



CLIMATE CORPS

The Future of Sustainability in Rochester: Energy Action Plan, Sustainability  
Office, and the Next Steps

8/12/2016

Matus Muron

## Introduction

The observations and recommendations in this report were obtained over the course of ten weeks between June 6th and August 12<sup>th</sup> as part of Environmental Defense Fund's Climate Corps Program. The author focused on exploring next steps in the area of sustainability after the city formally adopts the Energy Action Plan (EAP). Research consisted of interviews and interactions with stakeholders including senior city officials, city staff, electric and gas utilities, DMC Economic Development Agency, community representatives, and ordinary citizens.

The report tries not to repeat information from the EAP, Comprehensive Plan (COMP), and the Destination Medical Center (DMC) Development Plan, but it draws on these documents. Together with the EAP, the COMP Plan, and the DMC Development Plan, these documents can serve as a necessary background knowledge and guide for the city's decision makers, activists, and other participants in the sustainability realm in the City of Rochester.

This report provides an outlook and suggests a direction on introducing and embedding the idea of sustainability to Rochester in the most politically feasible and cost-effective manner. The report identifies organizational deficiency, fragmentation of the sustainability community, and dis-involvement of the wider community as the main hurdles to achieve that.

The primary recommendation is for the establishment of a sustainability office as the primary vehicle for advancing sustainability in Rochester. This report is not a final sustainability strategy, nor does it suggest that Rochester immediately needs one. It is not a definitive guide but rather an outlook on Rochester's sustainability activities and its post EAP future based on local circumstances as of August 12<sup>th</sup> 2016. It presents a political and intellectual compromise that will allow the city to save money while providing a positive outlook for the future of sustainability in Rochester.

This report is meant to be accompanied by the report prepared by Allison Anderson who was seconded to the Public Works Department during the summer of 2016 (EDF report #2).

## Background

Rochester is at a crossroads. The Mayo Clinic brings wealth, employment, international visitors, and diversity to the City of Rochester through the employment of over 30,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Over the next decade the Mayo Clinic, and subsequently Rochester, is projected to continue a trend of steady growth. As the Mayo Clinic, the City of Rochester, and the Rochester community embark on a new path towards reshaping Rochester to be a center for health and wellness – as part of the Destination Medical Center effort — they have an opportunity and an imperative to make the city grow not only in prosperity but also in a more livable manner.

Parts of the community, the city council, the mayor, and many from the city staff realized the need to transform Rochester from its Midwestern legacy to an attractive small, but international urban-like, city. To that end, the city's planning efforts began to integrate a more comprehensive approach to dealing with buildings, new developments, transportation, waste, energy, and environmental conservation – efforts that can be grouped under the term sustainability. This new approach is manifested in the inclusiveness of these subjects in the city's new COMP Plan, the DMC Development plan, and the EAP. This effort has a legal basis from

---

<sup>1</sup> Mayo Clinic. "Mayo Clinic Facts." About Mayo Clinic. Mayo Clinic, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016

ordinance 19A that states that: “The City of Rochester views the creation of a sustainable Rochester energy future as part of broad regional strategy for prosperity”.<sup>2</sup>

Planning, thought leadership, and sound legal commitment are instrumental if Rochester is to undergo such a large urban transformation as part of the DMC development and beyond. In addition, the involvement and support of the local community is also necessary. At this moment, there is a flurry of activity and enthusiasm from the community related to energy, alternative transportation, recycling, local food, and other issues. While these efforts are present, they are concentrated within interest-based community organizations, but have not yet permeated the majority of Rochester’s population.

The present challenge is to build on the legal commitment and transform the thought leadership as expressed by city staff and community organizations into actionable projects. These first decisions and actions are not only first goals and achievements, but they are themselves a means to an end. They will be the building blocks for the city’s sustainable future. To reach that future, the City of Rochester faces three main constraints: organizational deficiency, fragmentation of the sustainability community, and the dis-involvement of the wider community.

To address these aforementioned restraints this report recommends establishing the Sustainability Office as the primary means for advancing sustainability in Rochester and making the city better – more livable.

### **The Issue of Sustainability in Rochester**

Today the word "sustainability" is used more and more frequently, from a wide variety of perspectives and with a number of different purposes in mind. But sustainability is more than just environmental programs, more than just “going green”, more than a lot of new programs, and more than just talk. Sustainability contains projects executed by the city and the community in the framework of interrelated issues that include, but are not limited to, economic growth, environmental stewardship, public health, and social equity.

When referring to sustainability, this report uses the definition established and utilized by the Minnesota State Legislature. It describes the sustainable development of a community as one that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend.<sup>3</sup> Benefits include more livable communities, lower costs, and an environment safe for future generations.<sup>4</sup>

This definition partially corresponds with the one described in ordinance 19A that commits Rochester to a “sustainable energy future by saving resources, developing greater energy independence, supporting and building the local economy, improving air quality and public health, and improving community livability.”<sup>5</sup>

Since the Rochester City Council acknowledged the existence of tested local, state, national, and international models and initiatives supporting sustainable energy policy and

---

<sup>2</sup> United States of America. City of Rochester. Ordinance 19A : Energy Commission. Rochester, MN: n.p., 2009. City of Rochester, MN. Web. 12 Aug. 2016

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "What Makes a Community Sustainable?" Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> "Government." Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 22 Dec. 2009. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

<sup>5</sup> United States of America. City of Rochester. Ordinance 19A : Energy Commission. Rochester, MN: n.p., 2009. City of Rochester, MN. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

practices, and it expressed its intention for the city to take a leadership role in achieving them, the political support for pursuing this issue should not be in question.<sup>67</sup>

## **Current Situation**

Despite this commitment to Rochester's sustainable energy future in ordinance 19A, the progress on the topic has been slow. The Rochester Energy Commission (REC) that was created in 2009 to assist the city in its sustainability endeavors only succeeded in having the city's greenhouse gas inventory and Energy Action Plan developed this year. Prepared by Wenck Associates, a consulting firm, it is expected that the EAP will be adopted by the city council as an addendum to the COMP plan. While this is encouraging, the challenge lies in seizing this momentum and progressing.

Given the community organizations' and REC's eagerness to move ahead, the most obvious post-EAP course of action is to start implementing projects identified as a priority in the EAP. The author conducted a brief analysis of priority projects through interviews with stakeholders and independent research. The author concludes that most priority projects, which do not concern city operations as identified in the EAP report, are either already implemented, on their way, or cannot be implemented due to organizational and financial constraints.

Therefore, given the current constraints, EAP implementation and accompanied focus on community's energy and GHG reductions should continue to be the city's long-term objective. However, in the short to medium term, the city should focus on projects identified in EDF report #2 that focus on city operations. These primarily include retro commissioning of buildings and lighting upgrades in buildings, on streets, and in parks. The next step is creating a position that will address these energy management objectives in the short-term and it will be able to eventually transition to pursue other sustainability projects across the community.

## **Sustainability Office (SO)**

Creation of the SO would alleviate some of the organizational constraints on executing city operations projects that are described in EDF report #2, ensuring short-term economic savings while preparing the conditions to pursue "Rochester's sustainable energy future and improving livability" as described in ordinance 19A.

The impetus for pursuing sustainability measures in a city can come from various sources: strong and united sustainability dedicated community, devoted and powerful mayor, or enthusiastic city council. While Rochester does not enjoy any of the situations above, there is partial interest from all of the stakeholders listed above. Rochester has numerous even if fragmented sustainability focused organizations, percolating interest from city departments, organizationally weak but dedicated mayor, and understanding city council that focuses on the potential for economic savings.

In such an environment without a clear and powerful champion – the role of the Rochester Energy Commission is addressed on page 7 - the most effective way to progress in this

---

<sup>6</sup> United States of America. City of Rochester. Ordinance 19A : Energy Commission. Rochester,MN: n.p., 2009. City of Rochester, MN. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

<sup>7</sup> United States of America. City of Rochester. Ordinance 19A : Energy Commission. Rochester,MN: n.p., 2009. City of Rochester, MN. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

realm is seizing the opportunity by agreeing on the lowest common denominator. In this case, that would be the creation of a sustainability position within the city staff. The benefits that include immediate economic savings from their projects, synergies gained from cross-departmental collaboration, and other benefits described in EDF report #2 will embed them in the city structures while providing them with a flexibility to expand their role in the future.

### **Office's Role and Setup**

Specifics about the role of the Sustainability Office, job description, and responsibilities can be found in the EDF report #2. This report will only introduce high-level responsibilities of the position needed for understanding the elements of future progress of sustainability initiatives in Rochester.

As the name suggests, the position will bear the main responsibilities for sustainability related work. The composition and time allotment for different responsibilities will vary every year depending on priorities set by the REC, the city council, or the office itself. To fully pursue the responsibilities and activities below, the city would need a team of people so the individual's time will be severely constrained.

Primarily, the individual will serve as an energy champion - coordinator of all projects with energy, environmental, or a broader sustainability aspect as defined above. Initially, the individual will work with city departments to evaluate reasonable objectives in the area of sustainability for their departments. Then, the position will serve a management role for some projects both within and across different city departments. Throughout this process, the individual will try to bring energy and environmental considerations to all city operations — efforts that will focus on achieving cost savings for city operations.

The SO will also be in charge of public engagement which will include both communication and education initiatives to compensate for the city's lacking communications team. The SO has to communicate city's efforts in the sustainability realm to the public, engage the community to actively support city's energy and climate goals, and collaborate with community organizations active in this field.

The SO will also be in charge of finding and applying for grants for specific projects, for funding the sustainability office itself, and for applying and managing initiatives. Given that many grants require the recipient to have a sustainability position to even apply, the progress and opportunities will multiply. Another benefit will be increased participation in various initiatives on which the city otherwise loses out. For example, SolSmart seeks to address solar "soft costs," or business process or administrative costs that can increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system – costs which are then passed on to solar customers.<sup>8</sup> While the city could join this initiative at this time, no one within the city government can, currently, take advantage of it. This issue of ownership and management of initiatives repeats itself with other state and federal programs in which Rochester could take part.

In addition to taking advantage of the different state and federal initiatives, the Sustainability Office would serve as a hub for information management related to this topic. As of now, since no one is directly responsible for sustainability related issues, no one gathers information about projects, grants, initiatives, best practices, exchanges, lessons learned etc. Information about projects and grants gets passed around by emails, deadlines are missed, and opportunities are lost.

---

<sup>8</sup> Home." SolSmart. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

The SO would also be more effective in attracting and securing free professional advice and consulting services from AmeriCorps, GreenCorps, UoM, and other entities. While REC has authority to do so, the SO will be able to better identify scope of the different projects that could be done externally for free.

Funding options for the office are more thoroughly discussed in EDF report #2. This report would only like to point out the possibility of asking for financial support from Rochester Public Utilities (RPU). Municipal utilities such as RPU serve the needs of the local community in exchange for being shielded from competition. RPU's efficient operations, professionalism, low rates, participation in MN's Conservation Improvement Program, and conscious decision to follow MN state renewable goals are admirable, but RPU should be encouraged to take the next step in pursuing sustainability in Rochester by raising and contributing funds for the Sustainability Office. Duluth's municipal utility funds their version of the sustainability coordinator who currently focuses on energy management. Xcel Energy, investor owned utility that operates in Minnesota, funds two year sustainability positions for cities across its service area. RPU's financial contribution would fall within RPU's dedication of serving the community as a municipal entity and the city council has the authority to ask them to do so.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of an organizational structure, the SO should be an independent office attached to the City Administrator's Office. Given its primarily coordinating focus, it should not be housed within any single department to preserve its neutrality and credibility.

Lastly, the SO cannot be thought of as a temporary endeavor to deliver a few specific projects. The SO and its focus will gradually evolve, but to ensure Rochester's continuous advancement towards its sustainable energy future, the office and the position have to be permanent. To this effect, it would be detrimental for consultants or a temporary employee to be hired to execute the projects described in EDF report #2. It would hamper not only the projects' effectiveness but also the advancement of sustainability in Rochester's city operations and in the wider community.

### **Development of Sustainability Initiatives in Rochester**

SO's roles and responsibilities described above and in EDF report #2 will change and evolve over the years depending on specific projects, availability of external funding, external circumstances, community input, and other variables. The office is meant to progress through three phases: Energy Management of City Operations, City Climate Action, and Sustainability. These three phases are not mutually exclusive - they are meant to represent the progression of SO's increasing responsibilities. The rationale for the SO to have evolving responsibilities originates from the uncertain institutional support for the position as described above. An energy management position has the highest chance of being funded, but this political constraint should not prevent the city in advancing towards future action in regards to climate or social equity in the future.

The first phase will focus on energy management in city operations. EDF report #2 describes the possible synergies and savings to be gained from improving city's operations in relation to energy and centralizing some of the management and decision-making practices in regards to building management. Once projects are put in place and initiated, the SO might think

---

<sup>9</sup> An approximate calculation of \$0.50 cent monthly sustainability charge on 20,000 out of 30,000 of RPU's customers (to take into account low-income households) would yield \$120,000 annually which would be enough to fund the position

about preparing an energy management plan for city's facilities so as to formalize and institutionalize his/her efforts. Energy management plans for cities are readily available online and in the toolkit as submitted by EDF report #2.<sup>10</sup> The professional that this report, and EDF report #2, recommends hiring might not be an electrical engineer, but he/she will be able to identify opportunities for savings across the city's operations. In addition, department heads and other city employees already have ideas on how their own work can be done differently, more efficiently, and in a more sustainable manner.

The second phase will focus on climate action and community engagement. This is not to say that the SO will not pursue either of these during the first phase, but rather these initiatives will gain a primary focus during the second phase. At this point, the Sustainability Office will start exploring the most efficient and impactful means of greenhouse gas reductions and community engagement across the city. It will be able to draw from the EAP's recommendations, from the community, the REC, and from its own expertise. Given that the community is responsible for over 95% of GHG emissions in the City of Rochester, community engagement and awareness projects will be a key strategy. Whether these are geographically focused or issue focused, the Sustainability Office will be able to devise these on their own and without unnecessary paid consultants. At this time, the SO will also be responsible for updating the GHG inventory as it should be updated every three years. This phase should gain prominence in SO's activities within three years from the office's establishment.

Finally, the last phase will concern sustainability projects overall. At this point, city's operations and decision making should have the sustainability aspect embedded in them. City employees will think about energy, environmental, and social consequences when pursuing their daily duties. City staff themselves will already be participating in transportation, energy conservation, awareness raising, and health projects to showcase city's commitment to the idea. A community organization strategy will be implemented with events and initiatives that will be geographically and issue specific. At this point, the Sustainability Office will be able to execute ever broader range of projects. It will be able to explore and develop projects proposed by community organizations that span across energy, transportation, building, waste, or environmental issues to ultimately contribute to improve the city's livability.

In this last phase, the SO will further engage in planning efforts. At an appropriate point in time, it will have to develop a plan that encompasses Energy Management of City Operations, City Climate Action, and Sustainability overall. At that point, once it can reasonably expect and assess its time commitment to different initiatives, it will be able to utilize this plan. The plan should be developed based on feedback and objectives from city's departments, the Rochester Energy Commission, community organizations, and members of the community themselves. Comprehensive sustainability plans like this help to guide cities to achieve their objectives that are often expressed as ideas or principles.

### **Further Sustainability Planning**

Cities approach the development of Sustainability Plans differently. The reasoning and execution for developing Sustainability Plans differs based on who is leading the effort to promote sustainability, commitment of the city leadership, and community's involvement in these efforts. Examples of comprehensive sustainability plans from Dubuque, IA and Asheville, NC can be found in the EDF report #2.

---

<sup>10</sup> "Energy Management Plan - A Better City." A Better City. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

In cities with powerful sustainability advocates, these plans are often prepared before the city embarks on any sustainability initiatives so that its efforts are guided using chosen ideas and principles and they can be measured by chosen indicators. This comprehensive planning effort includes robust community input, ideas on the city's functioning developed by city employees, and outside perspectives on future development of the community with sustainability embedded at the city's core. Ideally, the time to execute this planning is now, but given the city's political, financial, and committal constraints in regards to sustainability, Rochester has to devise its own path.

Based on this assessment, this report recommends developing this narrative only in phase three of the Sustainability Office. Should this planning effort occur, it will require a great deal of thinking about the long-term vision and developing an identity for the city. While ideas and objectives about the future of Rochester permeate throughout the COMP Plan, Rochester as a city does not have an explicit narrative, mission, or identity that citizens identify with and into which Rochester's future sustainability efforts can be integrated.

### **Future of the Rochester Energy Commission**

Rochester Energy Commission (REC) is currently the only responsible entity working towards a sustainable energy future in Rochester. This group of Rochester's citizens includes individuals with diverse backgrounds, skillsets, and affiliations. Unfortunately, ordinance 19A endows it with both advisory and action responsibilities creating an identity crisis for its functioning.<sup>11</sup> The REC's responsibilities are limited by the fact that they do not have a city employee whom they can directly advise while their execution of responsibilities is hampered by the small budget and time constraints stemming from the voluntary manner of the REC. Ideally, in the future, the REC should serve an advisory role to the SO similar to other city commissions. It could help the coordinator decide on projects, voice community's concerns, ideas, or preferences, and provide substantive background on issues with which the coordinator might not be as familiar.

While this report is optimistic about the likelihood of the city hiring a sustainability coordinator and the eventual shift of the commission's role to a primarily advisory body, REC has an opportunity to utilize its action mandate in the meantime. The organizational constraint in progressing towards a sustainable energy future in Rochester can only be addressed by the city creating a new position, but fragmentation of community organizations and community's overall disinterest in sustainability can both begin to be tackled by the REC.

The author believes that the most effective means of achieving these goals is to create smaller project teams of commission members who would pursue specific projects. The REC's limited budget should not be spent on hiring an intern, but on items necessary for success of the undertaken projects such as logistics, printing, promotional materials, etc.

#### *Potential Projects for the Rochester Energy Commission*

In terms of community engagement, Rochester needs to go through a community mapping process that will identify actors, issues, initiatives, community participation based on geographic and socio-economic trends, and information distribution mechanisms in different parts of the city and on different issues. Once this background work is done, the REC can think

---

<sup>11</sup> Full list of the commission's responsibilities can be found here:  
<http://www.rochestermn.gov/home/showdocument?id=5104>



about who would be best positioned to reach the respective communities, and how they should be approached. This work would then be used by the SO in planning further community awareness and engagement initiatives.

Another subset of REC's members could also try to serve as a conduit for Rochester's numerous community organizations. The first stage could focus on mapping the different initiatives and projects that the organizations are doing to identify common objectives. This background information could be channeled to foster cross-community collaboration on projects as well as providing basis for future cooperation between the SO and community organizations.

Another area where the Commission could make a difference in the immediate future is community education. It could utilize one of the commissioner's connection with the local community college and develop an educational and outreach program for college, high school, middle school, and elementary school students. A few middle school science teachers already developed energy related projects and assignments on their own – an effort that can be studied and further developed. Given the already full curriculum in Rochester's School District, it might be more plausible to target and convince specific science teachers as opposed to trying to insert the subject into the curriculum. The ideas and resources for this project are readily available on the Department of Energy's website.<sup>12</sup>

Given the technical expertise in facilities management in the REC and expressed interest in this issue by the city council, the REC could also attempt to suggest reorganization of the city's structure to create a facilities department to reduce the current inefficiencies of buildings being managed separately and losing out on economies of scale and learning curves.

These are just a few examples of projects that the REC could undertake in the following months regardless of the city's decision on hiring the sustainability coordinator. Any progress in these areas would be beneficial for the future work of the Sustainability Office.

## **Community Engagement**

This report includes the role of community engagement in the sustainability coordinator's description because while the city can set an example in making its operations more efficient, only the community can make an impact towards achieving the city's energy and emissions goals. Community engagement is an organized interactive partnership between a government and its citizens that is essential to achieve effective implementation and maintenance of government-initiated sustainability programs. Citizen participation fosters a sense of ownership, increasing the community's buy-in, and providing them with a stake in the successful outcome.

That is why creating partnerships and establishing relationships with local commercial and industrial companies is instrumental in achieving progress in sustainability in Rochester. Whether it is a partnership with Mayo to take advantage of their employee behavior change and energy education programs, with local malls that make an energy efficiency pledge, or small businesses, the opportunity is there.

The same approach should be pursued in the residential sector. Whether this outreach is done through neighborhood associations, informal neighbor awareness meetings, or digital communication, Rochester's residents have to learn about what Rochester is doing in regards to sustainability, what their neighbors are doing, and how they can contribute. Given the currently non-existent coordinated outreach process, this effort will require considerable effort and time from both the Sustainability Office and the REC.

---

<sup>12</sup> "Teach and Learn." Department of Energy. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.

One of Rochester's specific shortcomings in community engagement is the community's apathy towards sustainability measures. Currently, it is difficult to reach wider audiences due to the limited number of groups and individuals who attend meetings, information sessions, etc. related to the issue of sustainability. It is necessary to develop the previously mentioned community mapping project that will uncover and address the city's shortcomings in different parts of the city and around different issues within sustainability. Based on the results, an outreach strategy can be developed that utilizes the existing outreach support and infrastructure from community organizations while focusing on the rest of the community.

Fortunately, while continuing to grow, Rochester still retains many attributes associated with smaller communities. Therefore, any outreach strategy will have to be a mix between information campaigns used in larger cities to reach wide audiences and community outreach that utilizes local grocery stores, libraries, sporting events, farmers markets, etc. This report does not provide any specific community engagement initiatives because they will be directly dependent on outcomes of the SO's and REC's initial mapping efforts.

## **Major Partners**

The EAP lists potential partners who will be instrumental for the city advancing towards its energy and GHG reduction objectives. Collaboration and projects with RPU, Rochester Chamber of Commerce, private businesses and associations, the construction community, Mayo, and local non-profits will be crucial in the future. These efforts and partnerships will eventually crystallize based on the needs identified by the SO. This report would like to emphasize the importance of collaborating with Mayo Clinic and its ongoing and emerging efforts.

Mayo and the city have strong working relationships on the technical level whether that is in regards to the DMC, energy specific issues in the DMC, power generation, and others, but there needs to be more discussion and understanding on the strategic level about the co-existence and further cooperation between the city and the clinic. Cities that are as closely interlinked and dependent on a single employer like Mayo develop special relationships with the company's leadership to identify ways of how they can tackle issues together. Whether that concerns collaboration in regards to Mayo's emerging sustainability initiatives or attracting young healthcare professionals to Rochester by increasing the city's livability, the two entities have an opportunity to capitalize on a more focused partnership. While Mayo already supports and engages Rochester's community, there is a potential to improve their efforts in the sustainability realm. Large employers and health organizations across the country support and take an active part in their cities' sustainability efforts. This dialogue on additional future partnerships should be headed by a designated member from the city council or the mayor who would liaise with a Mayo Clinic executive.

## **Conclusion**

Healthy, prosperous, and resilient communities develop not as a result of isolated initiatives but through a combination of clear vision, strategic actions, and onerous and time-consuming collaboration efforts. While the decision on establishing the Sustainability Office might not seem like a priority compared to competing funding needs, its economic, environmental, social, and branding benefits should be considered given the city's economic development. The expanding city needs ever more resources from city's operations, Rochester's

visitors and new residents will continue to expect ever more from “destination for wellness and health”, and Rochester’s community expects the best services while minimizing taxes. City staff are doing their best to run city operations as smoothly as possible; planners, other city departments, and the EDA are doing their best to conceptualize and execute the Destination Medical Center; and city council is doing its best to satisfy voters’ wishes while steering the city into the future. The Sustainability Office and the projects that it can execute can assist on all counts. The office would reduce the city’s spending on its facilities; aid the DMC’s Energy Integration Committee in redeveloping the downtown to ensure long-term cost-effectiveness for the city, Mayo, and local businesses; and bring the citizens on board to support their representatives in making Rochester more livable.

Given that there is not a single powerful champion in the city that would push this idea based on its economic, environmental, and social merits, the strategy for introducing sustainability to Rochester has to be gradual. That is why the establishment of the Sustainability Office, with an initial focus on Energy Management in City Operations, is the most logical, cost-effective, and strategic first step. Based on the economic value identified in EDF report #2, support from council members, and external organizations, the author of the report is reasonably optimistic about the creation of the position during the 2017 budgeting process. The other two hurdles to sustainability in Rochester - fragmented community organizations and disinterested community - can eventually be addressed through efforts and projects between the newly created Sustainability Office, REC, and the community itself. Progress on community organization and community awareness would consequently increase profile of sustainability issues in the city, possibly further influencing the city’s political environment.

This report is not all encompassing and it is intentionally vague in terms of timelines, specific projects, and financial assessments which depend on future circumstances. It merely suggests a strategic direction that achieves political and intellectual compromise that will allow the city to save money while providing a positive outlook for the future of sustainability in Rochester.

## Major Takeaways

- Establishing the sustainability office with evolving responsibilities is the first and most important step in advancing towards Rochester's sustainable energy future as described in ordinance 19A.
- The REC will continue to be an indispensable body for Rochester, but it should start developing and working towards projects based on its skillsets including a recommendation on creating a facilities department for the city, community organization mapping, community education project, community engagement plan, green building standard recommendation, or other ideas.
- Community engagement will play a key part in both raising awareness about sustainability initiatives as well as encouraging residents and businesses to contribute to reach the city's energy and GHG reduction goals. But the Sustainability Office will not be able to dedicate enough time to this activity at its onset which is why REC's executional and advisory contribution will be crucial for functioning of the Sustainability Office.
- While the Sustainability Office's future collaboration with partners in the private sector and non-profits is necessary, the city should think about its strategic relationship with the Mayo Clinic and whether there is a possibility for further collaboration on making Rochester more livable as part of Mayo Clinic's and Rochester's long-term vision for the city.

## Works Cited

- "Energy Management Plan - A Better City." *A Better City*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.  
<<http://challengeforsustainability.org/toolkit/energy-efficiency/energy-management-plan/>>.
- "Government." *Minnesota Pollution Control Agency*. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 22 Dec. 2009. Web. 12 Aug. 2016. <<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/government>>.
- "Home." *SolSmart*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016. <<http://www.gosparc.org/home-2>>.
- Mayo Clinic. "Mayo Clinic Facts." *About Mayo Clinic*. Mayo Clinic, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.  
<<http://www.mayoclinic.org/about-mayo-clinic/facts-statistics/minnesota>>.
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "What Makes a Community Sustainable?" Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016. <<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/quick-links/what-makes-community-sustainable>>.
- "Teach and Learn." *Department of Energy*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.  
<<http://energy.gov/eere/education/teach-and-learn>>.
- United States of America. City of Rochester. *Ordinance 19A : Energy Commission*. Rochester, MN: n.p., 2009. City of Rochester, MN. Web. 12 Aug. 2016.  
<<http://www.rochestermn.gov/home/showdocument?id=5104>>.