

Center for Land Use Education

THE LAND USE TRACKER

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TAPPING THE NEW APA ENERGY POLICY GUIDE TO MAKE WISCONSIN'S SMART GROWTH LAW EVEN SMARTER

by Ingrid Kelley

Wisconsin is on the leading edge with its Smart Growth Law. The law's nine required local plan elements and fourteen planning goals are designed to encourage community growth that will provide a continuing quality of life for future generations.

However, what is missing from much of the smart growth discussion in general, and this law in particular, is recognition that efficient and clean energy use is truly key to achieving this goal. The planning profession, while proactive on other aspects of smart growth, has yet to fully recognize the energy connection. Now, the newly adopted Energy Policy Guide from the American Planning Association (APA) can assist planners in strengthening the energy components of their comprehensive plans to promote smart growth.

The APA Energy Policy Guide
The new APA Energy Policy Guide was developed by a subcommittee of the APA Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (ENRE) Division, and adopted by the national organization at their annual conference in Washington DC in April 2004. Subcommittee members agreed there are at least four primary reasons an energy policy guide for planners is both timely and necessary.

The first reason was seeing how seriously the use of fossil fuel affects the environment, particularly through its contribution to global climate change. Next was the realization of how often energy issues intersect

with planning priorities, particularly with sustainability and smart growth goals, environmental quality, and community empowerment.

Furthermore, as planners become more and more involved in community-based planning processes, they are being recognized as local leaders on both sustainability and smart growth issues. They are, therefore, well placed to inform communities about energy issues and to broker collaborations among public and private stakeholders in addressing these issues. Finally, there is the long standing lack of a federal energy policy that could move us beyond fossil fuels into a clean energy future. It's important for the APA, as a national organization, to urge its chapters and members toward supporting a policy move in this direction.

Energy and Smart Growth in Wisconsin

The primary position taken by the APA Energy Policy Guide is that planning professionals can indeed make a direct contribution to a clean energy future, both through design and planning decisions that influence energy use and through their support of new clean energy technologies. If we identify where energy issues intersect with smart growth goals we will begin to connect some important pieces in the sustainability puzzle. We can start by examining how the four Policy Statements and twenty-one specific Policy Initiatives

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On The Web...

<http://eia.doe.gov/>

The Energy Information Administration provides energy data, forecasts, and analyses for Wisconsin and the United States.

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SIGN UP NOW FOR ONLINE COURSE IN LAND USE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We are looking for 10 educators interested in land use environmental education to participate in a 4-week pilot course, Land Use Education and Resources for Teachers (NRES 780). This online course, which runs from January 18 through February 18, will introduce and familiarize educators with land use concepts, issues, ideas, and resources and help educators to use, adapt and create activities and lesson plans for specific land use topics. Each participant will receive one graduate credit as well as a generous stipend. For more information contact Rebecca Mattano at (715) 346-2025 or rmatt533@uwsp.edu or visit the course website <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee/nres780/>.

USE-VALUE TAX LAW EFFECT ON CONSERVATION

January 28, 2005, Sheraton Madison Hotel, Madison, WI

"Making Use-Value Work for Farms, Forests, Wetlands and Your Community," is the featured topic of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's annual conference. Registration is \$25 for SWCS members, \$30 for non-members and \$20 for students and retirees, and includes lunch and breaks. For more information, contact Matt Otto at (608) 662-4422 x 245 or visit the conference website <http://wlcwa.org/Pages/UseValueMtgInfo&Reg.pdf>.

IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS!

February 14-15, 2005, UW-Stevens Point

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is sponsoring an intensive 2-day workshop to give Extension educators hands-on training with computer tools for planning, conservation, and environmental protection. Participants will learn about the different types of computer tools, gain direct experience using specific tools, and enhance their ability to use the tools in educational programming. The workshop is free but enrollment is limited to the first 42 participants and requires a 2-day commitment. For more information about the workshop, featured tools, and online registration, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/landuse/comptools> and click on UW-Extension. Event cosponsored by: Center for Land Use Education, Environmental Resources Center, UW-Land Information and Computer Graphics Facility, and the Local Government Center

**NATURAL RESOURCES SUMMIT FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS**

January 26, 2005, Stevens Point, WI

Interested in natural resources programming in Extension? Hold the date, and plan to join fellow UWEX educators in Stevens Point on January 26th, 2005, for a one-day UWEX natural resources summit. The summit, sponsored by CNRED natural resource centers and teams, is intended to bring together UWEX county, regional, and campus-based educators to share information about programs and resources, discuss emerging needs, and identify opportunities for collaboration. For additional information contact Ken Genskow, UWEX Environmental Resources Center at kgenskow@wisc.edu or (608) 262-8756.

WEEB GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board is accepting grant proposals for the "development, dissemination, and implementation of environmental education programs." Application deadline is January 15, 2005. Additional information may be obtained from the WEEB website <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb/index.htm> or by calling (715) 346-3805.

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included in the APA Energy Policy Guide might fit into the nine required local plan elements of Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law:

Policy Statement 1: Promoting Energy Efficiency

There are seven policy initiatives that support Policy Statement 1 which encourages "planners and decision makers . . . to reduce energy impacts by making more efficient use of all energy resources." Of the nine Wisconsin Smart Growth local plan elements, there are several obvious connections:

- **Housing.** Policy Initiative 3 from the Policy Guide advocates reducing energy consumption through life cycle costing as part of building construction; an excellent strategy for commercial and municipal buildings and facilities as well. Policy Initiative 5 advocates continued support for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program and the Weatherization Assistance Program. Lower home energy bills contribute to affordable housing goals. Policy Initiative 6 includes homeowners as it urges support for "education, incentives, and subsidies that reduce consumption at the individual level."
- **Transportation.** Policy Initiative 7 advocates for increasing corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards. While this is not a locally controlled issue, it can inspire awareness of the need to design more efficient traffic patterns and practices.
- **Economic Development.** Energy efficiency is a proven method for established and new businesses to cut costs. By supporting and promoting all seven energy efficiency initiatives, a municipality could create an environmentally friendly, energy efficient business climate that attracts new enterprises and strengthens existing ones.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** Policy Initiative 4 promotes existing state and federal programs that

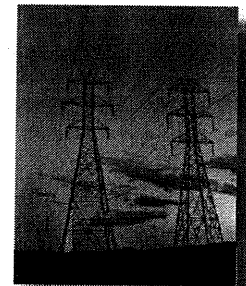
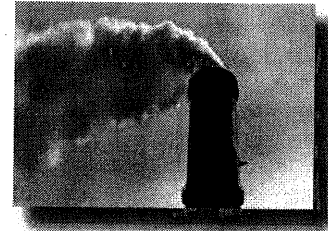
encourage and reward energy efficiency practices for homes, businesses and municipalities. Local governments could also pursue collaborative planning efforts to develop joint energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transportation goals and programs.

- **Land Use.** Policy Initiative 1 recommends that planners and urban designers "reduce energy consumption through comprehensive planning and urban design that incorporates strategies for both mobile and non-mobile energy efficiency." Policy Initiative 2 encourages "development of guidelines and codes for energy efficient site planning and building methodologies that take advantage of the energy flows of the natural environment."

Policy Statement 2: Reducing Fossil Fuel Use and Increasing Use of Renewable Energy

There are many ways that fossil fuels can be replaced by clean energy sources. While it's true that much effort in this direction is still under development, some technologies are ready now, and can become part of a municipality's commitment to sustainability. As we come to recognize the environmental and economic necessities of reducing fossil fuel use, planning for incorporation of new, clean energy strategies will become necessary as part of the comprehensive planning process. Policy Initiative 8 simply states "Develop and encourage appropriate applications of renewable energy." This initiative cuts across many of the plan elements:

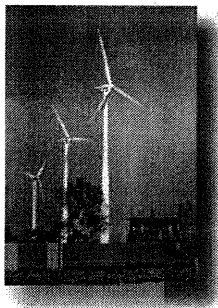
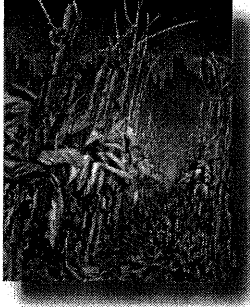
- **The Housing element** could include infrastructure incentives for installation of grid-connected solar electric panels and solar water heaters on residences as a way for new developments to assist in producing their own energy.
- **Transportation** could consider alternative fuels for municipal vehicles.



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- Utilities and Community Facilities could mandate development of renewable energy opportunities in community and municipal buildings and facilities. Such municipal renewable energy uses could include anaerobic digestion for sewage treatment, harnessing landfill gas to generate electricity or installing solar hot water systems for public pools, hospitals and other facilities.
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources could address anaerobic digestion for manure management on farms, wind energy development, and agricultural biomass for fuels and other products.
- The Economic Development element might explore the attraction of bioenergy or renewable energy businesses to the community or the development of distributed generation and combined heat and power as commercial/industrial energy strategies.
- Land Use could include siting requirements for both homes and businesses that would offer optimal solar orientation. It could also address advance planning for the location of wind farms in areas where the wind resource is sufficient to attract this kind of energy development.

Policy Statement 3: Reduce Environmental Impact of Energy Production and Use

Great progress has been already been made toward reducing air and water pollution caused by fossil fuel use for transportation and electricity, but more needs to be done. Other environmental issues affect our quality of life as well, and need to be addressed:

- The Transportation element could start with Policy Initiative 12, which discusses transportation options for alleviating pollution.
- Utilities and Community Facilities could look at developing community-based lighting

guidelines (Policy Initiative 13) “that promote energy efficiency and safety while reducing light pollution.” Municipal lighting ordinances have been developed by the non-profit Dark Skies Initiative, an organization dedicated to reducing light pollution.

- The Intergovernmental Cooperation element could recommend adoption of cooperative models for assessment of carbon sequestration opportunities on publicly owned land, along with local, regional global warming abatement strategies.

Policy Statement 4: Energy Equity

Energy resources are used by everyone, and therefore, everyone should share in both the benefits and responsibilities. The Policy Guide includes five initiatives under its statement supporting energy equity. Policy Initiative 17 recognizes that “while energy is a commodity for sale and consumption, it is also a national resource that must be equitably managed.” Policy Initiative 18 recommends that planners “integrate community energy goals into the ‘Smart Growth’ planning process.” The following connections also exist with the local plan elements:

- Housing. Municipal planning for affordable housing would do well to incorporate Policy Initiative 20, which supports the inclusion of “energy efficiency in all affordable housing guidelines.” This policy is designed to make housing more affordable not only to purchase, but also to live in.
- Economic Development. Policy Initiative 21 encourages communities to “plan adequately for all aspects of an energy generation and production facility and its workers.”
- Intergovernmental Cooperation. Collaborative planning among local government bodies could result in the development of agreements regarding regional growth patterns for utility infrastructure that include “a fair share siting process for



energy generation and distribution facilities that reflects sound environmental practice and does not place undue environmental burdens on any one community" (Policy Initiative 19).

Vision and Action: Energy Policy Opportunities

The two local plan elements from the Wisconsin Smart Growth Law that have not been mentioned so far are the Issues and Opportunities element and Implementation element. They are perhaps the most important of all. The Issues and Opportunities element sets the tone for the whole plan by establishing a community vision and identifying community resources. If a community wishes to make "sustainability" or "environmental quality" part of its future vision, reducing fossil fuel use through reduced energy consumption, improved energy efficiency and renewable energy use, will be essential. The Implementation element is also critical. Becoming more energy self-sufficient on a local level requires that a specific plan of action be carefully crafted and carried out.

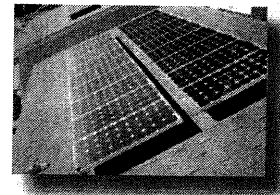
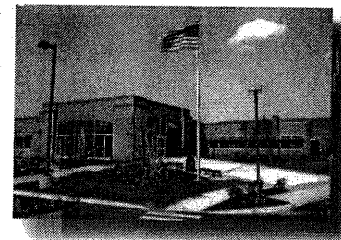
- Within the Issues and Opportunities element, the comprehensive plan should include an inventory and assessment of energy needs and resources including renewable and non-renewable energy sources, utility-owned land, transmission lines, and local utility facilities. Commitment to sustainability and environmentally responsible growth can be envisioned through a number of the initiatives from the Policy Guide, including:
 - Energy efficient design and planning to reduce energy consumption (Initiative 1).
 - Reduction of energy consumption on the individual level (Initiative 6).
 - Development of renewable energy and distributed generation (Initiatives 8 and 9).
 - Continued reduction of the

negative impacts of fossil fuel use (Initiative 14).

- Recognition that energy is both a commodity and a shared resource (Initiative 17).
 - Integration of energy efficiency goals into smart growth planning (Initiative 18).
- Implementation strategies are essential for turning a community vision into action. The APA policy initiatives suggest possible implementation tools, including:
 - Energy efficient building codes (Initiative 2).
 - Renewable energy-friendly subdivision ordinances (Initiatives 8 and 9).
 - Community energy efficiency goals (Initiative 18).
 - Community lighting design guidelines (Initiative 13).
 - Agreements with utilities for future planning and collaboration (Initiative 17).
 - Ordinance for siting generation and transmission facilities that conform with comprehensive planning goals (Initiative 11).
 - Renewable energy-friendly zoning and building codes including a solar access code (Initiatives 8 and 9).

The APA Energy Policy Guide is designed to serve as both an organizational policy tool, as well as a reference for planners in their daily professional practice. The full policy guide document can be downloaded from the APA web site at: <http://www.planning.org/policyguides/energy.htm>.

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Photos courtesy of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Photographic Information Exchange.



