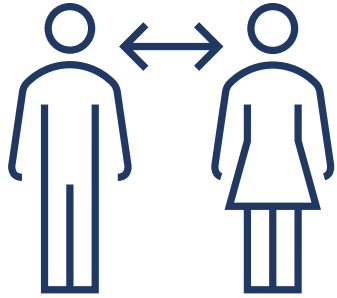
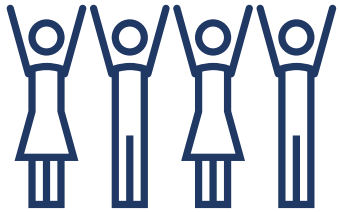


# Vermont Climate Action Plan Public Engagement Strategy

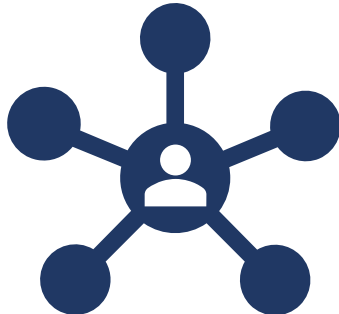
# CAP Public Engagement Strategy



**Enhance awareness** around climate action efforts in the state, with a particular focus on communities experiencing impacts and other frontline communities.



**Lift up the voices and viewpoints of communities** into the implementation of climate-related initiatives and the ongoing work of the Vermont Climate Council, so that a diverse group of Vermonters can influence these efforts.



**Build relationships and communication channels** that will help Vermonters work collaboratively on future climate action.

# CAP Public Engagement Strategy

Plan  
Accessibility

Broad Based  
Public  
Engagement

Targeted  
Engagement  
through Partner  
Organizations

Plan  
Accessibility

# Key components & changes

**Formatting,  
synthesizing, and  
visualizations**

**Multiple languages  
to reach non-native  
English speakers**

- New template for current CAP
- Develop Storymap to make CAP more communicable
- Develop real-life stories
  
- Public written notice and video in 11 most spoken languages in VT about availability of CAP to be translated upon request
- Translation services in Storymap

Broad-based  
Public  
Engagement

# Key components & changes

**Two interactive  
public forums in  
April 2022**

**Considering  
additional broad  
based “listening  
sessions” this year**

- April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>; 115 participants total

Additional events in 2022 could include:

- Ongoing policy work (e.g. transportation and biomass)
- Anticipated legislative priorities (e.g. Renewable Energy Standard)
- CAP Implementation (e.g. climate toolkit)
- Other topics identified through engagement

Targeted  
Engagement  
through Partner  
Organizations

# Key components & changes

**Work with partner organizations to build relationships that will allow more Vermonters to get involved on climate-related issues.**

- Develop tailored ways to **enhance awareness** in these communities around relevant climate action efforts
- Have a system for **capturing voices and viewpoints and transmitting them** to the Climate Council, state agencies and other bodies making decisions around climate action
- **Build relationships and communication channels** that are mutually beneficial and can be sustained over time.
- **2022 focus:** Low-income Vermonters, Rural Communities, Indigenous Communities, BIPOC Vermonters, New Americans.

Targeted  
Engagement  
through Partner  
Organizations

# Conversations in progress

- Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Capstone, CVOEO, and other Community Action Agencies
- Tribal voices (aiming to engage the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs)
- Vermont Language Justice Project
- VT LEND HDCC (Health Disparities Cultural Competence Council)
- DEC engagement contractors

# What we're hearing – Just Transitions & Equity

JT Principles and Scoring Rubric are good - continue to use them

Implementing climate justice and equity work is new for many communities.

Apparent disconnect between Council's equity efforts & legislature's activities.



# What we're hearing – Weatherization & Housing

Need a clear definition of weatherization to know if communities are meeting goals.

Lack of building codes and enforcement makes addressing thermal sector emissions challenging.

Municipal leaders want more education and resources on aspects of climate action other than energy

The Council should focus on reducing upfront cost burden of fuel switching, especially for those who can least afford it.

Electric service upgrades are important and should be considered during weatherization conversations.

# What we're hearing – Agriculture & Ecosystems

Communities need better support for working lands amid extreme residential development pressure in rural areas.

Encourage more communication between the Agriculture & Ecosystems Subcommittee and the full Council.

Council should think more about:

- Overall systems & holistic framework connected with our natural systems.
- Non-technological fixes, e.g., payment for nature-based services
- Reduction in pesticide/herbicide
- Right of way management, and riparian restoration programs.

# What we're hearing – Transportation

Pleased to see the Council focused on transportation in 2022

Transition to EVs important but the plan should have a greater emphasis on VMT reduction like bike/ped infrastructure and public transit

Municipal leaders would love to see models for programs like Micro Transit & Carshare to which towns could refer

More creative public transportation solutions such as shared transit between schools and communities in rural areas

Applauded the focus on compact settlement as a climate action strategy

# What we're hearing – Biomass and Clean Heat Standard

Many concerns expressed about biomass, including:

- Burning wood is not renewable/sustainable/low emissions energy source.
- Using agricultural lands for fuel crops instead of food crops isn't sustainable.

The legislative process around the Clean Heat Standard has not felt equitable and should focus more on impacts to the most vulnerable.

Clean Heat Standard would provide an avenue for incentivizing fuel dealers to shift their business focus – other incentives haven't worked.

Vermont must consider impacts beyond its borders when analyzing energy and fuel sources.  
Applaud planned life-cycle analysis but concern it won't be comprehensive enough.

# What we're hearing – Public Outreach

The Council should do more outreach; most Vermonters likely unaware of its work.

Difficult to understand how to engage in this process. People don't know how to have their voice heard.

Not always clear that input in public forums is being conveyed in full to the Council members.

Future outreach discussions could focus on specific issues, to allow for more detailed conversation.

Partner organizations can help get the word out about meetings

# What we're hearing – other takeaways

More all-hands-on-deck approach to climate is needed, particularly tapping large institutions and the private sector

State needs to better understand the full cost of implementing the recommendations in the plan

Municipalities will need support for plan implementation -- both financial, staffing capacity, and otherwise.

Consider climate migrants and the state's preparedness

Legislative process has not benefited from the learning that took place during CAP development. Legislators would benefit from greater education on CAP strategies.

# What we're hearing from low-income Vermonters

Many/Most have been financially burdened by the rising cost of keeping cool in the summer and/or rising heating bills

Difficulty navigating and managing confusing paperwork around programs designed to help.

## Other climate-related concerns mentioned:

- Tick and mosquito borne illnesses and ongoing health concerns and the financial burden associated with those
- Asthma and other respiratory health issues exacerbated by climate change
- General anxiety and depression associated with climate change and helplessness

Many unaware of existing programs and some are too costly

## Let's discuss: Small groups, 12-15 mins

- How does this presentation impact your view of the Council's work this year?
- What makes you hopeful?