

Greater Middlebury Climate Economy Initiative

what is it?

...a community-driven process with local leaders, the Vermont Council on Rural Development and many partners to cultivate economic development, innovation, and affordability in the face of climate change.

...working together to strengthen Middlebury's economic, environmental, and social health and resilience so that our region will achieve deep carbon reduction while also supporting a thriving and inclusive ecosystem of businesses and institutions.

...helping to ensure that Middlebury and surrounding towns will be a place that draws in youth, retains families, and is a supportive place to grow old.

the work

Over 150 local citizens participated in a series of public meetings last fall to identify strategies and develop action plans for strengthening the vitality and prosperity of Middlebury and surrounding towns. Four Task Forces are meeting regularly to push those initiatives forward. Each of these groups has local leadership and welcomes additional members.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for Homes and Businesses

The average Vermont household spends \$5,000 on energy costs to heat their home, provide electricity, and to power their transportation. As a first initiative, the Energy Task Force has designed a demonstration project to work with all residents in a neighborhood to bring down those energy costs, increase the comfort and healthiness of homes, and reduce fossil fuel emissions. Utilities and other partners will deliver special incentives and technical assistance in support of this effort. We are currently searching for a champion or champions who wants to bring this project to their neighborhood and take the lead in outreach.

→ Please contact Task Force Chair Chris Huston if you want to participate as a neighborhood champion, want to join the Task Force or if you have any questions or advice as this group continues its work - chuston@breadloaf.com.

Advance Public Transportation; Facilitate More Ridesharing; and Make Middlebury and Surrounding Towns the Best Possible Place for Biking & Walking

A Task Force has come together to make the Middlebury region easier, safer, more efficient and more affordable to get around. The group is working hard to answer questions like:

How can we encourage more people to ride the ACTR bus and take advantage of other transit and ride-sharing opportunities?

What role can we play to advocate that a new train stop in Middlebury connects easily with downtown and to other transportation options?

How do we support the work of the Walk-Bike Council of Addison County to make constant improvements to the walkability and bike-ability of our community?

→ Laura Asermily and Dorothy Mammen are chairing this group. To participate or share ideas contact Dorothy at dorothy.mammen@gmail.com.

Help Farmers Transition to Organic and Regenerative Practices

Farming and food production are a major economic engine in Addison County and at the same time, depending on how it is practiced, agriculture can either contribute to or help to reverse climate change. This Task Force is developing strategies to assist, incentivize and recognize area farmers who employ practices that build healthy soils and sequester carbon.

→ This Task Force is led by Ashar Nelson who can be reached at ashar@vermontintegratedarchitecture.com

Increase Staff Capacity at the Local and Regional Levels to Coordinate Climate Change and Energy Related Actions

This Task Force has been meeting regularly with the goal of developing an organizational structure that provides ongoing support for area towns and citizen groups working to tackle climate change. Sustained support and coordination that paid staff would provide are critical in realizing the potential of what have been largely volunteer efforts up until now.

→ Andrea Murray, Spence Putnam, and Amy Sheldon are the chairs of this effort. Contact Spence at spencerp@sover.net.

For more information

Visit <http://middclimateeconomy.org/> for information and regular updates on the Initiative. And for answers to general questions or with suggestions, reach out to the Chair of the overall Initiative, Steve Maier, at sbmaier55@gmail.com.

