THE COMMUNITY ENERGY PLAN OF
NORTHWEST OTTAWA COUNTY

WELCOME TO THE NORTHWEST OTTAWA COMMUNITY ENERGY PLAN

During 2023 and 2024, the City of Grand Haven, the City of Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven Township, aided by additional grants, funded the development of a community energy plan. The resultant Northwest Ottawa Community Energy Plan provides strategies and directions to reduce carbon emissions and wasted energy in the area by increasing efficiency and transitioning from oil and gas to electricity wherever possible. An important next step is to fund a community energy advisor position to lead the effort to make significant energy-use improvements in the Board of Light and Power service area.

LEADING BY DOING

Local governments can lead by setting carbon goals, updating policies for clean energy, supporting clean tech businesses, and investing in sustainable operations.

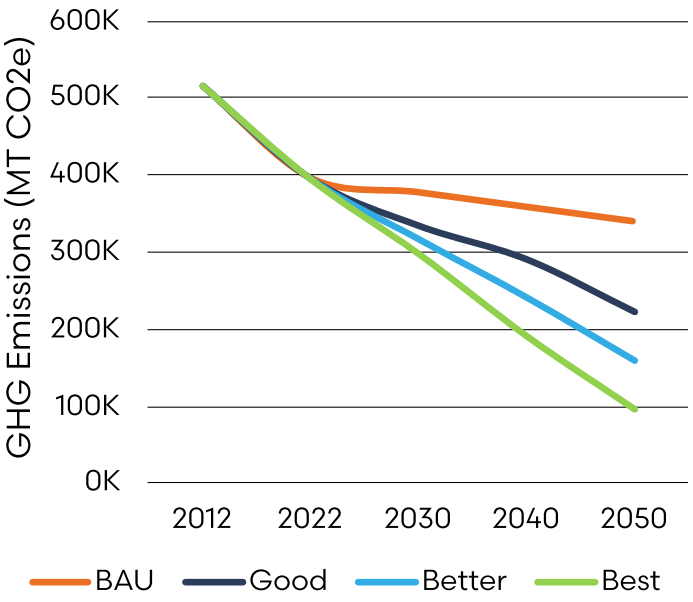
THREE EMISSION REDUCTION PATHWAYS

The Plan offers three pathways for reducing emissions by 2050:

Good: 56% reduction, aligning with Michigan's decarbonization goals.

Better: 60% reduction through increased electrification, efficiency, and adoption of electric vehicles.

Best: 76% reduction through renewable energy expansion, full electrification of residential buildings, and widespread adoption of electric vehicles.



Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions By Pathway

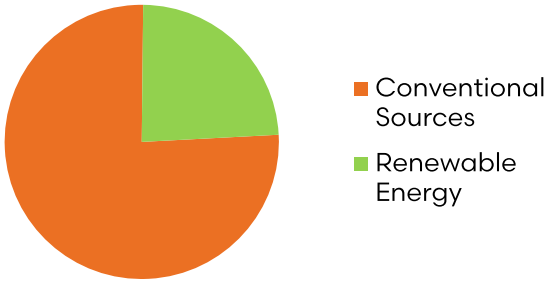
The "Business As Usual" (BAU) line represents a national benchmark, showing how Grand Haven's 2022 baseline emissions might decrease if they followed the U.S. energy-related CO_2 reduction trend projected by the Energy Information Administration.

BUILDING ON A POSITIVE TREND

Per person emissions in the Grand Haven Region dropped from **19.7 tons in 2012** to **14.5 tons in 2022**, which is close to the U.S. national average of 14.9 tons in 2024. If the "Best" plan is followed, emissions could fall even further to just **3.5 tons per person by 2050**. This reduction reflects the region's ongoing shift toward cleaner energy sources and more sustainable practices.

REDUCING ENERGY WASTE, INCREASING ELECTRIFICATION, AND RENEWABLES ARE KEY

Using less energy and electrifying buildings and transportation is key to cutting emissions, so too is adding more renewable energy. Currently, **24%** of the region's power is renewable, but this will need to increase to **100% by 2050** to achieve the Best scenario emissions reductions. Reaching this goal will depend on the actions of attuned local policymaking and collaboration with the BLP to expand clean energy infrastructure.



Grand Haven Regional Energy Mix, 2024

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Input from a diverse group of stakeholders from Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven Township shaped this plan. Led by a Steering Committee of local officials, BLP representatives, and community members, the plan was developed through open houses, listening sessions, and a community survey. Survey results from 378 respondents showed strong support for local action on climate change, energy-efficient buildings, and affordable clean energy.

STRATEGIES TO GET THERE—STARTING TODAY

The region's **Emissions Reduction Strategies** provide a roadmap for meaningful decarbonization. Divided into **Direct** and **Supportive** Strategies, they work together to build local capacity and deliver practical solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

DIRECT STRATEGIES

Direct strategies are the direct actions, such as energy efficiency projects and renewable energy adoption, that are cost-effective and reduce on-site emissions.

- Reduce Energy Usage and Emissions in Buildings
- Accelerate Local Renewable Energy Use
- Make transition to Electric Vehicles and Enhance Other Mobility Options
- Protect and Restore Land and Water Resources
- Improve Sustainable Food Systems

SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES

Supportive strategies focus on building the expertise and support necessary to implement clean energy solutions.

- Support Ongoing Community Energy Engagement, Education, and Equity
- Adopt Local Clean Energy Policies
- Invest in Clean Energy Projects
- Track Results and Update Plan

GOING FORWARD

After the Northwest Ottawa Community Energy Plan has been adopted locally and an area Community Energy Advisor hired, we will need to keep all the energy-saving possibilities in mind during annual planning and budget approval processes as well as in daily staff decision making. Additionally, we must be flexible and prepared to respond to new developments in solar panel technology and other energy-saving innovations in the future. Moreover, the Northwest Ottawa area will have beneficial opportunities to coordinate with other communities and agencies to share best practices and to pursue grants and joint funding to reach our energy goals.