

Community Power 2017 Minneapolis Candidate Questionnaire

Community Power invites all candidates to complete the following questionnaire to inform Minneapolis voters on positions shaping Minneapolis's energy future:

1. What role do you feel energy infrastructure, sourcing, and decision-making play in shaping livability, affordability, economic resilience and community health for Minneapolis residents and businesses? How do you propose to fulfill that role?

It is not hyperbole to say that climate change is the most important issue of our time and the deadliest threat to the long term survival of human civilization and our planet. Municipal energy policy is the linchpin at the heart of the intersectionality inherent to addressing that threat while tackling environmental justice, racism, and making Minneapolis an affordable place that everyone can call home. The City of Minneapolis has a budget of over a billion dollars and talented city staff. Those resources can be leveraged to shape what our energy future looks like. With those kinds of resources, Minneapolis can't be content to merely resist Donald Trump. We have to pursue transformative goals like getting Minneapolis to 100% clean energy by 2035, planting the seed for America's green energy renaissance by investing in renewable energy technologies, getting Minneapolis's municipal building to 100% clean energy use and reducing the city's carbon footprint, cracking down on polluters like Northern Metals, and leveraging agreements we make with utility companies to maximize clean and efficient energy options.

2. Do you think Minneapolis is adequately prepared to respond to climate change? If yes, how? If no, what do you think Minneapolis should do to become prepared?

No. That isn't to say that we haven't made some important progress. A year ago, I got sweeping environmental reforms through the city council that now serve as a national model for pollution control and tackling climate change. Specifically, I authored an ordinance that requires polluters to pay fees based on the amount of pollution they produce. In just one year, we have reduced criteria pollutants by 18,000 pounds and carbon output by 6 million pounds. Additionally, nearly one million dollars have been raised for green business improvements in communities with a cross section of pollution and poverty.

But it's not enough. In the wake of the United States leaving the Paris Climate Accord, American cities have to defend themselves from climate change and to step up to fill the gap left by the United States' abdication of leadership. Reports have concluded that Minneapolis is one of the cities most vulnerable to climate change, indicating that Minneapolis is not currently prepared to do so. As far as preventive measures to fight climate change go, we have to become the greenest city in America by pursuing some of the steps I outlined in question #1, unapologetically championing a vision of urban density that will reduce suburban sprawl, incentivizing or requiring developers to build energy efficient buildings, and supporting community solar gardens. In addition to working to slow climate change, we must prepare for the related crises it may bring. Two such reactive measures include training more of the city's first-responders to be prepared for withering, longer lasting heat waves and making sure our grid system is ready for what's to come.

3. Do you support a policy of 100% renewable electricity for city operations by 2021, 100% renewable electricity by 2030 for all Minneapolis energy users, and 100% renewable energy in all sectors (electricity, heating, transportation, industry) by 2050 for all Minneapolis energy users (check one)?

Yes, by those timelines

Yes, by (define years) I actually support a policy that sets an earlier goal of Minneapolis using 100% renewable energy in all sectors by 2035. Otherwise, I support those timelines.

No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

4. What do you intend to do during your time in office to help achieve the Minneapolis Energy Vision (established by City Council in 2014) and the goals of the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership?

I will work with city staff and other stakeholders in the Clean Energy Partnership to make sure that the stakeholders involved in both visions have the resources they need to pursue the goals. I will also work to develop clear and defined metric that can be used to evaluate the progress that these plans are making towards reducing Minneapolis's carbon footprint. Any recommendations and new ideas as to how we can improve that come forward will be strong priorities for me.

5. Do you support securing universally-accessible financing that, allows all Minneapolis energy users to make energy efficiency improvements and switch to clean energy with no upfront cost, no debt or credit checks, and monthly payments on utility bills that are overall lowered due to the energy saved?

Yes

No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position: **I support this goal in principle, but would like to know more about the specifics of the financing mechanism.**

6. Do you support using the rooftops of Minneapolis public buildings to host community solar gardens that create access for low-income families as well as train and hire Minneapolis residents of color to install and maintain them?

Yes

No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

7. How would you advance equitable access to energy resources for renters and low-income families to ensure that all Minneapolis families have healthy, comfortable homes, affordable energy bills, and the choice to shift to clean and efficient energy?

Renewables and clean energy have only just begun to emerge as flourishing enterprises. This has put them at a disadvantage relative to their entrenched counterparts. Minneapolis needs more community solar gardens, more energy efficient buildings and building design, and I am open to exploring subsidizing energy costs for low-income Minneapolitans who want to purchase clean-energy.

I also believe that raising the minimum wage has to be part of this conversation and solution. If people are paid poverty wages, they won't find access to affordable and clean energy no matter how much work we do at the municipal level to make the costs cheaper. This is one of many reasons why I have been a proud advocate of raising the minimum wage for more than two years, long before other members of the city council and candidates for Mayor switched to supporting a minimum wage increase now that they are running for office and why I support \$15 an hour.

8. Would you support an increase in utility franchise fees of 0.5% of Minneapolis energy sales to be re-invested in dedicated long-term funding for local energy solutions (**check all that apply**)?

- Yes
- No
- Dedicated funding could additionally/instead come from these sources:
- These specific energy solutions need this kind of long-term funding:

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position:

9. How should the City of Minneapolis evaluate the effectiveness of the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership as its second two year work plan ends in late 2018? What criteria or thresholds would convince you that the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership is succeeding (and should be sustained and expanded) OR is failing (and the city should pursue a different route)?

As I have said in previous answers, I am an extremely results oriented person, particularly on green energy issues. At the end of the two year work plan, I would want the City to evaluate the Clean Energy Partnership based on two criteria. First, did it meet its own goals? Second, if it did meet those goals, there should be a study or analysis done that assesses whether or not reaching those goals can be credited as the direct cause of a shift towards a Minneapolis that is a national leader on clean energy and how it can continue to improve upon those outcomes. Under a Trump presidency and a Republican Congress, it is more important than ever than Minneapolis carries the torch on clean energy. That starts with making sure we are perfecting our own programs. I am optimistic that the Clean Energy Partnership will be a part of making Minneapolis the greenest city in America.

10. If Xcel Energy and/or CenterPoint Energy refused to agree to the measurable outcomes you defined in question 9, or failed to achieve them, would you support active exploration of other options by the City of Minneapolis, including: terminating the franchise agreement, securing Community Choice Aggregation, or pursuing energy municipalization (**check one**)?

- Yes
- Yes, under these conditions: I exploring the options of terminating the franchise agreement or securing Community Choice Agreement, but would want to make sure the specifics and details are in order before committing because I believe that climate change is too important an issue to get wrong. I would not support energy municipalization. While I support having the option of municipalization as leverage to secure more sustainable and green outcomes, and I fully support getting our city to 100% renewable energy by 2035, I do not think municipal electric and gas is the best strategy to get there. Municipalization would require the City to purchase XCEL's energy infrastructure at a monumental cost that could dramatically spike rates for low-income people and limit our ability to use the market to our advantage. Solar power, for instance, has not only become the environmentally sustainable route, but also a profitable one.**
- No

Feel free to provide a deeper explanation of your position: