

# Community Energy Strategic Planning

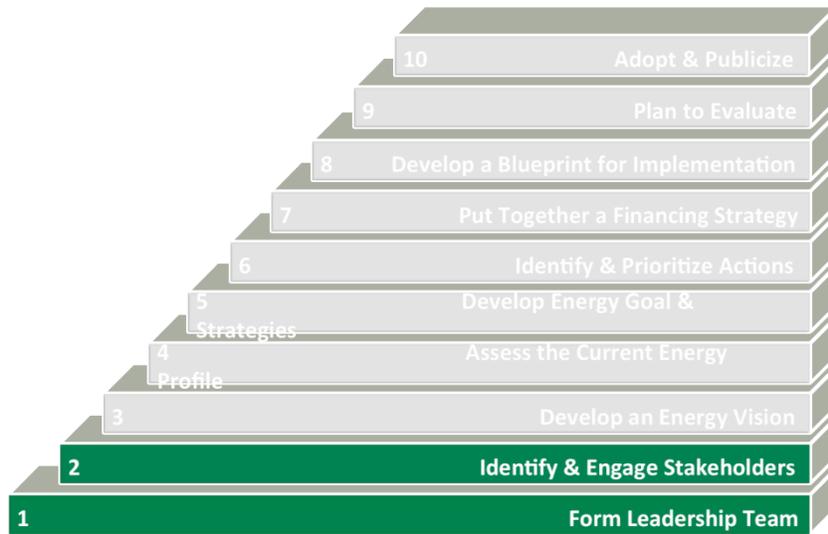
## Better Buildings Alliance



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**Step 2**  
**Identify and Engage Stakeholders**

## Community Energy Strategic Planning Process



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## Step 2: Identify & Engage Stakeholders

1. Identify stakeholders to include
2. Engage stakeholders effectively
  - Establish a strategy for stakeholder input
  - Consider types of enhanced engagement
  - Motivate effective stakeholder participation
3. Plan to maximize stakeholder value throughout the planning process

### Why

- Helps lay foundation for broad-based support
- Collect valuable insight
- Help prioritize recommendations



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Developing a stakeholder outreach strategy is typically the first item of business for the Leadership Team.

The Plan Manager and Leadership Team will want to allow 4-6 weeks to create and launch a stakeholder engagement strategy. The engagement itself will continue throughout the energy planning process.

## What You are Looking for from Stakeholders

- Ideas, expertise, and representation
  - The CESP will be stronger and more relevant with input from many perspectives
- Buy-in and support
  - The CESP is more likely to be successful when the process and outcomes are designed by and for the benefit of the community
- Funding and resources
  - Resources: financial, human, information, influence
  - Needed during planning and, more importantly, in carrying out the plan



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As you identify specific people or organizations, think about how they may fill general categories of stakeholders. The **Stakeholder Matrix Template** included at the end of this chapter can help organize your search. The completed matrix that follows provides examples of groups within each category to consider.

## Discover Your Government Stakeholders

Sector	Areas of Impact				
Category	Buildings & Facilities	Transportation	Energy Supply	Economic Development	Financing
Government Plan	Dept. of Public Works	City Fleet Management	Municipal Electric Utility	Economic Development Office	City Budget Office
	Housing & Neighborhood Development	Waste and Recycling Dept.	Landfill Gas Facility	City Planner	Finance Authority
	School District Facility Manager	Parks & Rec: bike path mgmt.	Power Procurement Office	Industrial Retention Office	
Elected Officials and Their Policy Staff					

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- Who among potential stakeholders are perceived to be **allies**? Who is important to engage that may be **harder to convince**?
- Who are the strongest local **leaders** – those who speak for or motivate the primary audience for CESP activities (e.g., government staff, community members)? Who are the **gatekeepers** – those who can facilitate or prevent access to the primary audience?
- What **political and civic authority** do potential stakeholders and governing bodies have – who has the authority and ability to shape the plan and its outcomes?
- Who has the **ability and resources** to help implement the plan once it is created?
- Who are the **non-local stakeholders** that would be useful to engage? Whatever strategies are adopted, they will be implemented within the context of existing regional and state-wide energy strategies. To better understand the energy-related policies and programs that exist at those levels, include representatives from the State Energy Office and any county or regional planning offices.

## Discover Your Community-Wide Stakeholders

Sector	Areas of Impact				
Community-Wide Plan also includes:					
Category	Buildings & Facilities	Transportation	Energy Supply	Economic Development	Financing
<b>Residential</b>	Community Energy Committee	Metro Transit Authority	Heating Oil Distributors	Homebuilders' Assoc.	Home Mortgage Lenders
<b>Commercial</b>	Chamber of Commerce	Taxi Association	Solar Manufacturer	Private Sector Clean Energy Technology Companies	Commercial Lenders
<b>Non-governmental</b>	Low-Income Advocates	Pedestrian Coalition	Community Solar Coalition	Economic Development Non-Profits	Foundations
<b>Institutions</b>	Local Hospital System	Local University	Local University	Labor Unions	Institutional Foundations
<b>Utilities: electric &amp; fuel</b>	Energy Service Companies (ESCOs)	Local Biofuel Coop	Gas Utility		
<b>Environmental Interests</b>	Environmental Groups (Sierra Club, etc.)			Environmental Justice Groups	
<b>Elected Officials and Their Policy Staff</b>					

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## Engaging Stakeholders

- Different stakeholders engaged in different ways
- Basic approaches:
  - Inform and educate
  - Solicit input
  - Ask for contributions



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Many large planning efforts establish **advisory committees** or task forces of local “experts” to inform various aspects of the planning or represent various constituencies.

While engaging stakeholders, keep an eye out for groups who may be effective **partners** in the planning effort. Partnerships can broaden the reach of the planning process, provide additional support, and add credibility.

As the process moves forward, **working groups** can help dive deeper into certain aspects of the plan.

Be sure to also include the media in the outreach planning. Good media coverage, guided by real stories of the ways energy planning can affect local concerns, is invaluable to establishing broad support for the process and motivating stakeholders to get involved.

Like any public process, there will likely be critics of the CESP effort. The most effective tactics to engage these parties in a positive manner are the same as those used with supporters – find a way to understand their specific concerns and motivations, and

## Stakeholder Engagement Example – Baltimore, MD

- 21 member Sustainability Commission
- 6 Working Groups
  - 12-20 subject area experts
  - Met 4-8 times to scope for challenges and opportunities
- 30+ Sustainability Ambassadors
  - Volunteers trained to communicate plan process and gather feedback
  - Attended 35+ Community meetings
- Youth Involvement
  - 20 members of Youth Advisory Group
- Open Houses
- Online Draft Posting
  - 300+ comments received



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## Maximizing Stakeholder Value

- Include media in outreach planning
- Engage potential critics early
- Map out right timing for each type of interaction
- Identify associated needs and resources
- Formally plan meetings – keep scopes focused on discrete objectives
- Coordinate ongoing communication to keep stakeholders looped in



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Like any public process, there will likely be critics of the CESP effort. The most effective tactics to engage these parties in a positive manner are the same as those used with supporters – find a way to understand their specific concerns and motivations, and then lay out how a solid planning effort can speak to their interests.

While stakeholders may have opinions and ideas at any stage of the planning process, obtaining their input and help will be most valuable when:

- Building support for the plan (early and throughout).
- Creating a future energy vision (Step 3).
- Understanding what has already been accomplished (Step 4).
- Gathering ideas for actions, strategies, resources, and funding (Steps 6 & 7).
- Prioritizing ideas (Step 6).
- Identifying potential resources and partners for implementation (Steps 7 & 8).

## Step 2: Tips & Tools

### Tips

- Clearly define the role of each stakeholder
- Consider teaming up with your public affairs staff, and/or finding inexpensive help from interns or local students

### Tools

- Stakeholder matrix
- Invitation to participate
- Stakeholder meeting agenda
- Appendix of engagement strategies