

# Vermont Climate Council 2025 Update to Vermont's Climate Action Plan

**Municipal Input Session**



# Vermont Climate Action Plan

Dennis Curran

- **2020** Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)
- **July 1, 2025** Climate Action Plan Update due; updated every 4 years
- Plan is a roadmap for how to achieve objectives set by GWSA
- **The Update focuses on:**
  - **Cutting Climate Pollution (aka. emissions reductions)**
  - **Adaptation & Resilience in Built and Natural Environment**
  - **Natural and Working Lands Solutions**
  - **Public Health and Housing**

# Vermont Climate Action Plan Update

## Vermont Climate Council & Subcommittees

### Spring and Summer 2024

Council orients update and subcommittees begin work

### Fall 2024

Task Groups draft updates to Pathways, Strategies, and Actions.

Subcommittees submit recommendations to Council in **December**

### Winter 2025

Council compiles a draft updated plan

### Spring 2025

Council revises and finalizes plan based on public input.

Plan delivered by July 1, 2025

## Engagement and Outreach



Public kick-off meetings



Eight input sessions:



We are here!



Public consultation on draft plan

### Community engagement throughout!

Meeting Vermonters where they are; partnering with community-based orgs; focus groups, etc.



# Drafting Subcommittees

**Agriculture & Ecosystems**

**Cross Sector Mitigation**

**Rural Resilience & Adaptation**



# Examples of Municipal-scaled Recommendations

# Agriculture and Ecosystems

**Pathway:** Maintain and expand Vermont's natural and working lands' role in the mitigation of climate change through human interventions to reduce the sources and enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.

- **Strategy:** Increase tree coverage.
  - **Action:** Increase support, funding, and education for increased urban tree planting efforts expansion to increase access to natural spaces and improve carbon sequestration and storage in the urban environment

**Pathway:** Sustain, restore, and enhance the health and function of Vermont's lands and water to help both natural and human communities adapt to climate change

- **Strategy:** Increase technical assistance, capacity, education, and resources to support private and municipal farm and forestland owners, planners, and managers for climate change adaptation.
  - **Action:** Enhance and support funding for technical assistance to farmers (e.g. fully fund UVM Extension to support climate adaptation training for agriculture and support other institutions of higher education in this endeavor), landowners (e.g. fund climate adaptation training through FPR's Forests & Climate program), and municipalities (e.g. fully implement Act 171).

# Cross Sector Mitigation

**Pathway:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with buildings and facilities through cost-effective and affordable weatherization and energy efficiency improvements, as well as through use and enforcement of energy and electrical standards and codes.

- **Strategy 1:** Ramp up implementation of the multi-year Weatherization (WX) at Scale Initiative to meet the scale and pace of residential and commercial weatherization that is used in the Vermont Pathways model necessary to meet 2030 GWSA requirements.
  - **Action:** Through legislation or administrative action, ensure X additional commercial, industrial, municipal, and non-residential buildings are comprehensively weatherized by 2030, and secure the funding needed to achieve the target.
  - **Action:** Through legislation or administration action, secure upfront funding to comprehensively weatherize all municipal buildings and public facilities (including “weatherization ready project needs) with priority for supporting/expanding existing programs (i.e. the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, Municipal Technical Assistance Program, Building Communities, etc.).
- **Strategy 2:** Strengthen state-wide building energy standards and fund related education and code enforcement necessary to meet the 2030 and 2050 GWSA requirements.
  - **Action:** Develop and fund a state-level Energy Code Circuit Rider initiative that provides code and enforcement assistance and training to municipalities to ensure awareness of and compliance with existing and future building energy standards and/or codes.

# Cross Sector Mitigation

## Pathway: Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

- **Strategy:** Increase state, regional and local capacity to plan for VMT reduction and implement sustainable transportation strategies.
  - **Action: Require VTrans to create a State Sustainable Transportation Implementation Plan in collaboration with municipalities.**

## Pathway: Further Reduce GHG from the Electric Sector

- **Strategy:** 100% Carbon-free or Renewable Electricity
  - **Action: Department of Public Service issuing report in January regarding considerations for community renewable access, including for municipalities, schools, affordable housing, and community led projects. CSM will consider potential Actions in light of that report.**



# Rural Resilience & Adaptation

**Pathway:** Increase capacity for climate resilience planning and implementation, and address inequities of under-resourced communities.

- **Strategy:** Provide tools and resources to help communities assess climate vulnerabilities and create climate resilience plans.
  - **Action:** Develop a climate planning toolkit hub for existing tools, resources, and information.
  - **Action:** Develop a Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide to help integrate climate actions into relevant municipal planning that are aligned with State climate goals.
  - **Action:** Expand capacity for the State to train on and support the use of the Municipal Climate Toolkit through development of education materials, expanded technical assistance, and streamlined tools.
  - **Action:** Align the Municipal Planning and Resilience Grant Program with the Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide to provide funding to develop municipal plans that incorporate climate resiliency.
  - **Action:** Establish permanent, dedicated funding for Regional Planning Commissions to cover overhead costs related to their application for and management of hazard mitigation grants.
- **Strategy:** Increase community participation in local governance and support civic engagement and citizen involvement.
  - **Action:** Support development/coordination of community stakeholder networks aimed at planning and implementing locally relevant climate resilient programs.

# Rural Resilience & Adaptation

**Pathway:** Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure statewide.

- **Strategy:** Create a policy, planning and organizational foundation to support effective investments in infrastructure resilience.
  - **Action:** Improve and promote the recently developed vulnerability index methodology and tool for stakeholders to identify priority areas for investment. The index identifies vulnerable communication, energy, transportation, and water infrastructure in addition to socioeconomic and equity factors that affect community resilience. Consider impacts of in-migration.
- **Strategy:** Increase the resilience of critical infrastructure to severe weather and other climate change threats by improving system efficiency, reliability and redundancies.
  - **Action(s):** Developing revised language for actions related to investment in planning and implementation for source protection, pollution reduction, regionalization, and solar and storage
- **Strategy:** Create a policy, planning and organizational foundation to support effective investments in infrastructure resilience.
  - **Action(s):** Developing revised language for actions related to investment in asset management planning, critical infrastructure identification, vulnerability assessments, and sustainable implementation funding

# Rural Resilience & Adaptation

**Pathway:** Ensure that all people have access to safe, accessible, energy efficient, and affordable housing.

- **Strategy:** Update state and local land-use governance, regulations, practices, and investments to eliminate barriers to housing development.
  - **Possible Actions:** Developing models for compact housing, infill, TOD plans, building codes, cost-efficient construction alternatives, MF units in NDAs
- **Strategy:** Increase investments in the preservation and development of both private-market and nonprofit-owned affordable housing.
- **Strategy:** Increase access to fair and affordable housing for Vermonters who are housing instable.

**Pathway:** Address Climate Change impacts on Public Health

- **Strategy:** Identify and communicate risks to public health due to climate change exacerbated hazards.
- **Strategy:** Emphasize the importance of mental health services for communities and individuals impacted.
- **Strategy:** Prepare municipalities to play a more active role in communications and emergency health impacts preparedness.



# Group Discussion

- How can the state support municipalities in advancing climate action?
- What do municipalities need to further address climate action at the town level?
- Where is action of most interest to municipalities: resilience, adaptation, nature-based solutions, or mitigation?
- Capacity has emerged as a key theme; do you agree and where would resources be most helpful to support municipalities?



# **Climate Action Office Projects to Support Municipalities**

- 1. Municipal Vulnerability  
Indicators Tool**
- 2. Municipal Climate Toolkit**
- 3. Municipal Climate Planning  
Framework**

# Next Steps

## Stay involved!

- Sign up for the [Climate Action Office's newsletter](#) (link in chat)
- Attend a subcommittee meeting or another input session: [climatechange.vermont.gov/calendar](https://climatechange.vermont.gov/calendar)
- Share your thoughts!
  - [Climate Action Plan public comment form](#) (link in chat)
  - Leave a voice message at 802-404-2729