some degree of resource allocation decisions and leadership to the hands of communities.

B. How Might Energy Trust Prioritize Opportunities and Approaches?

Energy Trust is currently guided by energy saving and generation goals to determine community engagement approaches and investment levels. In addition to this goal, there are additional criteria that could be considered for prioritizing certain community engagement opportunities. Criteria include:

- Community and Energy Trust strategic goals are aligned and mutually reinforcing.
- The community initiative will advance DEI and other strategic priorities and values.

- The effort will leverage and strengthen local assets, plans and resources to help reach mutual goals.
- The community's civic culture is strong and supportive.
- Local leadership commitment and capacity exists in the community.
- Potential exists to further grow benefits to community and Energy Trust.

C. How Might Energy Trust Measure Impact of Community Engagement Strategies?

If Energy Trust sought to measure effectiveness of community engagement efforts beyond acquisition of energy savings and generation, there are some potential qualitative and quantitative metrics to consider:

- Growth in number of communities, collaborators, customers engaged with Energy Trust;
- Growth in number of Energy Trust programs and services communities access;
- Greater speed, scope and quality of responsiveness to communities;
- Increasingly positive perceptions of Energy Trust where engaged;
- Increased strength (e.g. trust, shared leadership, mutual support) of collaborations;
- Growth in number of energy projects underway in communities;
- Growth in number of communities with energy plans referencing energy efficiency and renewable energy and intentions to access Energy Trust services;
- Shifts in how communities think about and value energy savings.

D. Key Questions and Next Steps

Energy Trust's mission, vision, values and annual energy savings and generation goals will drive the goals of community engagement. As such, here are key questions for consideration in advance of Energy Trust's next strategic plan:

1. What additional community engagement approaches, beyond what is done today, would help meet energy saving and renewable energy generation goals now or in the future?
2. What is the appropriate level of investment in these approaches? What people, processes and structures are needed to deliver on that investment? What funding limitations will Energy Trust need to consider?
3. What is the scope of the appetite/interest among communities for increased Energy Trust engagement? What are the criteria, and therefore best opportunities?

4. What is Energy Trust's best role in community energy planning and implementation?
5. To what extent is Energy Trust open to community engagement approaches that yield some of the investment decisions to the community? Is this something Energy Trust can foresee in the future?
6. How can community engagement work specifically advance Energy Trust's diversity initiative and other strategic goals and values?
7. What are priority metrics for success for community engagement?

If the Energy Trust Board identifies that community engagement can be further leveraged as a strategy to meet goals, Energy Trust is in a solid position to build on current engagement efforts and extend its credibility, trust, reach and mission impact.

About Energy Trust of Oregon

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and generating renewable power. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista save on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, creates jobs and builds a sustainable energy future.

Appendix

AOC developed county profiles that highlight local priorities and plans around energy efficiency and renewable energy. One such county profile focuses on Douglas and Jackson Counties. Another profile identifies housing in Clackamas County. Note: percent rural is based on Census urban-rural classifications.[21]

A. Clackamas County – Opportunities in Housing

Population: 413,000

Percent rural: ~19%

Top priorities: economic priorities in Clackamas County and the metro region focus on:

1. Increasing economic opportunity for local residents by addressing housing availability and affordability,
2. Growing and recruiting businesses and pioneering innovation,
3. Strengthening transportation infrastructure,
4. Increasing access to employment and industrial lands, and
5. Developing and advancing the region's talent.

Current engagement in energy efforts: Through its 2008 *Action Plan for a Sustainable Clackamas County*, the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners established specific energy-related goals, including becoming carbon neutral by 2050 and reducing the county's energy use by 5 percent from 2014 levels by 2020.

Current and future plans: Clackamas County's Comprehensive Plan calls out the need to conserve energy and promote efficiency through alternative energy resource development, recycling, land use and transportation circulation patterning, site planning, building design and public education. It calls for exploring geothermal resources in the Cascades and working with the state to evaluate potential for wind and solar energy. The plan also stresses the importance of publicizing energy conservation and available weatherization programs, serving as a forum for addressing energy-related issues and working with community partners to develop an education program around energy efficiency. Additionally, the county's Performance Clackamas strategic plan outlines goals for the development of various county facilities, which will present opportunities for conservation and use of renewables.

Since the end of the 2008 recession, population growth and in-migration have significantly increased housing prices in Oregon, particularly in Clackamas County since it is closely connected to the Portland housing market. While construction of single and multifamily housing has also increased, it has not kept pace with demand, resulting in a shortage that falls heavily on low- and moderate-income residents.

To address this shortage, Clackamas County has established an aggressive goal to develop 2,000 new homes affordable for low- and moderate-income families in the next ten years. Also in the preliminary stages, the county is initiating an extensive analysis of housing needs. This analysis is guided by the Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C4), which is made up of representatives from the county, cities, unincorporated communities and transit, sewer, water and safety district. This committee has hired a consultant to lead the effort and is committed to funding at least 50 percent of the analysis, with the goal of local cities committing the other half. The outcome of the plan will be an in-depth analysis of the current and future needs of affordable, workforce and other housing options in the county; a set of quantifiable recommendations to bridge identified gaps; and information necessary to comply with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals & Guidelines Goal 10.

The Clackamas County Housing Authority is also undertaking an aggressive redevelopment plan to quadruple its 545 public housing units, which are currently located primarily in four housing parks in Milwaukie and Oregon City. This process already has involved outreach to residents, cities and other local stakeholders. There will be many more opportunities for community engagement as the Oregon City Manor, Milwaukie Hillside Park and Milwaukie Hillside Manor projects advance.

The county also hired a broker to identify additional property to purchase. Evaluations of building and development codes are underway to assure codes do not create any obstacles to affordable housing. Several municipalities in the county have begun similar evaluations. Although this redevelopment will likely take more than ten years to complete, the county sees the value of having a pipeline of projects that will expand housing options over time. It remains optimistic that the timeline will be shorter if voters approve Metro's housing bond in November.

B. Southern Oregon – Opportunities in Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Douglas County

Population: 110,395

Percent rural: ~41%

Top priorities: Economic priorities in Douglas County and the region include:

1. Expanding training opportunities,
2. Building a talent pipeline,
3. Addressing land use and housing availability and affordability,
4. Diversifying the economy,
5. Growing value-added employment in the natural resource sector, and
6. Developing tourism products, alternative energies, broadband and transportation infrastructure.

Plans: Douglas County's Comprehensive Plan identifies energy conservation as an objective. It encourages consideration of conservation and solar energy use during location and design stages of residential and commercial construction, and promotes new development in areas with access to winter sun. Finally, the plan encourages the exploration of two rivers, Elk and Calapooya, for potential hydroelectric power generation as well as geothermal and woody biomass as minor energy sources. Entities such as Douglas County Electric Cooperative, United Community Action Network, Neighborworks Umpqua and others are involved and engaging community members in issues related to renewable energy and energy conservation.

Jackson County

Population: 213,765

Percent rural: ~20%

Top priorities: Economic priorities in Jackson County and the region include:

1. Workforce development,
2. Improving the availability and affordability of housing,
3. Supporting the agricultural and recreational sectors,
4. Strengthening transportation and water/wastewater infrastructure, and
5. Identifying additional resources for infrastructure projects and economic development initiatives.

Plans: Jackson County's Comprehensive Plan details a number of very specific action items for the county. One action item is to establish an energy advisory committee to assist in a variety of efforts, such as public education and engagement, developing an energy conservation package and incentive program and an action-oriented plan for developing energy supplies from renewable resources. Many other organizations are engaged in energy-related work in Southern Oregon, including the Southern Oregon Hybrid-Electric Vehicle Association, ACCESS, Rogue Climate, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN), Geos Institute, Energize Rogue and Spark Northwest to name a few.

Over the last several years, two citizen-led initiatives have gained momentum in Southern Oregon. Located in the Roseburg area, Douglas County Smart Energy is a project that has grown out of the efforts of the Douglas County Global Warming Coalition, a broad-based citizen group focused on promoting a healthy climate. As the coalition broke into subcommittees to focus on specific issues related to climate, energy efficiency and renewable energy became a clear priority for the group. Thus, DC Smart Energy was born. Today, the project includes a broad spectrum of interests including community members, local businesses and representatives from Douglas Electric, Avista Utilities, Pacific Power, Energy Trust, United Community Action Network and Neighborworks Umpqua. These organizations meet regularly to pool knowledge and resources to provide energy efficiency tips and incentives in a way that is easy to access and understand.

Each month, DC Smart Energy volunteers submit a column to the local newspaper regarding efficiency and renewable energy related opportunities, such as programs that provide energy assistance for low-income households, electric cars, creating a greener home for energy savings and more. The DC Smart Energy "Energize" campaign, which is staffed by an AmeriCorps RARE intern partially supported by Energy Trust, has included a series of town halls with Douglas Electric Cooperative and Energy Trust to highlight ways to save energy and money. In partnership with nonprofit Spark Northwest, it has also recently led a series of three workshops about ductless heat pumps. In addition to educating over 200 attendees, it was able to extend a group-purchase discount to participants and help them access additional tax credits and rebates to help cover the cost of installation.

In collaboration with Sustainable Northwest, DC Smart Energy also joined three other rural communities across Oregon to apply for a Federal Department of Energy SunShot grant. This grant offers funding and technical assistance for the development of solar energy in rural communities. It was awarded last year. DC Smart Energy is also working with Douglas County, the City of Roseburg and other landowners to identify potential sites for community solar, as well as long-term funding opportunities. Additionally, to take advantage of the growing trend toward electric cars, it has applied to Volkswagen for funding to install electric car charging stations in Roseburg.

Farther south in the city of Talent, a group of residents have come together over the past few years to create a clean energy plan for their community. Their hope was to develop a plan that would be adopted by city council and incorporated into the city's Comprehensive Plan. Their efforts were successful, and the plan is currently being adapted for inclusion in the city's COMP Plan with the help of a seven-member Citizen Advisory Committee.

As planning continues, Talent has also unveiled two electric vehicle charging stations in front of its community center, which was recently outfitted with a solar array to serve as its primary power source. Serving as the city's energy efficiency coordinator, an AmeriCorps RARE intern is working to further promote energy savings. This intern's position is jointly funded by the city of Talent and Rogue Climate. The intern tables at the public library once per week to inform citizens about energy efficiency programs, and his availability will soon double with an additional weekly session at the local coffee shop. His schedule is advertised in the local newspaper, which residents have confirmed as the reason for their visit to his table at the library. He also plans to publish a new page on the city's website devoted to energy efficiency, which will be available in English and Spanish

With the long-term goal of achieving net-zero consumption, Talent city leaders are also beginning to analyze total energy use across the city and identify potential sites for solar as a preliminary step toward developing a solar master plan. In the meantime, the city is working to identify immediate opportunities to save energy and is participating in Energy Trust's Strategic Energy Management program.

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