

CAPE COD CLIMATE ACTION PLAN SUBREGIONAL MUNICIPAL MEETINGS

Meeting Summary

October 13-15, 2020 | Virtual Meetings

The following meeting summary includes information from all four subregional municipal meetings. As appropriate, feedback is broken up by subregion and municipality. Where common themes emerged, broader areas of discussion have been combined across all four subregional meetings.

Meeting in Brief¹

During the week of October 12, 2020, the Cape Cod Commission (Commission) held a meeting to engage municipal stakeholders from the Upper, Mid, Lower, and Outer regions of Cape Cod to contribute to the development of a Cape Cod Climate Action Plan.

These four Subregional Municipal Meetings were the kickoff in a series of stakeholder engagement meetings to gather input across a wide cross section of voices on Cape Cod. The objectives of these four Subregional Municipal Meetings were to:

- Introduce the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan process
- Clarify existing understanding of regional hazards, vulnerabilities, and priorities, and climate adaptation and mitigation opportunities
- Identify current municipal priorities, barriers and needs, and opportunities for regional, subregional, and local action.

These meetings will help the Commission develop a plan that addresses the region's contributions to and threats from climate change. After hearing presentations from Cape Cod Commission staff on the Climate Action Plan process, climate hazards and vulnerabilities, and the results of the recent Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory, participants were split up into small groups to discuss priority municipal adaptation and mitigation actions, as well as identify opportunities for and barriers to their implementation.

To view the full presentation for each subregional meeting, please click below:

- <u>Upper Cape</u> Tuesday, October 13, 2020
- Mid Cape Wednesday, October 14, 2020
- Lower Cape Wednesday, October 14, 2020
- Outer Cape Thursday, October 15, 2020

¹For additional detail, please visit the Cape Cod Climate Initiative website: <u>https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/climate-change/</u>



Introduction to The Cape Cod Climate Action Plan Process

Cape Cod Commission staff provided a brief presentation on the Cape Cod Climate Initiative and the process to develop the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan. This presentation covered an overview of the Climate Action Plan process and timeline, components of the Climate Action Plan as they pertain to mitigation and adaptation, results of the recent GHG Emissions Inventory, various stakeholder engagement components, and specific information relative to each of the four sub-regions: Upper, Mid, Lower, and Outer Cape. In particular, Commission staff recognized the need to take action and address the region's contributions to and threats from climate change, with consideration of both adaptation and mitigation.

Climate Risks, Hazards, Vulnerabilities, and Priorities to Date

Cape Cod Commission staff reviewed risks of existing climate hazards relative to Cape Cod. They explained that over the next 80 years Cape Cod will experience increases in precipitation, rising temperatures, significant sea-level rise (SLR), and more extreme whether events. A series of subregional maps displayed during the presentation helped illustrate the extent of flooding and SLR that could occur. Drawing on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program work in all the Cape towns, Commission staff also reviewed the resulting MVP Action Plan priorities. Ninety-eight were identified by all 15 towns, of which the four most common themes across the Cape were:

- 1. Infrastructure projects
- 2. Plan development
- 3. Vulnerability assessments and feasibility studies
- 4. Education, outreach, and communications

Commission staff then reviewed the results of the regional GHG Emissions Inventory. They defined a GHG Emissions inventory as a comprehensive accounting of total greenhouse gas emissions for all man-made sources and identified the sectors with the highest emissions. On Cape Cod, Transportation and Stationary Energy were identified as the two largest sectors contributing to GHG emissions. Commission staff noted that the inventory would be replicable in the future and could help to focus mitigation actions.

Reiterating that responding to climate change involves actions to address both adaptation and mitigation, Commission staff then provided the following definitions for the terms:

- **Adaptation:** adjustments in human and natural systems that moderate harm or take advantage of beneficial opportunities.
- **Mitigation:** limiting or preventing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing activities that remove these gases from the atmosphere.

Commission staff provided some examples of actions that would have both adaptation and mitigation benefits, such as:

- Retrofitting buildings
- Tree preservation
- Reducing landfill emissions
- Smart growth/land use

Commission Presentation(s) Q&A:



Below are participant questions and comments that followed Commission staff presentations during each of the sub-regional meetings. Participant questions are bolded and answers from the Commission are italicized.

- Will there be any more comment on the shooting range and with regard to the cutting of the trees?
 - Given that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over that project our comments have been provided within the confines of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process. We will continue to monitor the project as it moves forward and are happy to have a further conversation at a different time.
- You mentioned seasonality, as things get warmer and the digital age continues, it is interesting to try and project how much the Cape will be used (for example, how many more people will live year-round on Cape Cod?). After this year, have you rethought this idea?
 - In terms of trying to calculate GHG emissions relative to seasonality, we are focusing on developing methodologies to count metrics like electrical/fuel usage. This exercise is geared more at looking at the data that we have: previous data and the emissions of the past.
- What percentage of the Cape is currently forested, and are there plans to plant additional trees?
 - The forested area is relatively high (at the meeting Commission staff offered to check on the percentage, which is provided here) – using 2017 data, about 109,265 acres, or roughly 50% of the Cape land mass, is forested. In terms of plans to plant trees, this is something with broad support across the Cape and within our Commission regulations. However, there is no program to plant trees. About 40% of land on the Cape is protected (most is wooded), and then unprotected land is also heavily forested.
- Are there long-term plans to encourage summer visitors to leave their cars and increase mass transportation to the Outer Cape?
 - Car-free trips to Cape Cod are certainly desired and have been pushed for a long time. The Outer Cape is one of our most challenging areas to get to. There are a few active efforts to encourage travel with a reduced carbon footprint. 1) The Cape Flyer, which brings seasonal rail service to Hyannis, and coordination with CCRTA buses providing trips to the Outer Cape. We also see passengers biking locally. 2) The Ferry from Boston to Provincetown is another active mode with similar bus connections to the Outer Cape. The CCRTA actively encourages those trips.



Priority Municipal Adaptation and Mitigation Actions

Following Commission staff presentations, meeting participants were divided into town-specific groups to identify and discuss their town's priority actions related to climate change, as well as additional or alternative actions they might consider prioritizing if they had additional support from neighboring towns, the region, or the state.

Participants discussed and answered the following questions:

- What are your municipality's *top* 3-5 priority actions as of right now?
- What additional/alternative (1-3) activities *might* you prioritize if you had more support from neighboring towns, the region, or state (consider both adaptation *and* mitigation)?

Below is a synthesis of the results of each of these small group conversations by sub-region.



Upper Cape (Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich)

Meeting participants in the Upper Cape sub-region identified common themes regarding priority actions, which fall into the following categories:

- Funding constraints
- The regulatory environment
- Education of/communication with the general public
- Climate-resilient infrastructure planning

A. Town	B. Priority Actions	C. Additional Actions
Bourne	 Comprehensive Water Resources/Sewer Management Plan (incorporating climate resilience) Stormwater management Low-lying roads Obtaining Green Community designation 	 Sewer management with neighboring towns Charging stations and additional solar Buying coastal lands, retreating, post-storm zoning needs Dedicated public outreach
Falmouth	 Coastal resiliency (e.g., Menahaunt Beach, Surf Drive) GHG emissions reduction (e.g., EV, solar, etc.) Wetlands creation 	 Sharing of local boards best management practices to deal with nourishment requests on private property Legislation to allow uniform solutions for public and private coastline protection
Mashpee	 Coastal green infrastructure Public and private stormwater infrastructure (e.g., low lying roadways and culverts inundated by storm surge Existing municipal facilities and infrastructure that can be modified and adapted 	 How to best engage with private property owners on town adaptation priorities Consideration of greater multi-modal transportation options
Sandwich	 Moving sand from Scusset borrow sites and getting approval from ACOE to use dredged material from canal 6 solar arrays on town property Assessing vulnerable areas and actively seeking projects that address a combination of retrofit, retreat, mitigation, etc. Obtaining Green Community designation 	 Bridge projects to improve Upper Cape transportation systems Upper Cape wastewater partnership Exploring a regional approach to dealing with solid waste Cape-wide floodplain regulations so all towns are doing the same thing relative to development and other coastal issues Work with other towns for bulk purchase of renewable energy (photovoltaics and wind)



Mid Cape (Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis)

Meeting participants in the Mid Cape sub-region identified common themes regarding priority actions, which fall into the following categories:

- Natural disaster planning
- Protecting natural resources improving climate change resiliency
- Vulnerable population identification and support
- Improvement of built environment infrastructure resiliency

A. Town	B. Priority Actions	C. Additional Actions
Barnstable	 Secure funding for Sandy Neck Beach parking lot Blish Point/Millway residential area Green Community designation MassCAN Initiatives 	 Establish Infrastructure and Energy Committees Guidance for communities on incorporating longer range hazard impacts
Dennis	 Assessment and prioritization of stormwater infrastructure Community safety including evaluation of shelters and communication adequacy Vulnerable roadways assessment to prioritize, design, and implement improvements Storm tide pathways analysis for the south side Conservation land funding 	 Better data on power outages to improve reliability of power supply Cost/benefit analysis of these ideas to compare priorities Identify high priority organizations and businesses to remain open
Yarmouth	 Taking a closer look at vulnerable properties, town assets, etc. Building resilience in coastal areas (e.g., beach, dune areas, buffer zones to coastal areas) Natural disaster planning (e.g., communications resilience during events, vulnerable population needs assessment) Updating bylaws for coastal resilience 	 Projects to collect information on coastal risk and SLR (to help decision making on vulnerable properties; land-use and bylaw changes) Public education/outreach: general risks facing the town Assistance identifying opportunities for alternative energy while preserving tree cover, etc.



Lower Cape (Brewster, Harwich, Chatham, Orleans)

Meeting participants in the Lower Cape sub-region identified common themes regarding priority actions, which fall into the following categories:

- Coastal protection and planning
- Protecting open space and fisheries
- Vulnerable population identification and support
- Improvement of building infrastructure efficiency

A. Town	B. Priority Actions	C. Additional Actions
Brewster	 Coastal Resources Management Plan and Coastal Adaptation Strategy More planning around bylaws and regulations (e.g., gentrification of the shoreline, large scale solar projects) Generators for town buildings Continuing to preserve open space 	 Reviewing town bylaws and regulations Emergency preparedness planning (regional shelters) Community engagement and education Sediment planning (with neighboring towns)
Chatham	 Managing coastal erosion and flooding Changes in fisheries in response to climate change; fish population changes, shellfish shell impacts (economic impacts) Increase electrification of vehicles within the municipality and among others Have homeowners and businesses participate in MassSave 	 Address Cape Cod vehicle emissions beyond municipal purchase of EVs (i.e., seasonal visitors to Cape Cod) Improve the village areas, creating more opportunities for small businesses to thrive without vehicles; safer streets, sidewalk networks Encourage public transit by making more transit available and expanding routes
Harwich	 Improve culverts and roadways New shelter for the region Identify upgrades needed in critical facilities Acquiring open space land (multi-purpose) Stretch code adoption and obtaining Green Community designation 	 Additional EV charging stations More energy efficient vehicles for town use Farmers market expansion (similar to Orleans year-round one) Additional funding and staffing available for the creation of regional shelter Wide volunteer network in-town (regional/sub-regional)
Orleans	 Conservation Commission permitting builds in space for marsh retreat Beach retreat program for Nauset Beach New buildings are LEED-qualified, especially 50+ year structures that will serve the municipality (e.g., DPW, police station) Ample open space protection program; go to Town Meeting every year EV charging station permitting and two EVs Support farmers markets to reduce food travel time and resources Converting streetlights to LEDs for efficiency 	 Increase density downtown to support public transit regionally Promote solar on any southern facing house; increased subsidies for rooftop solar needed Address transportation (i.e., improved powerful EVs)



Outer Cape (Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, Provincetown)

Meeting participants in the Outer Cape sub-region identified common themes regarding priority actions, which fall into the following categories:

- Coastal area resilience planning and infrastructure development
- Public education/outreach
- Efforts to reduce GHG emissions (e.g., passenger vehicles and residential energy use)

A. Town	B. Priority Actions	C. Additional Actions
Eastham	 Adaptation of low-lying roadways and areas where land is subject to coastal storm flooding Stormwater runoff to ponds Identifying land to conserve in coastal areas and in water protection district Obtained grant for town-wide solar plan 	 Agreements needed for emergency management Route 6/rotary vulnerability Subregional sharing of equipment and other resources
Provincetown	 Reinforcement and hardening of existing utilities for resilience to coastal flooding Expand sewer system to eliminate Title 5 septic systems near harbor Beach management and nourishment: improved outfall and building protective dune system Natural infrastructure solutions to improve groundwater conditions Developing one common, comprehensive emergency management plan for all scenarios and with better communication to the community, including visitor population Communicating with households on how to make their homes more resilient 	 Address infrastructure regionally Regional approach to addressing sharks and seals Getting community onboard with more regional efforts
Truro	 Municipal carbon footprint assessment Assessment of Truro's vulnerability to consequences of climate change 	 Continued collaboration with Outer Cape towns More regional data sets that builds from local data up to a regional level More grant funding
Wellfleet	 Town mitigation action: ground source heat pumps for the new High School Resident mitigation: share best heating residential heating options EV car show on the Outer Cape Quickly seeking out grants where available Outreach, energy fairs, lectures, working with the schools Hazard planning, coastal resiliency, addressing low-lying roads, shelters (generators), culvert restoration, communications system upgrades 	 More regional datasets using local data up to a regional level to evaluate effectiveness (e.g., vehicle fleet, residential fuel usage, etc.) More grant funding



Identifying Opportunities and Barriers to Implementation

Small Group Discussions

Meeting participants were divided into town-specific groups to identify and discuss the barriers they face in implementing their town's priority actions related to climate change, and to identify what support the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan could provide, build, or leverage for their towns.

Participants discussed and answered the following questions:

- What barriers do you face in addressing your priority actions?
- What support might the Climate Action Plan help to provide, build, or leverage?

Below is a synthesis of the results of these small group conversations.

What barriers do you face in addressing your priority actions?

Meeting participants identified common themes regarding the major barriers to priority action implementation.

The key categories that emerged were:

- **Funding and funding sources.** Lack of funding was identified as the most significant barrier. Moreover, support was requested to continue exploring and identifying additional funding sources. (i.e., status quo funding sources and new/other programs).
- **Staffing capacity.** There is an identified overall lack of bandwidth and capacity to adequately staff exploring and implementing the necessary projects, interventions, actions, and/or funding sources required to implement priority actions.
- **Public education/awareness.** The need to increase and bolster public education and outreach across the spectrum of climate resilience and adaptation/mitigation solutions was noted as a necessity. Closing the existing gap in understanding around proposed and/or ongoing activities was noted as crucial, including a multi-pronged approach that addresses all need levels.
- **Town/private property relationship.** Towns noted a limited ability to intervene on private property to fully execute programs such as beach nourishment.
- **Regulatory/bylaw obstacles.** The need to better understand the existing [state] regulatory environment, and guidance on how to maneuver within it was noted as a necessity. Additionally, there was the suggestion to explore standardization of coastal regulations regionally.

What support might the Climate Action Plan help to provide, build, or leverage?

Meeting participants identified common areas for Climate Action Plan support.

The key categories that emerged were:

• **Regional coordination.** Towns identified the need for assistance with information sharing, coordinating across regional activities, particularly with respect to identifying and communicating regional priorities, and a centralized way to identify funding sources.



- **Communications and outreach products.** Towns requested the need for some predeveloped and standardized communication materials with regional priorities identified and elaboration on long-term versus short term activities, as well as capacity building for widespread engagement.
- **Metrics and tools.** Towns expressed the need for measurable goals against which they could monitor progress of the various components of their activities, and more development of tools (e.g., solar planning tool).
- **Regulations and bylaw review.** Towns asked for strategic support with implementation of adaptation/mitigation actions in the regulatory environment, as well as language for model bylaws.
- **Grant-writing capacity.** Towns requested technical capacity for grant-writing and application submissions, as well as the management of funds once they are dispersed.

Full Group Discussion

Meeting participants continued the discussion of opportunities and barriers with a set of questions addressing regional level response, equity considerations, and prioritization.

Participants discussed and answered the following questions:

- What actions can be best addressed at the regional level?
- Are there equity considerations that we need to be taking into account, how do we do it, and what should we be thinking about?
- On what basis should the regional Climate Action Plan be prioritizing among the needs and ideas identified?

Below is a synthesis of the discussions.

What actions can be best addressed at the regional level?

Meeting participants were asked to share their considerations about what actions could best be undertaken at the regional level.

Participants confirmed that it would be useful to have sample language for town articles for legislative action/tools for informing the public in advance. Ongoing regional public education on climate risks and vulnerabilities will also be important to moving this planning process forward. They expressed a desire for increased regional collaboration through measures such as shared contact information for staff working on these issues across the Cape and relevant experts. Regional collaboration may prove necessary for funding the implementation of the Climate Action Plan, and standardization of efforts across towns was raised as a potential benefit relative to the allocation of necessary funds.

Are there equity considerations that we need to be taking into account, how do we do it, and what should we be thinking about?

Meeting participants were asked to consider accounting for issues of equity in developing the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan. They were asked to consider social, financial, and hazard impacts.

Equity was named as a criterion for prioritizing climate action planning efforts, with participants noting that connectivity and communications will factor heavily into the equity discussion on the



Cape. They emphasized the need for the Commission to clarify what "equity" means in this context (e.g., economic equity, environmental justice, equitable dispensation of mitigating resources, equitable distribution of climate impacts, etc.). Participants also noted that the Commission, and municipalities with support of the Commission, will need to conduct intentional outreach to bring voices of vulnerable and/or previously excluded communities into the climate action planning process.

Participants suggested that the Commission first identify the most vulnerable areas and then conduct an economic analysis of those areas, to better understand the relationship between vulnerability and capacity to bear the burden of climate impacts. For example, it was suggested that Environmental Justice areas on the Cape are often in low lying areas. Further complicating the issue, the Cape has large income disparities, with low-income communities mixed in and around wealthy, seasonal communities; a question was raised about how to target communities with the greatest need while ensuring that it does not appear as if the municipality is serving the seasonal, higher income population.

Which criteria/framework should be used to prioritize among the needs/ideas identified?

Participants named strong data collection and lessons learned from other localities as two important elements to creating a strong Climate Action Plan framework (e.g., looking at lessons learned in areas hit by Hurricane Sandy). They also emphasized the need for the Climate Action Plan to balance short-term and long-term needs when prioritizing actions, looking at what can be done in the short-term to allow Cape communities to react quickly to climate change impacts and what needs to be pursued in the long-term to maximize regional benefits. Participants named regional collaboration (e.g., effective communication and distribution of information, universal language to propose legislative/regulatory actions) as a key underpinning of the Climate Action Plan framework.

Public Comment

Upper Cape (Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich)

No public comment was made.

Mid Cape (Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis)

A member of the public stated that where the conversation is focusing around funding/economics, they wanted to point out/ask the group if they are aware of the billions of dollars of energy projects that are being permitted at the energy siting board (85 MW of solar that are at Eversource)? The coordination of this investment could potentially take care of a lot of these funding questions. There is also a \$50 million FEMA grant that opened up last month to build resilient infrastructure and communities; this could be a regional goal to put in place this grant to help individual communities trigger potential investment.



Lower Cape (Brewster, Harwich, Chatham, Orleans)

No public comment was made.

Outer Cape (Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, Provincetown)

No public comment was made.

Wrap Up and Closing

Cape Cod Commission staff thanked the municipal representatives for their time and participation, reminding them to visit the Cape Cod Climate Initiative webpage for further details.

CBI noted that it would send out a meeting summary to reflect back what was shared during each of the meetings. CBI also gave a brief overview of the upcoming first round of stakeholder working group meetings and invited participants to join whichever piqued their interest.



Appendix A: List of Participants by Municipal Sub-Region

Upper Cape

Bourne	Jennifer Copeland	Assistant Town Planner
Bourne	Robert Schofield	Energy Advisory Committee
Bourne	Janice Marks	Energy Advisory Committee
Bourne	Sam Haines	Conservation Agent
Falmouth	Doug Brown	Selectman
Mashpee	Evan Lehrer	Town Planner
Sandwich	Heather Harper	Assistant Town Manager
Sandwich	David DeConto	Director of Natural Resources
Sandwich	Judith Holt	Local Comprehensive Plan Committee
Sandwich	Ralph Vitacco	Director of Planning and Economic Development
Sandwich	Leanne Drake	Town Planner
Sandwich	Brendan Brides	Building Commissioner
Sandwich	Charles Holden	Selectman

Mid Cape

Barnstable	Nate Collins	DPW
Barnstable	Amber Unruh	DPW
Yarmouth	Kelly Grant	Conservation Administrator
Yarmouth	Amanda Lima	Town Engineer
Dennis	Dan Fortier	Town Planner
Dennis	Julie Early	Conservation Trust
Dennis	Mark Burgess	Chamber of Commerce
Dennis	Rick Sawyer	Aquaculture Research Corporation
Dennis	Suzanne Brock	Water Quality Advisory Committee
Dennis	Jeff Trieber	Recreation Commission
Dennis	Tom Andrade	DPW



Brewster	Chris Miller	Natural Resources Director
Brewster	Ryan Bennett	Town Planner and MVP Lead
Brewster	Mary Chaffee	Select Board Chair
Brewster	Pat Hughes	Former Coastal Committee Chair
Brewster	Chuck Hanson	Energy Committee
Harwich	Amy Usowski	Conservation Agent
Harwich	Charleen Greenhalgh	Town Planner
Harwich	Ed McManus	Selectman
Chatham	Frank Messina	Chatham Historical Commission
Chatham	Katie Donovan	Director of Community Development
Chatham	Tom Wilson	Cape Cod Commission Representative
Chatham	Robert Duncanson	Natural Resources Director
Chatham	Bob Wirtshafter	Planning Board member
Orleans	George Meservey	Planning Director

Lower Cape

Outer Cape

Eastham	Paul Lagg	Community Development Director
Eastham	Shana Brogan	Conservation Agent
Wellfleet	Dick Elkin	Energy and Climate Action Committee and Cape Cod Commission Representative
Wellfleet	Carol Magenau	Council on Aging Advisory Board
Wellfleet	Lilli-Ann Green	Energy and Climate Action Committee
Wellfleet	Robert Shapiro	Energy and Climate Action Committee
Truro	Kelly Clark	Assistant Town Manager
Provincetown	Rex McKinsey	Marine Coordinator
Provincetown	Tim Famulare	Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent