

A Climate Action Plan for Addison County

By Richard Hopkins and Steve Maier

What can we do to address the coming climate crisis while at the same time grow our local community and its economic and social institutions?? The Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County (CEAC) has begun a concentrated 10-month process to produce a Climate Action Plan, to provide a roadmap.

That's where you come in. We say that because: To be successful, this process will need substantial community input.

Our goal is to provide a much-needed blueprint for broad, community-supported reduction of local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to be measured against CEAC's recent [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#). The plan will address the three biggest sources of this county's greenhouse gas emissions: transportation, agriculture, and buildings.

Starting this month and running through July, members of CEAC's core planning team will be interviewing 50 to 80 community leaders who hold a wide variety of roles around the county.

We will be doing these interviews to get leaders' views on how to best address greenhouse gas releases in our community. We would like to learn from them about what they see as likely changes in their area of activity, related to greenhouse gases, in the next 5 to 10 years. We would like to learn about any specific anti-greenhouse gas actions that they are considering or planning, or that they would recommend to the community, in the next 5 to 10 years.

And we would like to learn about their reactions to CEAC's proposed climate action goals for Addison County. Are they ambitious enough, or too ambitious? Do they address the right issues? Are there local actions we can tentatively identify that will help us in meeting those goals?

We anticipate that the people we interview will be able to identify many actions we could take on a local level — actions that members of the planning team would not necessarily know about because they aren't in that leader's professional field.

Our intent is to interview local people and organizations in many different domains. Perhaps they sell gasoline and heating fuels, electricity, natural gas, cars and trucks, powered machinery, agricultural products, forest products, heating systems for buildings and homes, and other consumer goods. Or they may provide healthcare, education, transportation and government services; build and maintain homes and other buildings; or manage multifamily dwellings or own rental properties.

How did we get to this point in the process? Work on creating the Climate Action Plan began with a Climate Roundtable in February, which was attended by over 60 people who are working on or deeply interested in how best to locally address climate change.

An introductory workshop followed, for a core planning team of about a dozen knowledgeable and active people from around Addison County. Another workshop occurred in May.

From there we have developed a list of possible strategic goals for the year 2030. Those goals - to be addressed by local actions that will be determined later in the planning process -- will cover the three broad domains of transportation, agriculture and buildings.

The final plan will identify steps that can realistically be taken locally to reduce climate pollution while moving toward a local economy that is sustainable in the long term. We'll identify existing and future business and "green jobs" opportunities. Individuals, businesses, organizations and institutions will identify defined roles they can play in the plan.

It's our intention that the plan can help guide and coordinate the actions of community sectors including education, agriculture, business, industry, local and state government, nonprofits, and major institutions such as Middlebury College and Porter Hospital. We plan to complete the Climate Action Plan by the end of the calendar year,

CEAC is being assisted in some of this work by an expert consulting company called paleBLUEdot, which has already helped about 50 communities develop Climate Action Plans.

Do you have suggestions or questions about the climate action plan -- or would you like to become involved in the process? If so, email office@ceacac.org.

-Steve Maier and Richard Hopkins are on the board of the nonprofit Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County. More info at www.ceacac.org.