Item 5.5.

Meeting Date: August 20, 2019

TO:  DURANGO CITY COUNCIL  
FROM:  KEVIN HALL  
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT:  DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION CONCERNING THE APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY GOALS

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND
The Purpose of this agenda item is for City Council to consider the establishment of community wide and municipal greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy goals.

At the August 6, 2019 City Council Meeting, the Council heard a staff presentation on current sustainability initiatives. In addition, the City Council heard from residents and local organizations in support of adopting community renewable energy goals.

Increasing the percentage of renewable energy use in Durango represents an important step towards reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. The recently completed Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory indicates that grid electricity use accounts for approximately 65% of total municipal emissions and 41% of community-wide emissions.

According to the Sierra Club Ready For 100 Campaign, 133 cities across the U.S. have now adopted a 100% renewable energy goal and 1 in 4 Americans currently live in a community committed to transitioning to 100% renewable energy.

In January 2019, La Plata Electric Association adopted a long-term strategic goal to reduce its carbon footprint by 50% by 2030 from 2018 levels, while keeping its cost of electricity lower than 70% of its Colorado rural electric cooperative peers. For more information link here: La Plata Electric Goals

The State of Colorado has also set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26% by 2025; at least 50% by 2030; and at least 90% by 2050 from 2005 levels. For more information link here: State of Colorado Goals

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions goal of an 80% reduction by 2050 is consistent with recommendations in the La Plata County Climate Energy Action Plan (CEAP) accepted for consideration by the Durango City Council in 2011.

The adoption of both municipal and community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and renewable electricity goals creates a benchmark to measure progress against. Establishing ambitious goals is also a demonstration of leadership on sustainability and fulfills requirements under the Compact of Colorado Communities which the Durango City Council joined by Resolution on October 17th, 2017.

It must be noted that in order for community-wide goals to be met, there will need to be broad community support and participation in implementing the goals, and policy changes by LPEA and Tri-State.

As presented at the August 6th City Council meeting, the City of Durango already has a variety of ongoing actions underway to help reduce municipal and community greenhouse gas emissions including:

- An investment grade energy audit of City facilities is underway to identify energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that could be implemented starting in 2020;
- Recent adoption of the 2015 Energy Code;
- Continued City purchase of Green Power through LPEA’s Just One Block Program sufficient to offset 100% of municipal use;
- The City produces 3% of its total power through on-site generation of renewable energy, including a 19.7 kW solar array on the roof of the Durango-La Plata Airport Terminal;
- The City’s Santa Rita Water Reclamation Facility converts methane gas into electric energy to power facility turbines;

The preliminary results of the 2016 Municipal Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory indicate that total emissions from municipal operations have reduced by 13% since 2008. An update to the City’s Sustainability Action Plan beginning in late-2019 and continuing through 2020 will develop a framework of additional actions by which to further advance progress towards achieving greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy goals.

FISCAL IMPACT
The is no direct fiscal impact associated with the adoption of greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy goals. Strategies for achieving these goals will be identified and evaluated for fiscal impact and presented to Council as part of the Sustainability Action Plan update as well as during other initiative updates.

APPLICABILITY TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/GOALS
Greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy goals are consistent with goals adopted in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, including:
- Goal 1: Preserve, conserve and sustainably use natural resources so that future generations may enjoy the benefits of Durango’s natural environment
- Goal 4: Foster sustainable and resilient development that is compatible with established neighborhoods and contributes to reductions in resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and improves quality of life
- Goal 11: Promote a healthy, sustainable, balanced economy that capitalizes on the community’s natural, recreational, cultural and human resources

RECOMMENDATION
It is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council, by motion, adopt the attached Resolution establishing goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and transition to 100% renewable electricity.

City Manager Ronald P. LeBlanc
WHEREAS, the City of Durango is responsible to promote the health, safety and welfare of its residents, including access to clean air, clean water and a livable environment; and

WHEREAS, there is widespread scientific consensus that human emissions of greenhouse gases are impacting the earth’s climate system, causing the potential for unprecedented large-scale adverse health, social, economic and ecological effects; and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change are already being felt and are predicted to include warmer temperatures, reduced snowpack and increased frequency and severity of extreme precipitation events, wildfire and drought conditions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Durango City Council adopted, through the 2015 Municipal Sustainability Action Plan, a commitment to reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from municipal operations; and

WHEREAS, a Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory completed by the City of Durango in 2019 reveals that approximately 41% of total community emissions result from the use of grid-supplied electrical energy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Durango City Council recognizes the myriad positive outcomes resulting from a transition to a low-carbon community reliant on the efficient use of renewable energy including: improved air quality, enhanced public health, increased national and energy security, local clean energy jobs and reduced reliance on finite resources; and

WHEREAS, renewable energy includes that derived from wind, solar, geothermal and other means that may become available that do not burn fossil fuels or other carbon-based fuels and do not add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere or adversely impact communities or the environment; and

WHEREAS, on October 17th, 2017, the City of Durango City Council passed a Resolution to join the Compact of Colorado Communities, demonstrating a commitment to developing and implementing clean energy initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the requirements of the Compact of Colorado Communities include establishment and announcement of a new goal or initiative by no later than September 30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, it is understood that meeting community-wide emissions and energy goals will require broad community support and participation; and policy changes by LPEA and Tri-State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DURANGO, in regular meeting assembled, the following goals are adopted for both the City of Durango municipal operations and the community:

1. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goal: 80% from 2016 levels by 2050, with an interim goal of 30% from 2016 levels by 2030.
2. Renewable Electricity Goal: 100% Renewable Electricity by 2050, with an interim goal of 50% Renewable Electricity by 2030.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DURANGO, that the City shall develop, monitor and revise strategies by which to achieve the adopted Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Renewable Energy Goals and shall report annually on progress toward achieving said goals.

Approved and adopted this 20th day of August 2019.

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DURANGO

Attest:

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Amy Phillips, City Clerk Melissa Youssef, Mayor