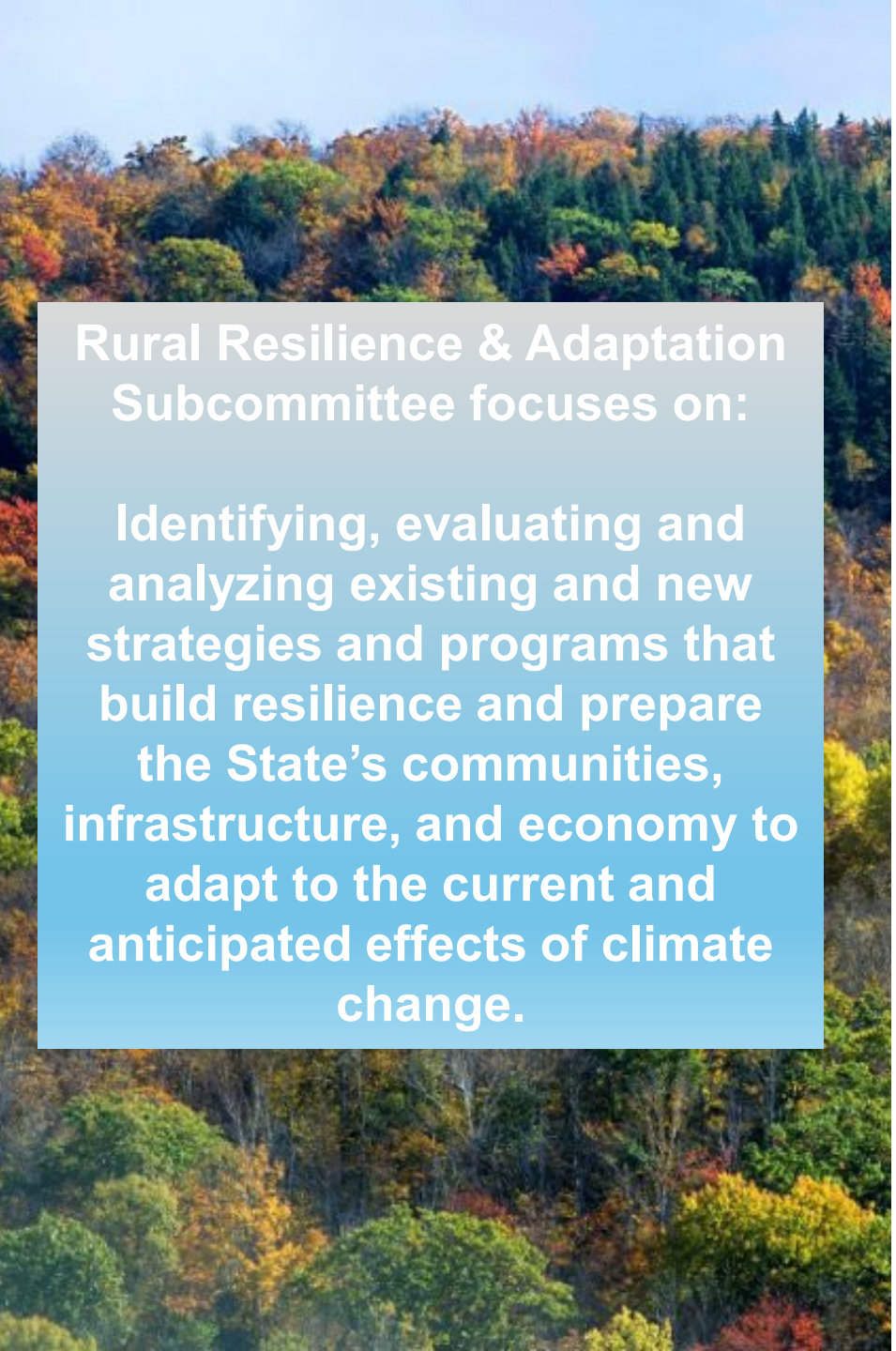
Vermont Climate Council 2025 Update to Vermont's Climate Action Plan

Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee

Priority Recommendations

December 16, 2024



Rural Resilience & Adaptation Subcommittee focuses on:

Identifying, evaluating and analyzing existing and new strategies and programs that build resilience and prepare the State's communities, infrastructure, and economy to adapt to the current and anticipated effects of climate change.

Rural Resilience and Adaptation

Core Focus Areas

Community Capacity and Planning

Infrastructure and the Built Environment

Public Health

Overview of Pathways and Strategies

Pathway 14: Increase capacity for climate resilience planning and implementation, and address inequities of under-resourced communities.

- 3 Strategies under this Pathway
- 12 Actions under this Pathway

Pathway 15: Proactively and strategically invest to enhance resilience in transportation, communications, water/wastewater, and energy infrastructure and prioritize our most vulnerable communities and environmental-justice populations.

- 2 Strategies under this Pathway
- 16 Actions under this Pathway

Pathway 16: 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.

- Cross-Sector Mitigation took lead on addressing this Pathway (view Cross-Sector Mitigation priorities)

Overview of Pathways and Strategies

Pathway 17: Change Vermont's land-use policies so current and future land development will be adaptive and resilient to climate change impacts.

- 2 Strategies under this Pathway
- 0 Actions under this Pathway

Pathway 18: Ensure that all people have access to safe, accessible, energy efficient, and affordable housing.

- 3 Strategies under this Pathway
- 10 actions under this Pathway

Pathway 19: Provide for equitable adaptation to the public health impacts of climate change

- 4 strategies under this pathway
- 12 actions under this pathway

Community Capacity and Planning Priority Actions

Secure sustainable, long-term funding to expand and maintain a permanent Flood Resilient Communities Fund (Community Resilience and Disaster Mitigation Fund) for the design and implementation of local and regional climate change adaptation projects and community resilience. Funding may be used as local match for federally funded hazard mitigation programs as well as non-FEMA eligible hazard mitigation activities.

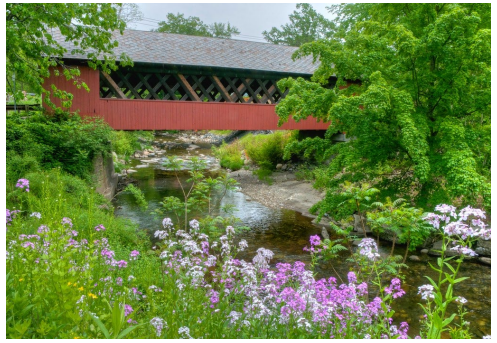
Establish permanent, dedicated funding for Regional Planning Commissions to hire and retain staff for climate resilience planning work, hazard mitigation application development, and management of hazard mitigation grants on behalf of municipalities or other eligible grant recipients as well as cover overhead costs related to completing Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.

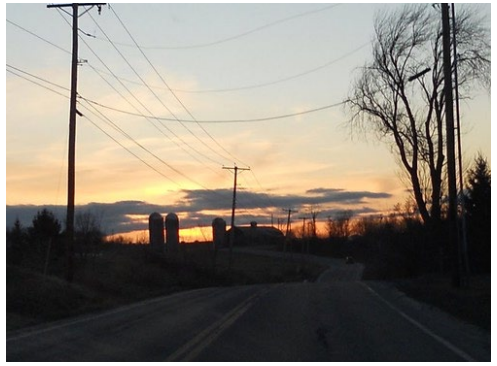
Map areas that are suitable for new, climate safe housing, set regional targets for new housing units created, and increase funding mechanisms where communities are investing in development-ready infrastructure.

Create and facilitate a business support network that connects and engages local economic development and small business support organizations for the purpose of developing and providing coordinated support for business and local economic resilience and disaster response.

Increase State capacity to manage funding programs and provide technical assistance for the development and implementation of climate resilience plans, with a focus on maximizing the efficacy of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans and augmenting existing programs with the Municipal Planning and Resilience Grant Program, the Municipal Climate Planning Framework and Guide, and the Municipal Climate Toolkit.

Infrastructure Priority Actions





Expand upon the Municipal Vulnerability Indicators tool to create a Municipal Vulnerability Index that can be used by state agencies and others as a resource to assist in prioritizing infrastructure resilience investments across the state based on specific vulnerabilities or combinations of vulnerabilities.

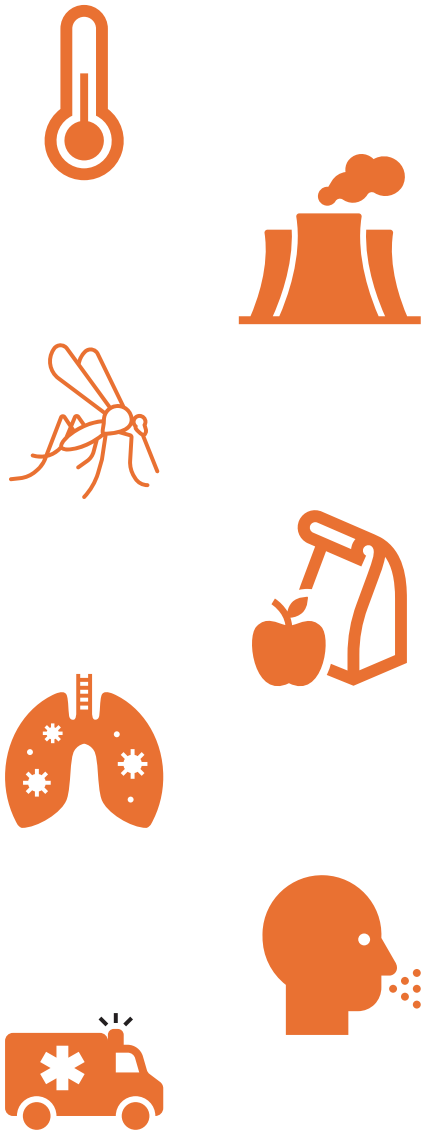
The state, through the Public Utility Commission and Public Service Department, should investigate resilience planning, including defining, valuing, measuring, and setting targets for grid resilience. Utilities should integrate resilience planning into their Integrated Resource Plans based on guidance resulting from this proceeding.

Replace aging electric and communication infrastructure with the most appropriate resilient alternative when cost effective.

In the absence of and/or in addition to dedicated federal funding, create a dedicated transportation flood resilience funding program to proactively address identified transportation risks and vulnerabilities.

Provide a sustainable funding source for addressing drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater infrastructure vulnerabilities identified and prioritized through asset management plan and vulnerability assessments development.

Public Health Priority Actions



- Provide funding for resilience equipment, supplies, and services that help reduce the health impact of climate-related hazards for income-qualifying households needing extra assistance.
- Increase funding for state-contracted community mental health services, to provide funded partners with more capacity to address anxiety, depression, distress, and trauma caused by climate change and climate-related disasters.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to municipalities and local organizations to reduce health impacts of climate change for the disproportionately affected populations they serve, through preparedness, facility adaptation, and support for individuals and households.
- Explore and implement strategies to enhance local emergency preparedness, response, and recovery capacity (e.g., expand funding and authority of RPCs and/or county government; increase direct state funding, training, and technical assistance to municipalities).
- Provide funding and technical assistance to local partners to develop community resilience hubs that can serve as places for learning, collaboration, resource access, and refuge in response to climate-related hazards and other community needs.