

# Milwaukee County Climate Action 2050 Plan Community Workshop Notes – May 2023

Prepared by Energetics – May 26, 2023

## Workshop #1: May 24, 2023- Basilica of St. Josaphat, 3 participants

- Concerns about future impacts of climate change during retirement years.
- Observation of environmental changes, including tree mortality, abnormal wind patterns, and disrupted seasons.
- Perception of climate extremes, such as warm winters, extreme cold spells, and severe storms causing power outages.
- Appreciation for increased environmental education for younger generations to foster community buy-in.
- Personal experiences and concerns about allergies, which have affected both children and adults.
- Financial impact and worries about the disproportionate effects of climate change on low-income individuals and families.
- Concerns about rising food prices and the pollution of water sources.
- Observations of physical and mental health impacts during heatwaves and seasonal changes, including a rise in frustration and potential violence.
- Challenges of teaching and studying in schools without adequate cooling during hot weather conditions.
- Personal experiences of increased power outages and longer durations in recent years.
- Transportation issues, including road closures and flooding, affecting daily life and accessibility.
- Notable incidents of severe windstorms causing damage.
- Ongoing concerns about coastal erosion and its implications.
- Curiosity regarding the timeline set for the climate change plan, particularly the year 2050.

## Workshop #2: May 25, 2023- Century City Tower, 9 participants

- Notable absence of permafrost or snow layers, and common flooding on the East side.
- Concerns about the environmental effects of higher road salt usage on waterways.
- Observations of changing insect populations, earlier plant blooming, and the impact of climate change on park ecosystems.
- More frequent occurrence of intense storms, including the 2010 flood, warm weather anomalies, and increased risk of basement flooding.
- Invasive plant and insect species proliferate due to the absence of deep freezes.
- Challenges with water drainage, leading to yard and basement flooding, as well as mosquito problems.
- Increasing pollen levels and seasonal allergies, requiring greater reliance on allergy medication.
- Coping with hot weather without air conditioning, including seeking relief in basements.

- Unusual weather patterns, such as extended dry spells followed by prolonged periods of rain.
- Appreciation for the proximity to a large lake as a water resource during dry spells.
- Water crises in the past and concerns about access to clean drinking water.
- Lack of County's capacity to provide air conditioning for everyone, impacting public health.
- The importance of establishing rebate programs to facilitate the adoption of greener technologies like heat pumps.
- Ensuring affordability and accessibility of sustainable changes, particularly for renters.
- Recognizing the benefits of tree cover in reducing temperatures, despite potential storm damage to power lines.
- Increase in ozone action days and the impact on individuals with asthma.
- Addressing the issue of lead pipes in Milwaukee and taking proactive measures to mitigate health risks.
- Exploring water storage options to capture excess rainwater for use during droughts.
- Highlighting the challenges faced by residents who must choose between essentials like food, medicine, and energy.

## Key Takeaways

1. **Climate change impacts:** Residents expressed concerns about future impacts of climate change, observed environmental changes like tree mortality and abnormal wind patterns, and experienced warmer winters and more severe storms.
2. **Health and financial implications:** Allergies, rising food prices and water pollution were mentioned as health and financial-related concerns. Participants noted the disproportionate effects of climate change on low-income individuals and families.
3. **Power outages and transportation challenges:** Residents shared their experiences of increased power outages for longer durations, as well as the impact of transportation issues like road closures and flooding on daily life and accessibility.
4. **Environmental education and sustainable practices:** Participants expressed desire for increased environmental education for younger generations to foster community buy-in. Participants also emphasized the importance of adopting sustainable technologies and making them affordable and accessible through rebate programs.
5. **Water-related concerns:** Various water-related issues were highlighted, including flooding, access to clean drinking water, and exploring water storage options.