



## Planning our Way to a New Energy Future



Climate change impacts, increasing heating and cooling costs, and overdependence on petroleum and other fossil fuels all contribute to the urgent need for more efficient energy use and alternative energy choices in the U.S. While more than 400 cities have stated their commitment to action to address climate change, these communities need guidance on how to implement those goals. In addition, more communities need to take appropriate steps now to help reduce future energy burdens. Energy can no longer be an "add-on" or considered a separate issue. Energy consumption and clean energy generation must be better integrated into planning decisions.

The [American Planning Association](#) (APA) and the [Environmental and Energy Study Institute](#) (EESI) have embarked on a three-year research and education project, *Planning our Way to a New Energy Future*, [promoting clean and efficient energy strategies](#) for communities. While most planners recognize that energy issues are connected to planning, many have had no direct experience with energy-efficient community design or with the range of renewable energy options now available. For more cities and regions to implement efficient and clean energy strategies, planners must be aware of the energy implications of their practice and have the knowledge and tools to incorporate energy considerations in all aspects of planning.

### **GOAL AND APPROACH**

The goal of this project is to encourage improved energy efficiency and increased use of clean, renewable energy technologies in communities. Pursuing this goal will help communities address the serious challenges of climate change, support reliable and safe energy sources, improve public health, save tax dollars, and boost their local economies. To accomplish this goal, this project is conducting interrelated research, publishing, and education initiatives and is building collaborations among community leaders, planners, and energy professionals to better integrate energy sustainability into contemporary urban and regional planning practice in the United States.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To bridge the gap between planners and energy advocates/experts through dialogue and collaboration
- To improve planners' understanding of how energy is related to planning activities and how planning decisions impact community energy choices.
- To help planners include energy efficiency and renewable energy considerations in their everyday work.
- To encourage planners to become advocates for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, to assist communities and regions in meeting greenhouse gas reduction goals.

### **ACTIVITIES**

**Needs Assessment:** Assess planners' capacity, knowledge, and educational needs on energy issues and planning.

**Partner Dialogue:** Organize a national symposium with representatives of planning, smart growth, community development, climate, energy, housing, and transportation to break down barriers and build partnerships.

**Best Practices:** Identify, document, and disseminate examples of communities successfully integrating energy sustainability into plans, management tools, plan implementation, public investment, policies, and built projects.

**State and Federal Policy:** Educate state and federal policy makers to ensure that programs, policies, legislation, and regulations support and enhance energy planning efforts at the local and regional levels; write a policy briefing document for state and local officials.

**Publications:** Develop a best practices manual and website on integrating energy into community planning; prepare articles for publication.

**Training, Technical Assistance and Outreach:** Develop and conduct workshops; provide technical assistance to individual communities; conduct conference sessions; establish two mini-pilot programs for more extensive assistance and support.

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