Vermont's Measuring and Assessing Climate Action Tool Public Meetings

January 30, 2025

Discussion Notes and Poll Results

This document captures the notes and meeting poll results for each of public meetings for the Measuring and Assessing Climate Action project.

January 30, 2025, 11:00 AM

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Discussion Notes:

- One participant noted the original intent of tool was for it to be used for decision making. Notes it is valuable to learn from progress in past. Disappointed that a primary use case of tool is not decision making, and that our timeline won't allow decision makers to use this tool for development of new CAP. Notes it is not valuable to have a tool that just shows the actions we took. It's critical to link actions to impact. Notes he is a member of Science and Data Committee; he wishes they had this tool available prior to CAP update.
  - ERG acknowledges concerns, notes information in the tool should be able to be used for decision making in the future, and that decision making is still a priority even if it's not top on the list. Hopefully tool can show which actions are driving results.
- One participant would like to see more emphasis on the natural ways to reduce carbon emissions/increase sequestration (advocates for wetlands and floodplain restoration projects). Notes that UVM is a good data source for wetland/floodplain restoration data. She works at Central VT Planning Commission and would like data to be accessible to RPCs so that they can be in sync with the climate action done at state level. Currently limited to working with 5-year-old data for regional plan updates. Emphasizes that it's important that this is usable to town planning and regional planning commissions so they can add climate action to their report and plans.
  - ERG explains that priorities were presented at a high level; metrics should dive deeper into wetland and floodplain management. ERG notes that the aim is to use municipal level data where possible, and that will discussions on data will occur with RPCs soon.
- ERG answers question from Q&A regarding accessibility of tool and use of plain language.
  - ERG notes complex language and jargon will be simplified as much as possible to make tool more accessible
- A participant noted in the chat: Our town energy committees are going to love the tool. Once the tool is complete, there should be trainings for RPC Energy Planners. We will get questions from energy committees on the data.
- A participant noted in the chat: Shouldn't we be allowing for increased household expenditures on electricity, as we transition to electric heat and cars? To be explicit: household cost burden from electricity may go up as burden from fossil fuels goes down. This is a feature, not a bug.
- A participant asked in the chat: What is used to "treat" trees for wildfire resistance?

- Participants noted that disaster relief funding data could and should be sourced from more than just FEMA. Examples of other sources include Federal Highway Administration and Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

Poll Results:

Do the priorities that we described match the priorities for you and your community's climate priorities? If not, please list any that you might have.

- Main priorities for our community are tracking progress and decision-making.
- The list of priorities is so large and goes beyond what I thought to be the initial intent of the tool that I believe that the project will lose focus and applicability
- I hope you will look for opportunities to use data that can be localized to the regional planning commission or county level, to support local planning and evaluation.

Are there any climate-related resources or tools you have used that you have found helpful?

- Yes, ICLEI Clearpath for GHG emissions. And VT EAN Dashboards. https://eanvt.org/dashboards/ The Public Service Department LEAP data. And UVM's Transportation Research Center Transportation Sustainability Tracking Tool: https://ccrpctranspstats.uvm.edu/
- Not a tool per se, but would like to encourage that the MAP tool allow for CSV downloads of the different data used and be very clear about what data periods it covers and how often it can be updated.
- https://floodready.vermont.gov/news/online-water-resource-seminars-water-connects-2024
- UVM Rural Development Center
- There is some great town level data here: https://eanvt.org/vermont-energy-dashboard/
- https://eanvt.org/emissions-dashboard/

On a scale from one to 5, how likely are you to use the type of information presented in the tool? One is extremely unlikely, and 5 is extremely likely.

- 2 people said extremely likely (5)
- 3 people said likely (4)
- 2 people said neutral (3)

January 30, 2025, 5:30 PM

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Notes:

- No verbal comments or Q&A questions

Poll Results:

Do the priorities that we described match the priorities for you and your community's climate priorities? If not, please list any that you might have.

- I have trouble separating climate from environmental health. Would like to see pesticide data included and reduction of chemicals used in Vermont.

- Also related to environmental health, the chemicals used in water disinfection and as climate changes, the challenges may result in more chemical usage. Be good to track those numbers.

- Related, PFAS used in so many products, including solar panels, so tracking locations and specifications of what's in the products being put in the environment would be good to track.

Are there any climate related resources or tools you have used that you have found helpful?

- Vermont has some really great mapping tools. After the floods that hit Barre, Montpelier, Ludlow, a map-savvy person produced maps showing elevations, properties, and provided a way to understand.

- Maps that show the flood hazard areas in downtowns would be a valuable resource for planners.

On a scale from one to 5, how likely are you to use the type of information presented in the tool? One is extremely unlikely, and 5 is extremely likely.

- 1 person said extremely likely (5)
- 1 person said likely (4)