



STEP 1: ESTABLISH AND CHARGE A LEADERSHIP TEAM

WHAT: The first critical step is putting in place a strong Leadership Team once the development of a community energy strategic plan (CESP) has been officially authorized (see Introduction).

WHY: To drive the process to successful completion it is necessary to establish a committee that includes leaders who will:

- Maintain continued focus on the CESP process.
- Connect the government offices necessary for success.
- Motivate key stakeholders to contribute to the plan.
- Inspire completion of an effective plan.
- Ensure its implementation over time.

WHO: The local government office or group that is initially authorized to do the planning activities will usually do the up-front work to put the Leadership Team in place.

HOW: During this phase of the planning process, the CESP initiators will need to:

- Identify Effective Leaders
- Charter and Direct the Leadership Team

WHEN: The Leadership Team should be established as quickly as possible, but no later than within a 1-2 month timeframe once development of the plan is authorized. Putting the team together quickly and early in the process will get momentum for the process going, demonstrate early progress to the official(s) that authorized the CESP, and assure that leadership is in place to help identify and engage the appropriate stakeholders (Step 2).

CESP Timeline										
Step 1	Form Leadership Team									
Step 2	Identify Stakeholders	Engage Stakeholders								
Step 3	Vision									
Step 4	Energy Profile									
Step 5	Goals and Strategies									
Step 6	Identify Actions									
Step 7	Identify Financing									
Step 8								Implementation Blueprint		
Step 9								Monitoring Plan		
Step 10	Scope and Develop Final CESP								Adopt & Publicize	
Month:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Identify Effective Leaders

Key Roles

To make sure the planning process works efficiently and effectively, there are several “roles” that will be important to fill: 1) a **Champion** for the CESP; 2) an on-the-ground **Plan Manager**; and 3) a **Leadership Team** of government and local representatives. As discussed in the Introduction, the Champion and Plan Manager will likely emerge in the process of initiating and authorizing a CESP. What follows is a description of the importance and role of each of these key positions as the planning moves forward.

Champion: the executive-level authority behind the CESP – provides top-level commitment and motivation for the effort.

- Who: The Champion will be a highly visible, executive-level sponsor:
 - **For a local government CESP:** Mayor, City Councilor, or other prominent government official or staff member. In some cases, this role may be held by a group, such as the full City Council – even here, there will likely be one real champion for the process who keeps it moving forward.
 - **For a community-wide CESP:** There may be two leaders both serving as Champions – an influential government official, as well as a highly visible and effective local community leader.
- Role: The Champion offers overall leadership and authority for the CESP, including the ability to direct staff time and provide final approval for policy and budgetary decisions. The Champion also gives the process credibility and political will, brings visibility to the Leadership Team, and inspires pride in the project.
- Why important: Political and/or management sponsorship is critical for institutionalizing the CESP, accessing and providing resources, marshaling other senior government managers to take action, and making the plan’s implementation sustainable.

Plan Manager: the lead administrator for the CESP process – directs logistics and serves as a day-to-day advocate. The Plan Manager may be supported by internal and/or contractor staff.

- Who: The Plan Manager is a senior manager with the skills, time, and resources needed to successfully orchestrate and develop a complete plan. Depending upon the scope of the plan, this may be a full-time assignment or a part-time addition to other duties. If possible, the Plan Manager should be someone who already has or can be given direct access to the Champion. Potential candidates for this role include:
 - **For a local government CESP:** Public Works Manager; Energy Manager; Sustainability Coordinator; a volunteer from a subcommittee of the city council; or other interested and capable staff.
 - **For a community-wide CESP:** May also be a local government staff person as above, or may be a member of a local organization that is intimately involved in the planning process (for example, a local non-profit that is driving the community activities associated with the planning process).
- Role: Provide support to the Leadership Team, ensure effective communication within the Leadership Team and between the Team and the broader community, and manage the day-to-day work required to develop the plan. This will include developing meeting schedules, preparing agendas, and facilitating discussions for the Leadership Team and stakeholders; managing the development and drafting of key pieces of the CESP, including the energy profile and final CESP report; and publicizing the work along the way to key target audiences.
- Why important: The CESP process is a significant and complex undertaking and requires a central figure to drive and focus the effort on a daily basis and keep people engaged throughout the process. The Champion and Leadership Team members will be busy people with many other duties, so it is critical that a staff-level Plan Manager own the responsibility for getting this effort across the finish line.

Tips for the CESP Plan Manager on successful project management can be found at the end of this chapter in the **Step1 – Appendix**.

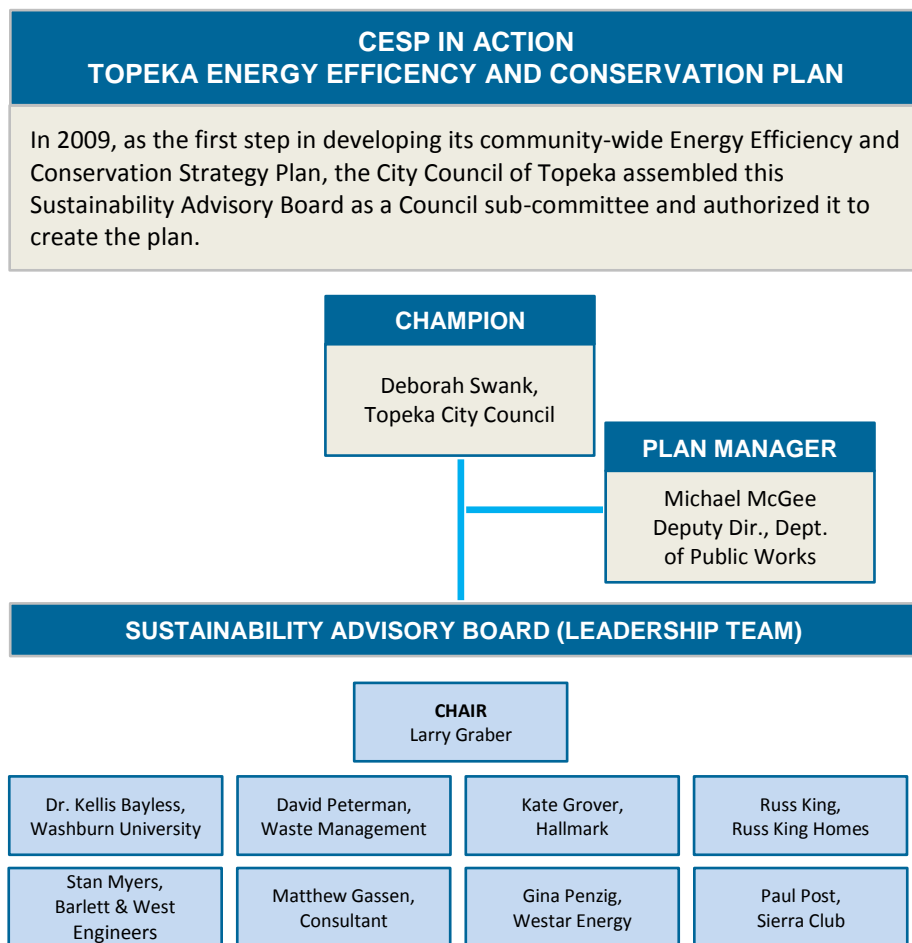
Leadership Team: an additional group or task force of influential local government and/or community officials and representatives charged with driving the CESP process. This group provides high-level thought leadership, guidance, and support for the final recommendations for the plan. The Leadership Team will report to the Champion, and the Plan Manager will be an administrative member of the Team. The Team may be called an Energy Planning Task Force, Sustainability Advisory Board, Commission on Sustainability, etc.

- Who: Candidates include individuals who routinely provide leadership on energy-related issues, as well as those who represent key elements of the government or business community that need to be engaged for the overall success of the CESP.
 - **For a local government CESP**, heads or representatives from the following departments/agencies:
 - Sustainability/Environment/Energy
 - Municipal Utility
 - Public Works
 - Waste/Water Management
 - Buildings/Construction
 - General Services/Facilities/Fleet Management
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Planning
 - Economic Development
 - Information Technology
 - Procurement
 - Budget Office
 - **For a community-wide CESP**, representatives from local government listed above, and heads or representatives from local:
 - Businesses
 - Colleges or universities
 - Utilities
 - Community energy committee
 - Non-profits
 - Homebuilders' associations
 - Financial institutions
 - Transportation authorities
- Role: The Leadership Team will not likely be the final decision makers but will provide recommendations on and for CESP elements. They will represent diverse points of view, encourage buy-in as representatives of important stakeholder groups, provide input to development of components of the plan, and provide the authority (or influence those with the authority) for plans to become actions.
- Why important: This team can bridge across government departments and/or into the community, expand ideas incorporated into the plan, and lend transparency to the process. They will also provide insights into putting the plan into action.

Effective leadership can come in different forms – no two communities’ leadership structure will look exactly the same, but should include these key roles. In addition, the Leadership Team may want to call on others to assist with some of the detailed or technical steps of the planning process, such as developing the profile of current energy use (Step 4) or identifying financing options (Step 7). These additional resources will be identified through the stakeholder outreach efforts (Step 2).

Recruiting Effective Leaders

The CESP will be most successful if local government, community leaders, and gatekeepers are engaged as the owners and initiators of the plan. Therefore, the search for strong leaders to fill the key roles **should not be limited to individuals with obvious connections to the topic of energy planning**. The outcomes associated with a thoughtful and directed approach to the local energy future – economic development, reduced spending for government and citizens, a cleaner environment – are goals for many government departments and community organizations. Focus on finding individuals motivated by these potential outcomes that can provide the necessary time, skills, and enthusiasm for this project.



To fill out these broader leadership roles, look for representatives and decision-makers across all local government departments and leading community organizations:

- Know your local political and influence structure – look for logical supporters who are connected throughout the community.
- Understand the community and its issues – this will provide insights into where to look for leaders who are passionate about these issues.

- Identify known movers and shakers in other fields – while their primary day-to-day focus may not be directly related to energy, they can bring useful insights from their own perspectives.
- Look to already established government, business, and civic and cultural leaders for suggestions – Business/Chamber of Commerce/Rotary groups, churches, or influential arts-based cultural organizations – they know their constituencies and can give authority for action.
- Be sure to consider representatives from the local utility(ies) – they will provide valuable insights into the local energy landscape and can provide useful data and resources.

Once you begin recruiting the people that have been identified, speak individually to the interests and concerns of each. Leaders are being asked to make a significant commitment of time and effort, and they are most likely to agree to be involved if they see that the process will result in outcomes that address issues they believe are important. Have a clear proposal for each of them on the potential outcomes for the community from the effort, and the time commitment you are looking for. To assist with recruitment, a **Sample Invitation to Participate on the Leadership Team** is included at the end of this chapter.



While not all of the potential leaders identified will ultimately serve as part of the Leadership Team, many will still have valuable perspectives and opinions. Consider including them as part of your broader stakeholder engagement (Step 2). Keep this in mind for “hidden stars” you may come across in the recruiting process as well. These are individuals who have, on their own, been quietly taking action to drive efficiency or renewable energy projects in their sphere.

Charter and Direct the Leadership Team

Articulating a clear scope of work and expectations concerning roles, responsibilities, and timeframe – as through a formal Leadership Team charter – is recommended for this effort to:

- Help the Plan Manager manage the CESP process.
- Provide Leadership Team members with useful guidance.
- Result in the most effective use of the members’ time and expertise.
- Help the process stay on track.

In preparing a formal charter, the Plan Manager, in coordination with the Champion and Leadership Team, should specify:

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| • Specific leader, sponsor, and membership | • Ground rules |
| • Project scope and team objectives | • Decision making process |
| • Member roles | • External and internal communication strategies |
| • Timeline and commitment | • Process for feedback on team effectiveness |
| • Meeting process and scheduling | |

The charter should outline structures and processes for reaching broad agreement and support for ambitious but achievable goals and actions. It should also clearly delineate the authority that the Team has relative to the local government officials who will accept recommendations and authorize actions. This distinction should be made clear in the roles and responsibilities to the Leadership Team. The work of the Team will also be clearer if a schedule is developed up front for meetings and communications. It is important to specify who will be the gatekeeper for information and the schedule for the Team – likely the Plan Manager – and indicate the preferred method for communication. For additional guidance, a **Leadership Team Charter Elements** document is included at the end of the chapter.



It can be highly effective to have the Leadership Team members officially recommended by the Mayor or Town Manager and approved by City Council or Select Board, so that the Team is connected to and authorized by local government decision makers.

Tools

[Tool 1.1: Sample Invitation to Participate on Leadership Team](#) (.docx file)

[Tool 1.2: Leadership Team Charter Elements](#) (.docx file)

Step 1 – Appendix

Tips for the CESP Plan Manager – Project Management & Effective Meetings

The CESP Plan Manager will be the project manager for the development of the energy plan, and will need to treat the planning process like any other project. The steps outlined in this Guide represent the structure for managing this project; be sure you are using good project management practices throughout. Here are a few general guidelines that will help ensure a smooth planning process:

- **Preparation** – One of the Plan Manager’s primary responsibilities will be not only to organize and manage the approach for developing the full CESP, but also to be the person who prepares for all its activities. Plan ahead and prepare for interactions with your Leadership and Stakeholder groups, for meetings, for working groups, and all other activities. Think ahead of time about the tasks that will be undertaken, and be sure to provide space, materials, and other support that will make these activities run smoothly.
- **Communication** – The Plan Manager will be responsible for communicating about activities, schedules, ideas, expectations, and all other needs of the process. This will include developing meeting schedules, preparing agendas, and facilitating discussions; managing the drafting of written work in formal reports as well as less-formal outreach information; and publicizing the work along the way to key target audiences. If you are not skilled in all of these types of communication, recruit others to help specifically augment your strengths.
- **Scheduling** – Thoughtful scheduling is critical for minimizing the stress of developing a CESP. Think about a long-term timeline for the planning at the beginning of the process. Once you have developed a target adoption and implementation date, think “backward” and identify how long each step will take, and be sure you have allowed enough time. Add in contingency time, or make your target deadlines flexible, because the unexpected *will* happen.
- You will also be responsible for scheduling lots of meetings, calls, and other formal working activities with others. Be accommodating when you can, but firm when necessary – meeting times can be quite difficult to confirm if you try to match everyone’s preferred schedule. When others are responsible for accomplishing work outside of formal meetings, be sure that they have a clear understanding of their assigned responsibilities, milestones, deliverables, and deadlines – and send reminders and follow-up communications to assure good performance.
- **Monitoring and adjustment** – Be sure to monitor how the planning process is progressing. Stay on top of how the workgroups are performing, how the information is coming together, and how the key players are working together – and be open to adjusting the process or the representation when necessary. Remember that guiding the CESP is not only about a process but also about people – you will be called on to be a source of motivation and wisdom throughout the process!

Managing Meetings

Regardless of the size of the CESP planning effort, the Plan Manager will likely be called on to organize and run many different kinds of meetings – Leadership strategy meetings; task group working sessions; large stakeholder meetings; one-on-one meetings and interviews. If this becomes a major part of the work, the subject becomes controversial, or the groups are large or contentious, consider hiring trained facilitators to help. Here are some general tips for organizing and running good meetings:

- **Planning Your Meetings** – Just as an architect would not show up to a construction site without a blueprint in hand, meeting organizers need to create a design for every meeting. This is important not only so that you are prepared to run the most-effective meeting possible, but also because different kinds of meetings have different purposes and need for structure:
 - **Information sharing** – Meetings with the purpose of giving update reports, sharing research, or brainstorming ideas for later ranking fall into this category. Since there is no decision making involved, these discussions are typically chaired or hosted, rather than facilitated, but still benefit from well-designed agendas.

- **Planning and/or problem solving** – Planning discussions include activities such as visioning and creating goal statements, describing objectives and expected results, assessing needs, identifying priorities, and creating detailed action steps. Problem solving includes activities that engage participants in identifying and resolving issues together, such as reviewing data, identifying problems, using ranking systems to sort ideas. Because lots of decisions and action-related results are developed during these conversations, they require a lot of structure and active facilitation.
- **Relationship building** – The key purpose of some meetings is to help people to get to know each other and to build cooperation. Important agreements may result from these meetings, and careful planning is recommended.

To plan for any of these meetings, consider the following steps:

- **Conduct background research** on the topic as well as the participants or participant groups – know what you will be talking about and who you will be talking to.
- If appropriate, **interview or survey participants** to understand what they expect to achieve or need from the process.
- **Create a preliminary design** for the meeting, and review and get approval or buy-in with select members or leaders of the participant group.
- **Develop an agenda**, with detailed process notes for yourself or the facilitator.
- **Communicate the agenda** in advance of the meeting.
- **Prepare for the meeting** – schedule time and place; prepare needed materials, worksheets, displays, and handouts.
- **Remember to get feedback** – design an evaluation form or process.

Meeting Management –The most effective facilitators think in advance about how they will manage their meetings, no matter the size or type. This includes not only the content of the meeting and the objectives and desired outcomes, but also the methods and procedures for running the meeting, the tools to use, and how relationships and good communication will be maintained. The last of these includes thinking about communication rules for the meeting as well as the expected group dynamics and how to cope with them. Here are some of the elements of effective meetings:

- **A detailed agenda** – with the meeting objective, content, timeline, and responsibilities for each item
- **Clear process notes** for the person running the meeting
- An understanding and consensus on **group norms of behavior** for the meeting (participating, listening, agreeing and disagreeing)
- Clarity about **how decisions will be made**, and by whom
- A process designed to **result in clear closure** – that is, the meeting objective will be met
- **Detailed and clear minutes**
- **Specific follow-up steps**
- **A meeting evaluation**

During the meeting, the facilitator manages participation, keeps things on track, and helps and supports the group’s effectiveness. The following tasks help map out the work of the facilitator as the meeting progresses:

- Starting the meeting:
 - Welcome and introduce participants
 - Explain roles
 - Clarify meeting objective
 - Review and approve agenda

- Explain the process
- Set time expectations
- Start the discussions
- During the meeting:
 - Monitor the group’s understanding of the purpose of tasks for clarity
 - Monitor the process for effectiveness
 - Check the pace of the meeting
 - Take the pulse of the meeting and manage interpersonal interactions when needed
 - Summarize periodically
- Ending the meeting:
 - Help participants make a clear statement of what was accomplished
 - Develop clear next steps with assignments and time frames
 - Evaluate the meeting

Resources Recommended for More In-depth Guidance

- The Planning Tool Exchange (an online hub for the tools, resources, and organizations in community planning) www.planningtoolexchange.org/
- The City of Chicago – Lessons Learned: Creating the Chicago Climate Action Plan www.chicagoclimateaction.org/filebin/pdf/LessonsLearned.pdf
- ICLEI Outreach and Communications Guide (a great resource for information on effective communications with target audiences) www.icleiusa.org/action-center/engaging-your-community/outreach-and-communications-guide
- The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation Resource Guide on Public Engagement (For overview of core principles of public engagement and the variety of strategies, tools and resources available to practitioners) www.ncdd.org/files/NCDD2010_Resource_Guide.pdf