

Arlington's Community Energy Plan: Creating an Economically and Environmentally Sustainable Arlington

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Overview

The Arlington Community Energy Plan (CEP) is a roadmap for transforming how we obtain and use energy. The CEP envisions an Arlington in which:

- Our residents and businesses save money by owning and operating more energy-efficient buildings.
- We breathe healthier air by using cleaner sources of energy and alternatives to driving.
- Electricity is more reliable and energy prices are less volatile.
- New businesses and residents are attracted to a higher quality of life supplied by cleaner, more reliable energy.

This visionary plan is a continuation of Arlington's history of being on the forefront of land use and transportation planning (a.k.a. 'smart growth'). Staff worked on a three year strategic and inclusive planning effort to create a new element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed CEP will improve Arlington's economic competitiveness and energy reliability, while advancing Arlington's environmental commitment. Implementing the CEP will transform the way we generate, distribute, and use energy for the betterment of all of Arlington. In June 2013, County staff will present the CEP to the County Board requesting adoption into the County's Comprehensive Plan, which guides the coordinated and harmonious development of the County.

CEP goals

- Improve Arlington's economic competitiveness
- Enhance energy supply security and reliability
- Reinforce Arlington's commitment to environmental stewardship

The Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) was established in 2007 and is already working to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions throughout the County. The goals established by the CEP will support Arlington's work as a community and chart a course to ensure a **healthy, viable, sustainable** energy future in Arlington.

The Community Energy Plan

The Community Energy Plan outlines a **transformative approach to planning and developing Arlington's energy future**. The long term goal is to **reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 70 percent by the year 2050**, which equates to 3 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per capita per year by 2050. In 2007, the Arlington community produced 13.4 metric tons CO₂e per resident. Using GHG emissions as a measure of overall energy productivity, a lower number indicates better energy use. The CEP's six goal areas include:

- Buildings: Increase the energy and operational efficiency of all buildings.
- District Energy: Increase local energy supply and distribution efficiency using district energy.
- Renewable Energy: Increase locally generated energy supply through the use of renewable energy options.
- Transportation: Refine and expand transportation infrastructure and operations enhancements.
- County Government Activities: Integrate CEP goals into all County government operations.
- Education and Human Behavior: Support personal action through effective education that raises energy literacy.

The overall goal of the CEP is to create the most desirable and competitive commercial, residential, and retail market in the region and country. Implementation of the CEP is intended to provide a competitive development environment with lower operating costs, enhanced energy reliability, and decreased power disruptions. The recommendations in the CEP are **voluntary goals. Community input and active participation is critical to achieve these goals.**

Why should you care about Arlington's energy future?

Investments in energy efficiency are **good business**. Arlington Government's investments in facilities are paid back, on average, in 5 years, with net savings each year thereafter. Each dollar the County invests in energy efficiency projects returns about 20 cents per year in **reduced operating costs**.

Development of locally generated energy, including district energy and renewable energy, ensures **consistent energy delivery**. This means more reliable and affordable energy supplies for our community.

Arlington maintains a long-term **commitment to environmental responsibility**. To protect the health and economic well-being of current and future generations, our community should reduce energy waste and emissions of heat-trapping gases by using the technology and practical solutions already at our disposal.