Public Feedback on UM’s Draft Climate Action Plan

Public Open House November 17, 2009 (40-50 people in attendance)

Education/Outreach

Offsets and renewable energy should be integrated with educational mission of University. Wind farm, biomass, LEED buildings can all have a place in student’s curriculum.

We should create student research opportunities and internships to help with the plan.

Need a lot more student outreach about the plan and helping with the plan.

Transportation

Creating a bike hub is a good idea to decrease bike congestion on campus and greater education about biking to campus

Not a good idea to limit number of departmental field trips because students need to learn off campus as well.

Goals

Without specific time goals it will be difficult to put pressure on the administration to get toward carbon neutrality.

We would like to see aggressive goals for first plan. We want to make significant changes in the way we do things. We should challenge ourselves as a university. We would like to see 2020 as a carbon neutral date.

Renewable Energy

We would like to see wind scaled up to include more turbines in the model. We would like to compare this to the biomass greenhouse gas reductions.

Install solar thermal system for preheating pool water. Other systems like heat pumps can be implemented to reduce the costs of heating the pool.

Energy Conservation

4-day work week would not work with class scheduling because of classroom space and faculty research needs, may want to try 4 ½ day work week.

We should create a position for an engineer or architect to just focus on energy savings. How would we create this position or get the funds?

Plan Process

People are curious how the revision process will go once the plan is completed. Who will make the final decisions about the plan?
Renewable Energy

Biomass
What is the benefit of converting biomass into synthetic natural gas over wood fired boiler?
Why build a biomass plant and not purchase green tags or renewable energy credits?

Wind
We can look at statewide options for forming a project that is through the Montana Universities system.
We need to look at the state’s renewable energy standards

We could pool money from student fees of all campuses in the state to pay for wind farm.

Carbon Neutrality Date
Students proposed a carbon neutrality date of 2020. It is important to have an aggressive date so we can aim higher. We need to have a date in the plan to give ourselves a goal to work toward.

Presenting a larger proposal is better than a smaller one so we can push harder toward or goal. Funders may grant us more money if we have a more aggressive goal.

We can enable students as part of a task force to search for funding options to get us carbon neutral by 2020. Time is of the essence. A more aggressive date will attract students to UM.
Students feel time is of the essence. Students want to see UM as a leader to attract more students.

Financial feasibility is important-scale makes it more cost effective.

Transportation
Emphasize the importance of supporting the Hiawatha Amtrak Line through Missoula.

Location Efficient Housing is crucial and needs to be highlighted as well.

If we added another bus where would the funding come from? Already, ASUM Transportation would not have enough money to purchase another bus.
Public Feedback Sessions 12/8/09

3:00, (2 students in attendance)

Education

This plan is a great opportunity for students to engage in student learning projects, needs to be expanded upon in the plan. In the PowerPoint presentation education component is missing.

Education around wind farm and other renewable projects should be built into student’s curriculums. We need more education on biomass and what carbon offsets mean.

Finances

Can we invest endowment in energy conservation projects? What is sustainability access to endowment?

Buildings

Audits and performance contracting should be verified by a 3rd party. This could also be a student learning opportunity

UM could install energy monitoring systems to give real time feedback on energy consumption.

6:00 pm, (23 students in attendance)

Goals

Students would like an aggressive goal of 2020 to be put into the plan for a carbon neutrality date. We must put a date in the plan to give some momentum to the process.

Aggressive goals may attract funders and help with receiving grants. This will also show we are a leader and a model for other institutions. We must remain idealistic.

UM’s climate action goals can and should become part of Montana’s goals to reduce emissions.

Compared to other countries the United States is lax in setting emission reduction goals. We need to be more aggressive.

Funding

There is concern over the cost of the biomass plant, and wind has a better cost savings benefit.

Can sustainability efforts get funding through license plate sales? This is a large funding opportunity. We can create a GreeningUM license plate.

Some students are willing to pay a student fee in order to fund sustainability projects. Students feel administration should match student fees.

We could spend some endowment on renewable energy and other sustainability investments.
Education/Behavior

More education about climate change in curriculum needs to happen. Freshmen orientation is a good place to do outreach about UM’s sustainability initiatives.

More emphasis on teaching what individuals can do to reduce their carbon emissions on this campus. This plan is heavily dependent on behavior changes and this should be emphasized all across campus.

There could be more student-to-student education efforts across campus. We will all gain from students who model energy efficient behavior.

COT could be more involved by training students about jobs associated with renewable energy. Students want more education in sustainable technology.

Renewable Energy

Biomass

Biomass plant is a concern due to air quality, cost per year, the size and the sustainability of feedstock.

Wind

Students would like to see the plan upscale the wind turbine and partner with other Montana schools to develop a wind farm. Students calculated that 10 turbines can offset electricity needs for $27.5 million.

Some students believe we should not move forward with a biomass plant and instead concentrate on developing more wind resources. Other students think we should diversify our renewable energy sources.

Transportation

The fleet could invest in low rolling resistance tires for the vehicles because this will have a significant savings on miles per gallon.

There should be more emphasis on supporting Amtrak to come to Missoula in the plan.

Carbon Offsets

Carbon offsets should be a last resort after we invest in renewable energy and energy conservation. We can buy off the open market.

We should do local carbon offset projects around Montana like conservation easements.

We should purchase offsets for our air travel.

Buildings

We need to continue building LEED buildings and doing audits every few years.