

#83

+ Council President Bradmoen

Hello Council members, my name is Janiece Watts, I am a policy associate with Fresh Energy a renewable energy nonprofit here in Saint Paul, and I am a resident of ward 1. I am here to speak in support of the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan.

Thank you for showing leadership on this plan. It is important for Saint Paul to step up in this way for future generations and our collective existence on Earth. There are many good things in the plan, and areas in which we at Fresh Energy hope to assist and improve.

The City has a stated goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, we hope we can work together to find new and innovative ways to beat this goal and timeline, but we must be intentional and clear about how define carbon neutrality. We must include decarbonization strategies like deep energy efficiency retrofits, benchmarking, and shifting remaining energy usage off fossil fuels for beneficial electrification in buildings, single and multi-family homes and transportation.

Goals like this are needed but they often depend on the actions of other entities that make decisions that impact all of us. It will be essential for the City of Saint Paul to collaborate and demand further commitments from those entities that serve Saint Paul, like our utilities Xcel Energy and District Energy, the MN legislature and other agencies to meet these goals together.

Establishing a community advisory body as stated in the plan, one that includes representation of Saint Paul's most underserved neighborhoods, young people and leaders with expertise in areas that are not solely focused on climate, will provide the accountability required for successful implementation and to ensure that environmental, racial justice and social equity - are the foundation of the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan.

We must not only plan for how we act on climate, but how we will rebuild whole systems in our city for every one of us to thrive. I applaud the city's outreach efforts so far and hope for continued partnership and community engagement.

These goals and more are urgently important to meet the magnitude the climate emergency demands of us, and it must be done with a budget that reflects our values.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my amazing colleagues Ben Passer, Margaret Cherne-Hendrick and Ben Rabe who submitted comments on behalf of Fresh Energy, and to thank the environmental justice advocates who we've partnered with to offer feedback on the plan.

Thank you, Saint Paul council members, and please vote to approve the Climate Action and Resiliency plan.

#83

From: Jean Comstock <[jean.comstock.dbcc@gmail.com](mailto:jean.comstock.dbcc@gmail.com)>

Ward 7

{First, I want to thank you for passing the resolution [RES 19-1870](#). Thanks also to Russ Stark for agreeing to advocate for St. Paul's commitments to reduce emissions and energy burdens at the Public Utilities Commission.}

The St. Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan is a comprehensive plan that does a great job of identifying specific areas of the city more likely to suffer from certain effects of the climate crisis. Its high-level goals are well stated and actionable. (However, climate-concerned readers might long for more detail on the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how" of these goals. We are concerned about accountability and information flow when the plan promises updates only every five years.)

Therefore, we were pleased to see the proposal for a Climate Resilience Advisory Board on which community leaders could serve as a conduit between the City and its citizens, helping to plan, organizing volunteers, and passing on information both ways. Unfortunately, funding for a staff person for this committee is not available for the coming year. We ask that you do everything you can to support Russ Stark in putting together such a committee as early as possible in 2020. As you can see, a large number of your constituents are eager to help the City of St. Paul implement these urgent climate goals.

Finally, please read and understand what is in the climate action plan you will be voting on soon. Commit to making it happen! Know that we will continue to engage and work with you, our representatives, as we move through this process together. Thank you.

For hearing on  
St. Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan

2019Dec18

My name is Tim Wulling. I live in Ward 4.

Cities and states must take the lead.

St. Paul has been doing this.

The St. Paul Sustainable Building Policy goes back more than 10 years. In 2017 the Partners in Energy report sought a path to carbon neutrality for buildings.

St. Paul's Energy Smart Homes program provides favorable financing. (0% loans, repayment after 15 years or sale of home)

And now the Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

This plan is basically a good one. Pass it. Pass it so the City can get to work at implementing it aggressively. Be aggressive about what we already know how to do – while figuring out how to do the more challenging parts.

The first point I'd like to make is that periodic reviews and updates of the Plan are crucial. The Plan does not cover the last 33% of emissions reduction. Nor does Xcel yet have a way to accomplish its last 20% emissions reduction. But that's okay. The challenge is too complicated to have it all worked out in the beginning. That's why the periodic reviews and updates specified in the Plan are fundamental.

My second point is that the gist of the plan is incomplete. The gist as stated is:

- 1st. Replace fossil fuels with electricity.
- 2nd. Rely on Xcel Energy's commitment to be carbon-free by 2050.

I repeat:

- 1st. Replace fossil fuels with electricity.
- 2nd. Rely in Xcel's electricity becoming carbon-free

A crucial piece is left out. The gist of becoming carbon neutral must be:

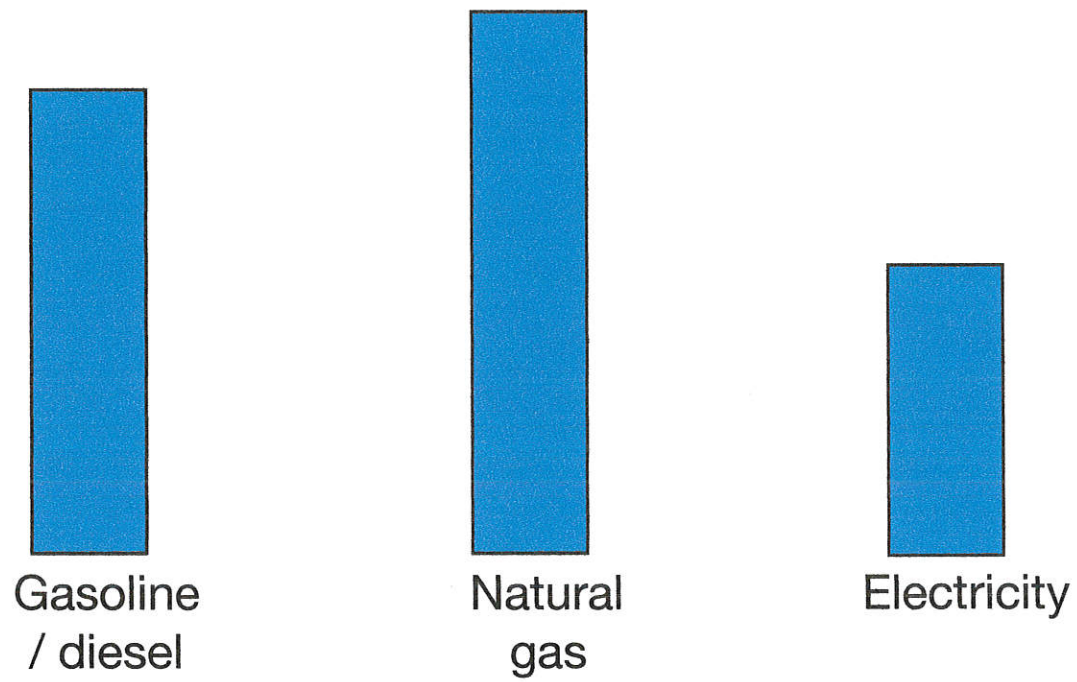
1. REDUCE OUR NEED FOR ENERGY.
2. Replace fossil fuels with electricity.
3. ENSURE Xcel's electricity becomes carbon-free.

My point is that we need to think in terms of reduction, not just efficiency.

I'd like to show why.

Here's a relative comparison of St. Paul's energy sources after converting to the same energy units.

## Comparison of St. Paul Energy Sources for 2015

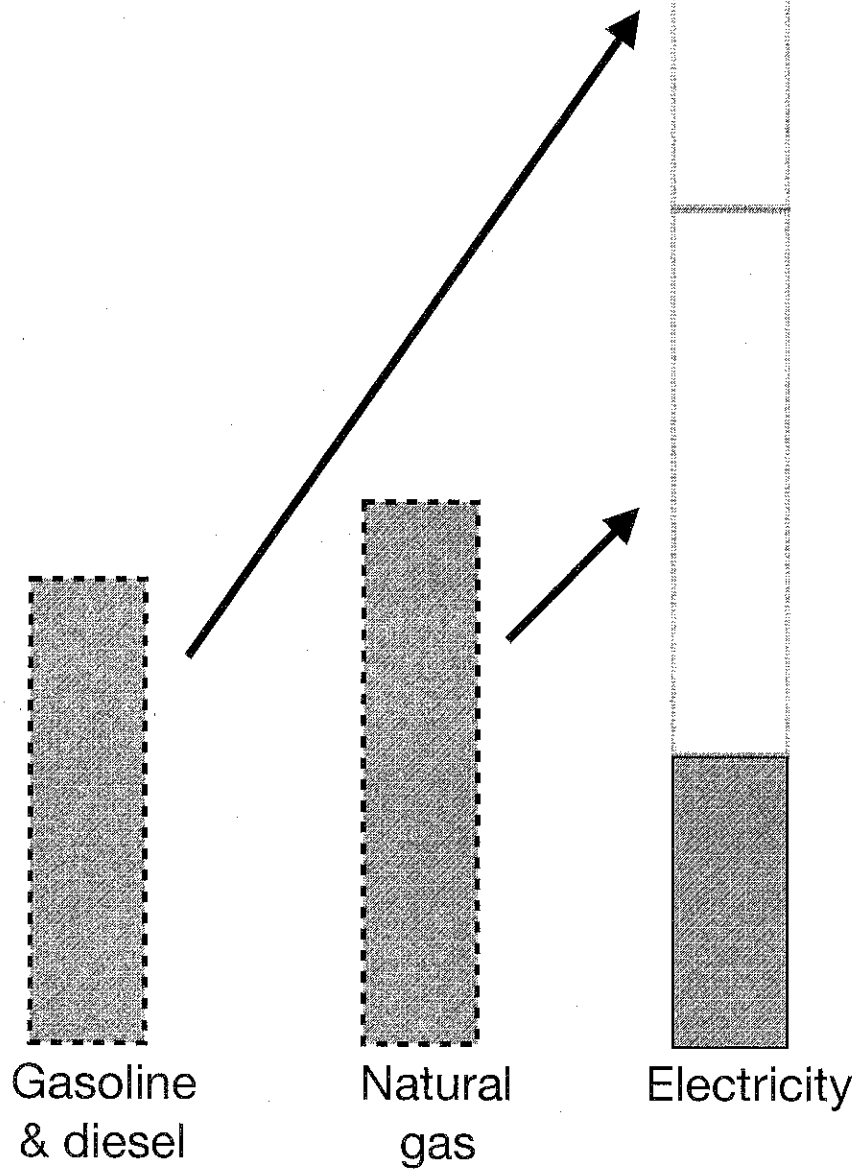


They are not equal. And yet they are not wildly different.

What would it look like if St. Paul were to electrify without reduction?

## Electrify without reduction?

Can't just move it all to electricity





St. Paul's electric load would go up more than four times. But there will be constraints on how much electricity can be generated with renewables.

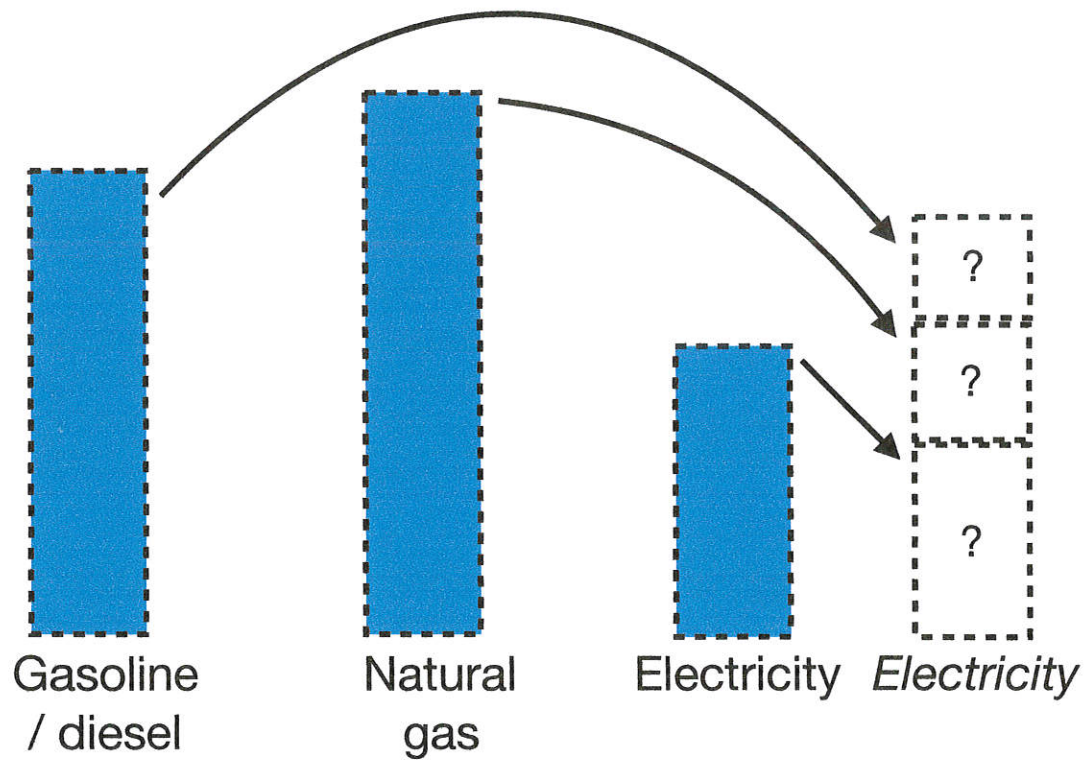
It will be difficult enough to convert our existing electric use totally to renewables. How much can the electric supply be increased when Xcel is retiring coal power plants? And while we recognize the necessity of avoiding new natural gas power plants?

Reducing energy needs must go hand-in-hand with electrification.

Can we do this?

Can we do this?

**REDUCE and electrify**



~~X~~ We know we can reduce existing electric loads with LED lights instead of incandescent and fluorescent, with newer efficient motors, and so on.

We can reduce natural gas a lot. Much of it is used for heating buildings. Buildings can be built with much better insulation and air sealing. The City should leverage its subsidies and incentives to require the tightest standards for energy use in new developments.

St. Paul's Sustainable Building Policy already does this. In exchange for subsidies, developers are required to exceed code. But the policy must go further by requiring not just LEED certification which reduces building energy perhaps 30% but by requiring something like Passive House which reduces the energy by 80-90%.

This seems an obvious place for St. Paul to take immediate action for new development.

~~X~~ Retrofitting existing buildings is not so easy. We have to find a way. Early experience can be incorporated in the Plan as the Plan is updated.

The Climate Action and Resilience Plan is not ideal, but its deficiencies are not enough to delay the plan. They can be dealt with as the plan is periodically reviewed and updated.

To summarize...

The Plan is a good start. Pass it, and start implementing it aggressively.

The Plan will never be finished. Periodic update is crucial.

We need to use the Plan with the following emphasis:

- 1st. REDUCE our need for energy.
- 2nd. Replace fossil fuels with electricity..
- 3rd. ENSURE Xcel Energy's electricity becomes carbon-free.

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**Urban Roots Testimony for Climate Action Resilience Plan December 18th, 2019:**

Urban Roots has worked in East Saint Paul for twenty five years. Beginning our work in community design through architectural consulting, this gradually shifted to the cultivation of food in the urban environment and the rehabilitation of parks, fostering stewardship of Saint Paul's green spaces with East Side youth.

Through our work in conservation we work to mitigate pollution and floods by way of implementing rain gardens around the city as well as restoring floodplain forests with an eye towards climate concerns. Our gardens, spreading out across East Saint Paul, help with sequestering carbon. The food we grow stays in our communities, reducing food transportation miles and improving our community-centered food systems. We work to make our fresh, healthy produce accessible to as many people as possible. With youth at the forefront of our work, we are investing in the next generation of Saint Paul's climate stewards.

The City of Saint Paul has been very supportive of our initiatives over the years. In our work, we engage New American families, offering opportunities to youth to celebrate their cultural assets through their work in their community. Many of these new American families hold agricultural experience, knowledge and skill bases. Currently, there are many barriers to accessing city land for food cultivation. We hope that these amendments will help to create more opportunities for families to improve their health and wellbeing.

**Statement on St. Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan**

December 18, 2019

Bobbie Scott

Ward 7 and District 1 Council

I would like to start by thanking the city for recognizing that our climate crisis requires action and for developing this climate action plan. Over the last couple of years I have attended several community events the city has held in a variety of locations. I am also a co-leader of the St. Paul Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. I spend a lot of my free time working on climate issues and have been to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress. It has been a positive change to see our climate crisis acknowledged publicly by more and more organizations and elected officials. We need action at all levels of government and we need it now.

That said, I have some general comments about this plan and some specific questions for the council to consider. First, I don't believe the plan is aggressive enough. I know that 2050 has been seen as the magic year for attaining carbon neutrality, but that was then. This is now. Things are worse than we thought. Professor Michael Mann, a world-renowned climate scientist, just presented a paper at the American Geophysical Union conference. His last slide contained some sobering conclusions:

1. Past studies have likely overestimated the carbon budget remaining for avoiding 1.5°C and 2°C planetary warming by using an artificially warm baseline for defining the pre-industrial baseline temperature.
2. Using more appropriate estimates of the pre-industrial baseline, we find that 2°C carbon budget may be as much as 40% smaller than previously asserted.
3. 1.5°C stabilization may no longer be possible (without negative emissions)
4. The "12 years to act" conclusion attributed to [last year's] IPCC special report on 1.5°C stabilization is likely *overly optimistic*.

Mann estimates annual emissions may have to drop by 15% a year (rather than 7.5%). In other words **we have zero years to tackle climate breakdown.**

Also, the clock on "12 years to act" in the IPCC report started in fall of 2018 and we are almost to 2020. So, no time to wait, no time for incremental climate policies. We all need to push ahead

with decarbonization with equity. Obviously we need action at the state, national, and international levels as well, but it is vital that the city implement this plan immediately. All decisions made by departments, the city council, and the mayor must make the climate impact of any action a fundamental element of the decision-making process. Have you got a process for this? A checklist?

The plan depends on Xcel reducing its GHG emissions. Xcel has certainly taken important steps to reduce its GHG emissions, e.g. by planning to shut down its coal-fired plants in Becker in the mid-2020s, which is great. However, they are planning to build a natural gas plant and an accompanying pipeline. This is not acceptable and is not going to help St. Paul reach its GHG emission reduction goals. We need to keep the pressure on to make sure fossil fuels stay in the ground. We don't want St. Paul ratepayers to be paying off a natural gas plant long after Xcel has had to stop using it.

I also wonder about public education on climate. If residents don't understand the urgent need for the changes included in this plan, they may reject it and elect people who don't understand the need. I think that the city and Ramsey County should both think hard about how they are doing climate education. Incidentally, there is a bill in Congress that would provide money for climate education, but I have no idea what its chances are. Amy Klobuchar has signed on as a cosponsor in the Senate.

The plan also raises questions of implementation and targets. I'm sure many of us have experience with strategic plans and other plans that lose their priority after a while. That can't happen with this plan. How will we, as residents, be able to track how the city is doing in meeting its goals? How will we know if we are on track for our 2030 goals? Will there be annual work plans? Will information be on a website? How will residents be able to provide input on changes to the plan as they become necessary? One example is air travel, which is the worst form of travel for GHGs. Does the city have a way to review air travel by city representatives? Should the city have a policy of planting a certain number of trees extra each year to offset any air travel by city staff?

Now to some specific objections to details in the plan.

1. I understand what the term “natural infrastructure” means, but philosophically I find it an objectionable term. The plan refers to both built (or man-made) infrastructure such as roads and bridges and natural infrastructure such as forests and lakes. This gives the impression to the reader that the two are equal in importance and in our ability to control them. It perpetuates the idea that we humans are somehow separate from the living world around us and that we can control or manage it as we see fit. But we haven’t been very good managers and there are a lot of things about the natural world that we don’t understand. We need to protect the living world that provides us and all the other plants and animals on earth with water and food and air. We need to see ourselves as part of the living world, not its ruler. That’s part of how we got into this mess in the first place. Yes, we benefit from the fact that wetlands help to filter and clean our water and trees can pull carbon out of the air and store it, but lakes and wetlands and trees and soil have value for more than the so-called services they provide to humans.
2. On page 8 under high-impact actions, transportation, a sentence has been changed from “eliminating transportation emissions is critical to achieving the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050” to “reducing transportation emissions.” Why is the city softening its stance? This is no time to wimp out on our goals. The internal combustion engine has to go. Between 1900 and 1915 the number of cars in the country jumped from 8,000 to 2 million. If we make the investment in other forms of transportation—EVs, electric buses, expanded transit, electric trains or streetcars, protected bike lanes—why can’t we phase it out at least as fast as we adopted it?
3. On page 13, What Causes Climate Change, I think it would be helpful to add some clarification to the next to the last sentence in the first paragraph that reads, “Over the past 260 years, enough GHGs have been released into the atmosphere that they have led to an increasing global average temperature. I suggest changing that to, “Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 260 years ago and the growing consumption of fossil fuels, enough...” This makes the connection between human activity, increased GHGs, and changing climate more explicit.
4. On p. 16, Climate Vulnerabilities, the first sentence reads, “Climate change has the potential to have major impacts on people, the economy, and infrastructure.” This is wrong. Climate change *is having* major impacts on people, the economy, and infrastructure.

I understand that putting a plan like this together requires a lot of work and balancing competing demands. Changing our society will be expensive; failure to act will be more expensive, but more importantly will kill hundreds of thousands of people. If we achieve the necessary reduction in GHGs, we will ultimately create a much more livable world with cleaner air and water and healthier and more equitable communities.



Thank you Council President Brendmoen and councilmembers.

My name is James Doyle and I have lived Ward 1 in St. Paul for almost 28 years. I am a professor of physics at Macalester College and do research in renewable energy related areas, and I volunteer with Saint Paul 350.

First, I would like to thank you for having this open hearing. I also want to say how much I appreciate Russ Stark's engagement with SP350 on CARP and the climate resolution you passed earlier today. I also want to thank the council members for the various meetings they have had with constituents to discuss the resolution, and I want to thank the Council for passing the resolution today. I also want to thank Jim Pearson and Nick Martin of Xcel for meeting with us and although I know we disagree about the resolution it was helpful to hear Xcel's point of view and I hope we can continue the dialog.

There are many things I really like about the CARP. I am proud to be a resident of a city that takes the climate challenge seriously. I am especially pleased with the emphasis on the social justice aspects of climate change, including recognizing the disproportionately adverse effects expected in the more economically stressed and less resilient parts of the city, as well as the higher energy burden experienced by these communities. The plan does a thorough job of addressing transportation and energy efficiency as ways to reduce the city's carbon footprint. There will be devil in the details on implantation, but I am pleased to see the aspirational framework.

Others speaking here today will (have) address(ed) issues such as inclusive financing and distributed solar. I would like to focus on the need for robust engagement of the city with Xcel on the future of energy production. Since the passage of the resolution has happened, my remarks will be to primarily amplify and support the resolves expressed there.

Collectively St. Paul is one of Xcel's biggest customers and we should be using that clout to have a say in our complete energy future that includes generation. To that end as a minimum I think the city should take formal positions on issues in the pending Xcel Integrated Resource Plan when the comment period re-opens in the spring. Ideally I would like to see the city apply for intervenor status if that is at all possible.

CARP expresses the view that there is no need for the city to consider energy generation issues since Xcel has a plan to achieve zero carbon emissions in electricity production by 2050. I should say that there is indeed a lot to like in the Xcel plan. They have ambitious goals to expand solar by 4000 MW and to retire

coal plants. New wind capacity will be added by upgrading existing turbines as well as new wind generation committed to from earlier IRPs. There is great stuff on efficiency. These are all steps in the right direction to confront the reality of climate change and Xcel is rightly being recognized as a leader in this effort.

However, despite these laudable goals, there are several aspects of the Xcel plan that remain problematic to me, and I believe problematic for the City, and therefore require robust engagement of the City with Xcel. The first is that we simply don't have until 2050 to get carbon emissions under control. Almost daily we hear news about the accelerating pace of climate change. The earlier models were if anything conservative in their predictions. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in 2018 that we only have 12 years to avoid the worst effects of climate change such as increased risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. This includes effects that will be felt in our city as CARP has noted. Aggressive action to curb CO2 emissions is needed in the next few years, not in 3 decades.

A second concern, which is specific to my first concern, is Xcel's proposal to build a new approximately 800 MW natural gas plant that will be built in the mid 2020s. In the usual scheme of things this plant would need to operate for about 30 years, which means it needs to operate until after 2050.

I have several concerns about this proposal. First, if renewables continue to decline in cost, which most everyone in the industry believes will happen, there is a real danger that this plant will become a stranded asset long before its expected life. Ratepayers including residents of St. Paul, not investors, are usually on the hook in these situations.

But the major problem is committing the state to three decades of new significant fossil fuel infrastructure, which doesn't even begin to produce power for a half a decade. This proposal is contrary to both the spirit and specific goals of the CARP. Solar and wind with grid energy storage are increasingly viable alternatives to natural gas, and large power and energy capacity pilot storage projects are appearing all over the country with other utilities. The preferred plan in the current IRP has no real commitment to storage, though I was glad to see that the CARP mentions energy storage in several places. The city needs to use its influence to pressure Xcel to take leadership in exploring and adopting these technologies.

I know that we cannot suddenly at this moment eliminate all natural gas from the electrical grid. We are not quite there yet in terms of cost as well as long term

storage technology. But we desperately need a transition away from fossil fuels to occur on a timescale of years, not decades. The cost of storage will almost certainly continue to decline over the next decade and the viability of long-term storage will undoubtedly continue to advance well within the timeframe of this IRP. And imagine the entrepreneurial opportunities that will accelerate these developments when a major utility such as Xcel commits to grid energy storage.

Xcel has been directed by the Public Utilities Commission in the revised IRP to explore some alternatives that includes storage and smaller gas plants, and this is definitely a step in the right direction. In addition other groups such as the Citizen Utility Board, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and the Department of Commerce are also leading robust modelling efforts of alternatives to building major new fossil fuel infrastructure. The City of Saint Paul needs to be part of these conversations. The resolution you passed today is an important first step, but the work is just beginning Thank you.

**From:** Elizabeth Dickinson [<mailto:eadickinson@mindspring.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 19, 2019 12:58 PM  
**To:** Kim, Hwa Jeong (CI-StPaul) <[Hwa.Jeong.Kim@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Hwa.Jeong.Kim@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Cc:** #CI-StPaul\_Ward5 <[Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Inclusive Finance Amendment to CARP

**Think Before You Click:** This email originated outside our organization.

Thanks, Hwa for your help-we really want CARP to robustly involve and benefit underserved neighbors, and that means holding Xcel to high standards...

Had to truncate my testimony last night, but the rest of it may be of interest, so here it is:

According to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, St. Paul is rated only 31<sup>st</sup> out of 75 major cities in our efforts in reducing energy use and in promoting renewable energy as measured by a city's implemented activities across local government operations, community-wide initiatives, building policies, energy and water utilities, and transportation policies. Minneapolis is 4<sup>th</sup> out of 75 cities. Again, we're #31.

We have an opportunity to address this and to become a leader in our climate action plan. Some aspects of this plan are terrific. These aspects include the focus on creating a building energy code, a time-of-sale and time-of-rental ordinance like Minneapolis, dramatically increasing rooftop solar deployment, reducing energy burden on under-resourced communities, electrification and equitable access to energy efficiency and renewable energy.

What's lacking in the plan are enough specific strategies to achieve those results. Some of these can be addressed today through the amendments Council President Brendmoen will offer, including a commitment to inclusive financing model which eliminates key barriers of credit, personal debt, and upfront cost for underserved communities and a commitment to measurable community solar projects. As Council President Brendmoen observed to St. Paul 350 this week, there are certain areas of the city where we've done everything we can in terms of energy efficiency, but we're unable to reach certain populations-inclusive financing is one of the bridge policies that will get us there.

I won't go into more details of what can be improved, since they're contained in my earlier written comments of which you have copies.

However, I want to end on a cautionary note. It's very common to hear in city hall that we are fortunate in having such a good partner in the monopoly investor-owned utility Xcel. First, the people who represent Xcel are nice, good people. We'd all be happy to have coffee or a beer with them. However they are representing a monopoly corporation whose primary allegiance is to their shareholders. Recently, the Public Utilities Commission who oversees their activities on behalf of the public required Xcel to re-do their modeling processes because Xcel wanted to invest in a new fracked gas plant and because Xcel hadn't included enough analysis of renewable energy possibilities for meeting demand. Thank you to the council for passing the resolution protesting more investment in fossil fuel infrastructure.

Additional concerns about Xcel's ability to act as a trusted partner have arisen in Minneapolis where Xcel is supposed to be helping the city with its climate action plan. Across the river Xcel has blocked or dragged its feet on virtually everything it has been asked to do, including inclusive financing. The only progress that's been made have been made in areas where the city of Minneapolis is free to act on its own.

Many of the measurable policies we propose in St. Paul will need Xcel's active involvement. Furthermore, in the next few years, we'll be entering franchise renegotiations with Xcel where we examine what we are expecting and what we are getting from our exclusive relationship. As many of you know, the franchise fees the city collects from Xcel through our bills are the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source of income for the city. We can't be rolled again by a major national corporation in the way we were rolled into bad contracts in the trash debacle. In a time of climate crisis, we expect better results, both in terms of energy and in terms of finances. Xcel can't just say the right things, they must do the right things. And so must we.