



ASHLAND ENERGY ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREAS

- **Energy efficiency** through equipment upgrades and behavior changes
- **Renewable energy** support, including both on-site installation and equipment upgrades
- **Electric vehicle** education to promote local charging stations and educate community about EV options

STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Outreach and Education

Near-term Strategies: 2022-2025

- Create targeted marketing collateral and resources for all target audiences to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and electric vehicle programs and resources with a clear call to action
 - Update City website with current information and resources
 - Create a checklist for target audiences for increasing energy efficiency using website content, utility program information, and Department of Energy resources.
 - Create a step by step guide for target audiences installing on-site solar, including alternatives to on-site solar that help reduce our community greenhouse gas emissions
 - Use public display kiosks, digital signs, and poster boards to create sustainability kiosks in public places to promote behavior change and calls to action.
 - Leverage city-owned communication channels and community events to share collateral.
- Promote new EV charging stations to existing residents and as part of tourism outreach for visitors.
- Engage large industry and education institution leadership to champion energy action plan.
 - Convene leaders and facility managers from large industry and education institutions to share best practices in energy efficiency and energy management.
 - Create and share case studies of local energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, including city projects.
- Partner with landlords and community organizations to connect homeowners and renters to free energy saving packs and materials.
- Partner with local services organizations and the library to promote income-qualified energy assistance and weatherization assistance programs.
- Partner with local business and civic organizations to co-host webinars and information sessions about energy efficiency programs and behavior changes.

- Conduct one-to-one outreach campaign to connect businesses with free assessment programs from Xcel Energy and Focus on Energy.
- Partner with the library to share renewable energy resources and information.

Medium-term Strategies: 2026-2030

- Host resident and business campaign to promote renewable energy subscription programs.
- Partner with local business and civic organizations to co-host webinars and information sessions about energy efficiency, renewable energy and distributed energy opportunities.
- Partner with education institutions to connect with student renters and landlords about energy efficiency upgrades.

Process and Policy Updates

Near-term Strategies: 2022-2025

- Benchmark city-owned building energy consumption and share data in public dashboard for community.
- Add energy efficiency rebate information to permitting applications and documents.
- Integrate energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electric vehicle infrastructure recommendations into development review process for private buildings.
- Prioritize LEED and other sustainability standards in new construction and renovation of city-owned buildings.
- Support State initiatives to update building energy codes as recommended by the 2020 Climate Change Task Force Report.
- Maintain SolSmart Silver designation and pursue additional recommended process changes to reduce the barriers to on-site solar to achieve Gold designation.

Medium-term Strategies: 2026-2030

- Adopt an energy benchmarking ordinance for private-owned buildings.
- Update purchasing policy to prioritize energy efficient equipment in replacement schedules.
- Create a sustainable building policy to require higher sustainability standards in new construction and redevelopment projects.
- Advocate at State level for new policies to allow master metering.
- Complete fleet analysis for city-owned fleet vehicles and transition vehicles based on recommendations.

Capital Investment & Financing

Near-term Strategies: 2022-2025

- Create energy audit and recommissioning schedule for city-owned buildings.
 - Prioritize efficiency upgrades using benchmarking data and audit recommendations.
- Review existing City and State financing programs to identifying additional opportunities to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on private buildings.

Medium-term Strategies: 2026-2030

- Complete solar suitability analysis on city-owned buildings.
 - Include on-site solar in capital improvement plan for suitable city buildings.

- Subscribe unsuitable city buildings to renewable energy programs.
- Review existing City and State financing programs to identifying additional opportunities to fund renewable energy projects on private buildings.
- Create incentive programs, like bonus rebates, for residents and businesses who increase their property's energy efficiency.

RESOURCES AND OUTREACH CHANNELS

Partners

- Xcel Energy
- Focus on Energy
- City of Ashland
- Ashland County
- Sustainability Committee
- Public Library
- Ashland School District
- Northland College
- Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
- UW Extension
- Ashland Area Development Corp
- Ashland Business Alliance
- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Clubs
- League of Woman Voters
- Youth Climate Action Team
- Alliance for Sustainability
- Mainstreet Community Group
- Bad River Tribe
- Chequamegon Bay Renewable Energy Resources
- Energy Action Team network

Communication Channels

- City website, social media
- Community events
- Local TV News
- Ashland Daily Press
- Visit Ashland
- Neighborhood groups and social media

TARGET AUDIENCES

Target Audience	Barriers	Benefits
Homeowners & Renters	• Lack of knowledge and awareness about programs and how to access them • Upfront capital costs to make improvements too high • Split incentive when you rent and inability to make capital improvements to rental property • Reluctance to upgrade with rapidly changing technology • Lack of trust that information is current and accurate • Learning curve to using new technology • Difficulty prioritizing energy efficiency and renewable energy with higher priority projects • Limited contractors to do the work • Older housing stock means there's usually more to do than just one upgrade • Tight rental market	• Cost savings and payback periods when you upgrade to new technology and equipment • Energy savings with more efficient energy use • Pride in being green and being sustainable • Reduced carbon footprint through cleaner energy use • Tourism opportunities to attract new visitors and continue to be a destination • Growing sense of environmental stewardship • Add value to your home as you make improvements and upgrades
Rental Property Owners & Managers	• Lack of knowledge and awareness about programs and how to access them • Upfront capital costs make return on investment too difficult • Split incentive with renters who pay their own utility bills • Improvements don't necessarily mean an increase in rent revenue • Tenants won't see the value of improvements and increased rents • Tight rental market • Difficult to find time to replace equipment outside of failure or replacement schedules • Difficulty prioritizing energy efficiency and renewable energy with higher priority projects • Landlords will do work themselves and don't qualify for rebates	• Energy savings with more efficient energy use • Growing sense of environmental stewardship • Pride in being green and being sustainable • Reduced carbon footprint through cleaner energy use • Add value to your properties as you make improvements and upgrades • PR benefits of being green and sustainable to attract new tenants
Businesses, Nonprofit Organizations & Education Institutions	• Lack of knowledge and awareness about programs and how to access them • Upfront capital costs make return on investment too difficult • Split incentive with property tenants who pay their own utility bills • Difficult to find time to replace equipment outside of failure or replacement schedules • Difficulty prioritizing energy efficiency and renewable energy with higher priority projects • Unreliable funding sources for small nonprofits	• Energy savings with more efficient energy use • Growing sense of environmental stewardship • Pride in being green and being sustainable • Reduced carbon footprint through cleaner energy use • Add value to your properties as you make improvements and upgrades • PR benefits of being green and sustainable • Upgrades preserve buildings and retain community charm/aesthetic