

REC Suggestions from a file compiled by Heather Adelman

1. "Thanks for putting this call for ideas out there! I believe these funds should be invested in ways that will permanently lower bills for Oberlin Residents and Businesses.

For Residents: \$500,000 per year should be invested in a program that will work with the 300 homes in town who are in danger of having their power shut off each month. Along with their orange stickers, these homes should be offered an opportunity from the city to have their bills paid in full as an incentive to participate in a new weatherization program. We know that in our region, weatherization programs save families about \$200.00 a year. This would benefit the utility because it would lower the amount of shut offs, notices, and late fees exercised on a monthly cycle. It would benefit residents by offering them potential savings of around \$17 per month (more than twice the \$7 offered by a rebate program, and unlike the rebate program, these energy savings would be permanent, lasting after the REC money stops.) Here is a breakdown of program costs:

Expanded Funding for the Caring Fund (Paying off bills for 300 customers, at roughly \$120 each)

- \$36,000

Cost of weatherizing homes after utilizing Columbia Gas programs (300 households, with an average of \$1,200 in weatherization costs per household.)

-\$360,000

Expanded administrative costs- (Additional staffing and a marketing budget.)

-\$85,000

Total Cost

-\$481,000

For Businesses: \$500,000 per year of the funds should go into a sustainable reserve fund specifically marked for Oberlin Businesses. A liaison or other position should be created to reach out to our local businesses and help them identify areas where they can save money on their energy usage, help connect them with local contractors to do the work, walk them through the application process, and pay for these improvements, resulting in significant monthly savings for these business, which will translate into job creation and a healthier local economy. \*Note- there is currently an argument that it doesn't make sense to add more money to the sustainable reserve fund because it is under-utilized as it is. It is important to point out that, thus far, it has been extremely hard to access sustainable reserve funding, and the application is not even available on city websites. This is why the creation of an outreach position is so vital to truly helping Oberlin businesses access and invest these dollars." 3/10/2016

2. A 2.0 mega Watt Oberlin solar garden initially financed by REC dollars and from which residents, institutions, and businesses could buy the output from 1 to many solar panels. Each month this kWh output will be subtracted from the owner's kWh use on the owner's City electric bill. 3/16/15

3. Bury electrical wires strung throughout much of the city. They are a safety hazard in snow and ice storms, and the mutilation of the trees along the streets to accommodate the wires is tragic. The newer developments around our town already have underground wires, and such a move would beautify the entire town as well as contribute to our safety and allow trees to flourish. 3/16/16

4. "Create low or no interest loans for sustainability initiatives from a revolving loan fund. Establish a foundation or other mechanism for energy and resource conservation in houses and buildings and for shifting to renewable energy sources." 3/17/16

5. Replace the city's cars with electric cars that run on renewable electricity and save gas and money. 3/17/16

6. Ideas put forth are great. But my thought is that if we don't let a large number of Oberlin citizens have a say in this decision, there will be some griping about it and animosity toward City Council. WE may need more time and discussion than a council meeting allows. 3/18/16

7. I would like to see the REC dollars invested for expanded future benefit. I have read the 4 options put forth by B. Burgess, S. Hayes, G. Mathews, C. McDaniel, D. Orr and D. Sonner and I believe that the 4th option (a combination of investment plus immediate utility-related use) is the best option for Oberlin. I also like their idea of hiring a Sustainability Coordinator who could oversee the programs so as not to burden any current particular agencies. Please DO NOT distribute the REC dollars with no future investment. A few dollars a month can be nice for everyone, but we would be wasting an amazing opportunity to do a larger good for our community. Being able to weatherize homes would make more of a long-term benefit with sustainable energy savings for families and households in need. 3/18/16

8. I think the City should use the funds to replace all of the street lamps with LED bulbs. I know some have been completed but all should be done. I think the PUC made a recommendation to do all bulbs as soon as possible with the help of an outside firm since City staff was limited. The sooner this is done the better. We all save money when the City saves money. 3/18/16

9. Identify strategies from the climate action plan that will be difficult to fund any other way. 3/18/16

10. The majority of these funds should be used for projects with long-term gain, not given to ratepayers for a short time, artificially lowering their bills. I think the funds should be used to weatherize and insulate as many buildings as possible in town (city buildings, homes, churches, businesses, industrial park, etc). This is the best use of these dollars because weatherization and insulation can permanently lower utility bills, not just lower bills for a little bit for a few years. The funds should be used to weatherize and insulate City buildings first because when City overhead

costs are lowered, all ratepayers and taxpayers benefit. I have heard the City say that they don't have the staff to oversee a program like this. That is simply not a good reason not to use this money wisely. If necessary, use a small portion of the funds to create a new position within the City to administer the program or form a board/commission to do it. It seems like POWER and Columbia Gas can also help administer a project like this in collaboration with the City. 3/18/16

11. Install 10 KW solar array's on one or more of the school buildings . Based on 4.5 hours per day average sunlight for northern Ohio, these array's could each generate approximately 16,500 KWH's per year, saving the schools approximately \$2,000 per year on their electric costs. 3/18/2016

12. Provide \$25,000 to each of the community's church's to implement energy efficiency upgrades. These upgrades could include adding insulation, replacing windows, and lighting upgrades. 3/19/2016

13. This document is specious because it begins from the assumption that the \$ ought to be retained by OMLPS/City of Oberlin. However, I support the Utility Director's position that the bulk of the money be returned to rate payers, with a maximum of 15% retained in the Sustainable Reserve Fund. I would support a "checkoff" system whereby rate payers could choose whether to receive a rate reduction/refund or return it voluntarily to the Sustainable Reserve Fund. Supporting this proposal does not make me a Climate Change denier or anti-green, despite what Carl McDaniel and David Sonner would have people believe. It makes me, and City Council members who vote to support the Utility Director, a responsible fiduciary of a municipally owned utility. The Sustainable Reserve Fund would still have plenty of money available for projects that support city-wide electricity reduction through replacement of infrastructure. If Council votes to retain the REC\$, then I believe it should be preserved as an endowment, not, as some people suggest, for just \*any\* worthwhile project, but only for greener energy-related purposes. Drawing off the endowment at a rate of 5% per year would provide more than \$100,000 \*per year\* of benefit, in perpetuity. One needs to remember that rate-payers and residents are not one and the same, and we have many utility customers who are not residents or even voters. OMPLS should not be overcharging its customers. 3/19/2016

14."Assuming Council elects not to return all of the REC money to the rate-payers, I would like to see Council appoint a working group to propose to Council one or a few specific mechanisms for spending some or all of the REC dollars on energy related projects in Oberlin. The group should consist of individuals with past experience in the investment and expenditure of funds in the \$4M+ range. Ideal candidates for this group should be current Administrators and Board members of local non-profit institutions and foundations, e.g. the Community Foundation of Lorain County, the United Way of Lorain County, the Nord Foundation, Oberlin College, Kendal at Oberlin and NASCORP. Ideally the council chairperson and the City Manager or their representatives will serve as ex officio members. Primary

qualifications are experience and wisdom necessary to create a structure in which REC dollars will be invested and dispersed. No expertise on energy and public utility issues is required; the primary goal of the group is to invent a transparent and efficient mechanism for others to manage and spend the REC dollars.

I assume the City of Oberlin will provide administrative and budgetary support for the working group.

To evaluate the feasibility of my proposal I would consult widely with community leaders and key members of the associations named above, especially Bill Harper at the United Way, Brian Frederick at the Community Foundation, Mike Frandsen at Oberlin College and John Mullaney at the Nord Foundation." 3/19/2016

15. "Returning the funds to the ratepayers seems short sighted to me. We have a unique opportunity to use these funds to implement technologies that would improve energy efficiency throughout the community and ultimately help Oberlin achieve the climate goals it set several years ago. If the problem we're facing is a lack of concrete ideas for how to reinvest the funds, why not use a small portion to pay for a consultant who can develop the ideas for us! Again, it seems foolish and short-sighted to make a decision about what to do with the credits without having explored all of our options. " 3/21/2016

16. Hire a "Director of The Future" who's direction would be to create a better tomorrow for all Oberlin residents. This person's responsibilities would be to research feasibility of suggested REC reinvestment ideas from the public and investigate similar communities who have had success with reinvestment of public funds. They would also, as an on going position, be charged with formulating new programs and developing funds to continue future programs or projects.

3/21/2016

17. "I feel that this large, unanticipated, sum of money is a windfall we must use in the most effective and beneficial way for the most people in Oberlin. That means doing several different kinds of things with it and dividing it I'm sure. For me personally, doing all we can to decrease our carbon footprint and increase the chance of saving the planet for my grandchildren is the most important. So funding our Climate Action Plan would be one piece.

However, for some Oberlinians living in drafty and leaky homes, that may be an abstract concept they're too cold and uncomfortable at the moment to care about. Getting back \$7.00/month (\$84.00/year) credit on their electric bill won't be able to remedy that situation, but access to interest free (they've already paid the interest in effect) loans, and encouragement and information about how improving their homes and/or energy efficiency of their appliances can make them more comfortable, and lower their utility bills, and save the planet—that's a win, win, win situation! Obviously this would entail working out what it would cost, who would administer the process and much much more, but getting everyone at all levels

engaged and feeling some real-time benefits from the use of this large chunk of capital is imperative." 3/21/2016

18. Develop a community based home insurance program in which home owners in Oberlin could be members of a community owned insurance co-op. A portion of the REC dollars, along with possible matching grants, would be the seed money to start the program. Positive revenue would be reinvested in the co-op and with the people who purchase insurance from the program for home improvements and weatherization. 3/21/2016

19. Anything that would yield a positive return on investment. This money was generated by making good financial decisions. Please continue to think with a creative mind for a better future for Oberlin and invest this money wisely for the benefit of everyone. 3/21/2016

20. "My name is Mindy Brueggemann, and I am an Oberlin resident. I would like to see the REC dollars used for reinvestment purposes, and would like to second Katie Hayes' ideas, as outlined below (copied and pasted from her recent email to City Council).

Thank you for considering reinvestment of the REC dollars.

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My name is Katie Hayes, and I am a community member in Oberlin. Unfortunately, I will be out of town during your upcoming work session on Monday, March 21st, where you will be discussing the spending of the funds generated by trading our renewable energy credits. This, "REC Money," as I understand it totals nearly 2 million dollars to date. The purpose of this email is to share my thoughts with you on how this money could be spent, since I can't come to the work session. I hope others who are out of town for either Oberlin College or the Oberlin City School's Spring break will do the same.

I believe these funds should be invested in ways that will permanently lower bills for Oberlin Residents and Businesses.

For Residents:

\$500,000 per year should be invested in a program that will work with the 300 homes in town who are in danger of having their power shut off each month. Along with their orange stickers, these homes should be offered an opportunity from the city to have their bills paid in full as an incentive to participate in a new weatherization program. We know that in our region, weatherization programs save families (conservatively) about \$200.00 a year. This would benefit the utility because it would lower the amount of shut offs, notices, and late fees exercised on a monthly cycle. It would benefit residents by offering them potential savings of over \$17 per month (more than twice the \$7 offered by a rebate program, and unlike the rebate program, these energy savings would be permanent, lasting after the REC

money stops.) As an added benefit, the city already has partnerships with organizations like POWER, and Oberlin Community Services, who could help with the administration of such a program. Here is a breakdown of program costs:  
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Total Cost \$481,000

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A liaison or other position should be created to reach out to our local businesses and help them identify areas where they can save money on their energy usage, help connect them with local contractors to do the work, walk them through the application process, and pay for these improvements, resulting in significant monthly savings for these business, which will translate into job creation and a healthier local economy.

Note- there is currently an argument that it doesn't make sense to add more money to the sustainable reserve fund because it is under-utilized as it is. It is important to point out that, thus far, it has been extremely hard to access sustainable reserve funding, and the application is not even available on city websites. This is why the creation of an outreach position is so vital to truly helping Oberlin businesses access and invest these dollars.

Total Cost: \$500,000

<<" 3/21/2016

21. "It is my strong recommendation that these funds are used for permanent and long term improvements rather than minimal, short term, and temporary rate reductions.

Where I grew up, the city had a Sustainability Commission. The Commission had the following charter: ""This seven-member commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council to provide expertise on major policy areas related to the environmental sustainability goals of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and General Plan. Specific duties include:

\*Advise Council on policy issues addressing sustainability goals.

\*Advise Council on how to strategically accelerate Sunnyvale's progress towards sustainability and recommend priorities, in order to promote continued regional leadership in sustainability.

\*Periodically review policies governing specific practices, such as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, water conservation, renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and urban forestry. Illustrative examples include creation of infrastructure for low emission vehicles, habitat restoration and conservation, biodiversity preservation, and reduction of toxics in the waste stream.

\*Advise Council on ways to drive community awareness, education, and participation in best practices.

\*Review and make recommendations to Council on Federal, State and regional policies related to sustainability which impact Council's goals and policies""

I think the City of Oberlin should form a similar group that reports to City Council. In conjunction with the creation of the Sustainability Commission, the City of Oberlin should create a paid staff position, the Director of Sustainability. This position could be modeled after the City of Cleveland's. The position would be responsible for implementing the Climate Action Plan (with the Commission) and creating a system for REC distribution and ensuring the funds went to the projects with the best and highest rate of return for all rate payers. " 3/21/2016  
allow trees to flourish.