

Cape Cod Climate Action Plan: Housing & Development Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Virtual Meeting No. 3 | December 16, 2020 | 9 AM – 12 PM ET

MEETING IN BRIEF¹

On December 16, 2020, the Cape Cod Commission (Commission) held its third meeting engaging stakeholders on the topic of Housing & Development on Cape Cod to contribute to the development of a Cape Cod Climate Action Plan (CAP).

The objectives of the third Housing & Development meeting were to:

- Recap Meeting No. 2 and the progress to date on the CAP process
- Review revisions to strategies, actions, and steps to include in the CAP
- 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, and an overview of the Legal and Jurisdictional analysis, working group members were split into small groups to discuss potential key actors for implementation and reconvened for a full-group discussion of performance measures for the goals and actions relevant to Housing & Development.

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

MEETING NO. 2 RECAP & REFLECTION ON PROCESS TO DATE

Commission Executive Director, Kristy Senatori, opened her presentation by providing the working group with the following purpose statement for the 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*
- *Mitigate climate change on Cape Cod through reducing net regional greenhouse gas emissions in support of the framework and targets established by the Commonwealth.*

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

Ms. Senatori reiterated the interdisciplinary, multi-faceted approach of the CAP process for the working group, noting recently launched initiatives like Cape-wide Survey (with support from the UMass Donahue Institute and Center for Public Opinion) and the Student Climate Ambassador Program for grades 9-12. She previewed that members would hear today about the ongoing work on the Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies database, findings from the Legal and Jurisdictional Analysis (with support from outside counsel) to aid in identification of appropriate actors for implementation, and preliminary results of the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Analysis (with support from Eastern Research Group) to study certain scenarios for addressing climate change, including the “no action” scenario.

Ms. Senatori then moved to review the stakeholder engagement timeline for the working group members, highlighting the recently held Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meeting, which aimed to bring in more voices to the conversation and build alignment between focus areas. She also noted that there will be a Communications Working Group Meeting, to focus on communications and education efforts necessary to advance the CAP’s implementation, as well as an Equity Working Group Meeting to ensure the CAP is reaching and collaborating with the different vulnerable populations in the region. Rounding out the review of stakeholder engagement, Ms. Senatori shared that the Commission will be hosting additional focus groups in January 2021 to further refine strategies and identify next steps.

Finally, Ms. Senatori 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 staff had been working diligently to incorporate working group input and feedback on the actions database, continuing to make amendments and working towards completing a draft plan.

Working group members were provided with the opportunity to share key reflections and ask any questions. Below are working group member clarifying questions and comments that followed Ms. Senatori’s presentation. Working group member questions are **bolded** and answers from the Cape Cod Commission and/or CBI are *italicized*, any further comments or questions made by members are in regular text.

- **What is the Commission’s expected timing for the completion of the legal and jurisdictional analysis?**
 - *CCC: The analysis is completed now, and today’s presentation and conversation about identifying potential actors will touch on some of the findings. This meeting will help advance a conversation about the essential actors for moving various CAP components forward.*

REVIEW UPDATED ACTION PLAN

Commission Chief Planner, Chloe Schaefer, reviewed the changes made to the Housing & Development strategies, actions, and steps in the CAP, including how input from stakeholders has been incorporated; provided a recap of meeting no. 2; and posed several key outstanding questions for the group to discuss.

In her overview, Ms. Schaefer highlighted the cross-sector meeting that the Commission had held earlier that month, of which the objective was to identify opportunities for advancing climate actions that support multiple regional priorities. She presented the following 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 update, Ms. Schaefer 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 in meeting no. 3. No working group member posed clarifying questions following Ms. Schaefer's presentation.

Discussion of Key Outstanding Questions

Following Ms. Schaefer's presentation and an opportunity for clarifying questions, working group members engaged in a full-group discussion of three outstanding questions relevant to Housing & Development: how to offset or balance the cost of improved efficiency; how to educate the public to spur action by private property owners; and how to address community character concerns while improving building efficiency and resiliency. Below is a brief synthesis of the results of this conversation, organized by question.

Question #1: How to offset or balance the cost of improved efficiency

- **Pursuing local financing tools:** The upfront cost of making net zero can be recouped through energy savings. For affordable housing, it can take about 10 years to recoup. In Yarmouth, there is an affordable housing trust that would make loans to developers (0-1% interest loan for 10 years with annual payments) to help facilitate that private or public developer making that front-end investment. There

are local financing tools that could be employed to address this issue. Instead of improved efficiency being a burden on developers, it could be a way that they join the effort to address this problem and lead in solving the problem. Any approach will require communication and education efforts required for reframing the need of immediate ROI and conveying the value of improved efficiency.

- **Considering the costs of inaction:** Building and development will be facing increasing costs regardless of efforts to improve resilience, as climate change is bringing increasing hazards and risks that will need to be addressed in development. Financing tools, subsidies, and regulatory efforts may be more successful in balancing costs than trying to lower the actual upfront cost.
- **Creating incentives for developers:** There could be incentives for developers, such as incentivizing improved energy efficiency through a density bonus if they generate efficiencies or thinking about how to address the “soft costs” of developing, such as creating a more simplified process for breaking ground on energy efficient projects. Zoning codes may also be a good tool for addressing density.
- **Considering modular housing:** Establishing a modular housing factory on the Cape could help increase efficiency in development and create local jobs. This could also be an opportunity to use reused and recycle building materials.

Question #2: How to educate the public to spur action by private property owners

- **Creating the necessary social infrastructure:** Strong public education efforts will rely on the correct social infrastructure being in place (e.g., ensuring that every town has an energy committee charged with education on these specific actions, making sure a climate representative is at the table for policy talks; creating accessible communication channels for public consumption, including podcasts and social media; etc.).
- **Highlighting real-life examples:** “Walking the talk” can be a powerful tool for public education. Demonstrative projects should be highlighted and shared.

Question #3: How to address community character concerns while improving building efficiency and resiliency

- **Illustrating the Cape’s character:** Addressing concerns around community character could be aided by drawing up examples of what would constitute “staying in character” when looking at higher density, more efficient buildings. Developing visuals could help alleviate concerns of the public.
- **Leveraging existing work:** The Commission should leverage the great work done recently on “Community Resilience by Design” by Union Studio to help educate and address community character issues associated with higher density to create new design guidelines for resilient yet affordable design.

Additional Comments

- **Aligning transportation and housing/development:** There are essential linkages between transportation and housing/development, and CAP efforts in these two

areas need to be in alignment. As long as the Cape continues to focus so narrowly on cars, it will be difficult to meet any CAP goals.

- **Considering scope of efforts:** There is a difference between incentivizing a homeowner and a developer and a big difference between building rental or ownership properties, which needs to be taken into account. Most existing regulations are driven towards parcel-specific development, but the more holistic view of the RPP on regional activity centers is important. The Cape will need to make the mental leap to thinking about community investment with strong coordination across focus areas. There needs to be more public investment in these areas that decrease costs associated with developing the kind of housing that the Cape really needs.
 - *CCC: This conversation has been looking at more detailed pieces of the puzzle, but the CAP is looking at different systems and how to implement them. All implementation efforts will be reliant on capital infrastructure plans and housing plans. There is a clear link between discussions in Housing & Development and in the Transportation groups, which are the Cape's biggest sectors in terms of GHG emissions. There are many connections between both focus areas, and the CAP does need to consider the transportation infrastructure necessary to support desired development strategies. Efficient development patterns and considering transportation at the beginning of planning conversations will be essential to lowering emissions.*
- **Prioritizing conservation:** Conversations about energy efficiency and lowering emissions can sometimes skip over one of the root causes of climate change: resource depletion. It's important to address conservation as a solution as we go forward.

IDENTIFY KEY ACTORS

Commission Executive Director, Kristy Senatori, 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 had informed 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. Senatori then shared some initial thoughts about appropriate actors for the actions and steps in the Housing & Development sector.

No working group members posed clarifying questions or comments following Ms. Senatori's presentation.

Identifying Key Actors

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

- NGOs
- Businesses & Private Actors

The table below coalesces a sample of the types of actors identified by the working group as key 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 that several of the actors suggested within a thematic breakout group may actually be outside the group within which it was suggested.*

NGOs	Climate Action Networks
	350 Massachusetts and 350 Cape Cod
	Sierra Club
	5Cs
	Cape Light Compact
	Cape and Islands Self-Reliance
	Conservation Trusts
	Preservation Massachusetts
	Church and faith-based groups (e.g., Hands of Hope, United Way, Needy Fund, etc.)
Businesses & Private Actors	Homebuilders' Associations and other developers'/builders' organizations
	Realtor Boards & real estate community organizations
	Energy companies
	Utility companies
	Architects

Supporting Key Actors

In addition to identifying specific actors, working group members were also asked to consider what would need to be done to enlist, mobilize, or support stakeholder groups who are identified (e.g., planning boards, homeowners' associations, and management companies, etc.). Below is a brief synthesis of member inputs.

- **Funding & technical support:** NGOs will require adequate technical support, such as staff, resources, and technical expertise, to contribute to CAP efforts.
- **Incentives for involvement:** Many actors in the private sector may require incentives that are less tangible to spur involvement, such as visibility, marketability, perception as a leader, etc.
- **Inter-sector communication:** It will be important for private sector actors to communicate about the best practices they are using and/or seeking out.
- **Clear asks:** It will be important to clearly define the roles of actors with each ask. Currently, NGOs may be needed in more of an advocacy role to advance strategies,

and they may later be needed to serve in more of a coordination role to bring in partners and lead implementation efforts.

- **Accessible concept:** More broadly, it will be important to centralize the larger themes and messages into a centralized leading concept that actors can buy into.

IDENTIFY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Commission Transportation Program Manager, Steven Tupper, presented on the Commission’s approach to developing performance measures that can assess and document progress toward reaching the goals within the CAP. He provided a high-level overview of the performance measures that would enable long-term progress while tracking at the short-term scale. The performance measures are divided into the five focus areas (e.g., Natural Resources & Working Lands, Energy, Transportation, Housing & Development, and Community) and were shared 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

Following Mr. Tupper’s presentation, working group members were asked to share any feedback on the Commission’s approach, looking at the breadth and depth of the evaluation framework and the indicators proposed. Below is a brief synthesis of member inputs.

- **Importance of tracking cost-effectiveness:** It will be essential to capture which initiatives are cost-effective in order to plan future actions.
 - *CCC: Cost-effectiveness could be tracked through economic analysis. It will also be important to consider the different framings of cost-effectiveness – for individuals and for businesses, and how it factors into equity conversations. “What is the burden on those looking to make shifts in line with the CAP?”*
- **Accessible progress reports:** The Commission could help convey high-level progress reports to the public with clear infographics and colored scales for

different performance measures. Public understanding and mobilization will be essential to drive decision-making on climate issues.

- **Considering ratio of garden space:** The ratio of garden space in a development could serve as a measure of mitigation, contributing to resilience with regards to the supply chain and self-sustainability. The Commission could also consider incentivizing pollinator gardens or native plants in place of traditional grass lawns.
- **Tracking open space:** An important consideration is that lack of development in vulnerable areas leads to lack of potential for damages (e.g., open space as the absence of houses in floodplains). This framing could be useful for measuring resilience and for communicating about increasing resilience.
- **Working with developers:** It will be important to remain cognizant of burdens placed on the developing community. Efforts like employing an “objective criteria” approach to assess proposed projects, training younger people starting in the building trades on how to improve efficiency and resiliency, and/or working with banks to finance smaller projects to increase the capacity of those working to build responsibly could be considered.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made during this meeting.

NEXT STEPS & WRAP UP

Commission Executive Director, Kristy Senatori, described the next steps for finalizing the CAP, including incorporating findings from the Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis and developing a plan for implementation. She noted that working group members will have an opportunity to share any final thoughts or questions regarding the CAP, and members were encouraged to send any reflections following this meeting to Commission staff over email. 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 Housing & Development 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

Participants	
First Name	Last Name
Buff	Chace
Matt	Dudley
Carla	Feroni
Tom	Feronti
Ward	Ghory
Andrew	Gottlieb
Bette	Hecox-Lea
Shannon	Hulst
Paul	Niedzwiecki
Kimberley	Pearson
Ann	Robinson
Sharon	Rooney
Mary	Waygan