



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: December 17, 2013

AGENDA TITLE: Update on Boulder's Energy Future Municipalization Exploration Project.

PRESENTERS

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I. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to:

- Present information to council and receive council feedback on the next phase of the Municipalization Exploration Project work plan, including updates on:
 - The City of Boulder-Xcel Energy (Xcel) Partnership Task Force discussions, including:
 - Formation of subcommittees
 - Subcommittees' work to date

- Timeline for report on outcomes
- Legal and regulatory actions
- Transition Plan development
- Energy Services Plan for 2014
- Working Groups
 - Solar Working Group
 - Natural Gas Working Group
 - Governance Working Group
- Public processes and input received related to this issue
- Next steps

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The City of Boulder has been through an extraordinary process with respect to the municipalization evaluation effort. Over the last year and a half, city staff, consultants and more than 75 community members have collected and evaluated data, built financial, resource, and probabilistic models, vetted assumptions and stressed the municipal model by adding varying levels of risk. Throughout this process, staff was challenged by experts, supporters and detractors, and continued to improve the city's analysis. In addition, members of the public and staff increased their knowledge about what a local utility can do to further the community's energy future goals. By studying what other communities are doing with respect to increasing renewables, expanding distributed generation, and providing energy services targeted to their individual community needs, it has become clear that a city-owned utility has flexibility and capabilities a regulated utility may not have.

Throughout this process, the city has, nonetheless, remained open to exploring other ways of achieving our community's energy supply goals. These include the possibility of forming a new partnership or participating in new product and service offerings from Xcel Energy (Xcel). From April through July, a group of community leaders was formed to help the city and Xcel look at options related to alternatives to municipalization.

In July, city staff presented the results of the quantitative modeling and the qualitative research to council, as well as an update about progress that had been made at that time in terms of partnership discussions with Xcel. In August, council authorized staff to move forward to: 1) continue discussions with Xcel in order to learn more about the potential products and services the company could provide; and, 2) proceed down a concurrent path toward acquiring the assets of Xcel and forming a locally owned utility.

This is staff's first formal update with council since that time, but there has been considerable activity. Two ballot items related to the development of a local utility were presented to the community. On Nov. 5, Boulder voters supported moving forward with the project but imposed an additional requirement that the cost of acquisition and any lump-sum payment for stranded costs cannot exceed \$214 million. The approved measure also includes several significant provisions related to how out-of-city customers, if there are any, would be represented in future utility decisions.

Some of the tasks completed between August and now include:

- The city/Xcel partnership task force has continued to meet and has developed two subcommittees to further develop and vet Xcel's proposed programs. Xcel has stated it will have a recommendation ready to present to council the second quarter of 2014. Staff has worked with the task force to develop a schedule for completing this process.
- Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) filings by Xcel have required attention by both legal and energy future staff, and it has become apparent that the city will need to dedicate resources to working with the PUC as it moves forward.
- The city filed for and received approval to become members of North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), which are the reliability oversight authorities with respect to the bulk power system of the country and region. This will allow city staff to obtain training and participate in these organizations, specifically related to reliability and planning for the bulk power system.
- City staff has been working with consultants, engineers, and the legal team to identify and value the electric assets needed to support a locally owned utility in preparation for negotiation and potential condemnation actions and acquisition.
- City staff has begun the process of developing transition plans to ensure that all aspects of operation are covered. A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been issued for consulting help to develop a detailed work plan to encompass everything from substation maintenance to administrative processes such as customer accounting. Once a consultant is hired, the team anticipates it will take three to four months to develop the work plan and then 18 months to two years to implement it.
- City staff has continued to explore opportunities for enhancing energy services and reducing emissions without owning poles and wires. While the benefits that could be realized are limited in comparison to the possibilities of a full retail utility and wholesale power purchaser, several ideas are being vetted for new pilot initiatives that could advance Boulder's Energy Future goals and demonstrate opportunities that could eventually be taken to scale. This process also provides a forum for integrating energy initiatives with other aspects of the city's sustainability work, both in terms of synergies between different infrastructure systems and investments, and in terms of creating one-stop customer service platforms. Staff anticipates presenting pilot initiatives for council's input early next year.
- Various issues related to energy resources have developed at national and regional levels. Staff has formed two new working groups – solar and natural gas – to guide the city in these important policy areas and develop recommendations as the project moves forward.
- Lastly, in July, the governance working group presented a set of recommendations that council adopted and which won overwhelming support in the ballot election. As part of the next phase of municipalization evaluation, the governance working group had topics its members would like to further develop related to a utility advisory board appointment process, terms of service, delegation of powers, and advisory board/ staff relationship. If council so directs, staff will reconvene that working group to address these issues.

There is significant work ahead, but this effort continues to represent a great opportunity for Boulder to make its goals a reality and truly move toward a sustainable low carbon future. This is no small task and the plan is likely to evolve as new information or agreements are developed. This will require both the discipline of having a well-developed plan and the flexibility to adjust

as appropriate. The work plan for 2014 (**Attachment A**) presents some exciting opportunities for community collaboration and moves the city closer to achieving a low-carbon future.

III. WORK PLAN UPDATE

City of Boulder-Xcel Energy (Xcel) Partnership Discussions

As mentioned previously, the City of Boulder and Xcel convened a task force of knowledgeable community members earlier this year to consider possible partnership options for achieving the city's energy goals and develop new initiatives that Xcel might offer to the city and other communities throughout its utility system.

During discussions with the task force, Xcel officials agreed to explore with Boulder an initial set of eight possible products and services to reduce energy demand; increase the use of renewable energy and distributed generation; reduce the use of coal for generating electricity; modify retail rates for customers; and reduce carbon emissions. Several of these concepts were first suggested by the city in its [December 2012 white paper](#). With the exception of products or services tied to SmartGridCity infrastructure, these would be made available to other municipalities as well and, where applicable, to individual customers. Many of the products and services, if instituted in partnership with Xcel, would be subject to approval by the PUC.

In July, Xcel presented a [proposal](#) to the task force that included a high-level analysis of the potential emission reductions, costs and overall impacts and benefits of a package of products and services. At its July 23 Study Session, City Council directed staff to continue to meet with Xcel as the company fleshed out the concepts presented to the task force and modeled the impact to Boulder ratepayers with regard to costs and benefits through increased renewable energy and emissions reductions. City Council affirmed this direction after a presentation by task force members at the Aug. 6 City Council meeting. At that time, Xcel indicated it could have a recommendation by the end of the year.

Since Aug. 6, staff from the city, Xcel and the citizen members of the task force have continued to meet regularly. To streamline the work effort, the task force formed two sub-committees that are working in parallel. The first is working on the issues related to developing the details of the specific Xcel program offerings, while the second is focused on quantitative modeling tasks. The purpose of the ongoing meetings has been to identify the potential benefits of the company's proposal for how it can support achieving the city's Energy Future goals. The subcommittees include original task force members along with additional community experts approved by both the city and Xcel.

Programs Subcommittee

The scope of the Program Development subcommittee is to take the products and services proposed by Xcel in July and flesh them out from a concept to a more defined program that would meet the goals of the city. This would include defining the goal of the program/service, description of the services to be offered, implementation (regulatory approval) and targeted customers, whether it will be a pilot program or included in Xcel's tariff (i.e., open to all customers), and funding. The programs will need to be developed in enough detail to allow the

modelers to calculate the cost, benefits, and carbon reduction of the program, both in the city and in Xcel's service territory.

So far, the Programs Subcommittee has discussed current Xcel programs and services related to demand-side management (DSM), SmartGridCity and distributed generation. Task force members suggested a number of new opportunities, including re-evaluating the cost-effectiveness metrics used to determine which energy efficiency programs Xcel operates; a one-stop shop for Xcel, city and county incentives, allowing for a single point of contact to facilitate access to funding; on-bill financing to support access for low income residential customers to energy efficiency or demand side management improvements; energy performance contracts to finance upgrades; looking at better data to segment customers for more effective marketing; and providing residential, commercial, and institutional customers with more real-time data. These are just a few examples of the many ideas submitted by the subcommittee.

Modeling Subcommittee

The scope of the Modeling Subcommittee is to review the inputs and assumptions used by Xcel and the city in their respective modeling. The subcommittee will also provide feedback as to the process that provides outputs and compares them to the city models to ensure comparability in the modeling. Xcel will be modeling using its Strategist tool, but incorporating updated and agreed upon resource assumptions for fossil fuel, wind, solar, carbon, etc. prices. The city used different software for resources called HOMER. The only assumptions that will be comparable will be in the resource modeling since this is where the impact of the programs and services will be reflected. In other words, the modeling process will not incorporate costs related to acquisition, start-up or ongoing debt not associated with purchasing energy. Xcel will model the programs assuming Boulder is part of the system and using the same process it would for its system.

The Modeling Subcommittee has made significant progress in identifying a joint set of assumptions that can be modeled by the city and by Xcel. This is highly detailed and time-consuming work because it requires identifying the different inputs and assumptions to be used in HOMER and Xcel's Strategist¹ model. City staff and Xcel staff have been discussing this separately with a goal of bringing forward a proposal to the task force in December.

The modeling process takes a set of resource assumptions, such as wind prices, transmission costs and load forecasts that both Xcel and the city can agree to include in their independent models. Once agreement is reached on reasonable assumptions for this process, Xcel will use them to model its proposed programs and services, which can be compared to a municipalization model using the same resource assumptions. Both carbon reduction and cost of power will be compared under each scenario.

Next Steps

Originally, the task force intended to present the findings of the Xcel products and services analysis to City Council on Dec. 17. However, due to the time required for products and services

¹ Ventyx Strategist is the modeling software utilized by Xcel.

ideas to go through Xcel's internal vetting process, Xcel has indicated its representatives will not be ready to present a final package to council until June 2014.

The task force met Dec. 9 to hear a presentation by Xcel on the outcome of its internal evaluation of new DSM programs (those suggested by the task force, as well as any new proposals by Xcel). At that meeting, Xcel agreed to proceed with evaluating four of the 18 ideas suggested by the task force, and presented one new concept for piloting wifi thermostats². In addition, Xcel introduced eight product concepts it is evaluating such as LED midstream rebates, HID to CFL retrofits, LED parking garage fixtures, ECM for HVAC and small-building tune up.

The modeling process will focus on finalizing a list of specific assumptions related to pricing of electric resources, which Xcel will then use to model the impact of any new products or services, as compared to their current base case. The modeling done by Xcel will then be compared by the city to municipalization model with respect to benefits, costs and how it well the proposal achieves the community Energy Future goals.

The task force members agreed the subcommittees had served their purpose and will begin meeting monthly as a whole to be briefed on the outcome of Xcel's analysis. They established a schedule through March to meet each month with the April meeting devoted to Xcel presenting a draft of their final recommendation. At the June meeting, Xcel will present additional detail on the various products and services included in the Xcel proposal. The city expects this to include a more detailed description of what each offering could achieve, how the program might be rolled out to Boulder and Colorado customers and what type of regulatory approvals would be necessary moving forward.

Lastly, Xcel has indicated company officials do not wish to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for this part of the working group process. Previously, the MOU was used to protect the discussions between the parties from being used in litigation, which supported an open sharing of information. At the Dec. 9 meeting, the task force requested city staff to prepare an MOU for both parties to sign.

Communications

When appropriate, information related to outcomes of the partnership work will be communicated to the public through already available communication channels such as news releases and media pitches, the Energy Future website, Channel 8 programming, social media websites (Facebook and Twitter), the project email listserv and the project newsletter. Additional assistance is anticipated as the group approaches the second quarter of 2014 and makes its presentation to City Council.

² Xcel had previously agreed to work with Energy Efficiency Business Coalition and others on a stakeholder group to explore "smart" thermostats as part of its 2014 DSM Plan; it invited Boulder to participate as part of this process.

Legal and Regulatory Actions

Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

Dockets Related to Municipalization

Boulder is currently participating in two dockets related to municipalization: Xcel's 2011 Electric Resource Plan (ERP) and Xcel's application for declaratory orders regarding service to electric utility customers outside the city.

2011 ERP

Regulated investor-owned utilities in Colorado must file their plans for the acquisition of additional electric generation with the PUC every four years. Xcel filed its plan in October 2011. In its initial filing, Xcel recognized the possibility that Boulder could be leaving the Xcel system. Consequently, the company proposed that it acquire energy through short-term contracts with independent power producers. Throughout 2012 and 2013, Boulder filed testimony and comments that proposed that it work with Xcel and the PUC to gradually transition away from Xcel's system, thereby reducing the need to acquire additional generation. This would save other ratepayers the cost of that acquisition. On Sept. 10, 2013, Xcel submitted its preferred resource acquisition plan, which included significant amounts of solar and wind power. Boulder filed comments in support of the acquisition of renewable energy, but expressed concern regarding Xcel's acquisition of more power than needed and much sooner than needed. The city also noted Xcel's failure to take into account the uncertainty of Boulder remaining a retail customer of Xcel. Staff from the Office of Consumer Counsel also suggested in its comments that Xcel should acquire fewer resources because of the likelihood of Boulder leaving the system. The commission is scheduled to reach a decision in this proceeding on Dec. 9. Staff will update council on the outcome of this proceeding at the Dec. 17 meeting.

Xcel's Petition for Declaratory Orders

On May 9, 2013, Xcel filed a petition for declaratory orders in which it sought rulings from the PUC that: (1) its right to serve customers located outside the city could only be taken away if a new utility could prove through a hearing before the PUC that Xcel was "unwilling or unable" to serve those customers; and, (2) having to build replacement facilities (presumably to replace facilities acquired by the city) did not constitute an inability to serve. The commission issued its decision in this proceeding on Oct. 29. The city filed an application for rehearing, reargument or reconsideration (RRR) of that decision on Nov. 18. In its application for RRR, the city argued that, contrary to the PUC's decision, it is council's role to determine which assets should be acquired through condemnation and that the condemnation proceeding should be filed before the city seeks approval of a transfer of assets or the right to serve from the PUC. On Nov. 26, the PUC granted Xcel's request to respond, on a limited basis, to some of the issues Boulder raised. This response was filed on Dec. 3, and the PUC is expected to issue a written ruling soon. Staff will update council on the outcome of this issue at the Dec. 17 meeting.

The "Boulder Docket"

Staff is also preparing for the likelihood that Xcel will re-file the "Boulder docket" (12A-155E). In this docket, Xcel sought to prevent Boulder residents and businesses from participating in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. In 2012, Xcel's application was dismissed

and the docket was closed in 2013. Before Xcel filed that petition, it suggested that the city agree to a proposal it made with regard to how to handle the city's ongoing participation in these programs in light of the city's exploration of municipalization, but refused to provide the information staff believed was important for council to have to make an informed decision regarding the proposal. The docket was closed "without prejudice," meaning that Xcel could refile its request at a more appropriate time. Xcel has indicated to city staff that it believes this is the appropriate time to refile its request and has made another offer of settlement. Staff sent discovery requests in the original proceeding to obtain the information necessary to evaluate the proposal, but Xcel refused to answer the requests and the docket was closed before the city could file a motion to compel Xcel to answer.

Dockets Unrelated to Municipalization

Boulder is participating in four other dockets on issues unrelated to municipalization. Two are focused on Xcel's demand-side management (DSM) programs, including the 2014 Plan for DSM programs and a "strategic issues" docket, which looks at overarching issues related to cost recovery and energy savings goals for 2015 through 2020.

Boulder joined in the settlement for the 2014 Plan because it included provisions that could be helpful to local governments that are considering enhancing energy efficiency partnerships.

Staff filed testimony in the strategic issues docket that supported the development of a new LED street lighting rebate program, but opposed cost recovery for unspecific distribution voltage optimization investments (investments on the utility side of the meter that reduce line losses) through DSM funding. Staff also promoted the idea of enhancing collaboration between utilities and local governments, based on governments' ability to provide tailored services and leverage alternate funding sources. Part of Boulder's involvement in DSM includes sending staff to quarterly "DSM Roundtable" meetings at which Xcel staff offer progress updates.

Boulder is also a party in Xcel's 2014 Renewable Energy Standard Compliance Plan, which has raised significant concerns about impacts to net metering and solar incentives. The city is still evaluating whether more active participation is warranted.

Finally, PUC advisory staff recently opened an energy data access and privacy proceeding to discuss the current status of the energy data privacy rules, whether they should be expanded to data regarding customer natural gas usage, and whether the data privacy rules should be modified. This is a significant issue for Boulder because of the rules' impacts on community-wide greenhouse gas reporting and energy efficiency program operation. Boulder filed extensive comments and joined with a group of 10 communities, including two municipal utilities whose customers receive natural gas service from Xcel, to request that the rules include provisions that facilitate local government climate action and sustainability programs. The filings note that these programs have saved residents and businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars. Access to useful energy data to identify baselines and measure progress remains an important area of concern for numerous Front Range communities.

Condemnation

On Aug. 20, 2013, council authorized acquisition of Xcel's facilities and property, including by condemnation, if necessary, in Ordinance 7918. Under the law, the city must conduct good faith negotiations with Xcel prior to filing a petition in the district court. The first step is for the city to send a Notice of Intent to Acquire to Xcel. This notice will describe the property the city intends to acquire, advise Xcel that it is entitled to an appraisal at the city's expense, and seek the names of the individuals with whom the city should negotiate. The notice of intent is not the same thing as initiating condemnation proceedings. Instead, it begins good faith negotiations, or a formal effort to start a dialogue with Xcel about the acquisition of the necessary assets to support a municipal utility. If negotiations are successful, the city will proceed to work with its financial advisors to issue bonds to acquire the funds to acquire the electrical system. If negotiations are not successful, the city would file a petition of condemnation with the Boulder District Court to pursue municipalization.

Although the ordinance allows for condemnation to be filed Jan. 1, because negotiations will be starting later than originally anticipated, the city does not expect any condemnation action to be filed that soon. On the other hand, Xcel has stated that it does not want to sell the assets, so it may shorten the time for good-faith negotiations so that it can make its legal challenges.

At the Dec.17 council meeting, staff will present a graphic of how the main components of the municipalization project overlap.

North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Memberships

The city recently submitted for membership in both NERC and WECC. NERC is a self-regulatory organization, subject to oversight by the U.S. FERC. NERC develops and enforces reliability standards; assesses adequacy; monitors the bulk power system; audits owners, operators, and users for preparedness; and educates, trains, and certifies industry personnel. NERC reliability standards define the requirements for planning and operating the North American bulk power system. Members have the responsibility to promote, support and comply with the purposes of NERC. Membership allows Boulder to participate in the development and enforcement of reliability standards. The motivation for becoming a member now is to raise industry awareness of Boulder's efforts and to allow the city to gain access to education and training opportunities for its personnel.

The WECC is the regional entity responsible for coordinating and promoting Bulk Electric System reliability in the Western Interconnection. In addition, WECC provides an environment for coordinating the operating and planning activities of its members. As a member of WECC, the city will gain access to power and stability computer simulations, transmission data, and participate in standards development, and the transmission planning process.

For NERC, Boulder has been approved as a member. Registration as an entity regulated by NERC will come with actual formation of the utility.

For WECC, the city will become a voting member under the existing bylaws rather than amendments that are planned for the near future. The form of the application has been reviewed and approved by WECC staff. The city will hear formally in December soon after the application is filed.

Communications

As expected, communications assistance for legal and regulatory actions is limited because information surrounding this aspect of the municipalization study needs to be confidential to protect the city's position in current and future legal proceedings. Communications has and will continue to help when documents and outcomes enter the public domain either through a legal filing that makes them public or if the city decides that the information no longer needs to remain confidential. It is likely that communications assistance will be critical as more previously confidential information becomes public through the filing of condemnation proceedings. Information provided to the public on costs, infrastructure acquisition, negotiations and other litigation will need to be communicated in a way that the general public can understand and follow along, should they choose to. Information will be released to the public through already available communication channels such as news releases and media pitches, the Energy Future website, Channel 8 programming, social media websites (Facebook and Twitter), the project email listserv and the project newsletter.

It is also likely that communications assistance will be necessary to help with media requests as information is made public. Communications staff will help coordinate interviews and will also track the corresponding stories to ensure that the city's messages are being conveyed accurately and understood by the public.

Transition Plan

On Nov. 27, the city issued an RFP to solicit proposals from qualified consultants to create a Transition Plan that builds upon the engineering, legal and financial work completed to-date and incorporates a work plan suitable for regulatory review. The anticipated outcome is a detailed Transition Plan work plan for use by the city that lays out the transition from current status to a full-retail utility operation. The plan would ensure that a city-owned electric utility can have the same or better reliability as Xcel and can keep rates at or below Xcel's at the time of transition in accordance with Charter requirements.

The transition plan will address both the initial start-up requirements and ongoing operations including:

1. Administrative and Overhead Support Functions
2. Distribution Operations and Maintenance
3. Transmission Operations and Maintenance
4. Resource Planning and Acquisition
5. Reliability
6. Asset Management
7. Regulatory Requirements and Compliance Processes
8. Customer Service
9. Energy Resources (management and acquisition)

10. Construction
11. Rates and Fees
12. Tasks related to legal process (acquisition, stranded costs, state regulatory, etc.) and internal process (utility formation, debt issuance, etc.)

It is anticipated that a final transition plan will be completed early in the second quarter of 2014.

Communications

Communications assistance around the transition plan is expected to be a significant part of the 2014 work plan. It will be important that members of our community understand what the process is for establishing this plan and what it means for the potential creation of a local electric utility. The plan is one of the first opportunities potential customers will have to see how a city utility would operate and provide them with service, both from a technical perspective and from a customer service perspective. Staff will be engaging the public during this process, similar to earlier phases, by creating a working group to review the detailed transition plan and ensure it incorporates any community desires or concerns. It is also likely that a webpage within the BoulderEnergyFuture.com website will be created and dedicated to explaining the plan. The communications team will create the website and announce the plan's availability using already available communication channels such as news releases and media pitches, Channel 8 programming, social media websites (Facebook and Twitter), the project email listserv, and the project newsletter. Other dissemination tactics will be evaluated as needed.

Energy Services Plan for 2014

The staff team associated with this project is working with other city departmental representatives to evaluate expanding existing and developing potential pilot projects that could be undertaken in 2014 to help advance Boulder's Energy Future goals, achieve emission reductions, and exploit potential synergies between the city's different infrastructure systems, investments and services.

Most of the project ideas under consideration would piggy-back onto other areas of work already underway or contemplated as part of the 2014 work program, targeting specific opportunities for demonstrating local energy initiatives and piloting the concept of "energy as a service." As specific ideas are further developed and vetted, the staff team will seek input from community experts as well as council. Implementation of pilot projects would also provide the opportunity to start building the organizational capacity for undertaking ongoing energy work, and to test alternative ideas of how an ongoing energy services entity could best be positioned in relation to other areas of "sustainability service." One possibility would be to create an energy services utility as an interim step toward creating a full retail utility, which could be funded by fees as an enterprise under TABOR or through a voter-approved tax. This would be a policy discussion for council at a later date.

If Boulder municipalizes its electric system, these groundlaying energy services efforts could provide a framework for a city utility that provides electricity to Boulder customers. If Boulder does not municipalize, this would be a vehicle for continuing to further Boulder's energy future goals, focusing on activities at the state level to enable quicker progress in decarbonizing the community's energy supply.

It is important to note that without owning and operating a retail utility there would be limits to what the city has the authority to do. It was the city's previous analysis of energy options—namely the potential for pursuing aggressive demand-side programs and on-site renewable generation—that led to the focus on changing the city's energy supply and the exploration of municipalization. While demand side programs and on-site renewable can and will play an important role in the city's overall efforts, there are significant limits on what can be achieved without having the full authority of the retail utility.

Examples of services that could be provided, with appropriate funding, include: enhanced energy efficiency programs, increased local solar installations, the purchase and upgrade of street lights to increase energy efficiency, and testing of innovative technologies such as “behind-the meter” microgrids. Variations of these and other ideas are being explored as part of the pilot project discussions, and evaluated in terms of legal, technical, and financial barriers to implementation.

Exploring Organizational Options

Since council passed the acquisition ordinance, staff has been moving forward with the next steps towards acquiring the electric distribution system infrastructure. One of the major work efforts is a transition plan that will detail how the utility will provide reliable service, organize itself, and be prepared to operate on “Day 1.” In other words, how will this entity be organized before the infrastructure is acquired?

A central focus of a new Boulder utility would be to design the “utility of the 21st century,” which would treat energy as a service, rather than a commodity. This utility would not be just about buying the poles and wires. There would need to be an appropriate organizational structure in order to implement the new utility model rather than replicate the utility model of the past.

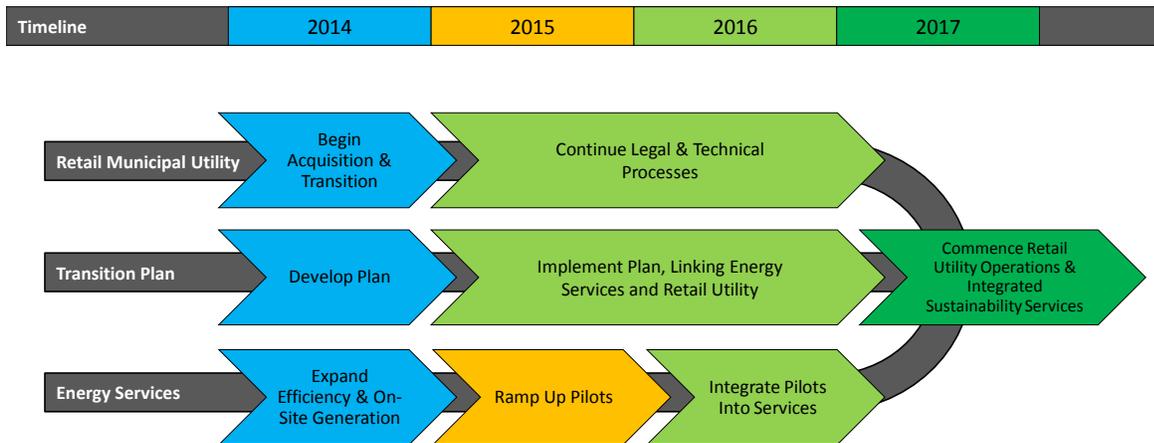
The time required for legal and regulatory processes provides a great opportunity to bring together energy activities that the city is currently providing or planning and look at them through the lens of a utility as well as integrating the city's climate commitment and resiliency efforts, which are currently happening parallel to this process. For example, from the recent flood, a community conversation around neighborhood planning and resiliency has emerged with consideration of new models for neighborhood engagement. This effort could have significant applications with regard to energy goals as well. Staff intends to use this opportunity to integrate services within the city organization to address common goals.

Examples of questions that need to be considered include:

- 1) How might formation of a utility in the future inform the development of near-term pilot projects and new services?
- 2) What current efforts are providing energy as a service?
- 3) What processes and structures need to be in place to support our vision of “the utility of the future,” and how do they relate to other parts of the city organization and its work?
- 4) What is the business model for energy-as-a-service and alternative strategies for funding near-term as well as long-term projects and services?

Parallel Tracks

The following graphic shows a high-level timeline for how the formation of a retail utility with ownership of poles and wires, the transition planning process development of near-term energy pilots that expand on the city's existing energy efficiency services and related efforts. The transition planning commencing now could inform the development of a near-term services entity (beyond what currently exists) and lay the foundation for the overall structure for an integrated utility.



Next Steps

There is a great deal of work ahead as we look to expand energy services. The list below highlights some of the work plan items but is by no means all inclusive of the work ahead. Some of the major milestones for 2014 and 2015 include:

1. Identifying a core project team
2. Developing a matrix and refine criteria for pilot projects with input from community working groups
3. Analyzing funding/financing options and local generation potential – including what is possible to implement without ownership of the distribution system.
4. Developing an organizational structure in coordination with the city management team
5. Developing and implementing a public process and communications plan including:
 - a. Engaging working groups on the proposed pilot projects
 - b. Returning to council for input
 - c. Engaging the community on the proposed services to pilot or pursue for full implementation
6. Developing any necessary legal and financial structures and putting the necessary organizational resources into place
7. Implementing initial offerings

Staff intends to return to council in early 2014 for a study session on a proposed plan. Community input would be sought shortly thereafter with staff hoping to return to council for the ordinance process in late 2014. Selection of new pilot programs could be ready for implementation in early 2014 with additional service offerings available in 2015.

Communications

Announcing the desired expansion of energy services and educating the public about what this means for Boulder will be at least as important as sharing information about the transition plan. This step will underscore the city's commitment to providing energy services to meet the goals of the community regardless of the outcome of acquisition proceedings. At the appropriate time, communications will assist with all messaging and potential branding, if any, around the creation of energy services. This will include the creation of a webpage within the BoulderEnergyFuture.com website and updating it regularly with new information that will help potential audiences learn about and get involved in the formation of a non-retail electric utility in Boulder. Communications will also assist in creating and updating talking points, fact sheets and other documents that will aid in the public's understanding of the city's work. Staff will use traditional communications tactics like news releases, listserv messages, Channel 8 programming and social media sites to provide new and timely information to the public.

Because this project will require enhanced public involvement to help shape its vision and framework, it is also anticipated that there will be a need for communications efforts that invite the public to participate and provide feedback. This may include open-house style informational meetings and the creation of videos that focus on energy services. These videos will be shared via the project website and city social media platforms and also disseminated through existing external networks in order to further the reach of the information to people who may not already be involved in the Energy Future project.

Working Groups

Solar Working Group

Because of the success of the Municipalization Exploration Project working groups in vetting complex information, staff formed a Solar Working Group to provide information and recommendations on several aspects related to local solar development. More specifically, this group originated because of concerns that have been expressed by both solar industry representatives and by residents and businesses who have or want solar about what would happen to incentives contracts with Xcel, both in the near and long term, if the city municipalizes. While the city has committed to work to make those who have signed solar contracts financially whole, staff needs more information about what customers expect, what existing contracts include and how the city can best develop local solar resources.

The purpose of the group is to focus on two key questions: (1) how Solar*Rewards contracts should be treated by Boulder and Xcel to provide certainty in the marketplace; and (2) how Boulder can best foster local distributed solar development, whether or not it becomes a local electric utility—i.e., defining the role of local distributed solar in the electric utility of the future. The working group has approximately 26 members representing diverse perspectives, including industry representatives, financiers, large customers, engineers, renters, low-income representatives, and researchers. The list of members and scope and purpose of the Solar Working Group is provided in **Attachment B**.

The Solar Working Group held its first meeting on Nov. 14, at which members provided feedback as to their goals for the working group process. In general, attendees at the first meeting

expressed concerns about the discussion that is occurring in multiple states about the value of solar power in the regulated utility industry. This seems to be taking precedence over concerns about the process of transitioning existing and near-future solar contracts should Boulder form a local electric utility. Working group members suggested that the group explore opportunities related to solar, including developing new market-based, rather than incentive-based, business models; looking at the city's ability to reduce "soft costs" related to taxes, fees, and permits; examining how new technologies and financing approaches could facilitate access to solar by customers who are beyond the early adopters; and looking at how to value solar more effectively. The working group seemed certain that solar will play a large role in the utility of the future.

The Solar Working Group is expected to meet once per month through April or May 2014. The group is expected to make recommendations around the role of solar in the electric utility of the future and will be meeting in conjunction with the existing Resource, Financial, and Reliability working groups for further input.

Natural Gas Working Group

Given the tremendous growth in natural gas production in Colorado, the current and future use of natural gas as an energy source for Boulder customers has raised concerns over fracking -- a process that uses a pressurized water mixture to release oil or natural gas from deep underground. On Nov. 5, Boulder voters passed a ballot measure that would institute a five-year moratorium on fracking in Boulder and on Boulder-owned open space property. This allows the community time to provide input on resource options as the city evaluates sources of future electricity.

In addition to concerns over fracking, there is a growing concern of methane leakage. While it is widely accepted that *burning* natural gas emits significantly less carbon dioxide than burning coal, recent studies have found that *using* natural gas may actually release more greenhouse gases over its lifecycle. That's because quantities of raw methane, a major component of natural gas, can escape into the atmosphere during natural gas extraction, production and distribution. Natural gas is likely to be a necessary transition energy source as Boulder makes what the city hopes will be a dramatic shift away from coal and other fossil fuels toward renewable sources. The feasibility modeling associated with municipalization identified a number of resource portfolio scenarios; each of these included some amount of generation coming from natural gas³ for some period. If Boulder chooses to municipalize, before a commitment is made to a particular energy portfolio, it will be important to address concerns around the use of natural gas supplied from fracking and how any negative impacts could be mitigated through best practices or other means.

The Natural Gas Working Group consists of industry specialists and local stakeholders and was formed to explore concerns and opportunities related to the use of natural gas to generate electricity for the City of Boulder, should it decide to form a local electric utility. This working group will provide valuable recommendations, as natural gas will likely play a significant role in Boulder's energy portfolio, whether the community continues to be served by Xcel or by a municipal utility. While the focus of the group's work will be to examine issues and concerns

³The city's modeling evaluated five scenarios that included natural gas as a fuel source. The modeled percentages ranged from 32 to 46 percent in 2017.

related to fracking and methane releases, it will also be exploring current and possible industry best practices and potential alternatives for gas replacement.

The working group will also provide input into future city comments on rules related to this issue. For example, the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission was recently presented with proposed regulations to streamline the state air quality program and address the growth in oil and gas development. The purpose of the rulemaking is to begin the process of developing and implementing programs necessary to meet federal air quality standards for ground-level ozone and protect public health. Oil and gas activity is now the largest contributor to harmful ozone levels and the only source expected to grow⁴. The city is part of a local Government Coalition intended to support regulatory changes that streamline air pollution controls for all sources, where appropriate, and address the rapid growth in emissions from the oil and gas industry.

The working group members represent diverse perspectives and include representation from a number of stakeholders. The list of members and scope and purpose of the Natural Gas Working Group is provided in **Attachment C**. The working group held its first meeting on Dec. 5, at which they discussed options for identifying specific topics for group discussion, and near-term analysis necessary to develop draft guiding principles related to the procurement and use of natural gas in the future. As it develops recommendations, the working group will meet in conjunction with the existing Resource, Financial and Reliability working groups to receive additional input.

Governance Working Group

In May of this year, a Governance Working Group was created to work with city staff to understand the flexibility and limitations of the Boulder City Charter electric utility advisory board language, specifically Article XIII “Light and Power Utility,” and to develop a recommendation for City Council on any necessary ordinance amendments or other suggestions about how the utility should be governed. It was important to convene this group for a variety of reasons, most notably to ensure the appropriate level of customer participation in the governance structure, including those who might be within the service territory but outside the city’s boundaries.

The working group consisted of 15 members selected on the basis of their diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It met four times beginning on May 29 and ending on June 26. During this time, the members reviewed the system of governance already provided for by Boulder’s Charter and the types of decisions that the City Council and the utility advisory board could be expected to face.

On July 15, the Governance Working Group made several recommendations to City Council, all of which are captured in a memo available by clicking [here](#). Two of these recommendations, pertaining to requiring the utility advisory board to advise the council on rate making and for out-of-city customers to be represented on the utility advisory board, were incorporated into the city’s 2013 Ballot Question 2E, which passed Nov. 5.

⁴Regional Air Quality Council, 2013

The working group was not able to consider recommendations on several other topics, including:

- Advisory board appointment process
- Advisory board term limits
- Delegation of powers from council to the advisory board
- Advisory board/staff relationship

While these topics were of interest to one or more members, time limitations prevented them from being evaluated. Moreover, it was determined that it might be best to seek council direction on whether it wanted to receive recommendations on these or other topics of governance later this year or at a date closer to the creation of a local electric utility. If City Council is interested in receiving recommendations on these or other governance related topics, staff will reconvene the Working Group in 2014 for such purpose.

Communications

Communications assists with all community working groups by creating and maintaining group webpages and by attending meetings in order to take notes, provide guidance and answer questions. Communications also helps disseminate any report issued by a working group that should be seen and understood by City Council, members of the public and any other audience that may be relevant. Communications is also assisting with media coordination and story tracking.

IV. FISCAL IMPACT

The municipalization exploration work plan represents a significant undertaking. In particular, the legal and technical work necessary to determine the final costs for potential acquisition of the local distribution system and launch of a municipal utility is a considerable investment.

Recognizing this, in 2011, city voters approved an increase to the Utility Occupation Tax in the amount of \$1.9 million a year. The use of this tax revenue has been allocated to legal services, consulting services related to possible municipalization and separation of Xcel's system (engineering and appraisal services), salary and benefits and purchased services and supplies.

The 2013 total budget of \$3,251,935 is funded from the Utility Occupation Tax as well as a one-time General Fund request of \$303,000 allocated to support staffing needs for this project and \$1,048,935 prior year carryover from 2012. The carryover reflects savings from hiring the director mid-year in 2012 and a delay in spending for legal fees to negotiate the purchase of the system and engineering fees to assess and determine the technical capabilities of the system. To date, expenditures have been within budget. A more detailed description of 2013 budget is included in the Dec. 17 information packet.

The approved budget for 2014 is \$2,312,000; \$1,957,000 is funded from the Utility Occupation Tax (\$1.9 million, plus a three percent tax increase approved by council on Oct. 25, 2013, pursuant to the original ordinance) and \$355,000 that is funded through one-time savings in the General Fund to support salaries and benefits for high priority staffing needs. It is anticipated

that there will be additional funds carried over from legal and consulting purchase orders encumbered in 2013.

The work anticipated in 2014 will involve significant expenditures. In addition to the work plan items that have been anticipated since the start of this project, additional tasks have emerged and are likely to emerge as the legal and regulatory processes unfold. City Council should anticipate the possibility that additional resources will be needed in 2014. Staff will bring these needs and proposals forward as they arise.

V. NEXT STEPS

Next steps include:

Fourth Quarter 2013

- 1) Send a notice of intent to acquire to Xcel and initiate negotiations for the electric system (if Xcel comes forward with a new set of programs and services that meet the community needs, negotiations and condemnation can be discontinued) (December)
- 2) Addressing outcomes from PUC decisions on who serves what customers as well as the impact of acquiring electric assets outside the city limits. City staff will work with PUC staff to address their concerns for a smooth transition. (October- ongoing)

First Quarter 2014

- 1) Continue negotiations with Xcel to acquire electric assets, if not successful file for condemnation.
- 2) Bring all working groups together to kick off the next phase of the project (January)
- 3) Select a consultant to develop transition work plan and begin the detailed tasks of preparing to own and operate an electric utility. If Xcel offers a better alternative, these plans can be adjusted to respond to the alternative. (January)
- 4) City-Xcel Partnership Task Force monthly updates to City Council (January through March)
- 5) Exploring and piloting energy services programs.
- 6) Reconvene the Governance working group, if so directed by council, to flesh out remaining issues should the city moves forward with municipalization and attempt to serve out-of-city customers
- 7) Working with Solar and Gas working groups to address community concerns and create alternatives to support reduced emissions and increased local generation (January through ongoing)
- 8) City Council Study Session

Second Quarter 2014

- 1) Presentation from Xcel on the recommended products and services that have been vetted by the task force and the Xcel organization that will achieve the city's energy future goals (April)
- 2) City Council Study Session

- 3) Presentation from Xcel to City Council on the recommended products and services that have been vetted by the task force and the Xcel organization that will achieve the city's energy future goals (June)

Third Quarter 2014

- 1) City Council Study Session

Fourth Quarter 2014

- 1) City Council Study Session

Roundtable meetings may be scheduled as topics arise.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Attachment A: | Draft Work Plan |
| Attachment B: | Solar Working Group Membership, Purpose and Scope |
| Attachment C: | Natural Gas Working Group Membership, Purpose and Scope |

ATTACHMENT A

December 11, 2013

2014 DRAFT High Level Work Plan (dates shown where known or able to be estimated; subject to modification throughout the year)

Xcel Partnership Task Force

Ongoing	Monthly meetings of task force
December 2013	Base modeling inputs completed
January - March 2014	Xcel Energy presents SmartGrid and distributed generation offerings to task force
February 2014	Evaluate Xcel's assumptions, make additional assignments if necessary
March 2014	Finalize modeling assumptions to model new products and services
March 2014	Gather data to perform comparative analyses between muni and status quo
April 2014	Presentation from Xcel to the task force on the full package of offered products and services
May 2014	Follow up from task force to answer and refine products and services and form recommendation to City Council
June 2014	Xcel Presentation to City Council on the full package of offered products and services

Regulatory Activity

<i>Anticipated</i>	CPUC Boulder Docket
December 2013 - March 2014	2014 Renewable Energy Standard proceeding
January - March 2014	Energy Data Access and Privacy proceeding
December 2013 - June 2014	Demand-Side Management Strategic Issues proceeding
Ongoing	Other energy related/municipalization related proceedings
January - March 2014	Manage membership applications with NERC and WECC

Condemnation Activities

<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Notice of Intent
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	File condemnation petition
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Good faith negotiations with Xcel
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Receive Xcel's appraisal
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Condemnation case
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Amend petition if necessary
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Authority to condemn granted
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Case management order issued

ATTACHMENT A

Condemnation Activities (continued)

<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Refine separation plan
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Discovery process
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	Jury trial
<i>Order and timing will vary</i>	FERC activities

Regional collaboration

Ongoing	Meet with other municipal utilities and surrounding communities
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Energy Services Plan

January 2014	Form project team
January 2014	Pecan Street pilot project set-up and recruitment period
January 2014	Develop list and criteria for prioritizing pilot projects
First Quarter 2014	Inventory existing energy services and enhancements
February 2014	Analyze funding options for pilots
February 2014	Communications planning
February - March 2014	Pecan Street equipment installed and web portal activated
April 2014	Pecan Street Mobile Application live
April 2014	Council check in on energy services
March - December 2014	Community outreach
June 2014	Council check in on proposed pilots and energy services
June - September 2014	Engage community to design services
August - November 2014	Refine initial offerings
Fourth Quarter 2014	Develop any enabling ordinance(s)
Ongoing	Quarterly reports and project refinement

Local Generation Assessment

February 2014	Engage working groups in assessment priorities and process
March 2014	Complete Scope of Work, guiding principles and RFP for local generation assessment
April 2014	Select consultant
May - August 2014	Analysis and assessment of generation potential

ATTACHMENT A

Local Generation Assessment (continued)

August 2014	Review preliminary findings with working groups
September 2014	Refine assessment and analysis
October 2014	Present preliminary key findings to council/community

Transition Plan

January 2014	Interview and select transition planning consultants
January 2014	Establish transition planning working group
February 2014	Collaborate with existing city admin and support functions for transition work plan
March - April 2014	Review draft transition work plan with other city departments
April 2014	Final transition work plan
June 2014	Review transition work plan with City Council
2015-20xx	Execute transition work plan

Solar Working Group

December - April 2014	Meet monthly
April 2014	Evaluate Solar Working Group findings with other working groups
May 2014	Finalize recommendations for review by council or other governing entity

Natural Gas Working Group

January - February 2014	Participation in CDPHE Stakeholder Oil and Gas Rulemaking process
December 2013 - April 2014	Gather data and research related to hydraulic fracturing, fugitive methane, industry best practices and natural gas alternatives
April 2014	Identify guiding principles related to natural gas issues; coordinate with other working groups
May 2014	Finalize guiding principles and proposed incentives programs to go to City Council or, if it exists at that time, a Utility Advisory Board

ATTACHMENT B

Solar Working Group

Purpose and Scope

The solar working group is convening to focus on questions related to the development of solar power in Boulder, included but not limited to: current and future incentives, barriers to solar development, and the future development of innovative distributed generation (DG) pilot projects. The group will attempt to address the following issues:

1. Develop guiding principles: what is the role of distributed generation such as solar in the utility of the future, either through the creation of a new municipal utility or through a continued partnership with Xcel Energy?
2. What barriers currently exist to achieving the future role of distributed generation?
3. Regarding the “Boulder docket”¹:
 - Are there barriers in the current solar marketplace specifically related to the municipalization effort?
 - What is a fair way to address new solar contracts that occur prior to municipalizing that provides certainty in the marketplace without compromising Boulder’s ability to incentivize local solar in the future?
4. Should the group determine an appropriate increase in solar installations, what is the place for roof-top versus utility scale solar? What are the benefits and risks of each?
 - How can a future vision of solar in Boulder be realized through a municipal utility? Through a partnership with Xcel?
 - What incentivizes solar development from both the developer and the customer perspective?
 - What type of analysis or evaluation is necessary to understand issues such as capacity, site suitability or incentive structures?
 - To the extent funding is required, where do we get the money and how do we direct it?

Working Group Meetings

The working group will meet once per month from November 2013 through May or June 2014.

- Sept./Oct. 2013 – Recruit members
- Nov. 2013 – Kickoff working group and discuss guiding principles (i.e., role of distributed solar in the utility of the future).
- Dec. 2013 to Apr. 2014 – identify (1) approaches to handle new Solar*Rewards contracts in Boulder docket and (2) incentive programs for

¹ The “Boulder docket” is a petition by Xcel to limit the future participation of Boulder customers in its Solar*Rewards, Solar*Rewards Community, and demand-side management (energy efficiency and demand response) programs. The Commission decided the application, filed in early 2012, was premature, but Xcel has stated that it may seek to revisit this issues based on Council approving moving forward with condemnation in August. The docket can be found here: https://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/efi/EFL.Show_Docket?p_session_id=&p_docket_id=12A-155E

ATTACHMENT B

the municipal utility or for a local energy service utility. Anticipate 4-5 meetings depending on holiday scheduling.

- Apr. 2014 – take guiding principles and proposals to other working groups for review (Resource, Financial, Reliability).
- May 2014 – finalize guiding principles and proposed incentives programs to go to City Council or, if it exists at that time, a Utility Advisory Board.

Working Group Members

COMMUNITY MEMBERS (Members CVs are provided [here](#))

Anne Guilfoile
Annie C. Lappé
Becky English
Bill Ellard
Cameron McGregor
Chad Parsons
Craig Jarvis
Dan Kramer
Dave Hatchimonji
Jason Wiener
Jim Hartman
John E Johnson
John Street
Kai Abelkis
Ken Gamauf
Matt Lehrman
Paul Melamed
Phil Klam
Phil Wardwell
Puneet Pasrich
R.T. Weber
Scott E. Stevenson
Scott Franklin
Steve Hoge
Todd Stewart
Tom Christoffel
Meghan Nutting
Dietrich Hoefner

STAFF

Yael Gichon – Energy Sustainability Coordinator
Kelly Crandall – Energy Sustainability Specialist
Jonathan Koehn – Regional Sustainability Coordinator
Andrew Barth – Communications Specialist

ATTACHMENT C

Natural Gas Working Group

Purpose and Scope

The working group will focus on questions related to the use of natural gas to generate electricity for the City of Boulder. Natural gas will likely play a significant role in Boulder's energy portfolio, whether the community continues to be served by Xcel Energy or by a municipal utility. The focus of the group's work will be to examine issues and concerns related to hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") and methane releases and to explore current and possible industry best practices in order to inform any process moving forward. The group will also explore viable alternatives to natural gas that support the Boulder Energy Future goals. The group's recommendations will be discussed in a joint working group session with the Resource Working Group in 2014, and the final guiding principles and recommendations will be presented to City Council or, if it exists at that time, a Utility Advisory Board.

The group will attempt to address the following issues:

1. Develop guiding principles: what is the role of natural gas, either through the creation of a new municipal utility or through a continued partnership with Xcel Energy?
2. Understand how the use of natural gas for electricity differs from that which is used for heating (i.e., quantities, source, delivery methods, etc).
3. As Boulder pursues a portfolio that addresses both environmental and economic drivers, what role should natural gas play in meeting Boulder's short and long-term resource needs? What are the associated benefits and risks?
4. What alternatives or industry best practices exist that eliminate or reduce the risks associated with fracking or fugitive methane release? What is the best way that Boulder can promote those best practices?
5. If Boulder does not form a local retail electric utility, what are ways to minimize harmful impacts from natural gas associated with Xcel energy's resource portfolio?
6. What type of analysis or evaluation is necessary to understand issues above?

Working Group Meetings

The working group will meet once per month from December 2013 through May or June 2014.

- Oct./Nov. 2013 – Recruit members
- Dec. 2013 – Kickoff working group and discuss purpose and issues; discuss current issues related to natural gas; identify additional working group members
- Dec. 2013 to Apr. 2014 – Gather data and research to support guiding principles; explore issues, risks and alternatives related to (1) fracking and methane release (2) industry best practices, responsible sourcing options and alternatives. Staff anticipates 4-5 meetings depending on holiday scheduling.
- Apr. 2014 – take guiding principles and proposals to other working groups for review.

ATTACHMENT C

- May 2014 – finalize guiding principles and proposed incentives programs to go to City Council or, if it exists at that time, a Utility Advisory Board.

Working Group Members

COMMUNITY MEMBERS (Members CVs are provided [here](#))

Bill Ellard
Alison Burchell
David Scott
Jim Look
Lynn Segal
Micah Parkin
Neshama Abraham
Pam Milmoie
Pete Morton
Puneet Pasrich
Robyn Kube
Sharon Klipping
Tim Thomas
Todd Bryan
Tom Asprey
Dickey Lee Hullinghorst

STAFF

Jonathan Koehn- Regional Sustainability Coordinator
Yael Gichon – Residential Sustainability Coordinator
Kelly Crandall – Sustainability Specialist
Sarah Huntley – Media Relations/Communications Coordinator