

Frequently asked questions about . . .

Bend's proposed Climate Action Ordinance

Q. What is an ordinance?

A. Ordinances are legally binding and enforceable city laws that provide consensus solutions to problems at the municipal level, providing for public safety and well-being.

Q. Why is this ordinance necessary?

A. The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly tangible, measurable, and dangerous. Scientists say we are reaching a point of no turning back, and serious action needs to occur quickly if we want to keep the Earth habitable.

Q. How can a small area like Bend have a meaningful effect on climate change?

A. The City of Bend and its citizens can contribute to the overall reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while serving as an example to other similar cities. Local effort is essential because action at state, national and international levels has been insufficient to slow GHG emissions.

Q. How would the ordinance be implemented?

A. The ordinance will result in two climate action plans: for City of Bend operations and for the community (residents and businesses). These action plans will be developed by a Climate Action Commission (CAC) that reflects a wide range of community interests and perspectives and after soliciting public input. The ordinance also provides for dedicated staffing at the City to oversee the implementation of the climate action plans.

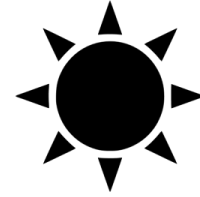
Q. What are the long term goals of the proposed climate-change ordinance?

A. The goals of the ordinance put the City of Bend on track to be carbon neutral by the year 2030 and to reduce actual fossil fuel use for both the City operations and the community by 40 percent by 2030 and 70 percent by 2050, based on carbon emission levels from 2010 or more recent years.

Q. Are the goals of the ordinance realistic for Bend?

A. The ordinance goals proposed for Bend are consistent with the science-based framework of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the recent GHG reduction targets established at the 2015 United Nations (UN) Climate Conference in Paris. They are realistic if we act now. More importantly, scientists agree that they are necessary to avoid catastrophic consequences.

Q. What other communities are taking action on climate change?



A. In enacting this ordinance, the City of Bend would be joining a growing list of cities throughout the inter-mountain west and west coast who feel that a comprehensive climate change strategy will not only reduce locally-generated GHG emissions but will also make their communities economically stronger, more sustainable and more livable. These include many cities in Oregon of diverse sizes: Albany, Gladstone, Lincoln City, Oregon City, Vernonia, Ashland, Corvallis, Hillsboro, Lake Oswego, Salem, Beaverton, Eugene, Gresham, McMinnville, Milwaukie and Portland.

Q. How would the ordinance impact local businesses?

A. Forthrightly addressing climate change through this ordinance would result in many opportunities for local job creation in the solar industry, building industry, and in the energy efficient home retrofit industries. The city's investment in climate recovery would be spent in Bend. It will also result in bottom line savings to businesses on heating and cooling, lighting, phantom (energy) loads, and hot water expenses. Businesses could have community pride in doing our part and in taking leadership in the state, which would be good for business. If we do not do our part to prevent disruptive climate change it will be bad for business, due to increasing and more severe droughts, warmer and lower rivers with reduced fishing and recreation, increased fire intensity and frequencies, health effects from smoke, and ever shorter ski seasons.

Q. Will my business be expected to reduce its GHG emissions under this ordinance?

A. Reducing GHG emissions will be encouraged community wide and will have paybacks that will be positive in both the short and long term.

Q. Will this ordinance result in higher taxes?

A. The proposed ordinance does not raise taxes. However, some strategies adopted by the City Council might require additional revenue over the medium- and long-term. Costs and benefits of strategies will be identified as the climate action plans are developed.

Q. How would the ordinance affect me and my family? Would we be required to do things that significantly restrict our lifestyle or cost us more than we can afford?

A. That depends on the specific strategies recommended by the citizens' CAC and approved by the city council. A building block of the ordinance is to encourage community consensus based on science and a full airing of alternatives, both before the CAC and the city council. Strategies that get adopted could include things like:

- Changes in planning, zoning and city code to make homes and neighborhoods more energy-efficient and increase the use of solar for electricity and hot water;
- Improving the extent of and access to the public transit system; or
- Increasing the number of charging stations for electric cars.

Such strategies are consistent with "smart growth" strategies used by cities throughout the country to achieve a wide variety of social and economic goals. Overtime, many of these strategies could well pay for themselves.