

# 2025 Building Equity into the Climate Action Plan and Ensuring a Just Transition

## Chapter Outline

### Opening context – Aleksandra Cirovic

- What do we mean when we say ‘equity’? Simpler, plain language definition of ‘equity’ (explain difference between equality and equity)
- Get more specific about who ‘frontline and impacted’ communities in Vermont specifically are – simpler, plain language definition.
- Why this work is important – **Claire (& Sam? As relevant to callout boxes) to support**
  - Data to show impact on BIPOC and socioeconomic communities throughout the plan
  - Housing needs assessment and other data points showing inequities impacting frontline communities
  - Quotes from the public (source from CAO Community Engagement report)

### 1. Where we were – Claire McIlvennie

- Initial 2021 CAP was focused on developing the [Guiding Principles for a Just Transition](#) and accompanying assessment tool
- Worked on how to engage the public while Guiding Principles were being developed

### 2. Reflect on 2021 CAP process – Carey Hengstenberg

- Use of tool & timing: Didn’t have time to have Guiding Principles guide strategies in the initial 2021 CAP
  - Tool was under development as recommendations were being developed
- Public engagement capacity: Didn’t have the capacity (time, staff) to effectively reach communities during 2021 CAP development

### 3. Where we are now & what happened differently this time – Sophi Veltrop

- Improvements in timing, process, and communication
- Updated Guiding Principles of a Just Transition tools, liaisons to other subcommittees, better aligned timing
  - Development of the [Guiding Principles of a Just Transition visual](#), not just the long narrative Guiding Principles

- Better capacity for engagement via Climate Action Office staff member and Consensus Building Institute contract. Community engagement input is timely – is occurring at key moments.
- Have a better understanding of the results of community engagement via quarterly reports
- Consult with other subcommittees about how they have centered equity and what they have done (acknowledging we can't/shouldn't write this alone)
  - *How have other subcommittees utilized the community engagement reports?*
- The draft of the revised CAP will be circulated to the public for feedback and reaction in the spring (in-person events around the state plus opportunities for feedback via email, online comment form, or phone)

**4. Challenges/stumbling blocks** (work still needed to improve during implementation of this CAP and for the next CAP update) – **Callie Fishburn**

- Inadequate time and capacity to socialize the Guiding Principles of a Just Transition and other tools to center equity with other subcommittees as they are updating/prioritizing recommendations and strategies
- Just Transitions Subcommittee brought on and trained new members and needed to ground them in knowledge and purpose at same time as the drafting subcommittees were working on revisions
  - Not sure that essential relationship building happened between Just Transitions and drafting subcommittees
- Inconsistent Just Transitions liaison engagement – each liaison may not have had capacity to engage with drafting subcommittees at the proper time
- Procedural recommendations
  - Per diem: needs to increase, acknowledging this is a pervasive issue beyond the climate council
  - Time commitment: How do we address the capacity issue / building capacity and knowledge to do this work?
- Comfort, knowledge, and understanding of how to incorporate equity into the CAP process
  - Often the recommendation in the plan very big and broad – it could be implemented either equitably or inequitably, depending on decisions made on a more detailed level by implementors. Conversations about equity can still happen at the Climate Action Plan level and be incorporated into the

plan, but it is important to give recommendations of how to center equity in the *implementation* of the Plan.

### Just Transition Call-Out Boxes

Weave equity throughout the Plan, not just in this chapter, by using visual call-out boxes. The liaisons will help the drafting subcommittees to share out how they have woven the principles of a just transition into their work, and this content can be incorporated into each of their chapters.

#### Examples for call-out boxes – Sam Lash

- Removing barriers to program participation
- Geographic & demographic data on program participation
- Low-income barriers to solar
- Rural electric reliability and access to electrification
- Land use impacts
- Weatherization & fuel switching in manufactured/modular homes and for low- and mid-low-income Vermonters
- Disproportionate impacts/burdens of climate disasters and impact on capital planning and climate action
- Planning for climate change & aging
- Emergency preparedness that is accessible (considers language barriers, disabilities) as climate change increases the frequency and severity of storms

### Other

- Just Transitions Subcommittee would like to visually highlight actions in the Plan that have particular importance for equity
- Would be great to have a gratitude section at the beginning of the plan, acknowledging the work of so many volunteer subcommittee members and Councilors plus everyone who came to an event or talked to us about the Climate Action Plan, trusting us with their feedback and stories.
- **Matthew LeFluer and Mona Tolba – review for plain language**