

# Cape Cod Climate Action Plan: Energy Stakeholder Meeting Summary

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Virtual Meeting No. 3 | December 16, 2020 | 9am-12pm ET

## MEETING IN BRIEF<sup>1</sup>

On December 16, 2020, the Cape Cod Commission (Commission) held its third meeting engaging stakeholders on the topic of Energy on Cape Cod to contribute to the development of a Cape Cod Climate Action Plan (CAP). This meeting was the third of three planned meetings with the Energy working group.

The objectives of the third Energy meeting were to:

- Recap Meeting No. 2 and the progress to date on the CAP process
- Review the revisions to strategies, actions, and steps to include in the Cape Cod Climate Action Plan
- Identify and discuss potential actors to lead on key actions and steps, in light of the Legal and Jurisdictional Analysis
- Identify and discuss appropriate performance measures for assessing progress on CAP actions

This working group helped the Commission develop a plan that addresses the region's contributions to and threats from climate change. After hearing presentations from Commission staff reviewing the proposed CAP purpose Statement, process to date (particularly regarding the Climate Ambassador program and cross-sector stakeholder meeting), and an overview of the Legal and Jurisdictional analysis, working group participants were split into small groups to discuss potential key actors and performance measures for the goals and actions relevant to Energy.

**To view the full presentation slides, please [click here](#).**

## MEETING NO. 2 RECAP & REFLECTION ON PROCESS TO DATE

Cape Cod Commission Deputy Director, Erin Perry, opened her presentation by providing the working group with the following purpose statement for the Cape Cod CAP:

*To identify, study and monitor the causes and consequences of climate change on Cape Cod as a basis to guide and develop science-based policies, strategies and actions that governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals can pursue to:*

- *Improve the region's resilience to climate hazards*

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

- *Mitigate climate change on Cape Cod through reducing net regional greenhouse gas emissions in support of the framework and targets established by the Commonwealth.*

Ms. Perry reiterated the various components of the CAP process for the working group, noting that there were several pieces that were taking place in parallel with stakeholder engagement, namely participants would hear about preliminary results of the legal and jurisdictional analysis, and be provided with an update on the Climate Ambassadors Program, as well as hearing briefly about the Fiscal and Economic Impacts Analysis.

Ms. Perry then moved to an update that the Commission had issued a call for students to participate in the Climate Ambassadors Program. Ms. Perry noted the Commission had begun connecting with educators across the region to ensure news of the program was widely distributed. She shared that the program would begin with a full group of students in late January. Following this, Ms. Perry provided a brief update on the Cape-wide survey, where she detailed the survey that had been released before Thanksgiving to a randomly selected group of households. She further explained that the Commission was working with the Center for Public Opinion and the Donahue Institute to capture a statistically significant response with this effort.

Finally, Ms. Perry highlighted that the purpose of this third meeting in the working group series was to begin taking action by identifying key actors and performance measures. She also highlighted that the Commission had been working diligently to incorporate working group input and feedback on the actions database, continuing to make amendments and moving towards completing a draft plan. Working group members were provided with the opportunity to share key reflections and ask any questions. Following this update, there were no question or comments.

## **REVIEW UPDATED ACTION PLAN**

Cape Cod Commission Natural Resources Program Manager, Heather McElroy, reviewed the changes made to the Energy sector strategies, actions, and steps in the CAP. She also explained how the input from the working group had been incorporated, provided a recap of meeting no. 2, and posed several key outstanding questions for the group to discuss.

Ms. McElroy also highlighted the cross-sector meeting that the Commission had held the previous month, of which the objective was to identify opportunities for advancing climate actions that support multiple regional priorities. She then reviewed the outcomes of that meeting:

- Make existing incentives to improve energy efficiency more accessible to all residents
- Balance provision of home efficiency data for homebuyers with financial impacts to sellers
- Recoup energy savings for affordable housing projects

- Build in efficiency measures as priorities in publicly funded projects, not expendable options, to serve as examples for others
- Develop strategies for coordinating solar projects with design and community character considerations
- Identify opportunities to ease regulatory barriers for solar projects where appropriate
- Communicate competing values and highlight importance of shifting values and tradeoffs

Following this review, Ms. McElroy characterized the changes made to the goals, strategies, and actions as a result of stakeholder inputs in meeting no. 2, and reviewed the resulting themes for discussion, suggested edits, and actions for meeting no. 3.

Below are the working group member clarifying questions and comments that followed Ms. McElroy's recap presentation. Working group member questions are **bolded** and answers from the Commission are *italicized*, any further comments or questions made by members are in regular text.

- **In the past, earnest efforts were made towards regulations and regional policy plans that were not accepted by the Assembly of Delegates and the Commission board. After this CAP process concludes, will it need to be adopted and/or approved by these entities? If so, is it possible that all of this work could be rejected?**
  - *CCC: Review by either of these bodies would apply to any amendments made to the Regional Policy Plan (RPP) as a result of the CAP. For the CAP, Commission staff is working with the Commission Climate Action sub-committee, and they are charged with developing the CAP and considering any amendments to incorporate into a potential goal/objective/technical guidance as part of the RPP. The CAP as a plan will be adopted by the Commission itself and does not need to go through the Assembly for approval.*
- **If the Commission adopts the CAP (and it has [enforcement capacity]), could you please elaborate on how this will work?**
  - *CCC: This can be thought of similarly to other regional plans the Commission has developed (e.g., the 208 Plan or Comprehensive Economic Development Plan). These plans have roles outside the RPP, but also inform things within it. The Subcommittee will be considering how the CAP is incorporated into the RPP. Then, there are other pieces of it that would stand alone outside of the RPP as the CAP itself.*
- **Where is a net-zero goal included?**
  - *CCC: The Commission's goal is to align with the Commonwealth. The timing is evolving on this, but the intention is that the CAP will be a shorter-term plan that is laying out the fact that we are looking to the future/long-term, where we will be net-zero by 2050. However, for this interim period—and nearer-term actions—net-zero by 2030 is not practical. When the CAP comes together as a whole, this*

*will make more sense, nonetheless, the Commission has heard this desire and it is reflected in the CAP's strategies.*

- **The CAP Purpose Statement invokes the State's work. Could the Commission use plainer English to illustrate that the goal *is* to get to net-zero? This overall effort suffers from proliferation of action, it is not using a clear enough filter of terms for reducing carbon. If the right incentives, social justice lens, etc., are used, then the structure of the presentation needs to have some sense of filter of carbon reduction and priorities, as well as greater use of simpler English.**
  - *CCC: The Commission and Facilitation teams structured these meetings to be sector-focused in order to make them manageable. However, we encourage you to review the Housing & Development and Transportation sections of the actions database; this is where you will see mention of these crosswalks regarding net-zero.*
- Following several working group members suggesting substantive changes or comments to particular actions in the DRAFT actions database, Commission staff clarified their intent to release a preliminary version of the completed CAP in early 2021. They emphasized that this would be where this type of specific input could be contributed by working group members before wider distribution for public comment. Overall, working group member comments during this discussion concerned the following:
  - "Incentives versus punishment" with respect to CAP adoption and implementation
  - Challenges related to achieving Green Community status designation (permitting, inspection, costs, etc.), and the State's role
  - The Stretch Code as it relates to the existing Building Code (specifically in Strategy 1.3)
- Commission staff also responded to a comment regarding the incorporation of public health and safety as it related to strategies and actions in the CAP. The Commission clarified that the framing of the entire CAP process implicitly took public health and safety into account as it is a default pillar of any plan developed by the organization.

### *Discussion of Key Outstanding Questions*

Ms. McElroy provided a brief introduction to the issue of Green Communities with regard to the CAP's Energy section. She then posed the following lingering critical question(s), which participants were asked to discuss, confirm, and refine, as needed:

- *What are remaining barriers to Green Community designations? Remedies?*

In response to this question, working group members noted several barriers to Green Community designations. There was general consensus that a major block was centered around the adoption of the stretch code. Participants noted that challenges around the stretch code related to lack of understanding regarding the benefits by town select boards

and managers, the public, etc., the influence of town builders either for or against the stretch code, and its application only to new homes (i.e., Sandwich has 7,500 homes already with 14 new homes being built per year).

Participants then noted that it could be helpful for the Commission or Cape Light Compact to create an educational package on the existing code and the new code to inform everyone. This was suggested as a means to reduce resistance to change by providing more detail on the new code (i.e., when it would be available or enforced). Finally, working group members suggested that the Commission could hire staff with specific expertise in energy conservation and/or building codes.

## IDENTIFY KEY ACTORS

Cape Cod Commission Deputy Director, Erin Perry, introduced and reviewed a summary of the outcomes of the Legal and Jurisdictional Analysis for the Climate Action Plan. Her presentation of the findings described how it informs the Actors section of the Plan. In particular, she highlighted the Commission's better understanding of governmental actors through its analysis, providing rationale for focusing the working group members on identifying civic and private actors. Ms. Perry then shared some initial thoughts about appropriate actors for the actions and steps in the Energy sector.

Following Ms. Perry's presentation, Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative, Inc., (CVEC) Executive Director, Liz Argo, reported on a meeting of the Expanded Energy and Climate Organizations of the Cape & Islands. Ms. Argo noted this meeting was hosted by the Cape Light Compact (CLC), CVEC, and the Cape Cod Climate Collaborative for groups in the area to convene and share, coordinate, and collaborate on climate-related work. She noted that a deliverable from this meeting would be a charting of all the organizations doing this work, and would be made available to everyone. She detailed that the purpose of this charting process was to increase understanding around collective efforts to address climate change in the region. Ms. Argo also highlighted that the Commission was present at the meeting, which facilitated wider understanding of the CAP process and how it was progressing.

Below are working group member clarifying questions and comments that followed these presentations. Several working group members made comments regarding the larger landscape of actors who were involved, and the necessity to truly map out and utilize the connections, resources, and expertise that are currently available. Working group member questions are **bolded** and answers from the Commission/CBI are *italicized*, any follow up commentary by participants is in regular text.

- **Could the Commission confirm that through the Cape Cod RPP, they have some power that could be recognized?**
  - *CCC: The intent is to look at both the CAP and RPP Amendments and incorporate appropriate actions. With the Commission members, this is something that will be considered in the near term.*

- **If the working groups are identifying actors, shouldn't climate/energy committees be included? Will the town committees be included? If not, why?**
  - CCC: *The Commission absolutely wants to attach those committees and boards to the steps; we want to include both.*
  - CBI: *There are some piece of this puzzle that are clearer, which might include these action committees. The Commission is looking for input on other actors that may not be as apparent.*
- **The inclusion of select boards would be powerful.**
  - CCC: *This point is well taken. There may be an opportunity to convene at this level in the future. The Commission has made a general request for time at the municipal meetings and will return.*
    - CVEC: *There are two organizations who provide convenings of the select people and the town administrators. It would be helpful to have standing presentations to these organizations. Convenings of these two groups could be a platform for the CAP to get much more attention and could facilitate opportunities for collaboration.*

### *Key Actor Analysis*

Following these presentations, participants were broken into the following groups to identify and refine key actors for the actions and steps of the Energy sector:

- NGOs
- Private Actors
- Scientists/Researchers

In addition to identifying specific actors, working group members were also asked to consider what would be required to enlist, mobilize, or support stakeholder groups who are identified (e.g., planning boards, homeowners' associations, and management companies, etc.).

The table below coalesces a sample of the types of actors identified by the working group as keys to implementing the CAP strategies and actions. Those listed below are an illustration of the breadth of opportunities for collaboration that were mentioned. *Please note: several of the actors suggested during these thematic breakout groups may actually be categorized outside the group within which it was suggested.*

NGOs	Chambers of Commerce
	Faith Communities Environmental Networks
	Energy Committee(s)
	PACE Program
	Tern Foundation
Private Actors	Eversource
	Chambers of Commerce

	Restaurants
	Hotels/Airbnb
	Real estate agencies
	Retailers
	Businesses as renewable energy producer(s)
Scientist/Researchers	Regional Transit Authority
	Eversource
	Northeast Energy and Commerce Association (NECA) - Emerging Technologies and Storage Committee
	Climate Action Networks (e.g., ICAN of Martha's Vineyard)
	Solid Waste and Diversion (municipal)
	NESEA Northeast Sustainable Energy Association
	Psychologists, religious leaders, political scientists
	Media specialists on influence

### IDENTIFY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Cape Cod Commission Natural Resources Program Manager, Heather McElroy, provided a high-level overview of the performance measures that would enable long-term progress while tracking at the short-term scale. She elaborated that the principles of the performance measures were set by the GHG inventory, which set the base line for the inventory to then be revisited to measure progress. Ms. McElroy then detailed that the performance measures would be used to track progress. She further highlighted that the baseline GHG inventory was also linked to other regional plans and initiatives in the region, and thus measures were already identified through the other plans (e.g., the Cape Cod Regional Policy Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Regional Transportation Plan, and Stats Cape Cod). Ms. McElroy revisited the two-part purpose statement, explaining one component prescribed measuring climate resilience and the other was meant to assess how Cape Cod is addressing mitigation through reducing GHGs. Finally, she reviewed the draft performance measures, which are divided into the five focus areas (e.g., Natural Resources & Working Lands, Energy, Transportation, Housing & Development, and Community) along with a key measure from each focus area:

Focus Area	Draft Key Performance Measure(s)
Community	Equity Considerations/Balance with other regional Priorities
Energy	% of Electricity from Renewable Sources
Housing & Development	% of Homes/Businesses Heated by Electricity



Natural Resources & Working Lands	Acres of Open Space Preserved (sequestration proxy)
Transportation	% of Vehicles Powered by Electricity

Below are working group member questions and comments that followed Ms. McElroy's presentation. Working group member questions are **bolded** and answers from the Commission are *italicized*.

- **To get a baseline reading, does the Commission inquire with Eversource at a high-level about the BTUs being produced for the Cape or therms of gas being used? This is the best overall indicator of use and progress at this scale.**
  - *CCC: The Commission cannot give a specific response to this question, but we confirm that this kind of question is incorporated into the GHG Inventory. If this is something of interest to track and report on, it is possible to do.*
    - As power suppliers, there is a requirement to disclose the sources. So, wouldn't the usage of the grid power be part of the disclosure label?
    - Eversource: Eversource and other utilities have shared these types of data and they are available. Eversource has been working on load forecasting data with the Martha's Vineyard commission, is open to this here as well.
- **Does the Eversource data identify sources for the grid as well as overall usage? Is it possible to glean a percentage of where the energy is coming from and in what quantity?**
  - Eversource: Yes, we should be able to track that down per region. The usage piece is very key in terms of exploring how to change electrification.
- **Is there agreement on what the baseline impacts are right now? What is the availability of baseline data and in what areas? Can we all agree on where we started to ensure how we are tracking our progress? Even if Cape Cod does all the right things, are we really making a difference?**
  - *CCC: We are hoping that the detail we were able to collect, and the data we were able to collect and provide in the GHG Inventory, are data that can be replicated. We would do it through the calculations and process the Commission has memorialized. If we have made progress through these efforts, it will be reflected in the next inventory. The Commission cannot speak to whether everyone thinks it is the baseline, but it is something that was widely distributed. Again, the Commission did the best we could with the data that were available so that it is replicable and will demonstrate some progress has been made.*
- **How many gallons of gas are delivered to gas stations annually on the Cape? What about per month as an indicator of what is happening seasonally? My hope would be this number decreases. It is also necessary to assess the impact**



**of visitors on energy use and subsequently how these results will be dealt with in this plan?**

- One working group member suggested the following specific indicators for performance measures as they related to four of the five focus areas:
  - **Housing & Development: Determine/procure a number for gas consumption. Natural Gas is currently a leading source of emissions across MA; this needs to be reversed.**
  - **Transportation: Calculate percent change of EVs and homes which will confirm if Cape Cod is reducing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (indicated that a an absolute number may not indicate conversion, e.g. a 2 car home that becomes a 3 car home with the addition of an EV car, does not have the same impact as converting one fossil fuel car to an EV).**
  - **NR & WL: Open space preserved already has historic numbers as an indicator instead use a measure that indicates contribution to new capture and storage of CO<sub>2</sub> (i.e., number of new trees).**
  - **Energy: Instead of tracking the percentage of renewable energy, measure renewable energy generation locally or procurement. It is important to define what is being tracked.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*No public comment was made during this meeting.*

## **NEXT STEPS & WRAP UP**

Cape Cod Commission Deputy Director, Erin Perry, described next steps for finalizing the Action Plan, including incorporating findings from the Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis, and developing a plan for implementation. She noted that the Economic and Fiscal Impact Assessment, being conducted by the Eastern Research Group (ERG), would not be completed until early 2021. Ms. Perry further detailed that for this analysis, ERG was working to examine the fiscal impacts of climate change in the region (including the cost of business as usual), as well as exploring several mitigation scenarios.

She then provided an overview of timeline and steps remaining after Meeting No. 3 to the drafting of the report, as well as other opportunities for public engagement from the draft to the final report. In particular, there would be specific focus groups convened to address the outstanding equity questions and communications & education. Finally, Ms. Perry closed by saying that while this third meeting concluded the stakeholder working group portion of the planning process, it did not necessarily end working group member involvement overall. Members were then asked to share final reflections on the process and complete a brief evaluation survey. Prior to adjourning the final meeting of the Energy Working Group, Commission staff expressed their gratitude for the time, efforts, and insights of all working group members over the course of the three meetings.

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Participants</b>	
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>
Brian	Miner
Judith	Holt
Kari	Parcell
Liz	Argo
Gordon	Starr
Lew	Stern
Francie	Williamson
Ronit	Goldstein
Chris	Powicki
Tim	Famulare
Margaret	Song
Walter	North
Steven	Casey
Rosalie	DeCosta