

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MAYORS

February 9, 2015

PRESENTATIONS

ENERGY RESOURCE PLANNING AND FUTURE TRENDS

Energy in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota will come from diverse sources in the next 15 years, according to Chris Clark, president of Xcel Energy Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Xcel plans to increase solar and wind energy and to decrease reliance on coal, Clark said. "I don't think we'll see coal plants built much more in the United States, if at all." Nuclear energy is likely to be the bigger resource, replacing some coal-powered plants.

By 2030:

- About 63 percent of the energy in the Upper Midwest will be carbon-free. "We'll do that by doubling the amount of renewables we have on our system," Clark said. If the goal is reached, he said, the Upper Midwest will be a national leader in the use of solar and wind energy.
- Wind will be 25 percent of the energy mix. Xcel has spent about \$1 billion to improve the distribution system for wind energy, to get it to the metro area.
- Solar will be 10 percent of the mix.
- Natural gas will be about 8 percent of the mix.
- Carbon-free nuclear will be about 28 percent of the energy mix.
- Coal will be about 29 percent of the mix.
- There will be a 40 percent carbon reduction from 2005 levels.

"We don't want to get too heavy in natural gas," Clark said. "So our ability to add renewables to our system really makes our plan worthwhile."

Although natural gas is currently fairly inexpensive because of fracking, he said, there are likely to be price increases in the future so Xcel does not want to rely too heavy on natural gas.

The increase in renewable energy resources is something customers at all levels are asking for, Clark said. "Customers are telling us they want cleaner, greener solutions," he said.

Growth in energy demand has slowed, Clark said, in part because things have become more efficient. "When you think about it, an iPad uses a lot less electricity than a computer. Furnaces today use electricity and gas more efficiently." While demand used to grow 1.5 to 2 percent a year, currently the company is seeing only .04 to .05 percent growth.

Clark said Xcel filed its Resource Plan for 2030 with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission at the beginning of January. Currently, Xcel is seeking suggestions from stakeholders for other areas to explore, then will move into a formal process for written comments on the Resource Plan. The plan, as is or as modified, will be reviewed by the PUC. Once it's approved, Xcel will begin acquiring the resources to make it work.

For more information: [see PowerPoint Presentation](#)

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Adam Duinick, new chairman of the Metropolitan Council, said a key part of his vision for the council is to have its members more engaged with the public. "Some of the criticism about the Council being staff-driven are legitimate and make sense," he said. "How can I think about the Council in a way to have members more involved? You'll see."

His own engagement has started with a "listening tour" to hear criticism, challenges and successes of the Council face to face from a variety of stakeholders. "I'll do it for seven weeks, then I'll do it for 52 weeks, then I'll do it for three-and-a-half years," he said, indicating his commitment to making sure Council leadership is accessible.

There is discussion at the Legislature this session about the governance of the Council. Currently, the chair and the Council members are appointed by the governor. Proposals for change over the years have included an all elected Council, a partially elected/partially appointed Council, overlapping terms, etc. "When I think about the Council, you need to balance a regional approach with some personal and political accountability to the area you represent," Duinick said. He said he thought that tension was, at times, healthy. "If there are structural ways we could improve that relationship, I would support them."

Equity

Duinick said that equity is important to him personally and to the Council, but he thinks there has been a lot of misunderstanding about how the Council will operate in respect to equity. It is not, he said, the Council "determining how cities ought to look." Instead, he said, "A big piece of equity to me is that this is the way the region is going to grow in the next 30 years and what does that mean?"

Governor Dayton's Transportation Package

The governor's transportation package at the Legislature calls for \$2.8 billion raised over 10 years and includes a half-cent sales tax in the metro region. Duinick is a strong backer of the package, which he said would reduce or eliminate future bonding requests and allow the Metropolitan Council to move the system forward in a quicker, more competitive way.

Duinick said he has been making a strong case for bolstering the bus system, the "backbone" of our transit system. "It has been the part of the system that hasn't gotten the attention it should over the past 10 years," he said.

POLLINATOR PROJECT

The health of bees, butterflies and birds “is one of those issues you never thought you’d need to think about as a mayor,” said John Shardlow, chair of the ULI Minnesota Healthy & Resilient Cities Committee. “Why should you care?”

The answer, according to Bob Engstrom of Robert Engstrom Companies is that 30 percent of our food supply and 80 percent of all plant life is dependent on bees and other pollinators—and those pollinators are at risk.

There are 500 pollinator species native to Minnesota, Engstrom said, and local products such as apples, honey, berries, sunflowers, canola and various vegetable crops that depend on pollinators are worth millions in the state’s economy.

The bee population, in particular, has been decreasing as a result of agricultural practices, use of pesticides and herbicides, parasites such as the Varroa mite and, most of all, loss of habitat.

Monarch butterflies have been decreasing even more dramatically than bees, almost entirely because of loss of habitat where milkweed—the butterfly’s only food source—grows.

Cities have the power to do something significant, Engstrom said, through a three-point program:

- Converting underutilized land to habitat.
- Integrating native habitat into the public approval process for development projects.
- Getting citizens to participate on their own property.

“This is a crisis that can be solved locally,” Engstrom said. “If we can implement this on a metro-wide basis, I think we have the possibility of making a tremendous impact.”

Relatively simple actions can include using vacant lots, medians, roadsides and utility corridors as habitat for plants that pollinators feed on. In Wayzata, a rain garden also serves as pollinator habitat. A residential development proposed for Lake Elmo would include 60 acres of pollinator habitat. Getting residents to participate can amplify city efforts, Engstrom said.

Shardlow said one important step is to “make sure you don’t prohibit the plants that are good for pollinators.” For example, Engstrom said, “Public works comes up as the enemy often because they’re kind of innocent when they plow down milkweed.”

Cities that are interested in implementing the three-point program to support pollinators can get support and assistance from Engstrom at roberteengstrom@gmail.com.

For more information: [see PowerPoint Presentation](#)

REGIONAL INDICATORS INITIATIVE

ULI Minnesota's Regional Indicators Initiative www.regionalindicatorsmn.com has now compiled seven years of data (2007–2013) on energy, water, travel and waste for 27 cities. "This is the only project of its kind in the world that we've been able to find," said Rick Carter of LHB. The data actually includes a third of the state's population and half of the metro region. The data is all online and can be explored by city, by year, by population, etc.

Over the years tracked, Carter said, consumption has gone down, but not substantially. "We're not really seeing a strong influence of conservation measures happening."

Now, Carter said, the Initiative has a five-year plan for involving cities outside the metro area. The Initiative has been supported by a grant from the Great Plains Institute of the McKnight Foundation; the cities involved pay \$500 per year.

Carter said the Initiative is looking for funding to support the five-year plan and asked that the Regional Council of Mayors endorse the goals of the plan. "What we're hearing from our funders is that your opinion matters," he said. Although support for the Initiative was clear, several mayors said they were uneasy at having RCM make an endorsement, since the unofficial, loosely organized organization has not done so before. "We're all worried about setting a precedent here," said Sandy Martin, mayor of Shoreview. "We're not worried about Regional Indicators; we're worried about the next one down the road."

Carter will ask the 27 cities that are participating for written support of the Initiative. Caren Dewar said that the mayors of those cities and/or the city councils (through a vote) may provide that support.

Dewar said she will put the topic of how RCM might govern providing support/endorsement for particular initiatives on the March agenda.

For more information: [see PowerPoint Presentation](#)

COMING UP

The next meeting of the Regional Council of Mayors will be **Monday, March 9, 11:30am–1:30pm**, at Dorsey & Whitney. Topics on the agenda include an industrial development panel and Generation Next.

ATTENDEES

Mayors

Sandy Martin	City of Shoreview
Jim Hovland	City of Edina
Mike Maguire	City of Eagan
Terry Schneider	City of Minnetonka
Bill Droste	City of Rosemount
Jerry Faust	City of St. Anthony
Mary Giuliani Stephens	City of Woodbury
Kathi Hemken	City of New Hope
Betsy Hodges	City of Minneapolis
Marvin Johnson	City of Independence
Stan Karwoski	City of Oakdale
Lili McMillan	City of Orono
Tim McNeil	City of Dayton
Tom O'Connor	City of Victoria
Duane Poppe	City of Osseo
Nora Slawik	City of Maplewood
Brad Tabke	City of Shakopee
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	City of Eden Prairie
Janet Williams	City of Savage
Gene Winstead	City of Bloomington
Scott Zerby	City of Shorewood

Guests

Becky Alexander, LHB; Ani Backa, Xcel Energy; Pat Born, Metropolitan Council; Rick Carter, LHB; Mark Casey, City of St. Anthony; Chris Clark, Xcel Energy; Bob Engstrom, Robert Engstrom Companies; Tom Fisher, University of Minnesota Design Center; Curt Johnson, Citiscape; Todd Klingel, Minneapolis Chamber; Larry Lee, City of Bloomington; Laura McCarten, Xcel Energy; Ellen McInnis, Wells Fargo; Patricia Nauman, Metro Cities; Diane Norman, RSP; Carolyn Olson, Greater Minneapolis Housing Corporation; Jennifer O'Rourke, Metropolitan Council; Julia Parenteau, Minneapolis Realtors; Meredith Vadis, Metropolitan Council; Mark VanderSchaaf, Metropolitan Council; Stephanie Zawistowski, City of Minneapolis;

ULI Staff/Consultants

Aubrey Austin, Cathy Bennett, Caren Dewar