

Tim Milburn, Executive Committee member of the Northwest Cook County Group Sierra Club presented an overview of the plethora of climate initiatives – from global all the way to regional – for the December 2021 program meeting on December 9, 2021.

According to Milburn, “We need to deal with this climate crisis and do this while fairly servicing society’s energy, environment, and societal demands. Responsible policies and programs are needed. Change is required, which results in a change in the balance of power. Education and consensus building are needed.”

To overcome climate change, mitigation and adaptation measures are necessary. The reduction and elimination of causes is needed for the mitigation of climate change, which includes transportation, energy, industry, agriculture, commercial, and residential. The adaptation actions to manage results include resilience, disaster management, flood management, infrastructure, and technology advances, and population displacement and migration and management.

The agendas included for climate initiatives – from global to regional include the following:

1. Review climate change basics
2. Frame – current policies, targets, measures, and incentives
3. Focus – achievable change, metrics and accountability, opportunities
4. Define – next steps

## **Global**

This fight to beat climate change begins on a global level with the Conference of Parties; the twenty-sixth conference took place in November 2021. The overall goals include:

- Reach Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) by 2050
- Achieve 1.5° rise
- Protect communities and ecosystems
- Provide aggressive measures to reduce GHGs for 2030
- Establish measures
- Collaborate and educate
- Fairly generate economic opportunity

Mitigation strategies for 2030 include the phasing out of fossil fuels, the conversion to renewable energy, and zero emission transportation. The economic aspect of these mitigation strategies include incentivize innovation, the support of clean energy manufacturing, and jobs. This results in the adaptation strategies that include the protection of communities and ecosystems, resilience planning and support, access to funding for those in need, and it provides access to funding for those in need.

From the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the environmental responsibilities filter down to the national level, to the state level, and then to the regional and municipal level.

On a national level are the Infrastructure and Investment Act (IIJA) and the Build Back Better America (BBCA) Act, which is pending.

The IJA includes more than \$1.2 trillion over 10 years, which include. According to Milburn, “More than \$567 billion of this funding will go toward **projects and programs** that affect every aspect of transportation, from road safety, rail, bridges to public transit.

The BBCA focuses on local and individual needs and includes:

- The extension of tax credits for solar, wind, and electric vehicles
- The investment of billions of dollars to help clean energy start-up companies
- The investment of workforce training, innovation, equity.

### **State Level**

Climate, jobs, and equity are the focus of Illinois’ Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA). Some of CEJA’s aspects include:

- The creation of thousands of new jobs
- Workforce and development – workforce hubs
- Carbon free school assessments
- Reduce bills through energy efficiency
- Evaluate energy storage and transmission solutions

### **Regional/Local Level**

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) “completes studies, defines future looking demand and supply needs for goods and services for Cook and the collar counties” with a focus on transportation, housing, economic development, opens space, the environment, and other qualify-of-life issues.

Another local organization, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) creates initiatives to improve “environmental outcomes at the regional level by supporting local actions to conserve energy and water, use clean energy and clean transportation, reduce waste and pollution, and sustain landscapes.”

The MMC’s Climate Action Plan’s mitigation objectives include demonstration to reduce emissions, optimization of building energy, and the reduction of vehicle miles traveled, which is detailed in the Greenest Region Compact (GRC).

The GRC offers sustainability strategies and actions geared toward municipalities and provides the framework for planning and managing sustainability programs. As of the time this article was written, 140 municipalities have signed this compact.

The global programs are aligned with the local programs regarding goals and areas of focus. However, according to Milburn, the local and regional level is where the “rubber hits the road – where these programs happen. This is where the action is the key to getting changes to happen. Also, businesses are the ones that are innovative and will create jobs.”

What can we do? Vote and consider your buying behavior. Use your voice to:

- Collaborate with other similar associations, educators, utilities, etc.
- Plan and attend clean energy meetings and share your knowledge
- Educate – learn and help educate others

- Support your community signing onto (and acting on ) MMC GRC Resolution and MMC CAP Resolution
- Involve yourself with your community – where and how you feel passionate
- Vote to support climate actions

To view the presentation in full, please visit....