VT Transportation Greenhouse Gas Policy Analysis
Outreach and Engagement Plan
September 20, 2024

Study Understanding

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and Agency of Transportation (AOT) are studying cap-and-invest as a strategy that could support meeting the State's requirements for cutting climate pollution. A cap-and-invest program would place a declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions and reinvest the proceeds in energy efficiency and clean energy. The State must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The transportation sector is responsible for achieving 40 percent of those required reductions. This work includes outreach to the public and a series of focus groups with representatives of business, freight, rail, environmental, and equity interests.

The Outreach and Engagement Plan is a living document that will be amended as needed as the study progresses.

Purpose of Outreach and Engagement

Effective engagement is critical for stakeholders, including the public, to understand Vermont's transportation climate pollution reduction requirements, how cap-and-invest programs work, and inform understanding of the benefits and impacts such a program could have on Vermonters. This policy analysis will be conducted alongside broader statewide engagement efforts, as the State seeks input across various platforms, individuals, and groups. The intent is to find the most effective way to reduce climate pollution from the transportation sector. There are five main benefits:

1. *Educate*: Provide information in an easy-to-understand and readily accessible format. This creates a baseline and general understanding of the effort, including why it is being conducted, what are the expected outcomes, the timeline, and how to get involved.

2. *Involve*: Provide opportunities for stakeholders to inform the goal-setting process and the discussion around the benefits and tradeoffs of various policy options.

3. *Document*: This study could significantly influence the State of Vermont's approach to climate solutions. Records of stakeholder interactions, focus group discussions, and public meetings will be compiled to ensure transparency and track metrics. Additionally, comprehensive summaries and reports will capture and reflect feedback received.

4. *Foster goodwill*: Build and maintain trust by positioning the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and Agency of Transportation as a leading national force in decarbonization efforts. Emphasize the State's commitment to improving policies that provide economic, environmental, and health benefits for Vermonters across all ages and income brackets.

5. *Build Relationships:* Engage individuals and communities who have an interest in participating in state-led climate initiatives to build and strengthen relationships between the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Vermonters. These strengthened partnerships will collaboratively pursue and deliver climate solutions for all Vermonters.

Outreach and Engagement Team

Our approach ensures active team participation in outreach and engagement, with specialists from relevant disciplines leading discussions (see Table 1). By coordinating with the Climate Action Office, we will avoid role overlap, maintain consistent messaging, and find efficiencies.

Table 1 Outreach and Engagement Team

Team Member	Affiliation	Role
Jane Lazorchak	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	Director of Climate Action Office
Brian Woods	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	Environmental Analyst
Sophi Veltrop	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)	Community Engagement & Communications Coordinator
Andrea Wright	Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT)	Environmental Policy Manager
Patrick Murphy	Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT)	Sustainability and Innovations Project Manager
Chris Porter	Study Team (Cambridge Systematics)	Project Manager (Consultant)
Ben Eskin	Study Team (Cambridge Systematics)	Deputy Project Manager (Consultant)
Toni Marie Pignatelli	Study Team (FHI Studio)	Engagement Lead (Consultant)
James Redeker	Study Team (FHI Studio)	Senior Advisor (Consultant)
Hannah Brockhaus	Study Team (FHI Studio)	Planner (Consultant)
Leah Beckett	Study Team (FHI Studio)	Visual Communicator (Consultant)

Outreach and Engagement Approach and Methods

Our approach to stakeholder engagement and public participation for the Vermont Transportation Greenhouse Gas Policy Analysis will be open, inclusive, and interactive. We will provide multiple opportunities for engagement across platforms for input throughout the process. By employing diverse tools and techniques, we aim to reach a broad range of stakeholders, including members of the public. Feedback will inform the analysis and be integrated into deliverables.

We will use outreach both as an engagement tool and a data collection method, allowing us to identify key issues, priorities, and opportunities. To effectively engage representatives of business, freight, rail, environmental, and equity interests, the study team will rely on successful strategies deployed by the Vermont Climate Action Office and review strategies used in other states.

The outreach effort will feature:

- Ten (10) focus group meetings with representatives of business, freight, rail, environmental, and equity interests.

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    - Phase 1: Gather initial input on issues

    - Phase 2: Review findings; Gather input on draft recommendations

- Two (2) statewide public information meetings

    - Meeting 1: Introduce the study; Provide foundational information on cap-and-invest strategies; Publicize opportunities to provide input

    - Meeting 2: Review findings; Gather input on draft recommendations

- Development and maintenance of website content

- Press releases and social media posts

- Written status report that will be provided to the Vermont General Assembly

These activities will document the study methodology, engage stakeholders in evaluating policy alternatives, and contribute to developing policy recommendations.

Focus Group Meetings

The consultant team will schedule up to ten (10), virtual focus groups with representatives of business, freight, rail, environmental, and equity interests. The first round of focus groups will focus on gathering initial input on issues. The second round of focus groups will focus on reviewing findings and gathering input on draft recommendations.

The consultant team will produce a memo that details the list of focus group invitees, protocol for conducting focus groups, discussion guide, and summary of findings.

A draft agenda for the first round of focus groups is as follows:

- Welcome and introductions

- Study objectives

    o Need for additional actions to support Vermont's GHG reduction requirements, Climate Action Plan,

    o Outcome: develop policy options and recommendations with supporting analysis for 2025 legislative session

- Outline of potential policy & program options

- Discussion of potential policy & program options

    o Opportunities

    o Concerns

    o Considerations

- Final comments and next steps

A draft agenda for the second round of focus groups is as follows:

- Welcome and introductions

- Recap of study objectives

- Summary of findings and recommendations

    o Recommended policy approaches

    o Assessment of benefits and impacts to Vermonters

- Discussion

- Final comments and next steps

Public Information Meetings

In addition to focus group meetings with stakeholders, the public will be invited to learn about the Vermont Transportation Greenhouse Gas Policy Analysis through four virtual statewide public meetings. ANR, AOT, and the consultant will publicize the meeting on agency websites, announce the meetings with email blasts to agency email lists, and broadcast information using social and print media. Meetings will be held virtually using Zoom.

A draft agenda for the first public meeting is as follows:

- Welcome & Purpose
- Background
- Cap-and-Invest Program
  - What is it?
  - How can it help Vermont meet its climate goals?
- Study Objectives
- Get involved!
- Next Steps

The second public meeting will present study findings and recommendations, with simplified versions of the material compared to the focus group meetings. The approach to inviting input from participants will be crafted using methods appropriate for a public discussion at a virtual meeting.

Study Website

The consultant team will create content that will be posted to the Vermont Climate Action Office website: www.climatechange.vermont.gov/cap-and-invest-study. The study team will explore the possibility of creating a link on the website that will allow visitors to sign up to receive email updates from the study team. Example information that the website could include:

► Study Overview
► What's New (latest study announcements)
► Study Contact
► Public Participation (ex.: Public Meetings Dates and Locations)
► Study Timeline
► Study Status
► Study Documents

Meeting announcements and materials, study updates, and documents and graphics, including task deliverables, will be regularly posted to the study website. All posted files will be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Study Communications

The consultant team will produce public engagement materials including press releases and social media posts that will be distributed through existing ANR and AOT channels. The announcements will be posted on the study webpage and ANR and AOT social media accounts (Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn) up to 6 times per month.

The consultant team will develop a social media plan that will include a calendar schedule for posts, collateral materials, graphics and messages for ANR and AOT. Execution of the social media plan will be completed in coordination with Stephanie Brackin, Communications Director (ANR), and Amy Tatko, Director of Communications and Public Outreach (AOT), who will approve and post through approved channels.

Outreach and Engagement Schedule

Figure 1 Outreach and Engagement Schedule

Task	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Task I: Study Initiation & Work Plan		■	■							
Task II: Scenario Analysis		■	■	■	■	■				
Task III: Stakeholder and Public Engagement		■	★	★	★ ● ▲	✚	★	★ ● ▲		
Task IV: Recommended Policy Approach						■	■	■	■	■

★ Technical Advisory Council (TAC) Meetings

● Focus Group (Phase 1 & Phase 2)

▲ Public Meetings (Meeting 1 & Meeting 2)

✚ General Assembly Update

Outreach and Engagement Dates & Locations

Dates and locations for outreach activities in Table 4 will be confirmed by the study team as they are identified.

Table 4 Outreach and Engagement Dates and Locations

Activity	Date(s)	Location
TAC Meetings	2024: August, September, October 2025: December, January	Virtual
Public Meeting #1	October 3, 2024 *12:00-1:00 p.m.* *6:00-7:00 p.m.*	Virtual
Focus Group – Phase 1	November 2024	Virtual
General Assembly Update	November 15, 2024	Montpelier
Focus Group – Phase 2	Early January 2025	Virtual
Public Meeting #2	Early January 2025	Virtual