

Rural Resilience & Adaptation Subcommittee

Equity Review/Rubric Scoring Instruction

MINUTES

OCTOBER 22, 2021 1:00PM – 3:25PM

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING/CONFERENCE CALL

DISCUSSION

The Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee worked with Kiah Morris to apply the Just Transition Guiding Principles/Scoring Rubric on selected high priority actions.

OVERVIEW

Kiah Morris and the Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee (RR&A) Members worked together in evaluating the '*Storage and Grid Management*' and '*Weatherization Navigators*' and '*Mixed Use Development*' pathway actions.

- Discussed and completed the self-assessment questions developed by the Just Transitions Subcommittee to help put the Guiding Principles into practice.
 - Just Transitions Guiding Principles set the framework to better ensure that the recommendations set forth are not just comprehensive but inclusive.
 - The exercise aims to better identify, understand, and address the social impacts, types of impacted populations, and engagement process of individual policy recommendations to ensure a Just Transition for Vermont.

STORAGE AND GRID MANAGEMENT

Deploy foundational technology statewide to enable and optimize storage and other grid management technologies (e.g., GridLogic, Virtual Peaker, DERMS).

- Focusing on a hat modern grid looks like and one that can operate all technology needs, as well as be efficient, one intended to be resilient and less pollution. Green Mountain Power (GMP) currently has some of these systems in place. Looking to adopt these systems statewide.

ADDRESSED IMPACTED AND FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

- Discussed which frontline and impacted communities might be most impacted by this recommendation:
 - ♦ Those living outside of GMP service territory would potentially benefit.
 - Northern Vermont.
 - Low-income Vermonters
 - "Electrically" Rural communities, communities far from the substation facility would benefit from setting up a micro-grid.
 - Smaller service communities that are under resourced and struggle with emulating the sophisticated systems like GMP offers.
 - Smaller municipalities: Barton, Enosburg, Hardwick, Hyde Park, Jacksonville, Johnson, Ludlow, Lyndonville, Morrisville, Northfield, Orleans, Stowe, Swanton. We also have Burlington Electric, Washington Electric, and Vermont Electric Coop
 - Communities that once relied on hydro with portfolios that aren't prepared or behind due to low resources.
 - ♦ Rental customers who are rate payers who don't receive direct benefits from the program as property owners might not directly benefit; however, the idea of any cost savings from implementing this system, would be distributed systemwide for all consumers.
 - ♦ Low-income Vermonters may encounter challenges, specifically the means and availability to purchase all the entities for the new proposal/system.
 - ♦ Rate payers as a whole.
 - ♦ Various Ecosystems currently impacted and/or impacted in the future.
 - ♦ Residents who may not trust government or are not willing to engage new technologies.
 - ♦ Taking into consideration of any workers affected.
- Examined the specified communities currently experience inequity around this issue.

- ♦ Those who live in GMP service areas have more access to programs and the necessary support, however those that live outside of the GMP service are that currently don't have the same access and support systems in place may struggle with implementation and adoption.
- ♦ Customers aren't currently able to participate due a variety of barriers
- ♦ Current location of services and education are not statewide
- ♦ Individuals are concerned about security and "invasion of privacy" with using smart technology – better ensure the definition of equity from the public view versus the definition we may be use.
- ♦ Language access and barriers; those who need plain language.
- ♦ How to distribute information to all communities – one suggestion was to implement navigators.

ANALYZED THE BURDENS AND BENEFITS = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

ENSURING EQUITABLE AND JUST ENGAGEMENT = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

FUNDING AND DATA = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

The RR&A Subcommittee Members were encouraged to complete the remaining self-assessment questions for the *Storage and Grid Management*. The responses from the self-assessment questions can then be used as a guide for completing the *Scoring Rubric*, which will help refine and identify area(s) of strength and challenges.

WEATHERIZATION NAVIGATORS

Develop a program to establish Weatherization Navigators at each Regional Planning Commission to help individuals, municipalities, and businesses through the process of weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades. Weatherization Navigators would help direct people to financial resources and programs to ensure understanding of financial investment and the process for weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades are clear.

ADDRESSED IMPACTED AND FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES = *there are remaining self-assessment questions that need to be completed.*

- Discussed which frontline and impacted communities might be most impacted by this recommendation:
 - ♦ Low to moderate income homeowners may not be captured by income thresholds.
 - ♦ Renters pay without controlling the weatherization.
 - ♦ Elderly/ Older Individuals because many live-in older home stocks.
 - ♦ Those without broadband may not receiving outreach.
 - ♦ Inequities amongst municipalities who may have less resources - (*Look at the cost burden study from VEIC*).
 - ♦ Rural areas where the heat source is not utility-based so the rebates might not be accessible, (ex: propane).
 - ♦ Small Businesses versus Big Business and would this include tenants... (*those triple net leases*).
 - ♦ Community affected by heat (85 degrees up) or other temperature extremes.
 - ♦ Labor sector affected by extreme heat and cold.
 - ♦ Weather dependent jobs.

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- Discussed how frontline and impacted communities have been a part of creating and implementing this recommendation, and how they will be a part in the future.
 - ♦ Public comment during committee deliberations.
 - ♦ Energy committees are focusing on community outreach
 - Recommend that the energy committees or other community partners support targeted outreach. By providing the navigator role, this can assist folks with getting the assistance they need and in essence create a 'one stop shop'.
 - ♦ Department of Health partnered with planning commissions to look at those suffering from heat exposure as well.
 - How can we use those lessons and feedback to better identify needs and engagement?

FUNDING AND DATA = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES = *self-assessment question section needs to be completed.*

The RR&A Subcommittee Members were encouraged to complete the remaining self-assessment questions for the *Weatherization Navigators*. The responses from the self-assessment questions can then be used as a guide for completing the *Scoring Rubric*, which will help refine and identify area(s) of strength and challenges.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Prioritize public funding for mixed-use developments near transit hubs in regional and rural centers.

- Transportation is a big polluter and a big cost, especially concerning daily commutes. Folks living in less expensive areas also tend to bear the burden of a longer daily commute, thus a big cost, as a significant portion of their budget is allocated towards transportation costs.

ADDRESSED IMPACTED AND FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES = *there are remaining self-assessment questions that need to be completed.*

- Discussed which frontline and impacted communities might be most impacted by this recommendation:
 - ♦ Rural communities: outlier rural communities that have long drives to get to services, (*Look at ACCD reports on town centers to identify areas of need*)
 - ♦ Those who cannot afford to live in centers and must live in more remote regions
 - ♦ Those who chose to live in remote areas as an intentional life and may not be open to new development.
 - ♦ BIPOC community
 - ♦ Low-income communities
 - ♦ Communities that have experienced disinvestment with a risk of "gentrification"
 - ♦ Those needing housing
 - ♦ Those needing transit
 - ♦ The goal is to provide amenities, housing choice, reduce transportation time and meet environmental goals, while ensuring folks are not displaced.

ANALYZED THE BURDENS AND BENEFITS = *there are remaining self-assessment questions that need to be completed.*

- Discussed whether this recommendation maintains existing inequities, makes them worse or improves the status quo?
 - ♦ Depends on the impacted community. May improve or change lived experiences differently.
 - ♦ Overall, may improve the status quo.
- Who will benefit from this recommendation and how does this recommendation help benefits be shared or targeted to help frontline and impacted communities the most?
 - ♦ Creating housing that appeals to many populations, (ex: seniors, families, etc.).
 - ♦ Those needing affordable housing, efficient and not built-in flood plains.
 - ♦ Transit users.

- ♦ Having housing options within walking distance to services.
 - ♦ Small businesses.
 - ♦ Construction industry.
 - ♦ Municipalities.
- Which communities will be burdened the most by this recommendation and how can that burden be shifted away from impacted communities?
 - ♦ Neighbors who will need to adjust to the development.
 - Construction may be built with sensitivities for their needs
 - Allowing communities to choose for themselves and encourage funding to go back to communities that are going to be impacted.
 - ♦ Those concerned about individual property rights to develop (zoning).

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Following the discussion of the above self-assessment sections, the members of the committee suggested adding a preface prior to each action concerning equity and resources. It was expressed that resources were not distributed in an equitable manner across all subcommittees, contributing to the pressure and angst felt in getting their specified sections drafted for the CAP.

The RR&A Subcommittee Members were encouraged to complete the remaining self-assessment questions for the *Mixed Use Development*. The responses from the self-assessment questions can then be used as a guide for completing the *Scoring Rubric*, which will help refine and identify area(s) of strength and challenges.

CONCLUSIONS	The RR&A Subcommittee has identified and completed an extreme amount of prep-work regarding their high priority actions for inclusion in the CAP (Climate Action Plan). It is understood that more work is needed, (ex: completing the remaining self-assessment questions and applying answers to the Scoring Rubric, etc.).		
	RR&A Subcommittee Members were encouraged to ask and seek guidance from other committees, colleagues, etc., for any gaps still needing to be addressed, specifically with completing the equity lens process for high priority actions.		
	RR&A Subcommittee Members expressed concern regarding the CAP deadlines enforced by the State of Vermont and the unrealistic timeline allotted to complete all the required tasks, in preparation for the drafting deadline. In general, 'just needing more time' has been a shared sentiment. A lot of productive work has been completed thus far and should not go unrecognized. The knowledge, expertise, and passion that each of the subcommittees contribute is remarkable; therefore, RR&A members where/are encouraged to call out specific areas needing more time to develop out, when drafting their portion of the CAP.		
	RR&A will continue to complete the Scoring Rubric for any remaining high priorities, one-on-one and during the next two upcoming subcommittee meetings.		
ACTION ITEMS		PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Continue to prep and work on tasks for drafting deadline.		All	11/01/2021

RECAP/OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOLLOW-UP	New Meeting Time on Fridays (12:45p-3:45p) for the Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee to complete the required time-sensitive tasks.
SPECIAL NOTES	Next Meeting is scheduled for Friday, 10/29/2021 at 12:45pm (via Zoom)