

Vermont Climate Council Work Planning

This document contains initial orientation for the Vermont Climate Council's work plan through July 2025, when it needs to provide an updated Climate Action Plan.

Overview

The Council's work should be guided by the following:

- Plan revision
 - The Council's primary focus should be on revising the CAP.
 - The Council should work backwards from the July 1, 2025 due date and ensure it provides itself enough time for subcommittees and the full Council to deliberate on the proposed revisions, have technical analysis to support decision-making, and do meaningful public engagement.
- Shorter-term work
 - The legislature requested that the Council assist it in identifying priorities for resilience and adaptation policy for the next legislative session.
 - The Rural Resilience and Adaptation Subcommittee should meet this fall (all Councilors welcome to attend) with the state agencies identifying priorities based on the Initial Climate Action Plan, then provide any additional guidance (as needed). The full Council will review and act in December on this analysis from the subcommittee.
 - Addendums
 - Biomass – The Council will review revised language in September 2023 and makes a final decision in December 2023.
 - Transportation – The existing addendum provides interim language that may, or may not, be sufficient to carry the Council through to the 2025 revision.
 - "Priority Climate Action Plan" for accessing federal funds
 - The Climate Action Office is leading a process across state agencies this fall to identify emissions reductions initiatives appropriate for significant federal funding.
 - Work is based on the Initial Climate Action Plan. Perhaps hold special webinar for Councilors to understand the process better and provide feedback?

Plan Revision- Draft sequence of steps

Step 0 (fall 2023) – Laying the groundwork

- Science and Data Subcommittee works to identify priority technical inputs for the plan revision, within the context of available funding
 - Priority new reports likely will be:

- Another update to the Pathways Analysis (including some supplemental analysis, such as an evaluation of the heat pump program)
 - Perhaps an update to the Business as Usual
- Public outreach and engagement
 - The Climate Action Office, working with its contractor (CBI), builds channels for engagement

Step 1 (Jan – May 2024) – Focusing the work

- Subcommittees and the Council identify the key issues that need the most work/attention in the revision process. A plan is put in place for issues that are cross-cutting. Calendars are coordinated regarding Council work and any rule-making that will happen by a July 1, 2024 deadline, so that rule-making can inform Council deliberation.
- RFPs for technical reports issued no later than March (ideally earlier)
- Public engagement conducted around draft focus areas

Step 2 (June – Dec 2024) – Developing draft plan revisions

- Subcommittees take the lead on developing proposed revisions to the plan
- Council receives updates and provides input
- Just Transitions Principles are woven into the deliberation process
- Subcommittees work with Climate Action Office (and contractor) to do targeted outreach/engagement as needed
- Technical work is completed and incorporated into recommendations

Step 3 (Jan – March 2025) – Consolidating revisions into a revised Climate Action Plan

- Steering Committee and Climate Action Office guide process of consolidating subcommittee output into a single revised document
- Council conducts multiple reviews of draft document, approves a version for public comment

Step 4 (April – June 2025) – Finalization of Revised Climate Action Plan

- Multiple approaches used to receive input on the content of the draft document
- Council reviews input, finalizes document

Support

- The Climate Action Office anticipates hiring a new position to support, in part, the administrative process of updating the CAP
- There is contracted facilitation and public outreach support
- There is some budget for additional technical analysis