

Cape Cod Climate Action Plan: Natural Resources & Working Lands

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Virtual Meeting No. 3 | December 15, 2020 | 1-4pm ET

MEETING IN BRIEF¹

On December 15, 2020, the Cape Cod Commission (Commission) held its third meeting engaging stakeholders on the topic of Natural Resources & Working Lands 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 Natural Resource and Working Lands stakeholder working group.

The objectives of the second Natural Resources & Working Lands 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 Natural Resources & Working Lands.

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

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

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.*

Ms. Senatori reiterated the interdisciplinary, multi-faceted approach of the CAP process for the working group, noting recently launched initiatives like a 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 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 that the CAP is reaching and engaging the different vulnerable populations in the region. Rounding out the review of stakeholder engagement, Ms. Senatori shared that the Commission will be hosting 8 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 noted that the Commission 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 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.

- **Were the Communications Working Group and Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meetings added in response to feedback from the Stakeholder Working Group Meetings?**

- *CCC: The Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meeting was added to address and align the diverse feedback received in the Focus Group and Stakeholder Working Group Meetings. The Cross-Sector Stakeholder group may meet one more time. The Communications Working Group was always planned as part of stakeholder engagement efforts.*
- **Will there be efforts to collate all actions in one place related to a specific topic, such as salt marshes or protected space?**
 - *CCC: The Commission would like to provide a complete picture of actions addressing different concerns, and the Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meeting also aimed to align some of those disparate conversations.*

REVIEW UPDATED ACTION PLAN

Cape Cod Commission Natural Resources Program Manager, Heather McElroy, reviewed the changes made to the Sector strategies, actions, and steps in the CAP, including how the 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. McElroy 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 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 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 in meeting no. 3.

Below are working group member clarifying questions and comments that followed Ms. McElroy'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.

- **When the Commission hosted the focus group conversation with realtors, what was their position regarding home energy scorecards?**
 - *CCC: At a high-level, the message was that, if you assign a grade to a home based on how well it performs in terms of energy efficiency, then that could ultimately impact the owner's ability to sell that property. For many, the home is their greatest investment, and any potential impacts to value are concerning. A potential path could be having the listing service provide information about homes that falls into different categories so sellers can shop for homes that best suit their interests.*
- **An important discussion during the Cross-Sector Stakeholder Meeting for this group was solar siting. It remains important that habitat and conservation be a part of that discussion. There may be a need for working group members to take the time to review the actions and strategies for other working groups to promote better alignment and build consensus around desired outcomes and steps. There are a few areas where input from this group would likely improve efforts of other stakeholder groups. Thinking about future opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, there could be short, focused meetings to address overlapping issues and concerns.**

Discussion of Key Outstanding Questions

Following Ms. McElroy's presentation and an opportunity for clarifying questions, working group members engaged in a full-group discussion of some outstanding questions relevant to Natural Resources & Working Lands: challenges around regulatory barriers to restoration projects and tension around sustaining salt marshes. Below is a brief synthesis of the results of this conversation, by question.

Question #1: Challenges around regulatory barriers to restoration projects

- Expediting regulatory review processes could lead to poor outcomes from development activities. In order to prevent harmful outcomes to the environment and give clear guidance to developers, it will be important to define what it means to restore natural lands. Language like "eliminate" or "streamline" should be carefully considered.
- Restoration requires identifying and balancing different priorities based on the natural environment, considering how to best manage for wildfire management, protecting rare species and biodiversity, and maximizing carbon sequestration.
- There are also instances of conventional restoration projects (e.g., Herring River Restoration Project) that go through long regulatory permitting processes. The Commission could consider how to address some of those regulatory burdens for restoration projects that are generally considered desirable. One approach could be

helping improve communication and education with Conservation Commissions to facilitate support of such projects.

Question #2: Tension around sustaining salt marshes

- One area for the Commission to explore could be adjusting regulatory requirements to target open space mitigation measures for projects in areas upland of salt marshes to allow for salt marsh migration.
- The region could establish districts of critical planning concern (DCPC) in areas that are already developed, allowing time to plan, and promoting a longer-term outlook for those lands that will have to deal with certain development restrictions and changes as the marsh migrates. There will also be a need to clearly communicate implications of buying property close to the coast.

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 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. Senatori then shared some initial thoughts about appropriate actors for the actions and steps in the Natural Resources & Working Lands sector.

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 Commission are *italicized*, any follow up commentary by participants is in regular text.

- **The government is a primary source of funding for natural resource work and climate resilience projects. Streamlining the pursuit of government funds is an important part of what CAP could do. CAP could help communities identify primary projects and sources of funding, building out a framework for applying for funds.**
- **There are many funding opportunities to which only municipalities can apply. The results from the Legal and Jurisdictional analysis could help municipalities justify specific projects that they are applying for.**
- **Will the CAP address how to promote action from the governmental actors that this conversation will not be addressing?**
 - *CCC: Yes. This conversation aims to gather working group member input on non-governmental actors.*
- **Where does the Cape Light Compact fit into this jurisdictional breakdown?**
 - *CCC: The Commission recognizes the Cape Light Compact as an important actor in these discussions and is working to incorporate them into the CAP.*

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 Natural Resources & Working Lands sector:

- NGOs,
- Private Actors, and
- Scientists/Researchers.

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.).

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	300 Committee
	Community College and Local University partners
	Center for Coastal Studies
	Churches and faith groups
	Climate Action Networks
	Village or Resident Associations
Businesses & Private Actors	Developers
	Landscapers
	Law firms
	Impact investors
	Resorts and hospitality industry
	Chambers of Commerce
Scientist/Researchers <i>*Members noted that it is difficult to identify scientists/researchers in a vacuum and suggested the Commission look at technical contractors behind NGO reports.</i>	MACC
	Pond Coalitions
	Herring River Restoration Project
	Woodwell Research Center
	Conservation Trusts
	Cape Cod National Seashore
	Trustees of Reservations
	Local land trusts
	Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
	Pleasant Bay Alliance

	Center for Coastal Studies
	APCC
	Woods Hole Sea Grant
	University researchers

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:** Funding and other aspects of technical support will need to be present to facilitate the mobilization of actors. The Commission will likely need to serve as a convener for different groups of actors at a regional scale.
- **Central convener:** The Commission may need to conduct landscape analysis of different non-governmental actors to help with the identification and outreach process.
- **Communication & education:** Communication and education within and across sectors will be important for implementation. Education will be especially important for better understanding the tradeoffs between short- and long-term priorities.
 - The Commission could compile a reference guide for all of the relevant NGOs and who to contact/call on for various projects or issues. This could prove especially helpful for municipalities.

IDENTIFY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Cape Cod Commission Chief Planner, Chloe Schaefer, presented on the Commission's approach to developing performance measures that can assess and document progress toward reaching the goals within the CAP. She 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 Ms. Schaefer’s presentation, working group member questions 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.

- If the Commission could create a uniform document outlining all issues and goals, it would prove helpful with communicating with all identified NGOs.
- The Commission should continue to consider how to best formulate co-benefits from actions to incentivize the broadest constituent base.
- Certain interests may appear to be conflicting (e.g., key successes in upland habitat restoration could be seen as negatively affecting carbon sequestration efforts), but education around the different approaches and priorities inherent in resilience and adaptation will help develop strategies and compromise to meet various interests.
- The CAP balances many different focus areas and actions; it will be important for the Commission to focus in on the activities and sectors with the largest impact on GHG emissions in the scheme of the larger CAP process.

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 Natural Resources & 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
Greg	Berman
Casey	Dannhauser
David	DeConto
Rick	Francolini
Jane	Harris
DeeDee	Holt
Ian	Ives
Don	Keeran
Jake	McCumber
Judith	McDowell
Maxine	Minkoff
Dennis	O'Connell
Morgan	Peck
Jim	Rassman
Avery	Revere
Leonard	Short
Gordon	Starr
Lillian	Woo