

CPRP Testimony
August 21, 2022

Dear City Council,

You are in the process of reviewing and hopefully approving a very important resolution for the future of Kansas City, the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan (CPRP), under Resolution 220596. I believe that approving this resolution is critical in several ways that the city has already recognized on multiple occasions over recent years, and is also necessary to turn previous words into meaningful action at this time.

First, the City adopted an early Climate Protection Plan in 2008, and has adopted numerous resolutions and ordinances since that time to address climate impacts, including 070830, 071216, 080091, 080543, 080736, 080754, 090461, 100245, 110235, 110245, 150299, 150965, 170484, 170586, 170949, 180475, 181000, 190233, 190475, 190760, 200005, 200143, 200396, 200719, and 210967. The last of these, 210967, is particularly important to declare a climate and ecological emergency; encourage developing and implementing a Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan; directs the City Manager to include CPRP programming during FY22-23; and drives future plans and policies towards solutions. Given the accelerating frequency and intensity of worldwide climate-related events (e.g. wildfires, floods, drought, extreme hot/cold weather patterns), including local and regional effects, we see that Kansas City is not immune to climate change and we must also do our part to quickly reduce our contributions across all sectors.

Second, other recent actions approved Resolution 200005 and Ordinance 210088 in 2000 and 2021, respectively. Resolution 200005 set ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals for both the city operations and community-wide, to move towards carbon-neutral by 2030 (city) and 2040 (community-wide). Ordinance 210088 established a contract with Brendle Group to develop a comprehensive, equitable, innovative, and multi-sector CPRP that is capable of achieving or exceeding the GHG reduction targets set forth in Resolution 200005. Approval of the CPRP under the current resolution (220596) is the natural conclusion of this effort. Failure to approve 220596 will represent a wasted multi-year effort by the City. Failure to approve 220596 will also diminish our standing among U.S. cities, simply because many businesses and citizens/workers (especially younger people) will choose to live in vibrant, engaged communities that are actively pursuing solutions to the climate crisis. Cities that are not actively engaged in addressing the climate crisis will not attract innovative brainpower, and will decline economically and culturally.

Third, through my work as a member of the KCMO Environmental Management Commission (EMC), there are several letters of recommended action that we have put forth:

1. January 7, 2022: AdvanceKC EDI Policy, reiterates how future project evaluations should make an effort to factor in KC's goal of carbon neutrality by 2040. Furthermore, projects with innovative approaches should be fully considered for their ability to address CPRP issues across a wide range of sectors.

2. April 14, 2020: 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC); the EMC recommends adopting the 2021 IECC building energy codes without any weakening amendments. This code represents the latest codes for energy efficient buildings which will provide an estimated 10% improvement for residential and commercial buildings over the previous 2018 code. This position was reinforced by additional letters of recommendation by the EMC on June 17, 2022 and July 18, 2022 for passing Ordinance 220364, the 2021 IECC code. Because buildings are a significant end-user of both gas and electric energy, approval of 220364 without any weakening amendments is critical to move forward hand-in-hand with the CPRP goals.
3. May 20, 2022: Resolution 220442; the EMC reviewed the proposed Balanced Energy Resolution 220442, and recommends against adoption of this resolution. The proposed resolution appears to pre-emptively handcuff the city from passing certain types of ordinances/codes in the future. Specifically, the proposed resolution would require keeping natural gas (NG) in the fuel mix for “the powering of buildings or fueling of vehicles”, and the EMC recommends that the City reserve its flexibility for future decisions. The EMC further clarified that the City should also not impose a blanket ban on NG or renewable natural gas (RNG). Rather, the City should identify sectors for the most appropriate use of NG, RNG, and electrification (via renewables) as the energy transition (i.e. decarbonization away from fossil fuels; sector-by-sector analysis) occurs. The EMC recognizes that fuel mix issues are complex, and recommends that the City partner with NG providers to work through these transitions. Resolution 220442 also appears to circumvent potential strategies laid out in the CPRP. For reasons described above, I recommend approval of the CPRP (220596), and against adoption of 220442.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Klamm
Commissioner

KCMO Environmental Management Commission