**Vermont Climate Action Plan**

**PUBLIC EVENT FACILITATION GUIDE**

The State of Vermont is creating a Climate Action Plan to ensure Vermont thrives now and into the future. Everyone has a role to play.

All Vermonters have important insights on how extreme weather and other climate impacts and the transformation to clean energy and low carbon solutions affect our communities and lives. All Vermonters are invited to contribute to the development of The Vermont Climate Action Plan.

As a community leader/influencer, you are in a great position to bring your network together to discuss climate risks and explore and weigh in on the range of solutions the Vermont Climate Council and subcommittees are considering. Input from community dialogues will be summarized and used to help set priorities in The Vermont Climate Action Plan so it reflects Vermonter’s concerns and ideas. The plan will be released in December 2021 for final public comment.

The *Public Event Facilitation Guide* offers on to facilitate dialogue events including capturing input from participants.

**GETTING STARTED**

*General tips on how to approach the event:*

* **Determine the best approach for hosting an event.** A climate action plan dialogue can be organized as a stand-alone event or incorporated into an existing meeting or gathering. Dialogues can be held online or in person (depending on COVID-19 and public health guidelines). Identify who in your network might be interested and the best way to engage them.
* **Create a dialogue.** Dialogues (rather than one-way presentations) help people process risk and provide a comfortable, nonpolarizing format for exploring solutions where everyone has a chance to weigh in. Provide enough context to kick start conversations but spend the bulk of the time with participants in small groups discussing risks and solutions with one another.
* **Tailor the event.** The sample agenda, presentation and facilitation approach can be customized based on the facilitator and group being engaged. You may want to focus on a particular climate risk and related solutions rather than covering all items outlined in the materials. A formal setting can be used or the conversation held over a meal. Determine the best way to capture input using tools provided (dialogue worksheets, paper surveys, online surveys).
* **Climate change expertise is not required.** This aim is to facilitate a conversation about and listen to community concerns and ideas which does not require being an expert on climate change or the planning process. Background materials have been developed to support you and Climate Access and Rise Consulting along with ANR are available to help customize events and respond to questions that come up.

**DIALOGUE STRUCTURE & FACILITATION GUIDANCE**

*The outline below provides a framework for a two-hour dialogue including tips for presenting climate change impacts and action information and for facilitating the interactive portions of the dialogue. Group exercises can be expanded and the agenda modified.*

**Section One: Introduction – Why We Are Here (20 min)**

* **Introduction -** Kick off the session with a story about why you care about climate change and/or how it has impacted your life, and how you became motivated to work on climate issues.
* **Agenda overview and outline group process -** Break down how the time at the gathering will be spent. Outline how the small group discussions will work. For example, “We will be breaking into groups of three to discuss our concerns about the impacts of climate change. Together, we’ll be exploring and weighing in on the solutions being considered by the Vermont Climate Council and sub-committees.”
* **About the Vermont Climate Action Plan** - Provide an overview of the Vermont Climate Action Plan’s goals, why public input is being sought, and how it will be used.
* **Group process agreements:** Walk through the following expectations:
  + *Participate as peers* - the assumption is that we come to this work as peers, all with our own unique and valuable experiences, even as there may be differences in the length of time we have done this work or our formal positional authority wherever we work
  + *Co-create brave space for learning* - the assumption is that learning requires some degree of vulnerability, saying “I don’t know,” asking questions, challenging assumptions (including our own)
  + *Share the air* - we have limited time and want to make sure that everyone feels like they can and are able to participate
  + *Be present* - engagement is key for this work, so we ask that people minimize distractions and avoid trying to multitask (while acknowledging that in these times there are competing demands from work and family)
  + *Ideas go, IDs stay (confidentiality)* - we want the learning to go with everyone, and want to avoid making attributions (s/he/they said) that could damage relationships; if you want to make an attribution the recommendation is to first get permission
* **Participant introductions -** Participants will be seated in groups of 3-6 to foster peer-to-peer dialogues. Have participants introduce themselves (name, pronouns, motivation to attend). Model a concise introduction and stick to 10 minutes total for participant introductions.

**Section Two: Why Action is Needed (5 min)**

* **What We Are Facing –** Overview of climate impacts and emissions sources in Vermont. Convey the relevance of climate change impacts, rather than detail all the ways in which the state will be affected.
* **People Aren’t Affected Equally –** Where efforts to address climate change need to particularly factor in the needs of the young and elderly, those facing health challenges, low-income community members and people of color.
* **Acting Now Matters –** Projections are based on emission scenarios. Steps taken now to cut climate pollution

**Section Three: Community Feedback (25 min)**

* **Small group discussion -** Ask people to move into groups of three to answer: “What climate change impacts are you most concerned about (for the state, your community, and you personally) and why?” Ask that each group select a notetaker and someone to report back from the conversation. *[For in-person events, provide small groups with flip charts and markers. For online events, create Google Docs or set up Google Jamboards in advance (i.e. digital whiteboards) for participants to use during the Zoom breakout rooms.]* Give the groups 10-15 minutes to discuss. Provide a reminder to summarize the discussion and get ready to report back.
* **Report back -** Allow up to 10 minutes for report back. If you have a lot of participants, there won’t be enough time for all groups to share so select a few to volunteer. In the last 5 minutes, gather the notes and let folks know the input will be used to inform planning efforts. *[For in-person events, capture feedback on a flip chart at the front of the room. For online events, continue to include feedback notes in Google Docs/Jamboard.]*

**Section Four: Climate Action Pathways (20 min)**

* **Overview of Pathways -** Walk through the Climate Action Plan Framework’s Pathways (i.e. the high-level means of achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions or adaptation, resilience, and sequestration goals), followed by Q&A.

**Section Five: Participating in Solutions (45 min)**

* **Small group discussion -** Provide lists of the related Climate Action Plan Pathways for the group to review. *[For in-person events, include as handouts or on flipchart paper at each table. For online events, provide on a sharable Google Doc or Jamboard.]* Have participants share their reactions and provide input on the Pathways regarding what should be prioritized and solutions that are missing. Ask that each group select a notetaker and someone to report back from the conversation *[via flipcharts or shared doc depending on event]*. Give the groups 20 minutes to discuss. Provide a reminder to summarize the discussion and get ready to report back. Facilitators will float throughout the room to answer questions.
* **Report back -** Allow 20 minutes for reporting back to the full group and discussion. *[Capture input on a flip chart/Google doc.]*

**Wrap up (5 min)**

* **Next steps -** The facilitator outlines the next steps in the planning process and opportunities to comment on The Vermont Climate Action Plan December 2021 - February 2022.
* **Distribution of feedback the survey**
* **Thank you–** In the last 5 minutes of the meeting, thank participants and let them know you and the Vermont team are available to help answer any questions/locate resources, etc. and that you will be following up with additional opportunities for involvement when the initial Climate Action Plan is released.