

Vermont Climate Council

A draft Process Roadmap

Version Jan 31, 2021

Council Steering Committee

Roles

- **Develop Council meeting agendas**
- Assist the Council to develop a slate of Sub-Committee members
- Develop common frameworks for Sub-Committee work (templates etc.)
- Serve as a clearinghouse for requests for technical help/contractor support
- Track progress and ensure an effective and efficient process.

Composition

- 2 from Executive Branch
 - Council Chair Secretary Susanne Young
 - ANR Secretary Julie Moore
- 4 from Legislature's appointed members
 - Chris Company
 - Liz Miller
 - Jared Duval
 - Lauren Oates

Its spirit: To act in service of the Council, organizing the work, but not controlling it

Sub-Committees

Roles

- Core function: Create recommended, draft initiatives, programs and strategies for the Council to review, refine and compile into Vermont's Climate Action Plan
 - Work will start with inventorying existing efforts

A challenge: How to do the work under open meeting laws. All members will need guidance on this.

Composition

- Council members and non-council members
- 8-12 members, ideally a majority are council members
 - Also, decisions about what to elevate to the full Council could be made by just Council members
- Criteria include: relevant expertise; sectoral, geographic and other balance
- Will be supported by agency staff

Sub-Committees (2)

Leadership

- Co-chairs:
 - One from Executive branch (or designee), one from the Legislative-appointed members.
 - In some cases, consider a third (perhaps even from outside council if needed)
 - Key attributes
 - Sufficient time availability
 - Substantive expertise
 - Willingness to work collaboratively
 - Will meet regularly together (all co-chairs) to coordinate substance across Sub-Committees

Selecting Members and Co-Chairs

1. Council members indicate preference
2. Council members suggest additional names to fill gaps
3. Steering Committee makes a proposed slate
4. Council confirms slate

Method for Making Decisions

- Strive for consensus, defined as: Everyone (or almost everyone) can live it
 - For decisions around the Council's process as well as its Climate Action Plan.
 - Seek to creatively problem-solve in the face of disagreements
 - Help each other understand core underlying concerns
 - This helps to lift up all voices
 - We should educate ourselves on this decision-making model
- For disagreements around the Council's process that can't be resolved through consensus
 - Use the Council's majority vote mechanism
- For disagreements that can't be resolved on specific issues in the Climate Action Plan
 - Include multiple viewpoints on that specific issue in Plan, noting level of support
 - We should have a high bar for this and avoid it as much as possible
 - The Council has a majority vote protocol as back-up.

Why push hard for consensus?

1) politically more powerful; 2) cross-sector support ensures more rapid implementation, reducing or avoiding future roadblocks

Public & stakeholder engagement

- Stakeholder engagement – multiple levels
 - Composition of the Council
 - Composition of the Sub-Committees
 - Targeted outreach by Sub-Committees
- Public engagement – multiple levels
 - Sub-committees hold public forum around emerging recommendations
 - Council holds public input sessions on draft Plan
 - Public engagement portal for asynchronous engagement.
 - All meetings open to the public. Most have defined public comment period
 - Let's get off Teams and onto a better platform such as Zoom
 - Non-members should hold of using Chat until the end

Project manager and staff support

- **Project manager**

- Manage and keep track of all the moving pieces
- Oversee contractors
- Shephard the written deliverables

- **Agency staff**

- Each Sub-Committee will have agency staff support.
- Staff will help prepare inputs, plan meetings with co-chairs, draft outputs
- Will coordinate with project manager in shepherding written deliverables

Rural Resilience & Adaptation

Sub-committee descriptions

- Focus on pressures climate change will place on Vermont's transportation, electricity, housing, emergency services and communications infrastructure, with particular attention to the challenges faced by rural communities across the state in addressing these pressures.

In particular:

- Develop a “municipal vulnerability index”
- Develop best practice recommendations for fortifying critical transportation, electricity, and community infrastructure
- Recommend a means of securely sharing self-identified vulnerable residents' information with State and local emergency responders and utilities;
- Recommend tools for municipalities to assess preparedness, consider land use changes that reduce vulnerabilities, evaluate their financial capacity and prioritize investment to address infrastructure resilience;
- Identify opportunities to better integrate and support regional land use planning, transportation planning, energy planning and operations, in service of resilience.
- Utilize Vermont Emergency Management biennial reports to recommend changes.

Cross–Sector Mitigation

Sub-committee descriptions

- Identify initiatives, strategies and programs to achieve the GHG emissions reductions in the GWSA.
- Evaluate these approaches to determine the economic case and relative cost-effectiveness of each initiative, strategy or program.
- Establish sector-specific working groups to ensure the capacity and expertise needed

Just Transitions

Sub-committee descriptions

- Develop principles and tools to guide the work of the other sub-committees to ensure that initiatives, programs and strategies support all residents of the State fairly and equitably.
- Consider job, economic and demographic impacts of various proposed recommendations set forth by other Sub-committees. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that climate policy is developed in a manner that is based on mutual respect and justice for all, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- To the extent they are able, members will join and participate in the other Sub-committees to ensure that these principles are fully integrated into the more technical components of this work

Agriculture and Ecosystems

Sub-committee descriptions

- Focus on the role Vermont's natural and working lands play in carbon sequestration and storage, climate adaptation, and ecosystem and community resilience.
- Emphasize opportunities for nature-based solutions, including actions and policies that restore wetlands, increase carbon stored on agricultural and forest land and in forest products, and support healthy agricultural soils and local food systems.
- Develop a full carbon budget for the State of Vermont that quantifies carbon emissions and sequestration associated with biomass growth, management and utilization, in support of the GWSA requirement to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 across all sectors
- Identify the co-benefits of strategies for such factors as water quality, quality of life, food security, and economic resilience and sustainability
- Identify initiatives, programs and strategies for mitigation to reduce gross and net annual greenhouse gas emissions from Vermont's agricultural and forested working lands

Science and Data

Sub-committee descriptions

- Be responsible for reviewing the latest information on direct and indirect effects of climate change, drawing on existing data and studies, as well as identifying critical scientific information needs.
- Establish an energy use and emissions baseline
- Build scenarios
- Identify critical scientific information needs
- Recommend monitoring and tracking