



Vermont Climate Council

**Building the Climate Action Plan
Initial Suite of Actions
Rural Resilience and Adaptation**

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Rural Resilience and Adaptation Message

- A climate resilient society is essential to the health, vitality, well-being, and future of Vermont.
- We must live with the changes set in motion now for many years, the changes set into motion how we will live
- Return on investment is both tangible and intangible, but does not diminish importance
- Adaptation must occur now and must accelerate. Storms and weather patterns are amplified and exacerbated by climate change now, not years in the future.

Process to Date

1. Finalized Pathway and associated Strategy Language
2. Developed 2025, 2030, 2050 Goals
3. Action formulation and consolidation at pathway task group level
4. Rural Communities Stakeholder Engagement Event



Rural Resilience and Adaptation Pathways

1. Increase local, regional, including community and civic networks (local volunteer efforts, non-government organizations, faith-based groups, etc.), and state agency capacity, for resilience planning and implementation, and address inequities of under-resourced communities.
2. Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure statewide.
3. Support the reduction of municipal, school district, residential, university, and hospital fossil fuel use in rural areas through equitable best practices that address the unique challenges of rural communities.
4. Change Vermont's land-use policies so current and future land development will be adaptive and resilient to climate change impacts by promoting compact development, enhancing the capacity of natural and working lands, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Ensure that all people have access to safe, accessible, energy efficient, and affordable housing in location-efficient, compact, and mixed-use neighborhood areas with diverse housing types and equitable access to jobs, services, schools, recreation and diverse transportation options.

PATHWAY 1- Increase local, regional, including community and civic networks (local volunteer efforts, non-government organizations, faith-based groups, etc.), and state agency capacity, for resilience planning and implementation, and address inequities of under-resourced communities.

1. Establish permanent statewide support for local and regional resilience, adaptation, preparedness, response, and recovery actions necessary to enhance overall rural resilience to hazards exacerbated by climate change.
2. Provide tools and resources to help communities assess climate vulnerabilities, and identify changes and investments needed to break the cycle of repetitive loss, speed post disaster economic recovery and reduce the long-term financial burden of disasters on impacted communities, businesses, and individuals
3. Expand cross-sector collaboration that includes nonprofit, public, and business and industry involved in preparedness and resilience work to align efforts, share best practices, and leverage resources to advance equitable resilience and preparedness efforts statewide.
4. Support workforce development in trades and skills that are needed to implement climate resilience and emissions reduction actions including training on resilient design and construction techniques

PATHWAY 2
Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure statewide.

- A. Create a policy, planning and organizational foundation to support effective investments in infrastructure resilience.
- B. Public, private, and nonprofit entities should be prepared to respond and recover quickly to disruptions caused by severe weather and other climate change threats.
- C. Increase the resilience of critical infrastructure to severe weather and other climate change threats by reducing vulnerabilities of specific facilities.
- D. Increase the resilience of critical infrastructure to severe weather and other climate change threats by improving system efficiency, reliability and redundancies.

PATHWAY 3

Support the reduction of municipal, school district, residential, university, and hospital fossil fuel use in rural areas through equitable best practices that address the unique challenges of rural communities.

- A. Provide tools and resources to help assess data needs and establish best practices for rural communities, businesses, and institutions to reduce fossil fuel use.
- B. Equitably expand access to programs that provide options to rural homeowners, landlords, municipalities, school districts, universities, and hospitals for weatherization and utility upgrades.

PATHWAY 4
Change Vermont's land-use policies so current and future land development will be adaptive and resilient to climate change impacts by promoting compact development, enhancing the capacity of natural and working lands, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- A. Support Forest Compact Pattern to reinforce compact settlements and strategically protect infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.
- B. Increase investment in the infrastructure (sewer, water, stormwater, sidewalks, bike lanes, EV charging, broadband, energy supply) needed to support compact, walkable development that is more resilient to climate disruptions, equitable, resource efficient, and protects the adaptive capacity of natural resources
- C. Update state and local land-use governance, regulations, practices, and investments to; (eliminate barriers to development in compact, walkable development; protect river corridors, floodplains, and wetlands by limiting development in hazard areas and reducing the fragmentation of intact forest blocks, working forests, and habitat connectivity areas; incorporate adaptation and resilience to foreseeable climate change impacts, including resilient design and construction standards.)
- D. Improve predictability, timeliness, and efficacy of state and municipal permitting by coordinating across agencies, departments, municipalities, boards, commissions and authorities to evaluate climate change impacts when considering and issuing permits, licenses, and other administrative approvals and decisions
- E. Develop permanent private and public funding sources to flood-proof, elevate and purchase commercial and residential properties, as well as conserve and restore ecosystem services upstream to protect our people, property, environment, and economy from flooding.
- F. Fund research, data collection and digital maps to provide insights on development in Vermont and the impact it can have on climate and resilience goals and outcomes.

PATHWAY 5

Ensure that all people have access to safe, accessible, energy efficient, and affordable housing in location-efficient, compact, and mixed-use neighborhood areas with diverse housing types and equitable access to jobs, services, schools, recreation and diverse transportation options.

- A. Update state and local land-use governance, regulations, practices, and investments to eliminate barriers to housing development that creates compact, walkable centers
- B. Increase investments in the preservation and development of both private-market and nonprofit-owned affordable housing
- C. Improve existing rental housing.
- D. Increase access to fair and affordable housing for Vermonters who are housing unstable.
- E. Fund research, data collection and digital maps to provide insights on housing development in Vermont and the impact it can have on climate and resilience goals and outcomes