

THE MINING Journal

Public, officials invited to guide Marquette Area Climate and Health plan

Editor's note: This is part one of a two-part story on the Marquette Area Climate and Health Adaptation Plan.

MARQUETTE — Fires, floods and severe weather events can all affect human health and safety. For those who want to help address local climate impacts, a discussion on the implementation of the Marquette Area Climate and Health Adaptation Plan will be held at the Marquette Township Community Center Jan. 29.

The public will have a chance to review recently-released guidebooks developed to guide the implementation of the plan, as well as give input on prioritizing local infrastructure interventions during an open house session to be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Jan 29.

Public input, combined with feedback collected from officials in a session earlier in the day, will offer organizers *“two different lenses to look through to see where those priorities are,”* said Brad Neumann, senior extension educator at Michigan State University Extension.

“The open house will have an educational component and it will have an engagement component to it — people that show up will be able to influence the list of priorities,” Neumann said.

The event serves as a way for the community to learn about local climate impacts and ask questions about climate patterns, the plan and potential strategies while providing feedback.

“I would say if you’re a resident of Marquette County and you’ve heard things about climate change and you just wonder: ‘Is it real, is it not real, is there something I can do?’ — just come to this meeting, find out, take the time to look and learn about it,” said Gail Anthony, a member of the Marquette County Climate Adaptation Task Force and CEO of the Community Foundation of Marquette County.

The Marquette Area Climate and Health Adaptation Plan, a three-phase project that began in spring 2017, has been coordinated by the Michigan State University Extension and School of Planning, Design and Construction, in conjunction with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the MDHHS’s Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program, Marquette County Health Department, Marquette County Climate Adaptation Task Force and the Superior Watershed Partnership.

The plan aims to mitigate climate change impacts upon human health in the area through strategic infrastructure interventions throughout the county. It will be entering its third phase as officials and the public begin to prioritize implementation strategies contained in two guidebooks set to be released at the event.

“When you develop a plan, it’s really the start, because the hope and the intention is that it starts to create a snowball effect of implementation,” Neumann said.

One of the two guidebooks to be released, Volume I, is a visual guide to implementation that features examples of local adaptation designs, information about design considerations, community feedback and input, as well as sample policies and metrics, he said.

Volume II includes specific policy recommendations and details climate drivers and impacts, along with interventions, recommendations and metrics to assess outcomes.

Community leaders will meet and review the guidebooks from 2:30 to 5 p.m. Jan. 29 at the township center, Neumann said.

“Those folks will be brought together to really go through a prioritization process of all the draft recommendations in the guides and asked to think within their own job how they see carrying out and implementing some of these ideas,” Neumann said.

Once the feedback has been collected and follow-up work is done, a third guidebook will be developed to outline the actual implementation of the plan, Neumann said.

Furthermore, officials said they look forward to beginning the implementation of the plan this year by using some of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding through the MDDHS that has supported the work to do some small-scale interventions in the county.

“To learn more about the plan or view the guidebooks, visit <https://superiorwatersheds.org/projects/marquette-area-climate-and-health-adaptation>

For more information on the Marquette County Climate Adaptation Task Force, visit <https://superiorwatersheds.org/catf>
