

League of Women Voters Minneapolis
November 2022 Unit Meetings
Study Guide and Discussion Questions
Topic: Climate Change and the City's Climate Action Plan

Background:

Last April, our *Civic Buzz* featured Kim Havey, who leads the City of Minneapolis's sustainability work to combat climate change. The City is currently in the process of updating its Climate Action Plan. This fall, we are taking a closer look at the City's plan and the work being done by climate activists to shape the new plan.

But first, a short overview on climate change. Climate change is a long-term change in the Earth's established weather patterns. The chief cause of climate change is global warming—the average temperature of the Earth is rising. Scientists estimate that the Earth's temperature has risen about 1.0 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since what is called the “pre-industrial period,” which is 1850-1900. The Earth's temperature is continuing to increase each decade.

Global warming is caused by human activity, primarily the burning of fossil fuels. Burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas increases the amount of heat-trapping gasses in the Earth's atmosphere. These gasses act like a greenhouse, holding heat in the atmosphere and raising the temperature of our Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and land.

The higher temperatures have consequences for our weather and environment. Some of the changes caused by global warming include increasing temperatures on land, in the atmosphere, and in the ocean; rising sea levels; ice loss at Earth's poles and in mountain glaciers; and changes in the frequency and severity of extreme weather such as hurricanes, heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, floods and precipitation.

Experts predict that as a result of climate change Minneapolis will experience higher average temperatures, significantly hotter summers, increases in heavy

downpours, and increasing times of drought. The City of Minneapolis has been working since 1989 to try and avoid these threats.

The City has a current Climate Action Plan, which was developed in 2013. It is currently revising that plan and seeking community input on the new plan's goals. Climate activists are working with the City to develop its new plan. One of those groups, MN350, is organizing to encourage the City to include more economic justice in its goals and to establish a steady funding source for initiatives to meet all the City's climate change goals. *The People's Climate and Equity Plan*, which MN350 supports, was developed by them and a coalition of environmental and social justice groups.

For more information:

Join the *Civic Buzz* and hear *The People's Climate and Equity Plan*, a presentation by MN350 climate advocates Tee McClenty and Ulla Nilsen, on Tuesday, November 1 at 7:00 p.m. Zoom link:

<https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/86873326996>

Read the City's current *Climate Action Plan*:

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/climate-equity/minneapolis-climate-action-plan/>

Get involved in developing the City's new *Climate Action & Equity Plan* by taking a survey or attending a listening session. Find information here:

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/climate-equity/>

Read *The People's Climate and Equity Plan* on the MN350 website:

<https://mn350.org/peoples-climate-and-equity-plan/>

Watch *Climate Change: A Side-by-Side Comparison of MN City Action Plans*, presentation by Kate Knuth for the League of Women Voters Minnesota:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoKms_tAp88

Sign up to be a part of the LWVMN Climate Change Task Force and receive information on issues and events: <https://www.lwvmn.org/subscribe>

Join the just-forming LWVMpls Climate Change Committee by emailing League member and Advocacy Director Kitty Westin at westin.kitty@gmail.com.

NASA's climate website has lots of great resources and educational pieces on climate change: <https://climate.nasa.gov/>

The United Nations has a website devoted to helping individuals act to stop climate change, including a list of ten impactful things we can all do:

<https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions>

Read: *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, edited by Paul Hawken (2017). It includes a list of 100 things to do to reverse global warming.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are we taking action to stop or reverse global warming?
2. Why is work to stop global warming and combat climate change so important for economic justice?
3. Why should or shouldn't the City's new climate action plan include goals to advance economic justice?
4. Have you taken any new steps to stop or reverse global warming? If so, can you share them with us?
5. If you are working with other groups of people to reverse global warming, what are you doing?
6. How can we help the City of Minneapolis in its climate change and sustainability work?
7. LWVMpls is starting a Climate Change/Climate Action Committee. What should its priorities be?