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MEMO

To: Dane County Towns
From: Renée Lauber, DCTA Policy Advisor
Date: January 21, 2014
Re: Blue Skies / Healthy Skies Initiative

At the December 2013 DCTA Membership Meeting, I was asked to give a report on the Blue Skies / Healthy Skies initiative. This topic has been referred to as the Blue Skies Initiative, Healthy Skies, Dane Healthy Sky Initiative and the Dane County Air Pollution Inventory. Irrespective of the name, there is \$35,000 in the County Budget for an air pollution inventory and strategic plan. Specifically:

“Expenditures be increased by \$35,000 in the Department of Planning and Development to fund a POS contract and LTE position(s) for a communitywide inventory of air pollutants, including greenhouse gas emissions, throughout Dane County business, not-for-profits, and residences; an inventory of conservation and efficiency opportunities and renewable energy resources; and the creation of a climate action strategic plan for the greater Dane County community.

Expenditures would be broken down as follows:

\$24,000 for the POS contract

\$11,000 for LTE position(s)

Deliverables would include data regarding current pollutants, a list of available resources, and a strategic plan for air quality improvement.”

Source: <http://pdf.countyofdane.com/budget/2014/PF%20Operating%20Amendments.pdf> - page 24.

The expenditure was done as an amendment to the County 2014 Budget via the EANR Committee and sponsored by Supervisor Ripp.

Link to other plans

The amendment request was initiated by CRANES (Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability - www.cranesinc.org). The request is based on work members of CRANES did with the Capital Region Sustainable Communities (CRSC) consortium, a group funded by a HUD grant through CARPC (Capital Area Regional Planning Commission). Specifically it comes from a CRSC work group that developed a set of recommendations to mitigate

climate change and air pollution by reducing emissions of greenhouse gas and other pollutants. The first two recommendations of the CRSC work group are similar to the 2014 budget amendment. The key recommendations of the work group are:

1 - Produce a Healthy Skies Emission Sources Report that inventories and benchmarks (to 2008) the data for overall emissions by sector and for per capita emissions, employing the three widely used scopes of emissions (directly in region, directly outside of region, indirectly outside of region) and a new and fourth scope, historical outside of region (as local resources allow).

2 - Produce a Healthy Skies Renewable Resources Report that inventories the potential for energy conservation and efficiency, as well as the county/region capacity for producing renewable energy, including solar (photovoltaic and thermal), wind, small hydroelectric (ecologically compatible, including no methane emissions), and biogas (from feed stock that is not competitive with food sources), providing Energy Return on Energy Investment (EROEI) data for each option.

3 - Produce Healthy Skies Strategic Pathway outlining actions and responsible parties to meet air pollution targets (without use of energy from coal and other fossil fuels, nuclear, or large-hydro) and with annual targets (and corrective actions that will be taken when targets are not met).

4 - Carry out campaign for local governments, businesses and organizations to adopt regional air quality and climate disruption emission targets, using specific and verifiable metrics and effective mitigation strategies (including a Healthy Skies Parley in January or February 2014).

Source: <http://www.capitalregionscrpg.org/blog/?p=700>

There is also a correlation between the budget amendment and the Dane Healthy Sky initiative that is part of a Dane 2100 report prepared by CRANES. See <http://www.cranesinc.org/presentations/CRANES-DANE2100-Ltr%20to%20DC%20Leaders-rev2013-09-26.pdf> for the full document.

I asked John Hendrick what the purpose of budget amendment was. He said that it was to establish baseline data. They expect federal grant money to be available in the future for projects and baseline air pollutant data will be needed to apply for grants. This comment is similar to what Supervisor Miles said the December DCTA Membership Meeting. He stated that the funding was for baseline data collection and had no policy associated with it.

Conclusion

While the Healthy Skies initiative adopted was suggested by CRANES, the rest of their agenda has not been adopted or even proposed at the county level yet. Dane 2100 calls for “protecting the remaining rural 81% of the county from urbanization for at least the next 50 years” and reconsidering “current agricultural practices, toward diversifying use of our working lands in ways that are more climate- and watershed-friendly.” Members of the DCTA Executive Board reviewed this information and noted that we can only speculate as to the long term goal of this budget amendment as the funding was allocated without any significant public discussion.

Additionally, the Executive Board noted that Madison's air quality is substandard – it is one of the worst places to live if you have asthma. The consensus of the Executive Board was that it is a given that the report will come back with negative findings. They don't see a positive outcome for towns as the likely result will be momentum for new restrictions on development and agriculture practices in towns because the county cannot do anything to regulate development in the cities and villages.

The DCTA Executive Board plans to discuss these concerns with the County Executive at our next meeting.