

Net Zero Task Force Meeting

December 10, 2014

City Staff Present – Susanne Rasmussen, John Bolduc, Ellen Kokinda

Consultant Team present – Dave Ramslie (via phone), Barbra Batshalom, Paul Gromer

Task Force members present – Henrietta Davis, Barun Singh (phone), Andrea Love, Julie Newman, Heather Henriksen, Joe Maguire, Paul Lyons, Jane Carbone, Shawn Hesse, Quinton Zondervan

11 members of the public present

Dave Ramslie, Integral Group consultant: Recap of Agenda

Our goal is to take a comprehensive look at the Bold Moves using the Gantt Chart as a guide, and to determine if the majority of the Task Force finds this as the right set of tools to pursue as a package of recommendations. Questions for the Task Force:

- Are there any conditions for this set of actions that would need to be in place in order to reach consensus?
- What is your reaction to the proposed targets as the different initiatives occur over time?

City Staff Comments on the Gantt Chart Draft: Fiscal Year 2015

Susanne Rasmussen, CDD – Presently, the Gantt chart misrepresents the amount of work that could be accomplished in 2015. New resources to accomplish the work will not be available until July 2015 when Fiscal Year 2015 begins. Even if the City were to farm out studies to external parties, these projects would still require staff management and more resources on the staff side that are not currently available to undertake the five proposed studies.

This Gantt chart is *one take* on how to roll out the proposed actions. Key feedback from the Task Force would be to discuss the SEQUENCING of actions. What are your reactions to the chart regarding sequencing? What do we need to change? What is acceptable?

Task Force’s Comments on the Gantt Chart

Henrietta:

- Concerned about City Council’s reaction to Task Force proposal – what is the TF asking CC to do? Proposing new studies has bad name in legislative terms as if we’re not doing anything
- Change “study” to “develop recommendations”; If these initiatives require more staff or resources, we should be upfront with City Council
- Need a communication strategy early so it is the first step
- Change the term “Bold moves” to “actions”- we need to start using language describing the specific area of focus rather than using “bold move # _” – more concrete descriptions that are clearly organized

Quinton

- Disappointed with the NZ timelines

- We need to move up the communications strategy- *do now*; the Gantt chart makes it look like nothing happens until two years have passed
- Need to include district geothermal
- Net Zero lab buildings should be required sooner than 15 years from now

Dave Ramslie, Integral consultant- The working group recommendations for engagement and behavior change were prolific. Implementing a communications strategy would require developing a brand, aligning partners, and designing programs. We proposed that it would take roughly one year to prioritize and develop a cohesive 5-year strategy.

Andrea:

- Too many studies
- RE: “further consultation” bubbles on Gantt Chart - All actions should have consultation built in, not just some of them; Would it not just be assumed that those consultations just happen at every review period?

Susanne Rasmussen, CDD: Gantt Chart & Program-wide Review

The red bars indicate an overall review of the comprehensive program/initiative. These are built-in evaluation points to make any course corrections. The blue boxes on the Gantt chart are program specific reviews. Comprehensive reviews will happen every 5 years. This is a long range program, thus there will be changes to this chart over time, specifically as technology evolves, and as regulations change. The full program will be adjusted as total package every five years.

Dave Ramslie – the chart must highlight key points for consultation, particularly where there should be specific stakeholder and public feedback

Shawn:

- What do the blocks really mean? How is this phased in? how does it all happen? This chart is not easily digestible – in communicating this chart – 1) we need to make it more simple 2) but much more detailed!
 - Dave Ramslie – this Gantt chart should be used with a copy of the report; use this document as a reference for more detail
- It would help to have context of other organizations represented on the chart, e.g. Architecture 2030; trajectory of ASHRAE Vision 2020 codes (40% reduction by 2020, 72% reduction by 2025)
- Also need to do “back-casting” from modeling, i.e. this is what we would accomplish through the actions, where would we be if we didn’t take these actions

Henrietta

- Perhaps we should start with an introductory communication strategy for City Council

Quinton:

- Agree –if we only do one thing, let it be communicating this to the public, the council, the community

Jane:

- We need to establish a subcommittee to develop more detailed recommendations for the communications strategy; subcommittee should include communications professional(s)

Barbra Batshalom, consultant response to Jane's comment → I'm concerned about the idea of forming a subcommittee only because it is temporary, and a communication strategy requires constant management.

Susanne Rasmussen's response → At this moment, there is no current resource plan to hire consultants

Barun:

- Prerequisite to City Council signoff – push everything off until a communication strategy is in place- if this requires more serious effort and support on a regular basis, then this needs to be someone's job rather than on a volunteer basis
- We need to have something worth communicating

Dave Ramslie → one possible solution is to start with an initial communication strategy for getting the plan before the City Council, but we need additional substance to engage people and as a call to action. In 2017 we'll have building energy disclosure data, residential pilot data, etc. and we need to do additional communication then.

Henrietta:

- Explore what percentage each action will contribute by sector, then prioritize
- Fundamental to the communication strategy is a pie chart – to show how each initiative contributes to the percentage of carbon reduction; show the big contributors to carbon emissions in a pie chart and how the initiative would reduce that to help prioritize actions

Heather:

- Looking at the interplay of the initiatives on the Gantt Chart – will this chart misrepresent what it is supposed to mean; needs to be put together differently
- Review the Boston Action Plan Revision and how it is laid out clearly– our document needs an executive summary, benchmarking, data,
 - Make clear the vision, the key priorities, why we think it is achievable, timeline, and then make the case or the rationale for prioritizing
 - Also need to address the governance and staffing issue and least flesh out a rough staffing plan
 - Our document also needs cost-benefit analysis of proposed actions

Paul Lyons:

- Deflated by this chart – all the review and studies listed going forward; at the other meetings when we talked about the ideas, I was much more invigorated- but I see this and I'm depressed
- we have to think of this process like it's a tree- the Task Force is the root ball; our job is to put together strong healthy sapling that can be presented to the City Council
 - The City (municipal buildings) is a minor player in carbon emissions; in order for this tree to grow, we need to unleash creativity- we need to bring people in
 - This needs to be represented differently in a visual way; when presenting, we show how we've planted the tree, and ask for leadership to address different branches – ultimately, trees grow on their own, we don't have to draw every last branch

- This will require reviewing the plan continuously – this is something we have to do every single day and week, it’s going to be a continual process and critiquing

Julie:

- Appreciate the updated language and timeframes
- Still need to see the full document; hard to respond without seeing it – as soon as we get the updated draft, I will review it ASAP
- Eliminate the term “Bold moves” – need to move past this as a title; should be categorized by topical area
- Need many more details than presented here
- Conceptually this chart needs to be a cube- a three-dimensional understanding of proposals
- Need to address: Still not clear what end product is? Please describe
- Need to address: NZ for new buildings aggregate of impact – what do these pieces add up to? – this needs to be understood as a package – you can’t pick and choose – and we should describe it that way; look at aggregate expected impact year by year
 - NZ commercial and multifamily- what are incremental impacts over time; milestones, demonstrating incremental commitments of sectors
 - Could we do a 3D plot by sector and contribution to the goal over time?
 - Need to reflect how this relates to and supports the City’s climate change preparedness/resiliency plan
 - Question for Henrietta – how do we present this to Council? –Do we present multiple options to the Council? Or just present one proposal?

Henrietta’s response

- I suggest perhaps presenting the Council with a slow plan and an aggressive plan in terms of timing – could do it in two different ways

Jane:

- The utility companies are in the midst of the planning process for the next 3-year efficiency programs; we need to make sure that we are up to speed with their 3year plan and that they are up to speed on what we are proposing
- We are doing too many studies and the study periods should be condensed
- e.g. the solar ready study – Paul Lyons could do that in 3 hours
- We are being conservative with labs, very disappointing – 15 years is too far out in the future not to do something now- we need to introduce incremental requirements for labs between now and 2030 ; set performance milestones
- What will this cost? Will this require a whole new department? Staffing required? Need to know # of staff and budget to present to City Council
- We need more communication about this, especially at the City Council – get people to talk to councilors

Joe:

- We do need to be conscious of metrics, we need to look at taxation implications, impacts on economic development, and be aware of the threats to the City’s stability (Triple-A credit rating)
 - those companies that choose to do things voluntarily should be recognized – what are we doing about that?
 - NZ is aspirational – not something going to get to; labs won’t get there in this timeframe

Barun:

- Likes the presentation, this reflects the reality of the complexity of what's being proposed
- Should reduce the study time
- Start the communication strategy right away – to the Council, to the city as a whole- worth doing ahead of time
- Still wondering how we deal with the data side

Quinton

- We need to prioritize, what happens immediately and what is later, because it can't all start at once, we need to focus on prioritization and staffing

Public Comment

- Susan Ringler- The Task Force needs to remember that this was started by citizens – visionary new zoning for large buildings in Cambridge; the reality is that there will be so much change, change will be incredibly fast – we don't have time to collect data on everything
 - Go for it – we have to get on it with or without regulation
 - Cost studies/economic impact studies cannot be done – no one will be able to come up with that data
- Andrew Vitvitsky – bring back the idea of the Cambridge Energy Alliance 2.0; staffing agency is key to understand
- Leo Sullivan – I'd like to add to that urgency – aggregation could help fund this – strategy is available immediately
- Peggy Barnes-Lenart – underscore what Paul Lyons and Quinton Zondervan and fellow residents have said; need to see more/different financial incentives – it is disappointing to see a need for financial incentive to do the right thing. There are millions of square feet already in the pipeline; How can we impact those buildings without regulation? Incentives?
 - Inspirational incentives – do we need to add height and FAR to do the right things?
 - The timelines are discouraging- why are labs so far out? Could be another incentive there

Additional comment from consultant, Paul Gromer (12/11/2014 email)

- Backing up Jane's comment: The City should advocate for continued funding for utility energy efficiency programs; this recommendation would parallel the recommendation regarding advocating for strengthening the RPS (the state decides on the level of funding, so the advocacy would be directed at the state not the utilities)
- Jane's recommendation is a good one. These programs are quite large and have funded quite a lot of energy efficiency in Cambridge. Were they to be reduced significantly it would become hard to meet the City's energy efficiency targets. As Jane pointed out last night, the program budgets will be under review over the next year, so this is a timely recommendation and would be a short term action