

Community Development Committee

Meeting of June 15, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 24, 2020

Subject: Metro-Scale Climate Leader, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate and Energy

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council takes the following actions:

- 1. Commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, joining thousands of other cities and local governments around the world currently engaged in climate leadership.
2. Specifically, within no more than three years of this commitment, the Council pledges to develop, formally adopt, and report on the following:
a. A community-scale greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventory,
b. An assessment of climate hazards and vulnerabilities,
c. Ambitious, measurable, and time-bound target(s) to reduce/limit greenhouse gas emissions,
d. Ambitious adaptation vision and goals, based on quantified scientific evidence when possible, to increase local resilience to climate change,
e. Ambitious and just goal to improve access to sustainable energy, and
f. Plan(s) to address climate change mitigation / low emission development, climate resilience and adaptation, and access to sustainable energy, including provisions for regular (annual or biennial) progress reports.
3. Council targets and action plans for mitigation / low emission development will be quantified and consistent with or exceed relevant national commitments defined through the United States' Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).
a. For information, under the State of Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act (2007), the Council has committed to emissions reductions that are more ambitious than those within the US NDC goals.

Table with 2 columns: US Nationally Determined Contribution (2015) and MN Next Generation Energy Act (2007). Both target reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% and 30% below 2005 levels by 2025.

- 4. The Council acknowledges that there may be additional region- or country-specific commitments to adhere to, agreed through local membership networks or through direct engagement with local Global Covenant of Mayors partners.
5. The Council acknowledges that continued membership in the Global Covenant of Mayors and associated local chapters or "Regional Covenants" as established, is contingent on complying with the above requirements within established timeframes.



## Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

### *Community Development Committee*

Planning Analyst Eric Wojchik presented the staff's report to the Committee. Council Members Johnson and Lindstrom asked about partnerships within GCoM and future commitments. Wojchik responded that Council staff will continue to work with local communities as part of our work, but this opportunity primarily focuses on Council operations and policy. Additionally, if the work with GCoM were to change, the Council would need to formally recommit to the partnership. Wojchik restated that the commitment is reflective of work already in process at the Council.

Council member Cummings inquired about the programmatic changes that made the opportunity available. Wojchik stated that the Denver-Boulder group were not able to participate which allowed us to join.

Council Member Wulff asked about the Council's ability to perform climate work in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and unknown economic impacts. Wojchik responded that the commitment to GCoM does not add any project work for Council staff.

Council members Vento and Atlas-Ingebretsen commented on the opportunity and expressed support for the recommendations.

The Community Development Committee recommended approval (8-1) of the proposed action at its meeting on June 15, 2020.

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: June 15, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 24, 2020

**Subject:** Metro-Scale Climate Leader, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate and Energy

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** *Thrive MSP 2040*

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Eric Wojchik, Planning Analyst (651-602-1330)  
Lisa Barajas, Community Development Director (651-602-1895)

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

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  - a. For information, under the State of [Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act \(2007\)](#), the Council has committed to emissions reductions that are more ambitious than those within the US NDC goals.

Table 1. Relationship of US Emissions Commitments to MN Emissions Commitments

US Nationally Determined Contribution (2015)	MN Next Generation Energy Act (2007)
Target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025.	Target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2025.

- 4. The Council acknowledges that there may be additional region- or country-specific commitments to adhere to, agreed through local membership networks or through direct engagement with local Global Covenant of Mayors partners.
- 5. The Council acknowledges that continued membership in the Global Covenant of Mayors and associated local chapters or “Regional Covenants” as established, is contingent on complying with the above requirements within established timeframes.

**Background**

[The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) (GCoM) envisions a world where committed mayors and local governments – in alliance with partners – accelerate ambitious, measurable climate and energy initiatives that lead to an inclusive, just, low-emission and climate resilient future, helping to meet and exceed the [Paris Agreement](#) objectives.

Whatever the size or location, the mayors and local leaders committed to the Global Covenant commit to taking concrete measures with long-term impact to tackle the interconnected challenges of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and access to sustainable energy.

The Council applied in April 2019 for to commit to GCoM as a Metro-Scale Climate Leader, a pilot program by GCoM, but the Council was unsuccessful at that time. In the interim, GCoM has approached the Council to offer the same opportunity due to programmatic changes. The other regions currently enrolled in the pilot program include the Chicago Metropolitan Region, Kansas City Region, and the Metropolitan (DC) Region.

Given the existing and ongoing climate work at the Council, the GCoM commitment does not require any *new* Council projects or initiatives, though it will require some external reporting. Specifically, within no more than three years of this commitment, the GCoM commitment requires that the Council pledge to complete several tasks, many of which the Council already has completed, has underway, or is part of current work plans.

**Table 2. Relationship of GCoM Commitments to Council Projects and Activities**

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Council Project / Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>
A community-scale greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventory	<u><a href="#">Metro Climate Stats</a></u>	Under development
An assessment of climate hazards and vulnerabilities	<u><a href="#">Climate Vulnerability Assessment</a></u>	Complete
Ambitious, measurable, and time-bound target(s) to reduce/limit greenhouse gas emissions	Council-wide Climate Action and Resilience Plan, as identified in the Council’s Sustainability priority and budgeted for 2020	Underway
Ambitious adaptation vision and goals, based on quantified scientific evidence when possible, to increase local resilience to climate change	Council-wide Climate Action and Resilience Plan, as identified in the Council’s Sustainability priority and budgeted for 2020	Underway

<p>Ambitious and just goal to improve access to sustainable energy</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Xcel Energy Green Energy Partnership</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Community Solar Garden Subscriptions</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>SolSmart membership</u></a> and <a href="#"><u>SolSmart program technical assistance</u></a></p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>Underway</p> <p>Underway</p>
<p>Plan(s) to address climate change mitigation / low emission development, climate resilience and adaptation, and access to sustainable energy, including provisions for regular (annual or biennial) progress reports</p>	<p>Implemented through Council-wide Climate Action and Resilience Plan, as identified in the Council’s Sustainability priority and budgeted for 2020</p> <p>2050 Regional Development Framework</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>Underway</p>

**Rationale**

The Metro-Scale Climate Leader GCoM opportunity will acknowledge the climate change planning and resilience work that the Council is currently engaged in. The opportunity supports the Council’s work and connects that work to a wider network of regional practitioners. Moreover, the Council’s commitment to GCoM includes the provision of external technical assistance, if needed, to assist the Council in its climate change and resilience planning efforts.

The Metro-Scale Climate Leader regional GCoM opportunity provides recognition for the Council’s existing and ongoing efforts to build organizational and local government resilience to climate change, while connecting our regional climate work to other US and international partners. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has established innovative approaches to regional planning, as evidenced by the current systems planning, technical assistance, and policy-making at the Metropolitan Council. The GCoM opportunity provides technical assistance to the Council, which increases capacity and support for our ongoing climate-related work. The commitment to being a GCoM Metro-Scale Climate Leader will allow the Council the opportunity to further embed a multi-sectoral planning approach that connects climate change planning to regional issues such as equity, environmental justice, affordable housing, public safety, education, and racial disparities.

The technical assistance with GCoM will help further the Council’s efforts toward meeting the goals identified in the Next Generation Energy Act and put Minnesota back on track to meeting those goals, consistent with the [Governor’s Executive Order 19-37](#) on establishing a climate change subcabinet to promote coordinated climate change mitigation and resilience strategies in the region and in the State more broadly.

**Thrive Lens Analysis**

*Thrive MSP 2040* includes policies on sustainability and implementation strategies for building resilience in the region. The Council has done a lot of mitigation and adaptation work for Council-owned infrastructure, from the wastewater system to the transit network. The Council has engaged with local communities in providing technical assistance on planning for resilience in this current comprehensive

planning cycle. Such assistance has increased the local commitment to building more resilient communities. The assistance provided through our regional GHG Inventory (currently being developed), the SolSmart initiative, and the Council’s Climate Vulnerability Assessment continues to provide local support. Though the Council has performed a diverse array of project work in climate resilience, the technical expertise and regional collaboration afforded through GCoM will help us to refine and launch our current projects and technical assistance to communities, while allowing us the opportunity to collate regional efforts and aspirations into a regional Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

**Funding**

No additional funding is required of the Council outside of the staff time and budget already committed to projects and activities as noted above.

**Known Support / Opposition**

None known.