

**Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee
of the Vermont Climate Council
11/22/24 Minutes**

Location: Meeting was recorded and posted [online](#) here.
Subcommittee Members present: Andrea Wright, Candace Pearson, Alice Peal, Marian Wolz, Ann Lawless, Val Stori, Eric Forand, Scott McCormick, Bronwyn Cooke, Dahlia Cohn, Danielle Bombardier, Chris Campany,
State Agency Staff Present: Ben Rose, Anne Margolis, Jared Ulmer, Stephanie Smith, Otis Ellms-Munroe
Minutes by: Sue Plant

12:04 PM **Welcome/Agenda Overview/Approval of [October 25, 2024 Minutes](#)**
Minutes approved

12:09 PM **Getting Grounded – VCC Updates and Review of Remaining Tasks and Timeframe**
Reviewed the focus of the Subcommittee. Provided a brief recap of what has been occurring over the past month (task group modification of pathways, strategies, and actions and stakeholder meetings) and reviewed the work ahead (prioritizing actions for our December 6th meeting). Determined we would expand the December 6th meeting to go from 12-3 and will hold it virtual. Noted that it would be helpful to have a draft to consider prior.

12:31 PM **Stakeholder Engagement Review and Discussion**
Reviewed a summary of the input received at the Stakeholder events. Encouraged all members to review the meeting videos and the summaries provided by the CAO. Discussed the input received regarding technical assistance for towns and the importance of getting information to the towns/people that need it as well as the challenges of funding initiatives. Discussion on providing support to stack funding and the need for Selectboards to make some very difficult decisions. Encouraged the incorporation of the input into the recommendations.
From the chat:

Chris Campany: On the second it will soon be out of date with river corridor regulation moving to state effective January 2028.

For RBES and CBES I suggest the action be simplified to refer to the outcome of the report of the Building Energy Code working group that is tasked with, "Recommending strategies and programs to increase awareness of and compliance with the RBES and CBES, including the use of appropriate certifications for contractors trained on energy codes."

Friendly amendment: Commission a study to identify how many Vermonters have been AND LIKELY WILL BE displaced by floods.

12:58 PM **Pathways Overview and Input Discussion**
Each Task Group shared new and revised actions.
Community Capacity and Planning

Several proposed new actions were presented, many of which are meant to address stakeholder input. Three main areas discussed – community resources and support, crossover with Cross Sector Mitigation subcommittee around efficiencies, and housing
Dahlia's research regarding business support and resilience:

https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/Rural_Resilience_Subcommittee/Documents/Business%20Support%20%26%20Resilience%20Research.pdf

Infrastructure and the Built Environment

Task Group: DOT, PSD, VEM, and have been corresponding with DEC.

Has been broken down into two strategies: one around planning and assessments and the other around investment and implementation. Val Stori mentioned the importance of new loan products for Vermonters. Also, the lack of an energy code to improve weatherizing and energy use and the difficulty towns will face meeting these challenges.

Public Health

Public Health is an entirely new Pathway. Five new strategies have been developed. Alice Peal outlined discussion on the role of Public Health, to support equitable adaptation to the public health impacts of climate change. Reviewed the strategies and actions to increase awareness of climate impact on health.

From the chat:

Chris Campany: Compact settlement! Infrastructure investment! Compact, multifamily housing! you get resilience and the settlement pattern to reduce GHGs.

For aging electric infrastructure, can we call out "including increasing amperage service to homes to accommodate conversion to electricity as fuel?"

Anne Margolis, VT PSD: Chris we can consider adding some language about "right sizing," which is what you're referring to.

Chris Campany: Yes - but need this explicit action. So many homes have 100 amp service which precludes conversion, and the cost to upgrade the service and panel can be prohibitive.

Does generating energy through wastewater system hydro exist? I'm thinking about the wave power generation projects on the west coast. Are there generators that could generate power bobbing up and down in the aerated pools?

Anne Margolis, VT PSD: On the plus side, we're about to roll out a whole bunch of pass-through federal funding to do this! It should be covered in CSM, subject to Andrea checking.

Andrea Wright, VTrans: I will say they are somewhat different looking but not different in substance and the shared/posted doc should provide what is needed for you all to provide input to other TGs.

Anne Margolis, VT PSD: That being said, it would be good to discuss this further. The original intent of the action was "utility side" infrastructure, while everything downstream of the service transformer (and sometimes including the service transformer), including upgrading the home to 200 amp service, would entail action on the part of the building owner to right-size. That's where the federal funding will help (and is being bundled with electrification incentives for one-stop shopping).

Otis Ellms-Munroe, VTrans: I think there's an existing resilience hub action that the Community Capacity TG had to look at. I mention it more to make sure we don't have duplicative actions. Could see it in either pathway.

Anne Margolis, VT PSD: It may be worth revisiting the items we prioritized at the beginning of the last legislative session for the [Letter to the Speaker](#).

Chris Company: As a Councilor I am very happy to carry that message.

Anne Margolis, VT PSD: <https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/co/documents/DEC-Mission-Driven-Priorities-1.24.19.pdf>

1:52 PM **Public Comment**
None

1:50 PM **Recap and Next Steps**
All members please look to provide input on [Draft Revised Pathways, Strategies, Actions](#) presented at Fridays meeting. Please provide this by e-mailing Task Group leads and try to do so before Thanksgiving break (or by Monday December 2nd).

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Task Group work: Finalize and prioritize Task Group Recommendations

- Look to apply the [rubric](#) and [foundational prioritization criteria](#) to whatever level possible (recommend Strategy and generally; not step by step)
- Think about incorporating stakeholder input. Reference [Stakeholder Summary](#).
- Consider the [RRA Letter to the Speaker](#) from last year
- Revisions should be made in the RRA [Templates](#) docs on SharePoint

1:57 PM **Adjourn**