

Vermont Measuring and Assessing Progress of Vermont's Climate Action
Racial Justice Alliance Focus Group
March 1, 2025 at 4 PM

ERG Presentation on Project and Priorities

Sophi and Melanie provided a PowerPoint presentation ([RJA Focus Groups 3-1-25 revised.pptx](#)). The notes below are the questions and comments raised during the presentation.

- GWSA passed in 2020, what data has CAO gotten since then?
 - We will be looking at existing sources; CAO has not yet collected its own data for this specific tool.
- Is it too late for metrics to be adjusted after our feedback?
 - Not too late, still refining metrics.
- Is Vermont Rural Development Council engaged?
 - They are not part of the team running the project but were included in engagement.
- Concern with language around working lands and open space: all land is working
 - This issue has also been raised with the Climate Council
- How are you going to maintain the data and who is doing it?
 - CAO and Agency of Digital Services will have some role in overseeing the tool and data updates; however, specific roles and responsibilities have not yet been defined.
- How do you measure impacts from other states (such as wildfire smoke)?
 - This tool is going to be looking at the actions taken within VT toward the state's climate action priorities.
- Are the things you're measuring enforceable? Who is making sure that these actions are being taken?
 - This project is focused on measuring the priorities, strategies, actions outlined in state plans, and the enforcement of the actions is beyond the scope of this project.
- We want to take what we learn from metrics and adjust the tool and strategies if things aren't working. The State team anticipates that this type of iterative process will be ongoing after the tool is developed, as the current project is an initial effort to establish tool content.
- Interest in outcomes that impact us at a personal level – micro not just macro
- Designing the tool for more than one user group is important
- Landslides are a big issue in this neighborhood
- It would be beneficial to understand the more holistic impacts of climate actions that also includes the adverse impacts from “good” climate actions.
 - Example: An expanded sidewalk to allow for additional modes of non-car transportation led to unsafe conditions around the sidewalk due to how the project was implemented. *How* projects are implemented can shape whether the actions taken end up being positive (i.e., not all actions taken are a positive step forward).
- Is data from tool going to be available to the public?

- Yes, the tool will be using publicly available data and, therefore, data will be accessible to the public (e.g., via download, accessing source data through website links)
- Organizations can use the data however they choose

Breakout Group Discussion

Online Breakout Group

1. Did the climate priorities we described match those that you have for yourself and your community?
 - A. If not: What are your climate priorities?
 - Most seemed aimed at government agencies
 - What do you do for a building that is already built?
 - Brenda in chat: “Yes resonates well”
 - When we talk about affordable housing and electricity, are we including solar panels and installation of solar panels?
 - Is it possible to add affordability of at-home solar?
 - We should track whether solar panels are included on new buildings and their impact
 - Brenda in chat: track improving heat conditions in housing during winter
 - Want to know industry/manufacturing carbon footprint, especially of factories near me
 - Add number of hydrogen vehicles on the road in addition to number of EVs
 - What about impact of delivery trucks? (i.e. all the packages we order online)
 - Does this tool look at road safety?
2. Are you likely to use the type of information presented in the tool? Why or why not?
 - Johnson in chat: yes
 - Jeferson says he would not use the tool, thinks it’s more geared towards public sector and companies.
 - Data is hard to explain, seems too complicated for him, but thinks government agencies would definitely use it
 - Chuck in chat: yes because of I would save something on my income. On electricity bills I mean.
 - Wants to look at tool to see whether he can save money on electricity bills
 - Martin in chat: yes
 - How will you know once it’s available?
 - Mark will share with RJA broader community
 - Will be available on CAO website

In Person Breakout Group

1. Did the climate priorities we described match those that you have for yourself and your community?

- A. If not: What are your climate priorities?
- **Transportation:**
 - It would be helpful to see/understand how climate actions are experienced by and impact different populations. For example, weather and seasonality may shape the mode of transportation used by non-car owners.
 - It would be interesting to see some type of projection information (such as from a survey) that shows how many people would take X action should it be a viable possibility for the public. One topic area where this might be highly relevant is for transportation.
 - **Infrastructure:** Many climate actions don't consider the Earth's/environment's memory
 - Example: water will go around newly built or revamped infrastructure. How will we account for this?
 - **Recovery and Response:** Need to consider how things are done, not just the timeline for recovery. Continuing to "fix" things in the same way that continually leads to repeated problems isn't helpful.
 - **Electricity:** some measure or understanding of equity between electric companies could be helpful, as each company is not comparable to the next in terms of its services (consistency, number of incidents, recovery time from outages).