Genesee Finger Lakes Region
Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

Appendix C

Engagement Summary

August 2025

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01

Overview

The development of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan required broad community feedback to inform the goals and strategies for reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions and climate pollution in the region. Community engagement throughout this process included Steering Committee meetings, community and municipal surveys, three rounds of meetings with eight focus groups, two public webinars, and six pop-up events.

Purpose of Engagement

Broad community feedback was sought by GFLRPC to inform the goals and strategies of the CCAP. Throughout engagement, GFLRPC particularly sought input from environmental justice populations, including low-income communities and communities of color, which have and will continue to be disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

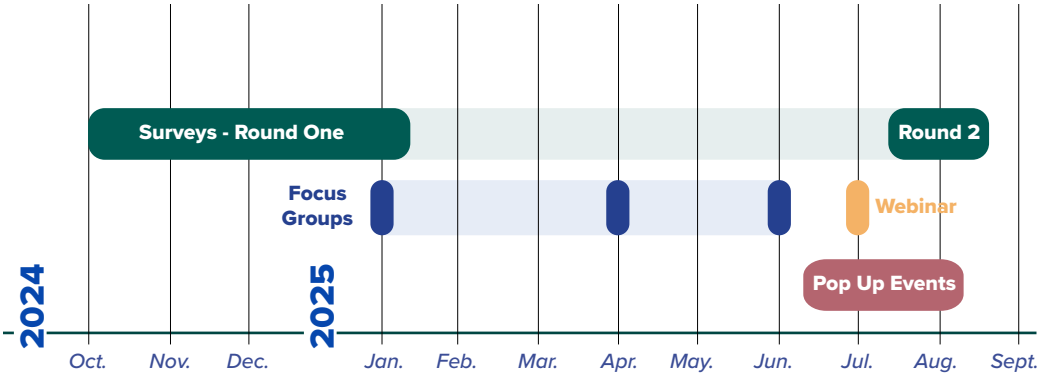
Engagement occurred in two main phases:

January 2025 – March 2025: Development of Draft Measures and Tools

Community Survey #1, Municipal Survey #1, and Focus Groups Round 1 helped identify preliminary concerns about climate impacts, barriers to climate action, and potential solutions to address these concerns and barriers. This initial feedback was used to develop draft measures and tools that were presented at Focus Groups Round 2.

April 2025 – August 2025: Refinement and Prioritization of Draft Measures and Tools

Feedback from Focus Groups Round 2 and 3 helped further refine the draft measures and tools for each sector. These refined draft measures and tools were presented at the Public Webinars and shared with the public via Community Survey #2 and at Pop-Up Events throughout the region in July and August. Community Survey #2 and Pop-Up Events also helped gain insights into the public's priorities for implementation.



Key Takeaways

Key takeaways across both phases of engagement include:

CONCERNS

Climate change and impacts such as water pollution, increased spread of invasive species and/or disease, extreme heat, air pollution, and flooding are a major concern, according to the municipal and community surveys. In the sector-based focus groups, participants cited climate-related disruptions such as extreme storms damaging the power grid, flooding damaging buildings and infrastructure, and drought/flooding impacting farmers.

BARRIERS

Across all sectors and for residents, business owners, municipalities, and institutions, the cost of implementing climate action is a major barrier. High upfront costs, such as electrifying buildings and fleets, upgrading the electric grid, and installing manure management systems, were identified for every sector.

Capacity is another major barrier. Municipalities lack staff capacity and need technical assistance navigating grant programs. There are also not enough knowledgeable contractors to meet the demand for electrification. Workforce training and regional hubs for information will be key to bridge these gaps.

PRIORITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

There are clear priorities for implementation. In the short term, the community would like to see quick fixes, such as electrifying vehicles, diverting waste, and increasing energy efficiency. However, in the long term, the community would like to see a wholesale culture shift to reduced car dependence, closed landfills, and net-zero buildings and infrastructure.

Equity must be a key consideration during implementation. There is a desire for the benefits and impacts of climate action to be distributed equitably. Energy affordability, in particular, is a major concern.

Framing strategies around co-benefits such as job creation, cost savings, cleaner air and water, and increased resilience is crucial to increasing community support. Focus group participants emphasized the importance of focusing on more tangible benefits than abstract emissions reductions.

02

CCAP Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee met with GFLRPC monthly, and other members of the Engagement Project Team as needed, to provide insight and guidance on the development of the CCAP and public outreach. The Advisory Committee was comprised of representatives from the City of Rochester, Genesee Transportation Council, RTS, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region, and County governments. The Advisory Committee members are listed below.

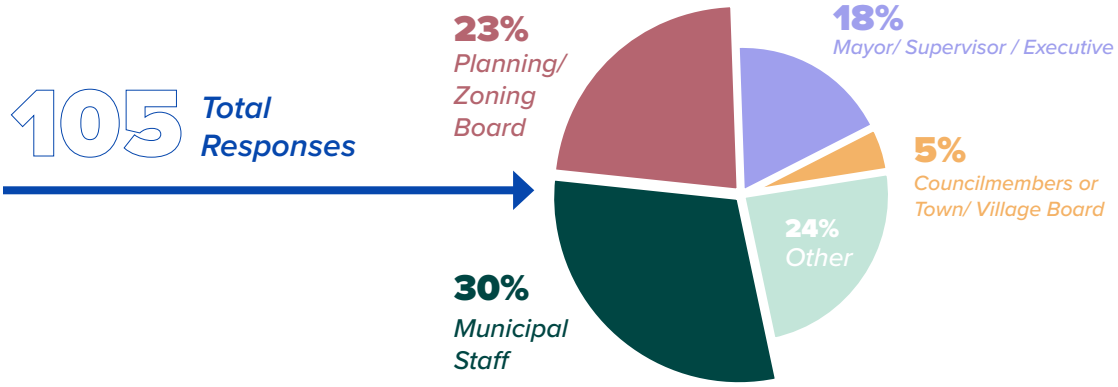
- Anne Spaulding, City of Rochester
- Ben Levine, Wayne County
- Brittany Czworka, Yates County
- Cory Winters, Orleans County
- Emily End, Yates County
- Eric Farr, RTS
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Jae Darling, Seneca County
- James Bragg, Wyoming County
- Jeff Ayers, Yates County
- Jill Henry, Seneca County
- Jim Stack, Genesee Transportation Council
- Kristen VanHooreweghe, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Madison Quinn, Monroe County
- Mary Underhill, Livingston County
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Rusty Korth, RTS
- Shalini Beath, City of Rochester
- Thomas Lyon, Ontario County

03 Community and Municipal Surveys

Municipal Survey | October 25, 2024 - January 31, 2025

This survey was targeted specifically for municipal staff, elected officials, and others affiliated with municipal operations. The input from this survey informed the goals and strategies to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions and climate pollution across all sectors. The survey was open from October 25, 2024, through January 31, 2025, and received a total of 105 responses. The survey was promoted through email and social media and was available online through Survey123.

Approximately 46 municipalities responded as well as all of the Counties, except for Wayne and Yates Counties. Seneca Falls, with 12% of responses, and Brighton, with 5% of responses, were the municipalities with the most responses. Initial feedback from this survey was used to shape the focus group discussions and preliminary measures and tools. Key findings from the municipal survey are highlighted below, a detailed survey analysis is available in Appendix A.



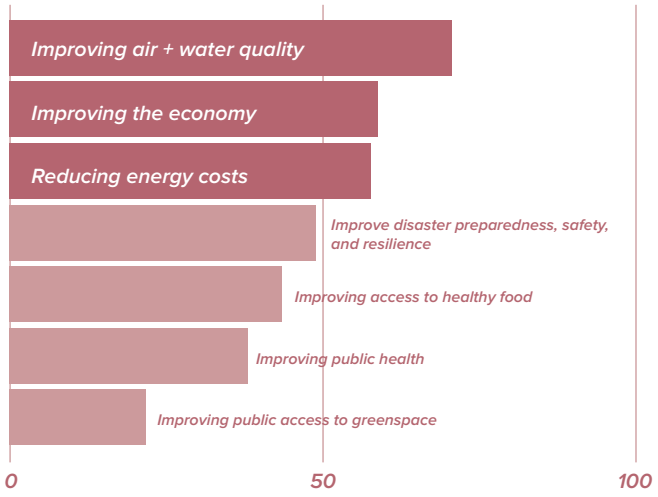
49%

of those surveyed said funding constraints prevented them from doing more to reduce their municipalities carbon footprint.

73%

of those surveyed said they would like to do more to reduce their municipalities carbon footprint.

Which of the following climate action benefits are most important to you/ your municipality?



The most common strategies that municipalities...

have implemented:

- *conducting an inventory of the municipal fleet (40%)*
- *incorporating smart growth principles into land-use policies and regulations (25%)*
- *incentivizing mixed-use/mixed-income development in City, Town, and Village centers (25%)*
- *expediting and standardizing permitting for installation of pedestrian amenities (25%)*

are interested in pursuing but need support for are:

- *expanding EV charging infrastructure in municipal lots (27%)*
- *expediting and standardizing permitting for installation of alternative fuel and electric vehicle refueling infrastructure (27%)*
- *incentivizing, then requiring through zoning and site review standards, green infrastructure, considerations for public transportation, and bike and pedestrian circulation in development projects (27%)*

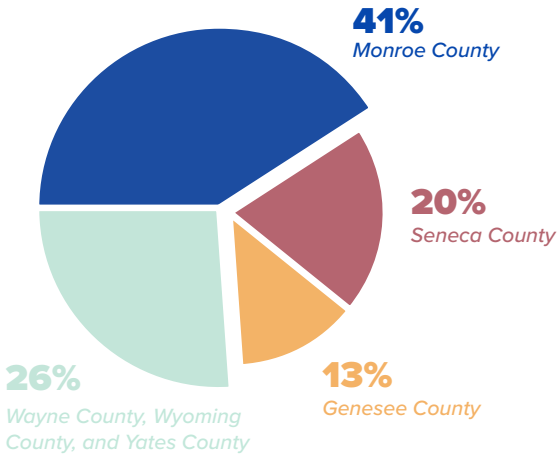
are not interested in pursuing are:

- *subsidizing or incentivizing public transit options for employee commutes (51%)*
- *engaging employees to take alternative modes of transportation through a green pledge or competition (46%)*
- *implementing a car-sharing program for staff (40%).*

Community Survey | October 25, 2024 - January 31, 2025

The community survey targeted members of the public and focused on individual concerns, household actions, and a broader community understanding of climate impacts. Input from this survey informed the goals and strategies to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions and climate pollution across all sectors. The survey was open from October 25, 2024, through January 31, 2025, and received a total of 236 responses. The survey was promoted through email and social media and outreach to local libraries. The survey was available online through Survey123 and was also distributed in a physical format at community events. Initial feedback from this survey was used to shape the focus group discussions and preliminary measures and tools. Key findings from the community survey are highlighted below, a detailed survey analysis is available in Appendix B.

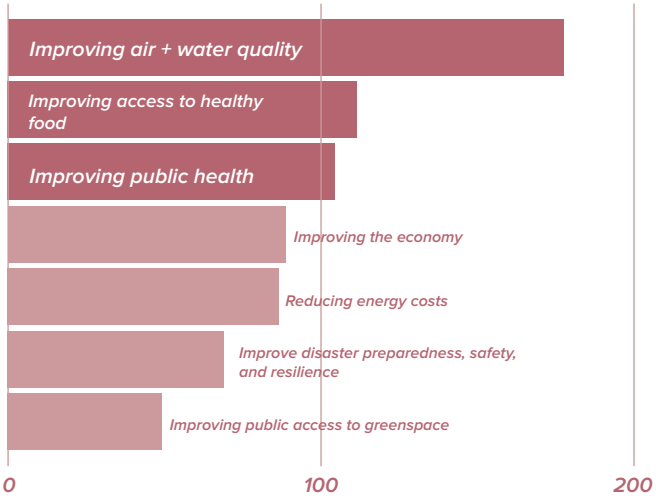
236 *Total Responses*



Additional community concerns:

- ✓ *government mandates*
- ✓ *implementation timelines*
- ✓ *lack of federal support*
- ✓ *unique rural challenges*

Which of the following climate action benefits are most important to your household?

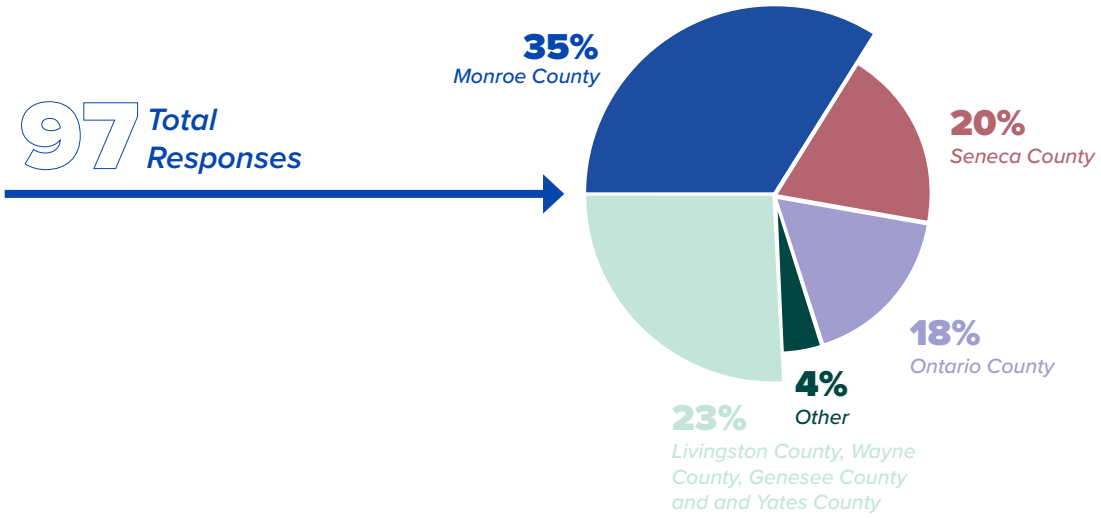


66%

of those surveyed said they would like to do more to reduce their household carbon footprint.

Community Survey #2 | July 18, 2025 – August 22, 2025

The community survey targeted members of the public and focused on prioritizing the strategies for each sector for implementation over the next three to five years. The survey was open from July 18, 2025, through August 22, 2025, and received a total of 97 responses. The survey was promoted through email and at pop-up events. The survey was available online through Survey123. Feedback from this survey was used to inform the implementation strategy for the Plan. Key findings from the community survey are highlighted below, a detailed survey analysis is available in Appendix C.



Top priorities from each sector:

Transportation and Land Use:

Adopt climate adaptation policies to reduce runoff, encourage native plants, manage stormwater, and promote overall **(49 responses)**

Buildings and Infrastructure:

Utilize Land Banks to repurpose vacant and derelict properties **(40 responses)**

Electric Power and Energy:

Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to increase grid capacity, create, meet, and expand their energy goals ensuring customer affordability remains a key consideration
(53 responses)

Agriculture and Working Lands:

Establish a tree fund to increase and replace lost tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals
(44 responses)

Materials Management:

Expand composting facilities, programs, and funding for medium to large waste producers to reduce the amount of food in landfill, in accordance to NYS Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling law. Over time, extend support to include small scale waste producers. **(53 responses)**

Industry and Workforce:

Define and integrate clean energy pathways into skilled trade and educational programs. **(42 responses)**

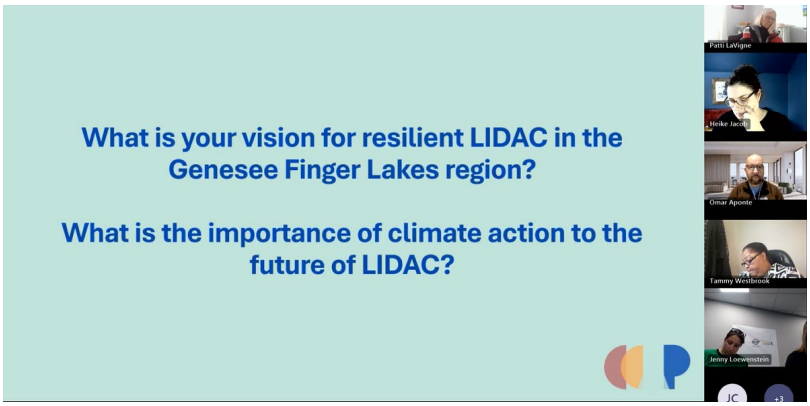
Building Regional Capacity :

Advocate for supportive policies at local, state, and federal levels can create a conducive environment for sustainable practices. For example, tax incentives, grants, or subsidies for farmers adopting sustainable methods. **(44 responses)**

04 Focus Groups

Focus groups were convened for eight sectors: Agriculture and Working Lands, Buildings, Electric Power, Industry and Economic Development, Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), Materials Management, Transportation, and Workforce Development. Focus group members provided their sector-specific expertise to inform the development of measures and tools for each sector. A list of the focus group members is available in Appendix D.

Focus groups met three times, in January, April/May, and June 2025. Each round of focus group meetings is summarized below. Notes from each focus group meeting are available in Appendix E.



Focus Groups Round 1 | January 2025

The first round of focus group meetings included introductions of the focus group members, a brief overview of the Comprehensive Climate Action, and a presentation of the preliminary findings from the greenhouse gas inventory and the community/ municipal surveys. The focus groups then discussed the following:

- The vision for resiliency for [that focus area] in the Genesee Finger Lakes region
- The importance of climate action to the future of [that focus area]
- The impact of extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting [that focus area]
- The steps organizations are taking to reduce emissions or how has [that focus area] prepared for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
- The barriers [that focus area] to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help [that focus area] overcome these barriers?

Key findings from each group are summarized on the following pages.

Agriculture and Working Lands

January 7, 2025

The agriculture and working lands focus group highlighted a vision for resilient agriculture in the Genesee Finger Lakes region that balances environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Participants emphasized healthy soil, biodiversity, water conservation, and sustainable practices that strengthen farm businesses, support community well-being, and ensure long-term food security, while acknowledging both the region's natural advantages and the challenges of cost and complexity. They discussed how climate change and extreme weather will affect farmers and foresters, the practices already being adopted to prepare, the barriers they face, and ways GFLRPC could provide support. Key themes included:

- **Support for resilient agriculture** – Promote practices that protect soil health, conserve water, sustain biodiversity, and balance economic and social needs to secure the future of farm businesses and community food systems.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Address wetter springs and falls that hinder planting and harvesting, increased pest pressures, and runoff that drives erosion and algal blooms, while also planning for development pressures from potential climate migration.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Encourage silvo-pasture, trialing new crops and breeds, participation in the NYS Climate Resilient Farming Program, sourcing greener fertilizers, generating renewable energy from manure, and installing solar.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Confront the cost, technical complexity, and scalability challenges of climate-smart practices, along with concerns that New York's ambitious climate goals could disadvantage local producers compared to other regions.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Invest in research and development to reduce costs, connect producers to programs like Cornell's Nutrient Management Spear Program and conservation easements, provide tools to understand carbon footprints, support infrastructure for electrification and efficient irrigation/manure systems, emphasize near-term mitigation strategies, learn from climate-similar regions, and engage trusted community leaders to encourage adoption.

Buildings

January 8, 2025

The focus group highlighted a vision for resilient building stock in the Genesee Finger Lakes region that emphasizes nature-based solutions, weatherization of older buildings, and adaptive reuse of vacant structures, supported by updated guidelines to advance climate action. Participants also discussed how climate change and extreme weather will affect homeowners and developers, the steps already being taken to prepare, the barriers they face, and ways GFLRPC could provide support. Key themes included:

- **Support for resilient building practices** – Expand nature-based solutions, weatherize aging housing stock, and prioritize adaptive reuse of vacant buildings.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Address rising insurance costs, water damage, house fires, flooding, and vulnerabilities of mobile and manufactured homes.
- **Adoption of climate-smart actions** – Encourage energy audits, transition to heat pumps, site new development carefully, secure backup energy for critical facilities, and participate in Clean Energy Communities and Climate Smart Communities programs.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Tackle high retrofit costs, electricity expenses, contractor shortages, limited municipal budgets, insufficient incentives for rental housing, long waits for rebates, and lingering distrust in government.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Increase the awareness of available incentives and ROI, frame benefits around local community and environmental health, promote small no-cost actions, explore regional strategies to lower electricity costs, and help municipalities strengthen their competitiveness for grant funding.

Electric Power

January 9, 2025

The electric grid focus group emphasized the need for a resilient, reliable, and affordable power system that integrates renewable energy and storage, reduces outages, and avoids becoming a bottleneck for other climate actions. Participants noted that extreme weather events are already straining the grid, raising maintenance costs, and creating new challenges alongside growing demand from electrification, AI, and data centers. They discussed steps utilities are taking, the barriers that remain, and the ways GFLRPC could provide support. Key themes included:

- **Support for a resilient grid** – Strengthen outage response, expand renewable energy with dependable storage, and ensure the grid remains reliable and affordable while accommodating climate action.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Address higher maintenance costs, manage capacity upgrades fairly, plan for the added strain from electrification and new technologies, and navigate community concerns about battery storage.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Advance customer programs for energy efficiency, EVs, and heat pumps; set emission targets for fleets and facilities; improve storm mobilization; expand smart meters; apply environmentally sensitive siting practices; and encourage creative approaches like using goats for vegetation management.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Tackle regulatory and educational hurdles, high costs, equity concerns for customers, and the reliance on mandates over flexible pilot programs in New York State.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Host local government workshops, emphasize community benefits, expand public education to counter misinformation, promote utility programs and funding, and share model local laws for renewable and battery energy projects.

Industry and Economic Development

January 14, 2025

The industry and economic development focus group emphasized the need for technology improvements, affordable clean energy, and sustainable practices that allow the region to remain competitive while retaining existing industries and attracting new ones. Participants stressed the importance of ensuring sufficient power for industrial sites and focusing on efficiency, while also acknowledging that climate action must balance market forces with long-term sustainability. They discussed how extreme weather underscores the need to invest in critical infrastructure, the steps industries are already taking, the barriers they face, and the role GFLRPC could play in supporting progress. Key themes included:

- **Support for resilient industry** – Advance technology and efficiency improvements, expand clean energy supply, ensure affordability, and strengthen competitiveness by retaining current industries and attracting new investment.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Invest in critical infrastructure to maintain business continuity and protect economic development.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Promote smart growth strategies such as redevelopment of brownfields and infill, build green facilities like Edwards Vacuum, and reduce industrial waste.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Overcome rigid mindsets favoring single technologies, regulatory and outreach gaps, limited energy supply, aging infrastructure, high costs of grid updates, and community opposition through planning and zoning processes.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Lead regional planning studies to identify suitable sites for renewable and alternative energy projects, and support municipalities in updating zoning and comprehensive plans to enable climate-smart industrial growth.

Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)

January 15, 2025

Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with participants to review DAC conditions in the region, share preliminary greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory results, and discuss draft strategies to reduce emissions and address climate impacts in disadvantaged communities. Participants then engaged in a facilitated discussion about their vision for resilient DAC, the expected impacts of climate change, steps already being taken, key barriers, and the role GFLRPC can play in supporting these communities. Key themes included:

- **Vision for resilient DAC** – Reduce the number of communities classified as disadvantaged by improving health outcomes, ensuring access to clean water and affordable electricity, reducing indoor air pollution, and expanding access to jobs and transportation choices.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Prepare for flooding, extreme heat, and winter storms that disproportionately affect vulnerable households; address challenges related to limited evacuation options, reliance on FEMA's reimbursement process, reduced mobility, and barriers to receiving alerts due to broadband or language access; and ensure safety for residents dependent on medical equipment during power outages.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** Support community-led solutions such as waste reduction and composting, mutual aid networks, community gardens, and participation in energy efficiency grant programs.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Confront affordability challenges, limited knowledge of climate-smart practices, and the reality that residents often face more immediate priorities competing with climate action.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Provide community education, share resources on programs at local events, strengthen participation in Climate Smart Communities, and expand grant writing support to help DAC access funding and resources.

Materials Management

January 21, 2025

The materials management focus group emphasized the need for a coordinated, circular system that prioritizes upstream solutions, strong education and communication, and clear metrics to measure progress. Participants discussed the risks that climate change poses to the sector, the steps already underway to reduce emissions, the barriers that persist, and the ways GFLRPC could provide support. Key themes included:

- **Vision for resilient waste systems** – Build a circular, coordinated, and consistent regional system that emphasizes upstream waste reduction, education and communication, and clear, data-driven metrics.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Plan for risks such as fires, rising insurance costs, and the challenges of safely managing solar panels and batteries at the end of their life cycle.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Advance energy and waste audits, expand supportive legislation like single-use plastic bans, work with entrepreneurs to create a sustainable local supply chain (e.g., Next Cycle), promote green purchasing, and plan for improved organics management.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Address high costs of residential composting, labor expenses, and zoning hurdles, as well as cultural preferences for convenience and the ongoing challenge of disposing of new and emerging materials.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension to expand community education, provide grant writing assistance, and support regional collaboration between counties (such as through GLOW) to strengthen waste and materials management systems.

Transportation

January 22, 2025

The transportation focus group emphasized the need for a resilient, low-carbon system that expands transportation choices, reduces car dependency, and improves public health while ensuring freedom of mobility. Participants stressed the importance of diversifying fuels beyond electric, expanding high-speed passenger and freight rail, and supporting measures such as truck stop electrification and stronger anti-idling enforcement. They discussed how climate change will impact the system, steps already underway to prepare, barriers that remain, and ways GFLRPC could support progress. Key themes included:

- **Vision for resilient transportation** – Expand transportation choice, reduce car dependency, diversify fuel sources, improve public health, and invest in high-speed rail, truck stop electrification, and stronger enforcement of anti-idling measures.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Provide shade trees, shelters, and improved snow removal to protect and support people walking, biking, or using transit in extreme weather.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Coordinate programming with transit schedules, implement active transportation plans, complete vulnerability and resiliency assessments, adopt Complete Streets legislation, and begin fleet conversions.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Address slow fleet turnover, limited EV supply, technology gaps for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, workforce needs to operate and maintain EV fleets, and reliance on federal funding.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Facilitate connections between agencies, advance active transportation planning, help municipalities position themselves for funding opportunities, and incorporate climate-smart transportation into comprehensive planning.

Workforce Development

January 23, 2025

The workforce focus group emphasized the need to prepare the region's workforce for the clean energy transition by raising awareness of green jobs, especially among youth, and ensuring people see them as stable, long-term opportunities. Participants highlighted the importance of clear career pathways, access to training, company support to attract workers, and proactive measures to ensure worker safety in a changing climate. They discussed how extreme weather will affect workers and employers, the steps already underway to prepare, barriers that remain, and the ways GFLRPC can support progress. Key themes included:

- **Vision for a resilient workforce** – Increase the awareness of clean energy jobs, create stronger training pathways, support companies in attracting and retaining workers, and prioritize worker safety.
- **Concerns about extreme weather impacts** – Ensure companies have emergency preparedness plans and prepare for potential worker relocation away from the region due to climate risks.
- **Adoption of climate-smart practices** – Provide grant programming to close skills gaps, expand remote work, convert fleets, and implement sustainable materials management strategies such as composting, reducing plastics, and sourcing locally.
- **Recognition of barriers** – Address challenges similar to other skilled trades, such as attracting young people to apprenticeships, building soft skills, improving workplace culture, and ensuring living wages. Additional challenges include unclear green job definitions, limited openings outside of specific trades like electricians, mismatches between job locations and worker access (including transit gaps), and uncertainty around federal workforce development funding.
- **Recommendations for GFLRPC** – Help project which green jobs are likely to grow in the region and convene clean energy businesses, schools, and workforce development providers to strengthen connections and pipelines into these careers.

Focus Groups Round 2 | April 2025

Focus groups met again in April and May 2025 to review the draft measures/tools developed for each sector. Themes from each focus group are summarized below.

Agriculture and Working Lands Focus Group

April 21, 2025

The Agriculture and Working Lands focus group reviewed draft measures to reduce carbon emissions through sustainable forestry and agricultural practices. Forestry tools included open space conservation, tree funds, land restoration, and carbon credit programs, while agricultural tools emphasized farm audits, education on carbon farming and soil health, financial resources for manure and fertilizer management, methane digesters, agrivoltaics, and support for farmland protection plans.

Participants raised questions about the impact of the federal funding freeze, stressing the need to identify state resources, creative projects, and priority measures. They highlighted the importance of clarifying implementation roles (Cornell/CCE, Soil and Water Districts, Cornell's Nutrient Management Spear Program), and called for more detail on funding sources, partner organizations, and successful precedents. Additional feedback included caution on siting agrivoltaics to protect prime farmland and forests, and the suggestion to add silvopasture as a strategy.

Buildings

April 23, 2025

The buildings focus group reviewed draft measures to decarbonize buildings through heat pumps, geothermal networks, utility upgrades, and reduced embodied carbon, alongside tools to expand energy audits, financing, gap funding for pre-weatherization, insulation incentives, and programs to reduce construction waste. They also discussed adopting zero-emission codes and standards, including energy efficiency requirements for rentals and updated historic building standards.

Participants supported geothermal networks (particularly in new development) but raised questions about cost and whether community steam could be included. They emphasized the need to monitor utility upgrades, address grid capacity, and broaden the focus beyond HVAC to include gas stoves and dryers. Key concerns included high upfront and ongoing costs, the complexity of rebates, potential overregulation and public pushback, and challenges of retrofitting historic buildings. Attendees also stressed the importance of developing tools for renters.

Electric Power
April 24, 2025

The Electric Power focus group reviewed draft measures to expand renewable energy capacity, strengthen the grid, and provide regional support mechanisms for energy initiatives. Proposed tools included piloting innovative renewable projects such as microgrids and agrivoltaics, conducting feasibility studies with a focus on LIDAC communities, expanding battery storage and emergency resiliency, creating model zoning language, adopting Community Choice Aggregation, and leveraging state and federal funding. Additional tools emphasized public outreach, technical assistance, and region-wide campaigns to expand rooftop solar, community solar, and heat pump adoption.

Participants recommended building on existing NYSERDA model zoning, targeting outreach to municipalities with renewable energy moratoria, and including microgrids in feasibility studies. They also suggested expanding educational efforts to cover smart meters, demand response, and off-peak charging, and emphasized engaging IDAs about business parks. Finally, they noted the importance of aligning measures with updates to the New York State Energy Plan.

Industry and Economic Development
April 28, 2025

The Industry and Economic Development focus group reviewed draft measures to decarbonize and retrofit industrial processes through zero-emission technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Tools included creating a regional working group of industry leaders, prioritizing site selection for energy reduction, and providing programming, education, and financial incentives.

Participants supported aligning with existing state programs and incentives, prioritizing brownfields, infill, and build-ready sites over greenfields, and amending siting tools to account for agricultural land protection. They also discussed who should manage the proposed working group and emphasized the importance of connecting local companies to green supply chains, which could also help reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)
April 28, 2025

The DAC focus group reviewed draft measures and tools from across sectors that would provide benefits for disadvantaged communities, including expanding active transportation and transit access, financing building efficiency upgrades, siting renewable energy, creating a regional tree fund, building a clean energy workforce training center, and supporting community organizations that improve access to affordable clean energy.

Participants emphasized the importance of targeting DAC communities in adaptation planning and suggested conducting a regional vulnerability analysis to guide resources. They also discussed aligning these efforts with state funding opportunities and programs such as Climate Smart Communities, the state climate adaptation plan, and the reforestation plan.

Materials Management
April 30, 2025

The Materials Management focus group reviewed draft measures to reduce landfill waste, manage landfills more sustainably, and build regional capacity for reduction, reuse, and recycling. Participants supported expanding composting programs, construction and demolition waste reduction, organics management, and educational campaigns, but emphasized the need for funding, incentives, and stronger procurement policies rather than relying only on education.

Key discussion points included closing loopholes in state composting regulations by expanding facilities, ensuring tools address medium-scale producers, adding tools for construction material reuse and contractor training, and strengthening language around sustainable procurement. Participants raised concerns about waste-to-energy facilities, stressing the need to clarify whether proposals meant methane capture, incineration, or anaerobic digestion, and noted potential regulatory and community opposition. Additional suggestions included adding hospitals and senior homes to education efforts, building nonprofit partnerships, expanding single-use plastic bans, and highlighting local models such as Geneva ReUse Systems and Monroe County's recycling app.

Transportation
April 30, 2025

The Transportation focus group reviewed draft measures and tools in three areas: increasing adoption of zero-emission passenger vehicles, transitioning bus and truck fleets, and reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips. Participants supported expanding EV infrastructure, electrifying truck stops, upgrading bus and truck facilities, and promoting active transportation, transit, and demand management strategies.

Key discussion points included the need for standards and amenities at EV charging sites, better enforcement of EV parking rules, and simplifying residential charger installation. Participants highlighted barriers such as the high cost of fast chargers, limited bus manufacturers, downtime for vehicle charging, and supply chain issues. They suggested considering near-zero emission vehicles, hydrogen fueling, short-haul rail for freight, and carpooling programs for large employers. Other themes included addressing infrastructure stress from EV weight, balancing mode shift with economic growth metrics, eliminating parking minimums, and coordinating business siting with transit service.

Workforce Development
May 1, 2025

The Workforce Development focus group reviewed draft measures to strengthen the green workforce, including regional collaboration, partnerships with educational institutions, a potential clean energy training center for LIDAC communities, and building demonstration sites. Participants supported the training center and demonstration sites but noted challenges in connecting with green employers, marketing clean energy jobs, and defining career pathways. They also highlighted the need for a workforce analysis and supportive services such as transportation.

Focus Groups Round 3 | June 2025

A third round of focus groups meetings took place in June of 2025. The purpose of these meetings was to review updates to the draft measures/tools for each sector and discuss the prioritization of measures/tools in the CCAP as well as potential partners and funding sources for implementation . Key points from each meeting are summarized below.

Agriculture and Working Lands

June 5, 2025

Edits emphasized soil health (cover crops, reduced tillage), added tools like precision agriculture and manure injection, and flagged the need for three-phase power. Roles for Cornell and Soil & Water Districts were discussed.

Buildings

June 10, 2025

Revisions highlighted historic building standards, utility leakage monitoring, geothermal pilots, and stronger education/technical assistance.

Electric Power

June 12, 2025

Feedback centered on siting renewables on brownfields, affordability, community outreach, and clarifying utility roles.

Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)

June 17, 2025

Tools were broadened to cover rural contexts, solar siting was refined to underutilized land, and terms like “pre-weatherization” were clarified. Workforce tools were distinguished between enhancing training vs. creating new centers.

Materials Management

June 19, 2025

Participants stressed resource needs for landfill diversion, refining plastics reduction strategies, prioritizing composting/C&D diversion, and shifting emphasis toward infrastructure pilots over education alone.

Transportation

June 24, 2025

Revisions emphasized consistency around “zero and near-zero,” reframed VMT reduction to highlight alternatives, added outreach on zoning/EV adoption, and proposed incentives like fleet right-sizing and parking perks.

Workforce Development

June 26, 2025

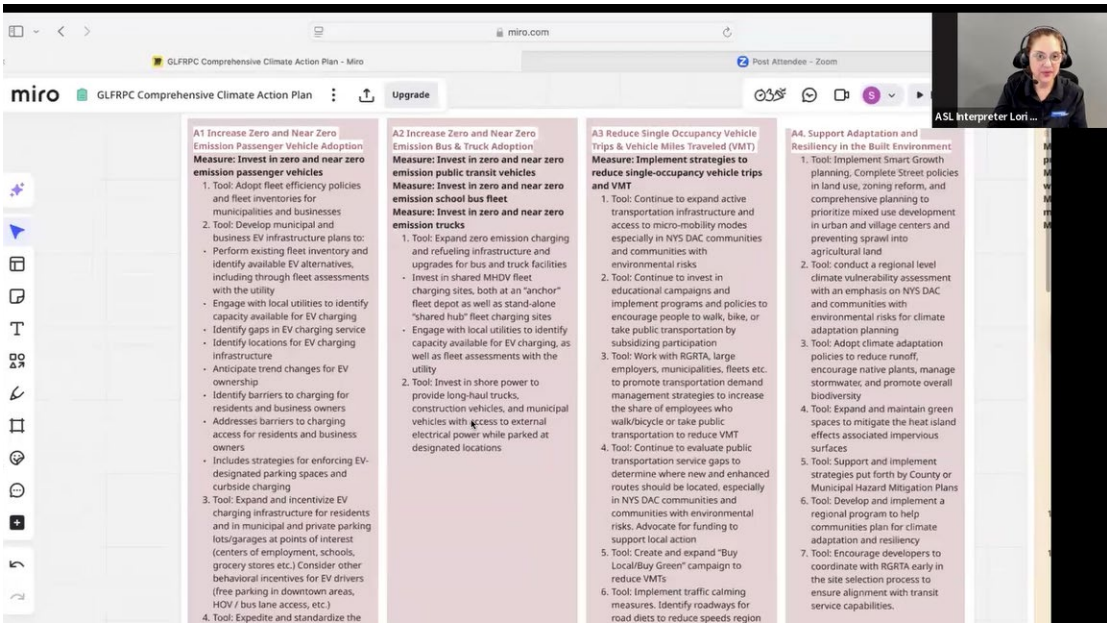
Strong support for employer education, case studies, partnerships, and demonstration sites to expand training pathways.

05

Webinars/ Public Meetings

Webinar Round 1 | July 2025

Public webinars were conducted on Monday, July 21, 2025 and Tuesday, July 22, 2025, providing an opportunity for the public to learn about the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan and provide input on the Plan's draft strategies. The two webinars presented identical content, and included a presentation followed by a question/ answer session and group discussion. The discussion was facilitated using Miro to capture comments on the draft strategies. The webinars were recorded and posted to the project website.



06

Pop Ups

A series of pop-ups were conducted across the region in July and August 2025 to gather feedback on the draft goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. During the pop-ups, the Engagement Project Team encouraged participants to use dots to vote on their top three categories of climate action. They also had open discussions to gather public suggestions. Participants were encouraged to take community survey #2 and to sign up for project updates. In addition to these discussions, a children/ youth activity was offered where participants could make a button showing how they are a climate superhero (by drawing themselves walking/biking, recycling, etc.). The individual pop-up events are summarized on the following pages.









Hemlock Fair | July 18, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 23 members of the public. The main themes included concerns about local landfills and trash, longevity of solar panels, and a discussion on capturing methane emissions.

Canandaigua Art Show | July 27, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 14 members of the public. The main themes included concerns about algae blooms on lakes and support for composting, reuse of materials, and reducing waste.

Rochester Public Market | July 31, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 20 members of the public. The main themes included individual climate action, questions on how this plan differed from the Monroe County Climate Action Plan, support for the composting plan, strong support for increasing access to solar energy efforts for homeowners, and a need to support urban forestry with increased tree plantings .

Puerto Rican Festival | August 2, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 40 members of the public, including several youth. Attendees showed interest in reducing emissions, particularly from manufacturing, as well as diverting waste from landfills, increasing renewable energy production, and converting to electric vehicles. Attendees also expressed an interest in being engaged in their communities and a desire to be informed and participate in municipal/institutional decision-making around climate action.

Palmyra Farmers Market | August 6, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 15 members of the public. The main discussions centered on the major funding differences between small and large farms and how the plan could address both. Smaller farms face larger expenses and less access to easy capital than larger farms despite making more effort to support climate action farming methods. Small farms would like additional support from a liaison who works with farmers throughout the entire process of securing funds. Participants were concerned about the support of access to public transportation in rural places and the potential impact of continued extreme weather events.

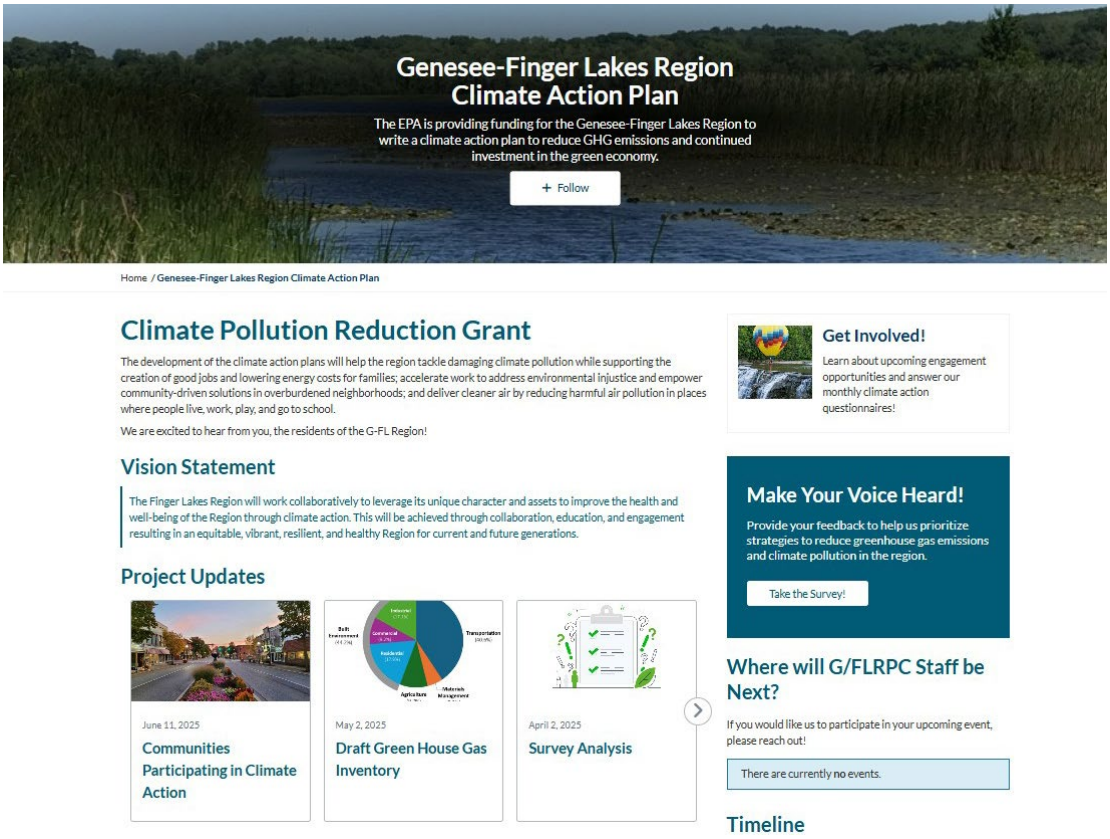
Reconnect Rochester Ride & Rally | August 22, 2025

The Engagement Project Team discussed the CCAP with approximately 15 members of the public. Community members expressed a desire to see more options to buy used EVs to make the switch more affordable for consumers. One community member expressed concern over the plans for the Western New York STAMP (Science, Technology, and Advanced Manufacturing) technology hub located in the town of Alabama, NY. This project would be a direct threat to climate action efforts stated in this plan due to the environmental concerns and the displacement of people.

07

Project Website

Throughout the development of the CCAP, the Engagement Project Team maintained a project website, engage.gflrpc.org/CPRG, with information about upcoming events, monthly climate action questionnaires, and case studies of communities participating in climate action. Project documents, such as the greenhouse gas inventory, and meeting materials were posted on the website for the public to review. The website was also used to promote the community and municipal surveys, public webinars, and pop-up events.



GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Appendix C. 1 Municipal Survey Analysis

Prepared by Highland Planning // March 31, 2025

OVERVIEW

Building off the Priority Climate Action Plan (CAP), which was developed in early 2024 and focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in three sectors (Municipal Operations, Transportation, and Buildings), the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) is undertaking the development of a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for the nine-County Genesee-Finger Lakes region (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates). This survey was targeted specifically for municipal staff, elected officials, and others affiliated with municipal operations. The input from this survey will inform goals and strategies to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions and climate pollution across all sectors.

ACCESSIBILITY

The survey was available online through Survey123.

PROMOTION

The survey was promoted through email and social media.

SURVEY PERIOD AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

The survey was open from October 25, 2024 through January 31, 2025 and received a total of 105 responses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section defines all of the questions asked in the Municipal Survey and provides a brief summary of the responses to each question. The summarized responses are shown in italics immediately following each question.

Section 1: First, a little about you...

1. With which Town, Village, City, or County are you affiliated?

   Approximately 46 municipalities responded as well as all of the Counties, except for Wayne and Yates Counties. Seneca Falls, with 12% of responses, and Brighton, with 5% of responses, were the municipalities with the most responses.

2. What is your role at the Town/Village/City/County?

   30% of respondents were municipal staff, 23% were Planning Board or Zoning Boards of Appeals members, and 18% were a mayor/supervisor/executive.

Section 2: Climate Action

3. How worried are you about climate change?

   Most respondents are very worried (49%) or somewhat worried (40%) about climate change.

4. What impacts from climate change are you most worried about in your community?

   Respondents were most concerned about water pollution (61%), increased spread of invasive species and/or disease (59%), and flooding (51%).

5. In general, how committed are you to reducing your municipality's carbon footprint (from government operations)?

   Most respondents (73%) said they would like to do more to reduce their municipality's carbon footprint.

6. What prevents you from doing more?

   Funding constraints are the largest barrier for respondents (49%).

7. Climate action has many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Which of the following are most important to you?

   Improving air and water quality was most important to respondents (65%).

Section 3: Transportation and Land Use

8. The following table identifies several strategies to reduce greenhouse emissions from transportation and land use. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

   The most common strategy that municipalities have implemented is conducting an inventory of the municipal fleet (40%). The most common strategies that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for are related to increasing the availability of EV charging infrastructure as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The most common strategies that municipalities are <u>not</u> interested in pursuing involve changing commuting patterns for employees.

9. What other strategies is your municipality considering to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and land use?

   Other strategies that municipalities are considering include strategies to increase government efficiency (such as shared services agreements) and strategies to encourage walking and cycling, such as building sidewalks and expanding bicycle and pedestrian trails.

10. If you indicated above that you would like your municipality is interested in a strategy, but needs support, what support do you need?

    Financial assistance (e.g. grants) was the support most needed by respondents (86%).

Section 4: Buildings and Infrastructure

11. The following table identifies several strategies to decarbonize municipal buildings and infrastructure. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

    The most common strategy that municipalities have implemented is upgrading interior or exterior lighting to LED technology (57%). The most common strategies that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for are improving building envelope insulation (27%) and installing renewable energy generation on municipal property (e.g. roof- or ground-mounted solar panels) (26%). The most common strategy that municipalities are <u>not</u> interested in pursuing is installing air-source and ground-source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in municipal buildings (29%).

12. The following table identifies strategies for implementing zero emission codes and standards for buildings. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

    The most common strategy that municipalities have implemented is educating municipal planning and permitting staff on new energy codes (35%). The most common strategy that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for is adopting and implementing green building codes (22%). At the same time, 18% of respondents are <u>not</u> interested in adopting and implementing green building codes.

13. What other strategies is your municipality considering to lower energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in municipal buildings and infrastructure?

    Other strategies that municipalities are considering/have implemented include adopting the Unified Solar Permit and converting streetlights to LED technology.

14. If you indicated above that you would like your municipality is interested in a strategy, but needs support, what support do you need?

    Financial assistance (e.g. grants) was the support most needed by respondents (87%).

Section 5: Final Thoughts

15. In your opinion, what is the one most important action you'd like to see your municipality implement in the short-term (1-3 years) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

    In the short term, respondents would like to see their municipality transition to electric vehicles, install EV charging stations, divert waste, expand sidewalk and trail networks, increase public transit options, install solar panels, complete projects to reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency, and use energy management systems.

16. Think big. If funding and capacity were unlimited, what do you think is the most impactful action your municipality could take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next 10 years?

In the long term, respondents would like to see their municipality electrify municipal, residential, and commercial buildings; invest in solar and wind powers and electric grid updates to support the transition to net-zero; explore alternative sources of energy such as nuclear; close the landfill and divert waste through composting and recycling; convert municipal fleets to EVs, install EV charging stations, and provide incentives to residents and businesses to convert to EVs; and expand trail networks, build sidewalks and protected bike lanes, and create pedestrian-only zones.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

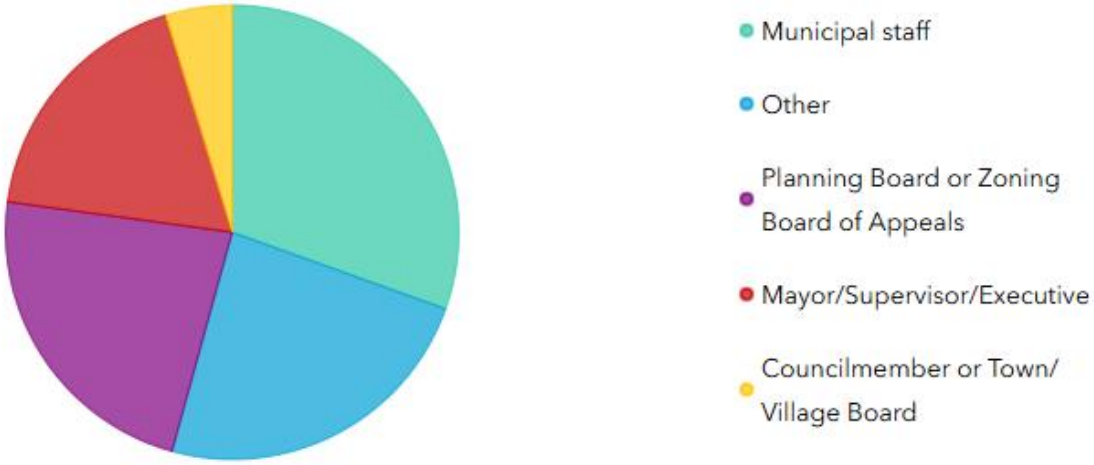
This section provides a detailed analysis of the responses received to each question.

Section 1: First, a little about you…

Question 1: With which Town, Village, City, or County are you affiliated?

Out of 105 responses, **Seneca Falls**, with 12% of responses, and **Brighton**, with 5% of responses, were the municipalities with the most responses. In total, approximately 46 municipalities responded as well as all of the Counties, except for Wayne and Yates Counties. It was not possible to determine the exact number of municipalities that responded, as some respondents did not specify whether they were affiliated with a Town or Village.

Question 2: What is your role at the Town/Village/City/County?

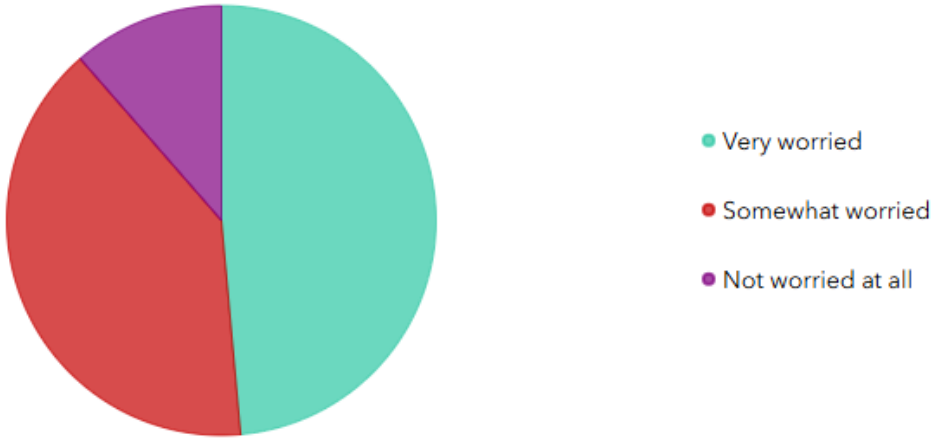


Out of 105 responses, 30% were **municipal staff**, 23% were **Planning Board or Zoning Boards of Appeals members**, 18% were a **mayor/supervisor/executive**, and 5% were **councilmembers or on the Town/Village Board.**

24% of respondents chose “Other.” Most of these respondents were members of other municipal boards, commissions, or task forces, such as the Climate Smart Communities Task Force, Historic Preservation Committee, or Conservation Board.

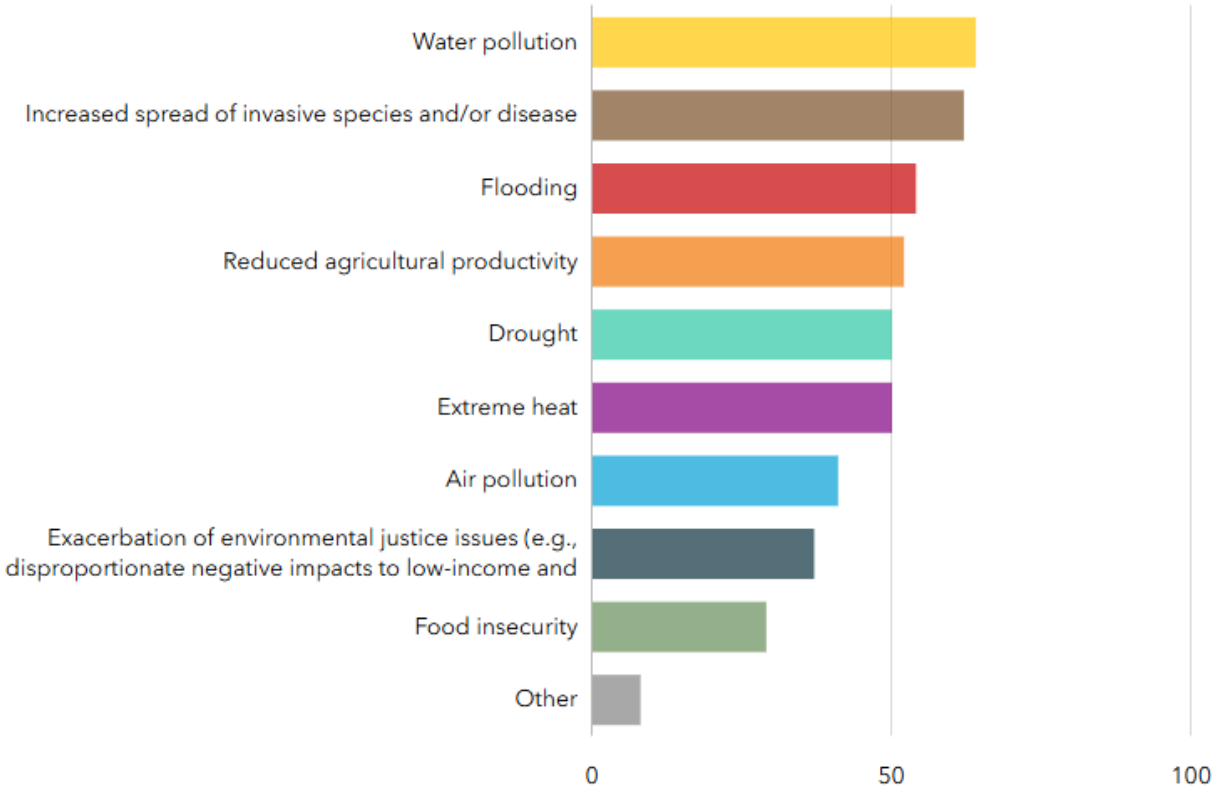
Section 2: Climate Action

Question 3: How worried are you about climate change?



Out of 105 responses, 49% were **very worried**, 40% were **somewhat worried**, and 11% were **not worried at all**.

Question 4: What impacts from climate change are you most worried about in your community?

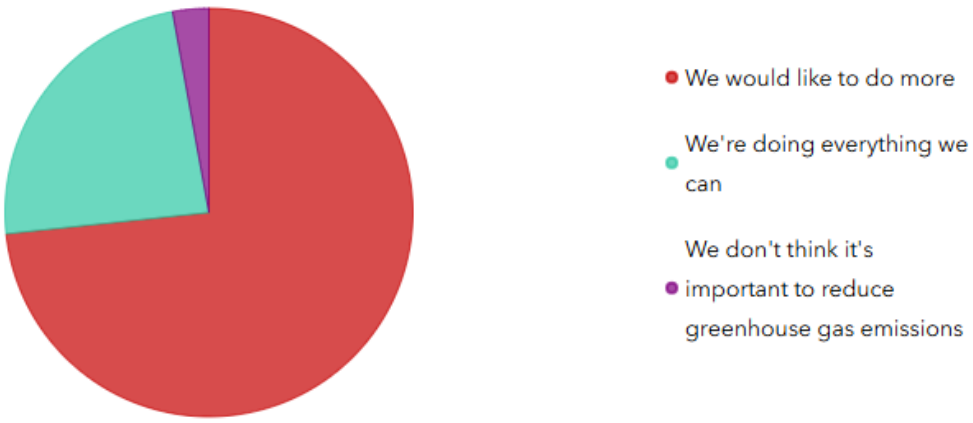


Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 105 responses, 61% selected **water pollution** as the climate change impact they are most worried about. **Increased spread of invasive species and/or disease** (59%) and **flooding** (51%) were also concerns for the majority of respondents.

8% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

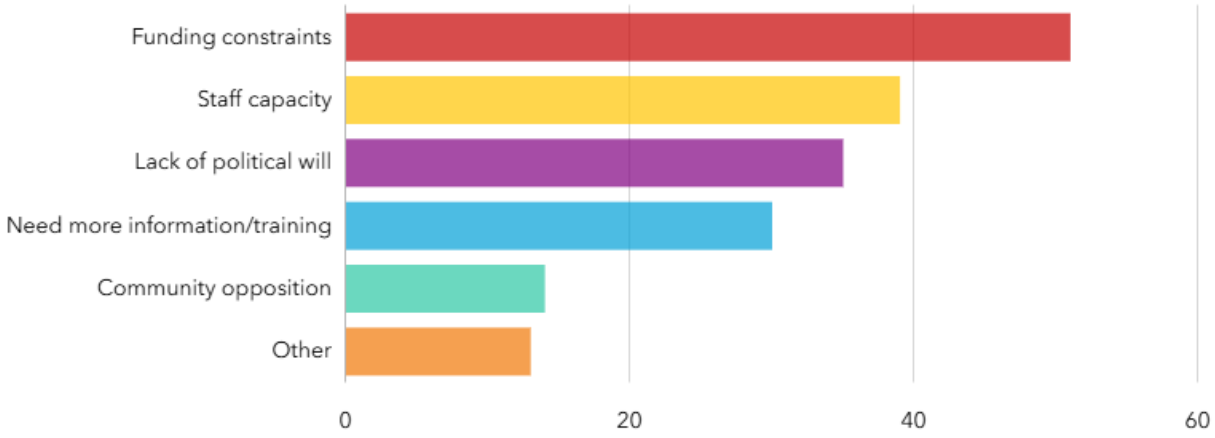
- Some respondents expressed concerns about soil and water contamination from the landfill, pesticides, overuse of manure, and forever chemicals.
- Some respondents are concerned about biodiversity loss and species extinctions.

Question 5: In general, how committed are you to reducing your municipality's carbon footprint (from government operations)?



Out of 105 responses, 73% said they **would like to do more**, 24% said they are **doing everything they can**, and 3% said they **don't think it's important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

Question 6: What prevents you from doing more?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who answered "I would like to do more" to Question 5.



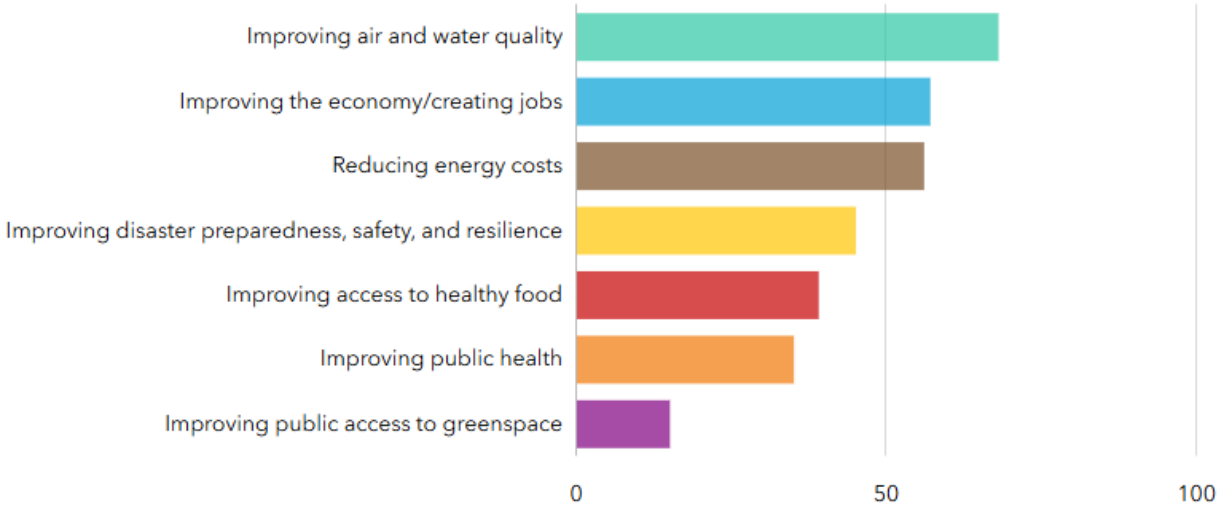
Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 77 responses, 49% answered that **funding constraints** prevent them from doing more to reduce their municipality's carbon footprint. **Staff capacity** (37%), **lack of political will** (33%), and **need for more information/training** (29%) were also cited as barriers.

12% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- One respondent stated that having specific information about how climate change will impact our region and the potential costs of climate change impacts compared to the cost of mitigation would be helpful.

- One respondent stated that climate change does not fall neatly into one department's scope, so it is difficult to make a coordinated effort to take action.

Question 7: Climate action has many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Which of the following are most important to you?



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities. Out of 105 responses, 65% selected **improving air and water quality**, 54% selected **improving the economy/creating jobs**, and 53% selected **reducing energy costs**.

Section 3: Transportation and Land Use

Question 8: The following table identifies several strategies to reduce greenhouse emissions from transportation and land use. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

Strategy	My municipality is already doing this (partially or fully)	My municipality is interested but needs support (e.g., technical or financial assistance)	My municipality is not interested in this action	Unsure
Adopt a vehicle fleet efficiency policy	13%	25%	11%	51%
Conduct an inventory of the municipal fleet	40%	9%	5%	45%
Implement a car-sharing program for staff	6%	6%	40%	46%
Convert the municipal fleet to alternative fuel or electric vehicles	5%	25%	23%	47%
Adopt a policy allowing employees to telecommute to reduce commuter trips	14%	7%	34%	42%
Subsidize or incentivize public transit options for employee commutes	1%	7%	51%	40%
Engage employees to take alternative modes of transportation through a green pledge or competition	0%	7%	46%	45%
Encourage residents and businesses to invest in zero emission light, medium, and heavy-duty fleets when technology is available	5%	21%	18%	55%
Implement a program to encourage people to walk, bike or take public transportation by subsidizing transit passes, or shared mobility programs	9%	21%	26%	43%
Invest in an educational campaign to educate all road users about best practices for use of public transportation and alternatives modes of transportation	6%	23%	23%	47%

Strategy	My municipality is already doing this (partially or fully)	My municipality is interested but needs support (e.g., technical or financial assistance)	My municipality is not interested in this action	Unsure
Adopt green parking lot standards	6%	15%	20%	57%
Adopt a Complete Streets policy	22%	13%	13%	49%
Expedite and standardize permitting for installation of alternative fuel and electric vehicle refueling infrastructure	14%	27%	13%	44%
Expedite and standardize permitting for installation of pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, bike paths, and bike parking	25%	23%	14%	36%
Implement Complete Streets policies and Safe Routes to School as well as integrate Complete Street standards into zoning and design standard language	19%	20%	17%	41%
Develop municipal EV infrastructure plan	11%	24%	18%	44%
Expand EV charging infrastructure in municipal lots	19%	27%	21%	41%
Expand bike network and bike rental/share programs	17%	17%	21%	41%
Designate preferred parking in public parking facilities for alternative fuel vehicles, carpools, bike parking, etc.	12%	12%	24%	49%
Create and expand shared mobility services	2%	17%	21%	58%
Make safety improvements to roads such as roundabouts, road diets, etc.	23%	25%	15%	35%
Create low-emission zones (anti-idling) around environmental justice communities, school zones, pedestrian-centric areas, and transit stations	3%	9%	27%	58%

Strategy	My municipality is already doing this (partially or fully)	My municipality is interested but needs support (e.g., technical or financial assistance)	My municipality is not interested in this action	Unsure
Update zoning to increase density, including legalizing accessory dwelling units (i.e., mother-in-law units)	21%	20%	17%	41%
Update zoning to require certain coverage of renewable energy installations on certain land uses/zoning districts (i.e., solar panels above parking areas)	13%	20%	17%	48%
Incorporate smart growth principles into land-use policies and regulations	25%	21%	9%	42%
Incentivize mixed-use/mixed-income development in City, Town, and Village centers	25%	26%	11%	37%
Incentivize, then require through zoning and site review standards, green infrastructure, considerations for public transportation, and bike and pedestrian circulation in development projects	9%	27%	16%	47%

Out of 105 responses, the most common strategies that municipalities have implemented are **conducting an inventory of the municipal fleet** (40%), **incorporating smart growth principles into land-use policies and regulations** (25%), **incentivizing mixed-use/mixed-income development in City, Town, and Village centers** (25%), and **expediting and standardizing permitting for installation of pedestrian amenities** (25%).

The most common strategies that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for are **expanding EV charging infrastructure in municipal lots** (27%), **expediting and standardizing permitting for installation of alternative fuel and electric vehicle refueling infrastructure** (27%), and **incentivizing, then requiring through zoning and site review standards, green infrastructure, considerations for public transportation, and bike and pedestrian circulation in development projects** (27%).

The most common strategies that municipalities are not interested in pursuing are **subsidizing or incentivizing public transit options for employee commutes** (51%), **engaging employees to take**

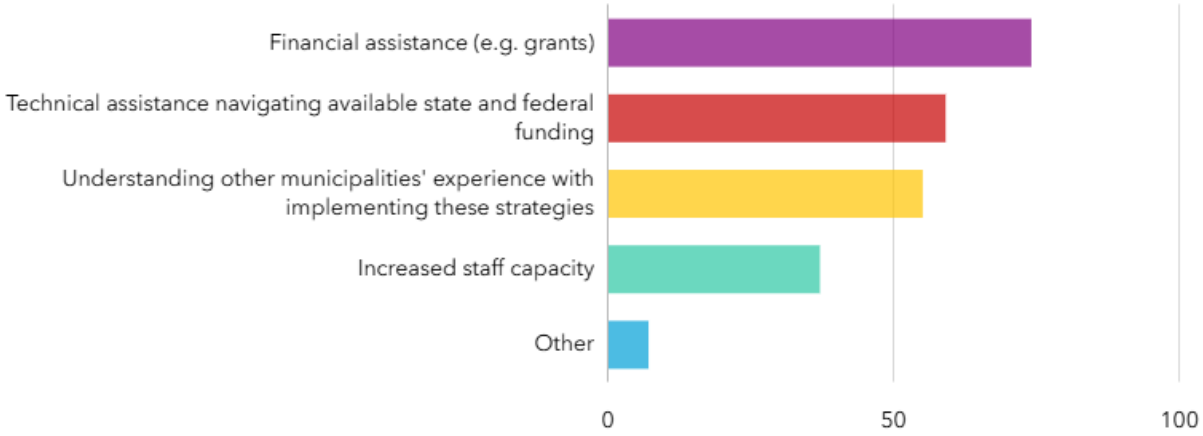
alternative modes of transportation through a green pledge or competition (46%), and **implementing a car-sharing program for staff** (40%).

Question 9: What other strategies is your municipality considering to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and land use?

Out of 26 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- Several respondents noted that many of the strategies are not feasible for rural communities.
- Some municipalities are considering shared services agreements, efficiency in work related trips, and assigning employees an area to reduce travel between visits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Some municipalities are building sidewalks and expanding bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Question 10: If you indicated above that your municipality is interested in a strategy, but needs support, what support do you need?



Out of 86 responses, 86% stated that they need **financial assistance (e.g. grants)**, 69% stated that they need **technical assistance navigating available state and federal funding**, and 64% stated that they need help **understanding other municipalities' experience with implementing these strategies**.

7% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Respondents stated that they need help "selling the ideas" to elected officials to help them understand the need for the strategy.

Section 4: Buildings and Infrastructure

Question 11: The following table identifies several strategies to decarbonize municipal buildings and infrastructure. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

Strategy	My municipality is already doing this (partially or fully)	My municipality is interested but needs support (e.g., technical or financial assistance)	My municipality is not interested in this action	Unsure
Conduct energy audits in municipal buildings to identify opportunities to lower energy use and GHG emissions	40%	15%	7%	37%
Install air-source and ground source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in municipal buildings	13%	13%	29%	43%
Upgrade interior or exterior lighting to LED technology	57%	9%	2%	30%
Improve building envelope insulation	19%	27%	9%	44%
Purchase renewable energy (such as subscribing to community solar)	17%	19%	11%	50%
Install renewable energy generation on municipal property (e.g., roof- or ground-mounted solar panels)	13%	26%	16%	41%
Pilot net-zero municipal buildings	2%	24%	14%	56%
Invest in energy management planning to reduce energy use and lower GHG emissions at municipal facilities including benchmarking	16%	17%	13%	51%
Implement energy management projects to reduce energy use and lower GHG emissions, including organics waste diversion	11%	20%	12%	54%

Out of 105 responses, the most common strategies that municipalities have implemented are **upgrading interior or exterior lighting to LED technology** (57%) and **conducting energy audits in municipal buildings to lower energy use and GHG emissions** (40%). The most common strategies that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for are **improving building envelope insulation** (27%) and **installing renewable energy generation on municipal property (e.g. roof- or ground-mounted solar panels)** (26%). The most common strategy that municipalities are not interested in pursuing is **installing air-source and ground-source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in municipal buildings** (29%).

Question 12: The following table identifies several strategies for implementing zero-emission codes and standards for buildings. Please identify which strategies your municipality has implemented, which strategies your municipality is interested in pursuing but needs support (e.g. expanded capacity, technical assistance, financial assistance), and which strategies your municipality is not interested in pursuing.

Strategy	My municipality is already doing this (partially or fully)	My municipality is interested but needs support (e.g., technical or financial assistance)	My municipality is not interested in this action	Unsure
Follow state guidance/policy so that all newly constructed and renovated municipal buildings meet high performance building standards	24%	12%	11%	52%
Adopt local policy(ies) to encourage localized construction materials, deconstruction, reuse of materials, and recycling and minimizing construction waste	4%	20%	11%	62%
Educating municipal planning and permitting staff on new energy codes	35%	16%	8%	37%
Updating the permitting process to identify and review decarbonization projects	4%	20%	17%	56%
Adopt and implement green building codes	7%	22%	18%	51%

Out of 105 responses, the most common strategies that municipalities have implemented are **educating municipal planning and permitting staff on new energy codes** (35%) and **following state policy/guidance so that all newly constructed and renovated municipal buildings meet high performance building standards** (24%). The most common strategies that municipalities are interested in pursuing but need support for are **adopting and implementing green building codes** (22%), **adopting local policy(ies) to encourage localized construction materials, deconstruction, reuse of materials, and recycling and minimizing construction waste** (20%), and **updating the permitting**

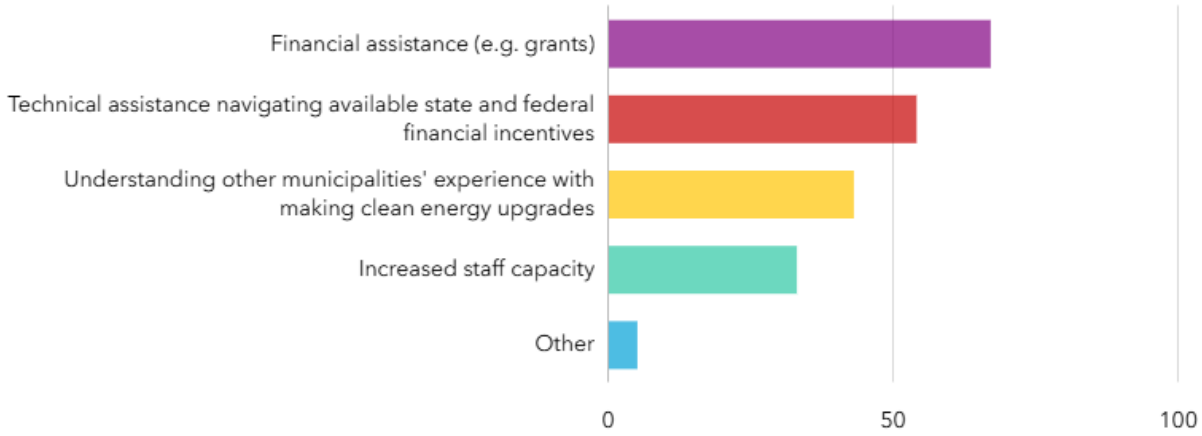
process to identify and review decarbonization projects (20%). The most common strategies that municipalities are not interested in pursuing are **adopting and implementing green building codes** (18%) and **updating the permitting process to identify and review decarbonization projects** (17%).

Question 13: What other strategies is your municipality considering to lower energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in municipal buildings and infrastructure?

Out of 14 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- Some municipalities have adopted the Unified Solar Permit to streamline the permitting process for small-scale solar energy systems.
- In addition to converting interior or exterior lights to LED technology, some municipalities have also converted their streetlights.

Question 14: If you indicated above that your municipality is interested in a strategy, but needs support, what support do you need?



Out of 77 responses, 87% stated that they need **financial assistance (e.g. grants)**, 70% stated that they need **technical assistance navigating available state and federal funding**, and 56% stated that they need help **understanding other municipalities' experience with implementing these strategies**.

7% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- One respondent reiterated the need for financial assistance to make their vision of a zero-waste sewer plant (ATAD digestion) a reality.

Section 5: Final Thoughts

Question 15: In your opinion, what is the one most important action you'd like to see your municipality implement in the short-term (1-3 years) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Out of 55 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- **Electric Vehicles:** Several respondents would like to convert their fleets to electric vehicles and install EV charging stations.
- **Waste Management:** Several respondents would like to see waste diverted from the landfill, through organics management/curbside composting and plastics reduction and recycling.
- **Alternative Transportation:** Respondents would like to see expansions of the sidewalk and trail networks as well as increased public transit options.
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency:** Several respondents would like their municipalities to install solar panels, complete projects to reduce energy use and increase energy efficiency, and use energy management systems. Additionally, there is support for implementing a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to ensure a renewable energy supply for the entire municipality and lower energy costs.

Question 16: Think big. If funding and capacity were unlimited, what do you think is the most impactful action your municipality could take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next 10 years?

Out of 58 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- **Renewable Energy and Electrification:** Respondents think it would be most impactful to electrify municipal, residential, and commercial buildings and invest in solar and wind power and electric grid updates to support this transition to net-zero. Some respondents are also interested in exploring alternative sources of energy such as nuclear power plants or digestion of agricultural waste.
- **Waste Management:** Several respondents think it would be most impactful to close the landfill and focus on diversion of waste through composting and recycling.
- **Electric Vehicles:** Respondents think it would be most impactful to increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations, convert municipal fleets to electric vehicles, and provide incentives to residents and businesses to convert to electric vehicles. As the region has a large agricultural community, there was also a suggestion to focus on converting agricultural equipment/vehicles to more efficient technology.
- **Alternative Transportation:** Respondents also think it would be most impactful to encourage walking and cycling by expanding trail networks, building sidewalks and protected bike lanes, and designating downtown areas as pedestrian-only zones. Respondents would also like to see the public transportation network expanded as well.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Appendix C. 2 Community Survey Analysis

Prepared by Highland Planning // March 31, 2025

OVERVIEW

Building off the Priority Climate Action Plan (CAP), which was developed in early 2024 and focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in three sectors (Municipal Operations, Transportation, and Buildings), the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) is undertaking the development of a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for the nine-County Genesee-Finger Lakes region (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates). The input from this survey will inform goals and strategies to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions and climate pollution across all sectors.

ACCESSIBILITY

The survey was available online through Survey123 and also provided as a pdf to municipalities. The online version of the survey was also available in Spanish.

PROMOTION

The survey was promoted through email, social media, and outreach to libraries.

SURVEY PERIOD AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

The survey was open from October 25, 2024 through January 31, 2025 and received a total of 236 responses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section defines all of the questions asked in the Community Survey and provides a brief summary of the responses to each question. The summarized responses are shown in italics immediately following each question.

Section 1: First, a little about you...

1. In which County do you live?

   Most survey respondents live in Monroe County (41% of respondents), Seneca County (20% of respondents), or Genesee County (13% of respondents). Less than 10 responses were received from each of the following counties: Wayne County, Wyoming County, and Yates County.

2. What is your zip code?

   14020 (Batavia area), with 7% of responses, 14456 (Geneva area), with 6% responses, and 13148 (Seneca Falls area) and 14620 (Southeast Rochester), with 5.5% of responses each, were the most common responses.

3. Do you own or rent your home?

   Most survey respondents own their homes (80% of respondents).

4. Which best describes your race or ethnicity?

   Most survey respondents identify as White (97% of respondents).

5. Are you of Hispanic or Latinx origin?

   Most survey respondents are not of Hispanic or Latinx origin (97% of respondents).

6. What is your approximate household income?

   Most survey respondents had an approximate household income of $100,000-$149,999 (32%), $150,000 or more (23%), or $35,000-$74,999 (23%). Only 4% of respondents had an approximate household income under $35,000.

7. What is your age?

   Most survey respondents are between 45 and 64 years old (43%) or between 20 and 44 years old (29%).

Section 2: Climate Action

8. How worried are you about climate change?

   Most survey respondents are very worried about climate change (63%).

9. What impacts from climate change are you most worried about in your community?

   Respondents are most worried about increased spread of invasive species and/or disease (66%), water pollution (60%), extreme heat (58%), and air pollution (55%).

10. In general, how committed are you to reducing your household's carbon footprint?

    Most respondents said that they would like to do more to reduce their household's carbon footprint (66%).

11. What prevents you from doing more?

    The expense of reducing their household's carbon footprint is the largest barrier for survey respondents (51%).

12. Do you think your local government is doing a good job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from municipal operations and preparing the community for the impacts of climate change?

    Most survey respondents were unsure what their local government is reducing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (56%).

13. What is one action you wish your local government was taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or prepare for climate change that they are not currently doing?

    Respondents wished that their local government was taking action to improve waste management and promote composting, develop and implement climate action plans, electrify municipal buildings and use clean energy, educate the community on climate action, prepare for an influx of climate refugees, transition their fleets to electric vehicles and install more public charging stations, encourage density and reduce car dependency, and improve multimodal transportation.

14. Climate action has many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Which of the following are most important to you?

    Improving air and water quality was most important to respondents (76%).

15. In which of the following sectors would you like to see your community focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

    Materials management (63%), electricity generation and distribution (56%), and transportation (53%) were the top sectors that respondents would like their community to focus on.

Section 3: Transportation and Land Use

16. What types of transportation do you use often (at least once a week)?

    Driving was the most common type of transportation (99%) among survey respondents, followed by walking (38%) and biking (15%). Rideshare (4%) and public transportation (3%) were extremely uncommon.

17. What type of vehicle is your primary vehicle?

    Most survey respondents who use a car often have a gas-powered vehicle as their primary vehicle (76%).

18. Why don't you have an electric vehicle?

    For survey respondents who don't have an electric vehicle, expense was the largest barrier (51%), followed by lack of charging infrastructure (43%).

19. What would make you consider buying an electric vehicle?

    Financial assistance to offset the cost of an electric vehicle (54%) and more charging infrastructure in the region (47%) were most likely to make survey respondents consider buying an electric vehicle.

20. Why don't you take public transportation?

    The most common reasons that survey respondents don't take public transportation is that public transportation doesn't take them where they need to go (50%) and that there are no stops or stations close to them (48%).

21. Why don't you walk or bike?

    The most common reason that survey respondents don't walk or bike is that there aren't stores and services within walking/biking distance of their homes (47%).

22. What would make you consider walking, biking, and/or taking public transportation?

    More bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, and crosswalks (46%) were most likely to make survey respondents consider walking or biking, while bus stops closer to their homes or where they want to go (36%) were most likely to make survey respondents consider taking public transportation.

23. Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?

    Respondents were most supportive of adaptive reuse of vacant buildings (70%).

Section 4: Buildings and Infrastructure

24. Have you made any of the following energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to your home?

    The most common energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades were conversion of interior and/or exterior lights to LED (82%) and building envelope insulation (46%).

25. Which of the following would make you consider making energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to your home?

    Financial assistance (e.g. tax rebates, grants) (81%) and technical assistance navigating available state and federal incentives (52%) were most likely to make respondents consider making energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to their home.

26. Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?

    Respondents were most supportive of programs to offer financial assistance to low-income homeowners and business owners to make energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades (66%).

Section 5: Other Sectors

27. Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?

    Respondents were most supportive of planting more trees (44%), upgrading the electric grid to handle increased demand from electrification (42%), and installing renewable energy (wind/solar) on municipal/County property, (41%).

Section 6: Final Thoughts

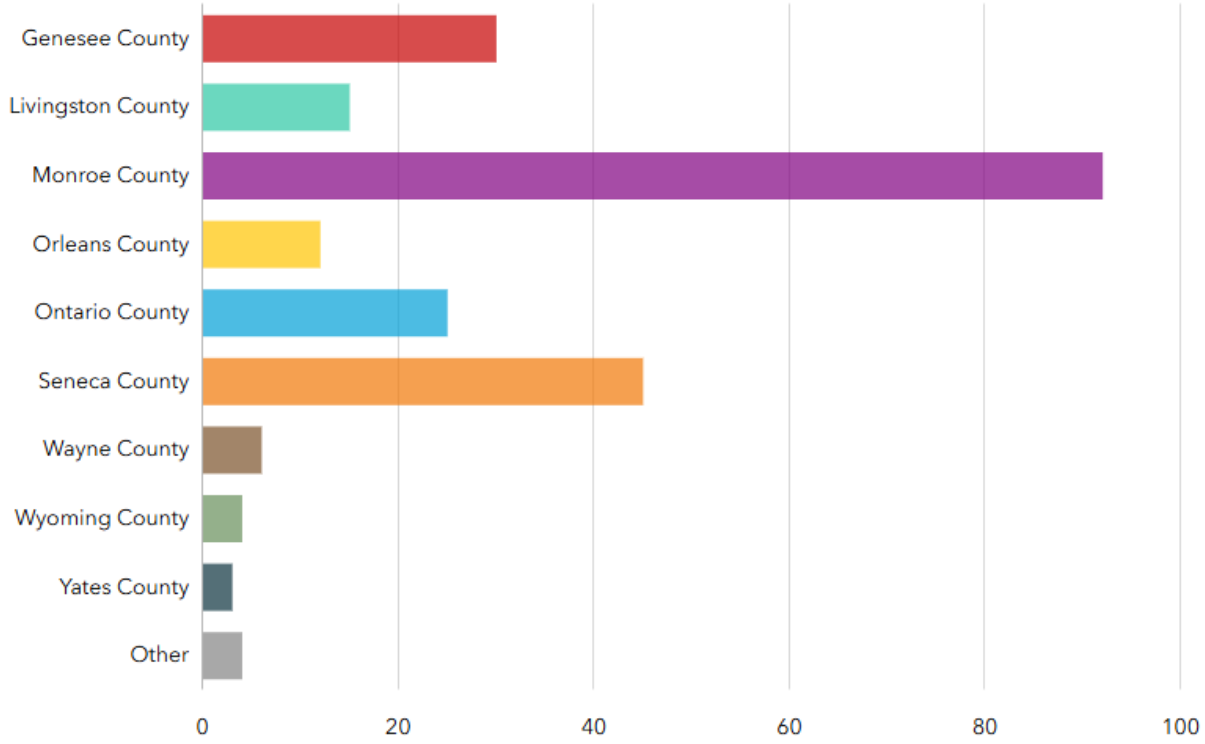
28. Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team that the survey did not address?

    Respondents shared concerns about government mandates, implementation timelines, lack of federal support, and the need for the unique challenges facing rural communities to be considered in the CCAP.

This section lists each question included in the survey and summarizes the responses received.

Section 1: First, a little about you…

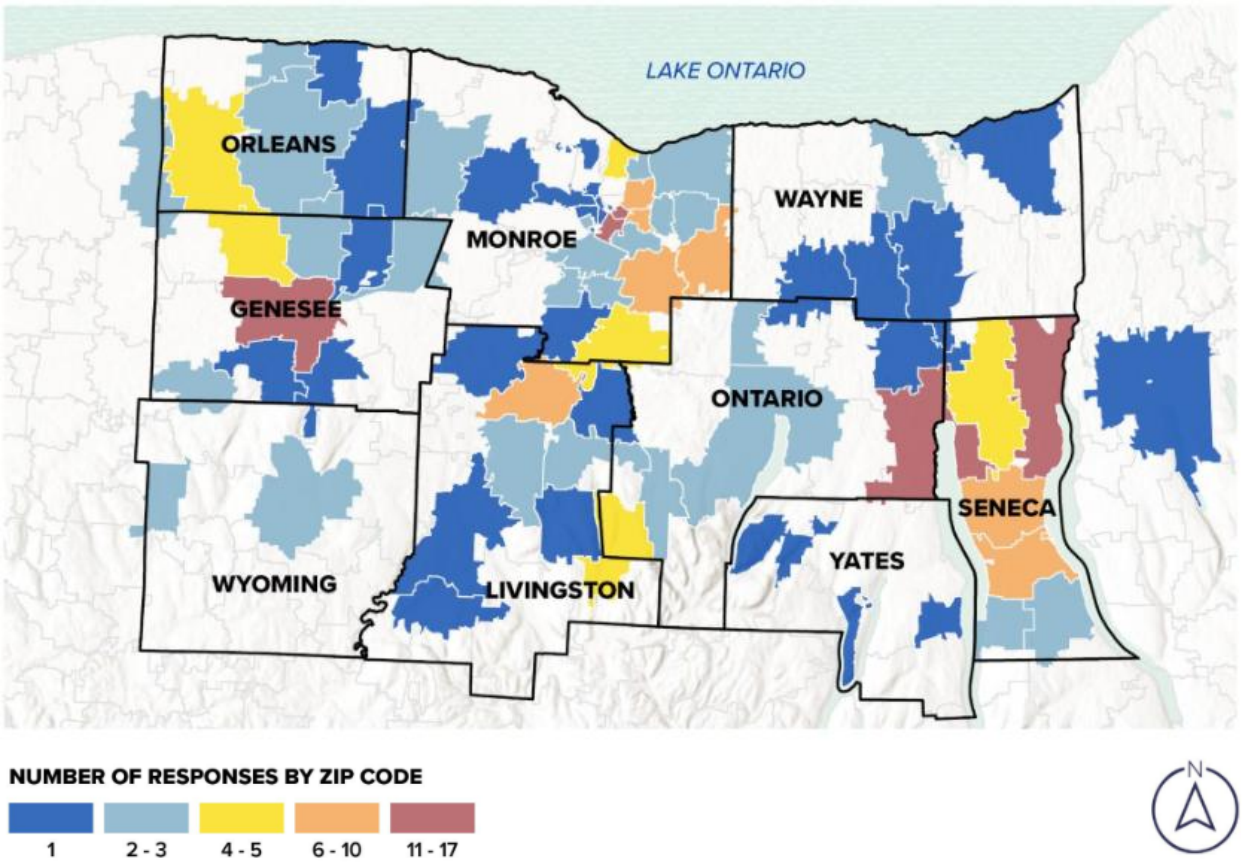
Question 1: In which County do you live?



Out of 226 responses, **Monroe County**, with 41% of responses, and **Seneca County**, with 20% of responses, were the most common responses. Genesee County had 13% of responses, Ontario County had 11% of responses, Livingston County had 7% of responses, and Orleans County had 5% responses. Wayne County, Wyoming County, and Yates County had fewer than 5% of responses each.

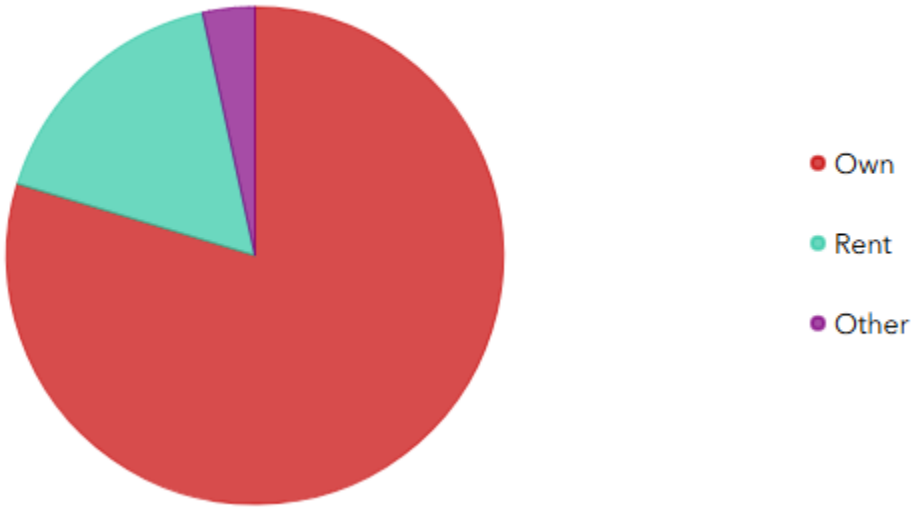
Three respondents chose "Other." One was from Erie County, one was from Niagara County, and one chose not to specify a county.

Question 2: What is your zip code?



Out of 236 responses, **14020**, with 7% of responses, **14456**, with 6% responses, and **13148** and **14620**, with 5.5% of responses each, were the most common responses. 14020 is a zip code that includes the Batavia area, 14456 is a zip code that includes the Geneva area, 13148 is a zip code that includes the Seneca Falls area, and 14620 is a zipcode that includes the Southeast area of Rochester.

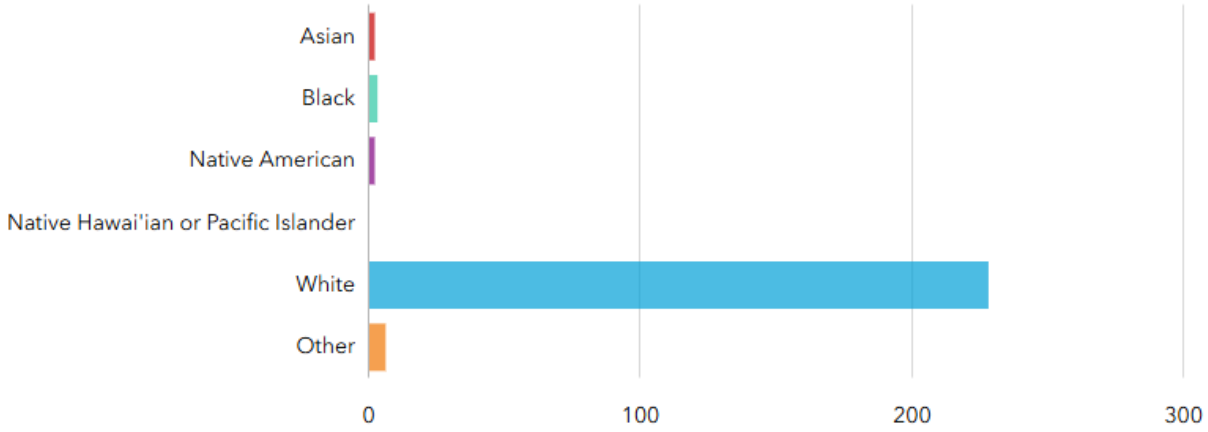
Question 3: Do you own or rent your home?



Out of 236 responses, 80% **own** their homes. 17% of respondents **rent**.

3.4% of respondents chose “Other.” These respondents are either living with family members or own land.

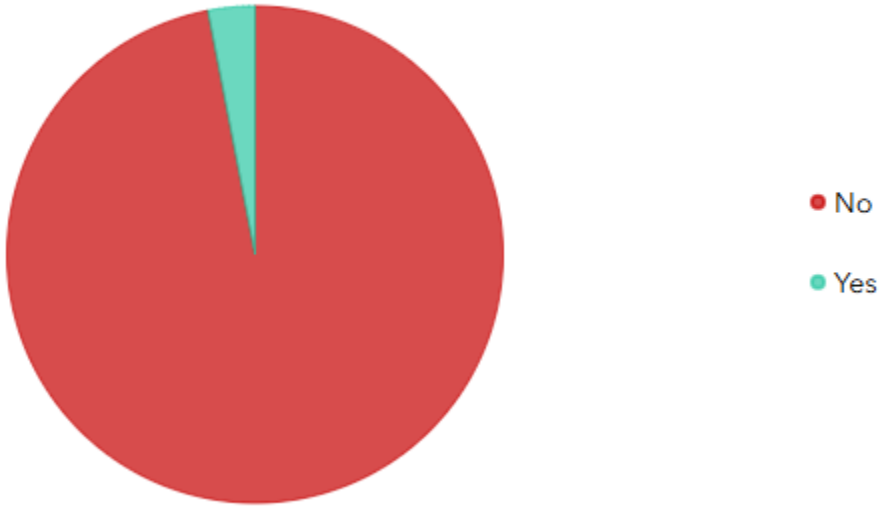
Question 4: What best describes your race or ethnicity?



Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 234 responses, a 97% of respondents selected **White**. 1.3% of respondents selected **Black**, 0.9% selected **Asian**, and 0.9% selected **Native American**.

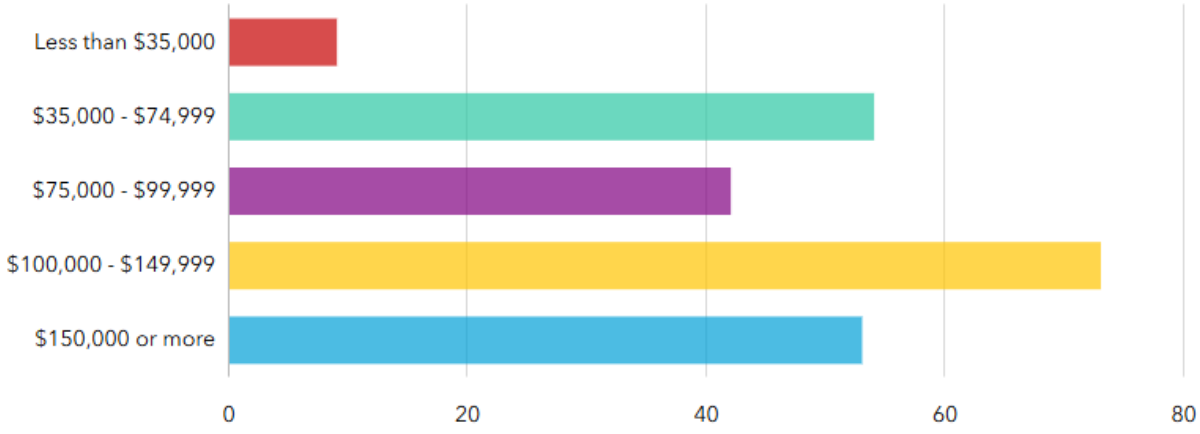
2.5% of respondents chose “Other.” These respondents identified as “multiracial” or “mixed.”

Question 5: Are you of Hispanic or Latinx origin?



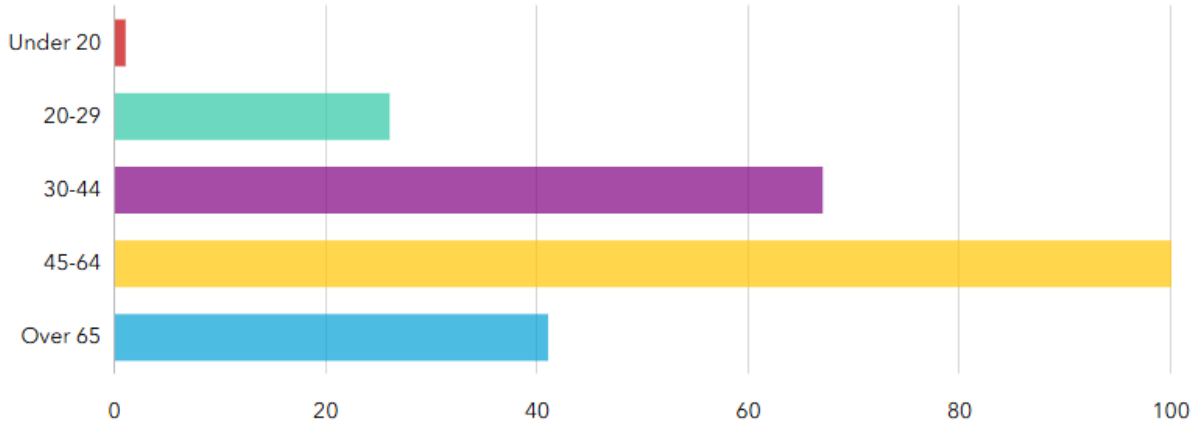
Out of 230 responses, 97% **did not identify as being of Hispanic or Latinx origin**. 3% of respondents **identified as being of Hispanic or Latinx origin**.

Question 6: What is your approximate household income?



Out of 231 responses, 32% had an approximate household income of **$100,000-$149,999**, 23% had an approximate household income of **$35,000-$74,999**, and 23% had an approximate household income of **$150,000 or more**. 4% of respondents had an approximate household income of **less than $35,000**.

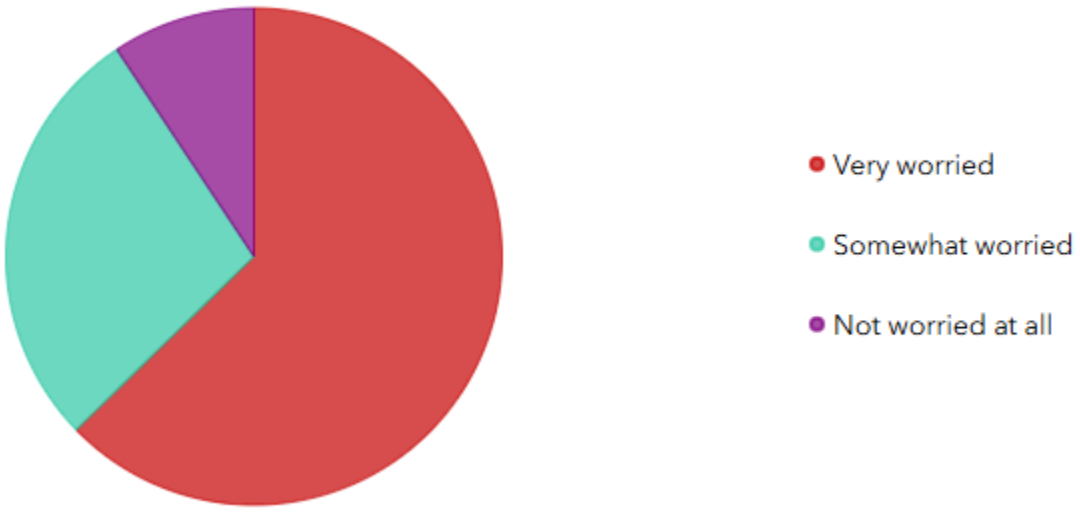
Question 7: What is your age?



Out of 235 responses, 43% were **45-64** years old, 29% were **30-44** years old, and 17% were **over 65** years old. 11% of respondents were **20-29** years old, and 0.4% were **under 20** years old.

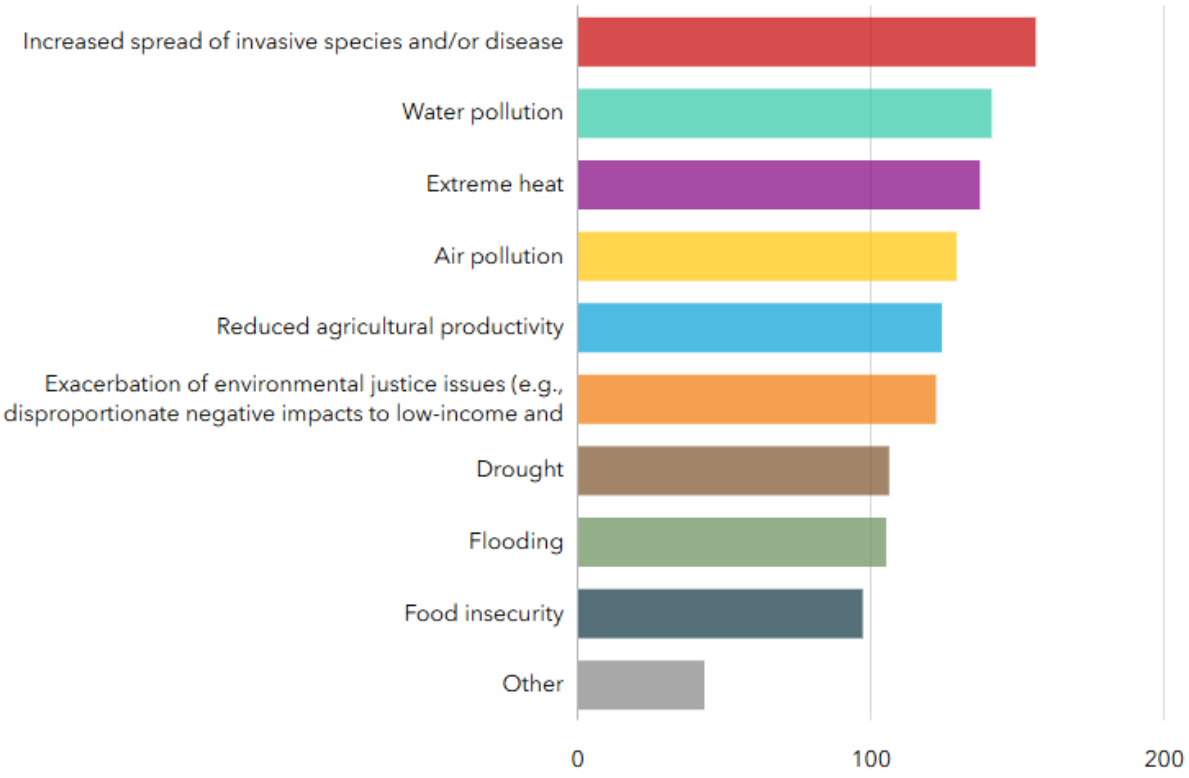
Section 2: Climate Action

Question 8: How worried are you about climate change?



Out of 236 responses, 63% were **very worried**, 28% were **somewhat worried**, and 9% were **not worried at all**.

Question 9: What impacts from climate change are you most worried about in your community?



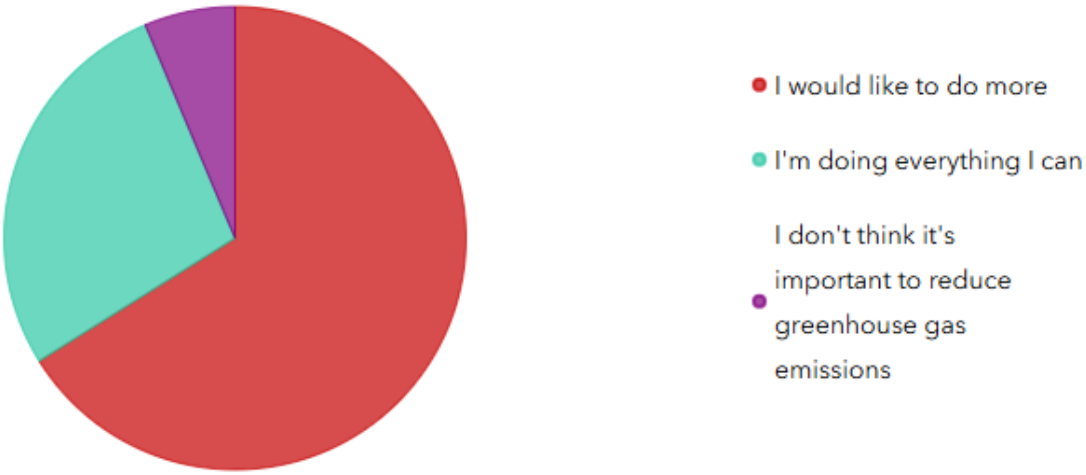
Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 236 responses, 66% selected **increased spread of invasive species and/or disease** as the climate change impact they are most worried about. **Water pollution** (60%), **extreme heat** (58%), **air pollution** (55%), **reduced agricultural productivity** (53%), and **exacerbation of environmental justice issues** (52%) were also concerns for the majority of respondents. **Drought** (45%), **flooding** (45%), and **food insecurity** (41%) were not concerns for the majority of respondents.

18% selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents expressed doubt about climate change or whether it would impact the region.
- A few respondents are concerned about other changes in weather and seasonal patterns, such as warmer winters and more intense storms.
- Several respondents expressed concerns about soil and water contamination from the landfill, pesticides, conventional farming practices, and microplastics/PFAS.
- Several respondents are worried about how climate change might impact animals, wildlife, and ecosystems. They are particularly concerned about the potential loss of environment and biodiversity.
- Respondents are concerned about climate change making poverty and inequality worse, increasing violence and housing insecurity, and causing political instability.
- Some respondents are concerned about the conversion of land to solar farms.
- A few respondents expressed concerns about climate change impacting young people, noting increased climate anxiety and the potential for reduced longevity.
- Some respondents are concerned about the potential influx of climate refugees to the region.

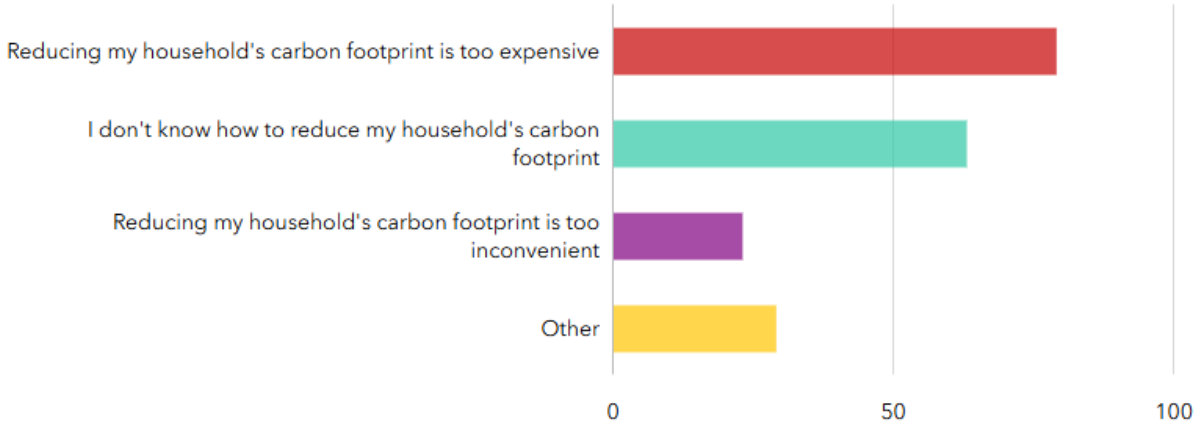
- Some respondents are concerned about the economic impact of climate change, which may results in workforce disruptions.
- Respondents are also concerned about potential energy shortages/blackouts.

Question 10: In general, how committed are you to reducing your household's carbon footprint?



Out of 236 responses, 66% said they **would like to do more**, 28% said they are **doing everything they can**, and 6% said they **don't think it's important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

Question 11: What prevents you from doing more?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who answered "I would like to do more" to Question 10.

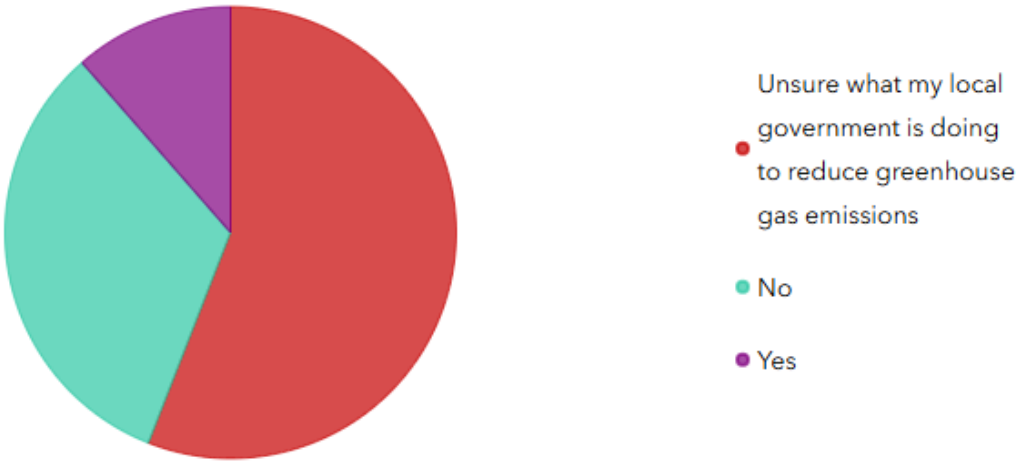


Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 156 responses, 51% answered that reducing their household's carbon footprint is **too expensive**, 40% answered that they **don't know how** to reduce their household's carbon footprint, and 15% answered that reducing their household's carbon footprint is **too inconvenient**.

19% selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Some respondents have already completed the "easy" changes, and now only have the "difficult items" left.
- Respondents said it is difficult to find time to "get these big projects done."
- Several respondents are renters and have limited options to improve their household's carbon footprint.
- Some homeowners are planning to move in the next couple of years and are hesitant to make substantial clean energy upgrades prior to moving.
- A few respondents expressed the need for support from their community or governmental programs to reduce costs.
- Some respondents have encountered resistance from other family members.
- Respondents found researching potential upgrades to be a substantial barrier and found it hard to know how to make the most impact at an individual level.
- Some respondents felt that the onus should be on large corporations to reduce emissions, not on individuals, who can't make as large of an impact.
- Some respondents expressed that "our culture and the way we have set up our society" is hard to work against. For example, it is difficult to be a car-free household in a car-centric society.
- Some respondents need connections to knowledgeable contractors.
- Some respondents expressed concern about negative environmental impacts of alternatives (such as solar panels being hazardous waste at end of life).

Question 12: Do you think your local government is doing a good job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from municipal operations and preparing the community for the impacts of climate change?



Out of 236 responses, 56% were **unsure what their local government is reducing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** 33% **did not think their government is doing a good job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions**, while 11% **believed that their government is doing a good job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions**.

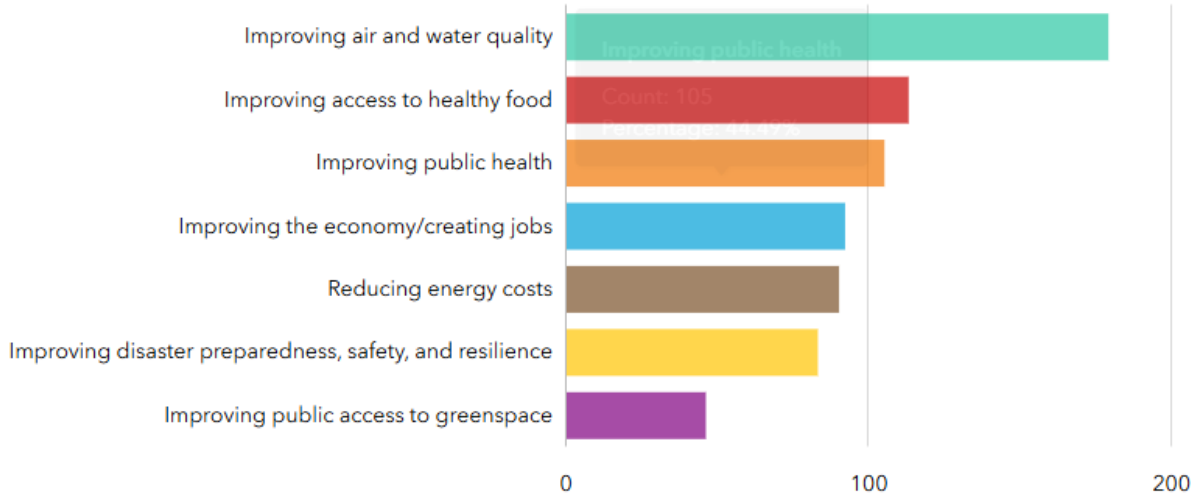
Question 13: What is one action you wish your local government was taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or prepare for climate change that they are currently not doing?

Out of 160 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- **Waste Management and Composting:** Several respondents would like their local government to close the Seneca Meadows landfill, manage waste, separate organics from solid waste, and compost.
- **Climate Action Planning:** Several respondents stated that they would like to see their local governments develop and follow a municipal climate action plan, rather than referring to a County-wide climate action plan. However, other respondents emphasized the importance of intermunicipal/regional planning, as climate change is not a localized issue. Some respondents also would like to see their local governments participate in the Climate Smart Communities program.
- **Clean Energy Upgrades:** Respondents would like to see their local government weatherize and electrify municipal buildings and use more renewable sources of energy. Respondents would also like to see their local government support residential solar and geothermal installations through incentive programs. Some respondents suggested that municipalities generate their own power or participate in a Community Choice Aggregation to lower energy costs and ensure that clean energy is the default supply.
- **Community Education:** Several respondents stated that they are unsure of their local governments are doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change. There was a call for local governments to educate the community, both on what the local government is doing regarding climate change, but also how the community can get involved.

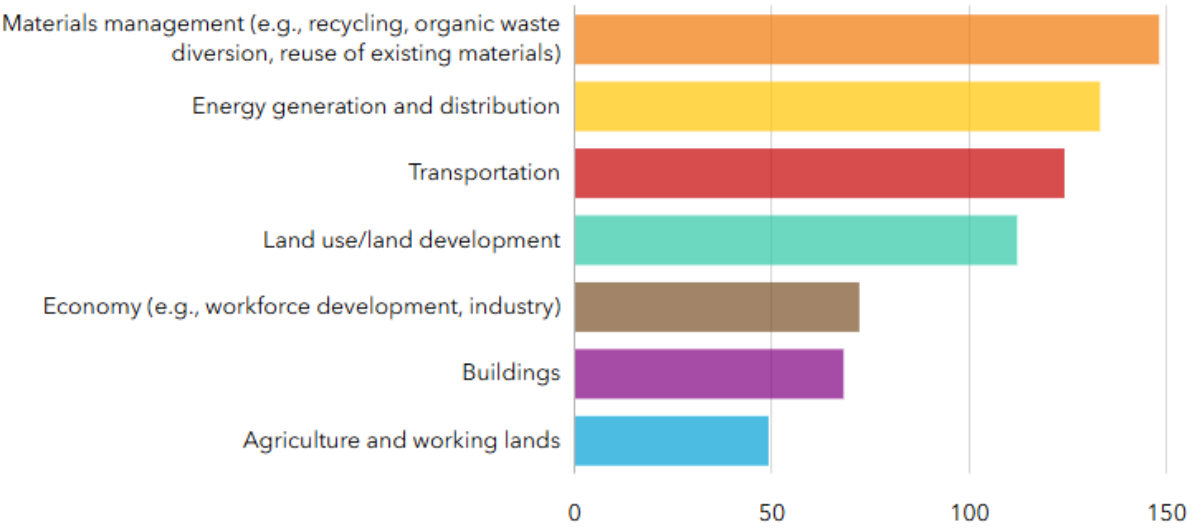
- **Climate Refuge:** Several respondents would like to see their local governments be proactive about preparing for an influx of climate refugees. In particular, there is a need for more affordable housing to support these refugees.
- **Electric Vehicle Transition:** Several respondents would like to see their local governments transition their fleets to electric vehicles and also install more public charging stations. Respondents would also like to see more support for businesses and homeowners to install charging stations.
- **Zoning and Land Use:** Several respondents would like to see their local governments encourage more density and reduce short car trips by removing parking minimums and zoning restrictions that disallow multi-family and mixed-use development. Respondents would like to see more small businesses, such as cafes, grocery stores, and medical offices located within neighborhoods to further reduce car dependency. Respondents would also like to see transit-oriented development and limitations on sprawl.
- **Multimodal Transportation:** Respondents would like to see their local governments improve walkability and bikeability through adoption of Complete Streets policies and investment in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Respondents would also like to see improvements made to make transit service more frequent and reliable, and to expand transit to rural areas.

Question 14: Climate action has many benefits beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Which of the following are most important to you?



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities. Out of 236 responses, 76% selected **improving air and water quality**, 48% selected **improving access to healthy food**, and 45% selected **improving public health** as a top priority.

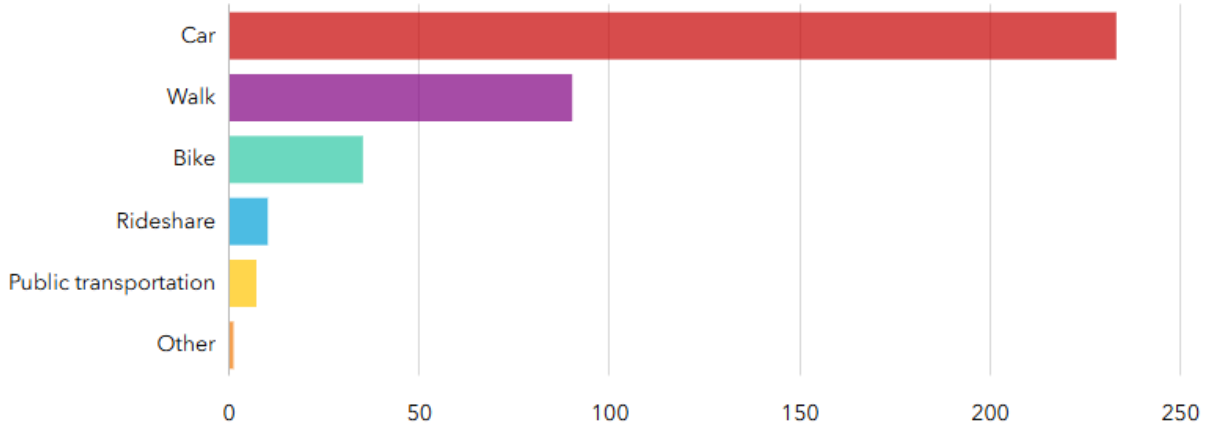
Question 15: In which of the following sectors would you like to see your community focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions?



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities. Out of 236 responses, 63% selected **materials management,** 56% selected **energy generation and distribution**, and 53% selected **transportation** as a top priority.

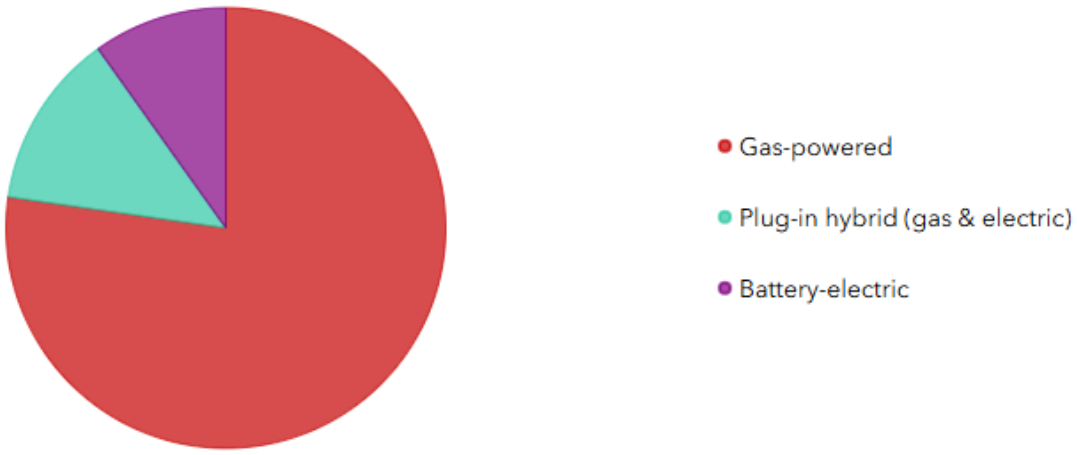
Section 3: Transportation and Land Use

Question 16: What types of transportation do you use often (at least once a week)?



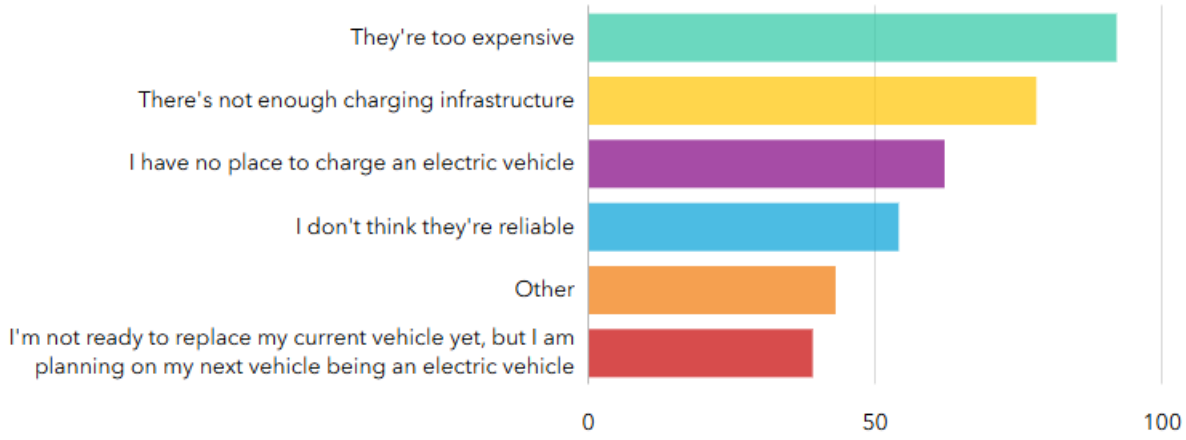
Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 236 responses, 99% used a **car** often. The second most common mode of transportation was **walking** (38%) and the third most common mode of transportation was **biking** (15%). Rideshare (4%) and public transportation (3%) were the least common modes of transportation.

Question 17: What type of vehicle is your primary vehicle?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who answered "car" to Question 16.



Of the 233 responses, 76% have a **gas-powered** vehicle as their primary vehicle, 13% have a **plug-in hybrid** as their primary vehicle, and 10% have a **battery-electric** vehicle.

Question 18: Why don't you have an electric vehicle?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who answered "gas-powered" to Question 17.



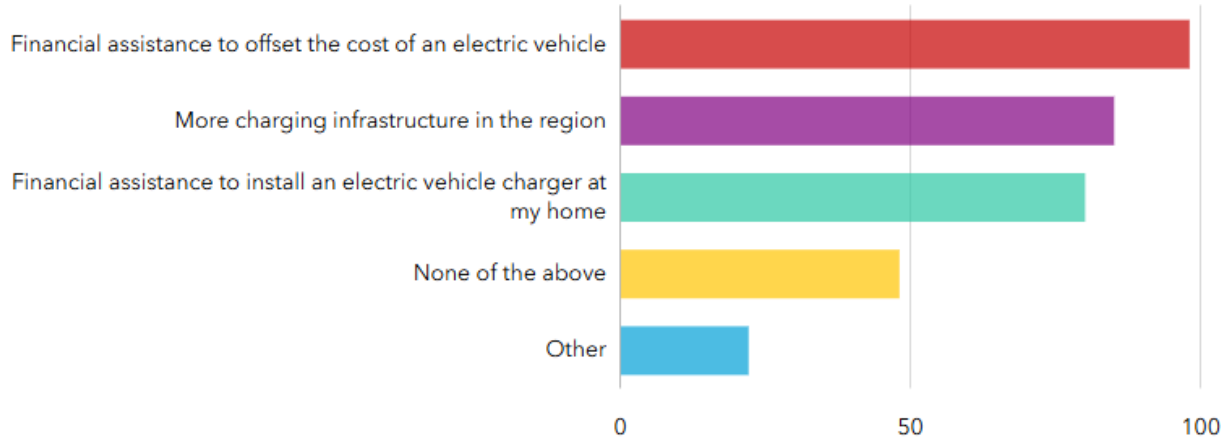
Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 180 responses, 51% stated that electric vehicles are **too expensive**, 43% stated that **there's not enough charging infrastructure**, 34% stated that they have **no place to charge an electric vehicle**, and 30% stated that they **don't think electric vehicles are reliable**. 22% of respondents stated that they are planning on their next vehicle being an electric vehicle, but are not ready to replace their current vehicle yet.

27% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents expressed concerns about the sustainability of materials used in electric vehicles (like lithium-ion batteries).

- Several respondents expressed concerns about the power grid's ability to handle demand from electric vehicles, the cost of charging, and being able to charge and use their car in the event of a power outage.
- Several respondents do not believe that electric vehicles are compatible with cold climates and/or rural areas.
- Several respondents stated that the current electric vehicles on the market do not fit their needs.
- Several respondents stated that long-distance travel with electric vehicles is not convenient, due to extra time needed for charging, and charging stations not being accessible or in safe areas.

Question 19: What would make you consider buying an electric vehicle?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who answered "gas-powered" to Question 17.

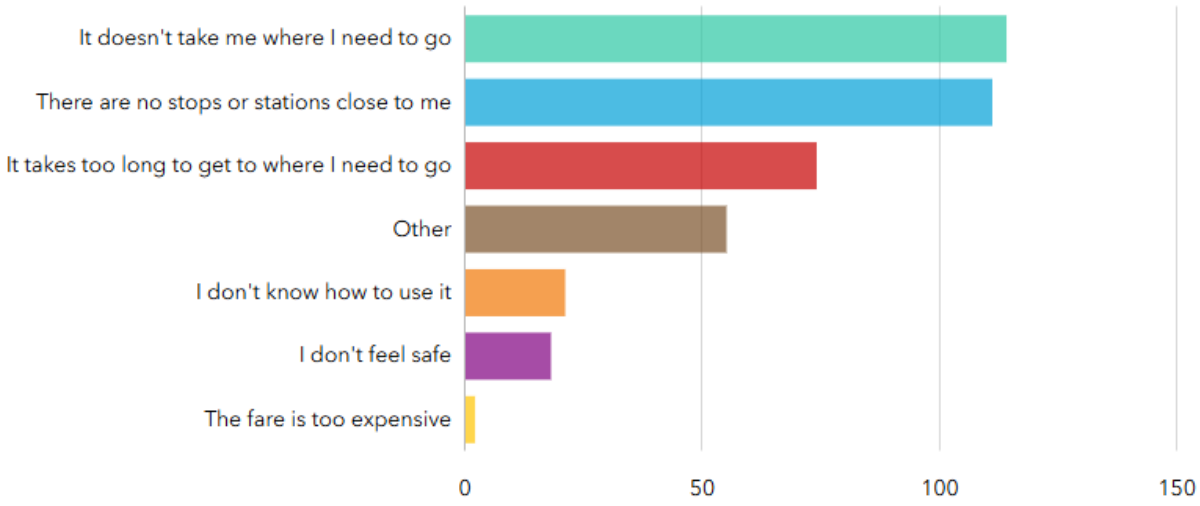


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 180 responses, 54% of respondents selected **financial assistance to offset the cost of an electric vehicle**, 47% selected **more charging infrastructure in the region**, and 44% selected **financial assistance to install an electric vehicle charger at my home**. 26% of respondents selected **none of the above**.

12% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents stated that they would be open to buying a hybrid, but not a battery-electric vehicle.
- Several respondents stated that they would buy a battery-electric vehicle once the technology improves and batteries perform better in cold weather, have a longer range, and recharge more quickly.
- Several respondents stated that they would need more information about the recycling process for lithium-ion batteries.

Question 20: Why don't you take public transportation?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who did not answer "public transportation" to Question 16.

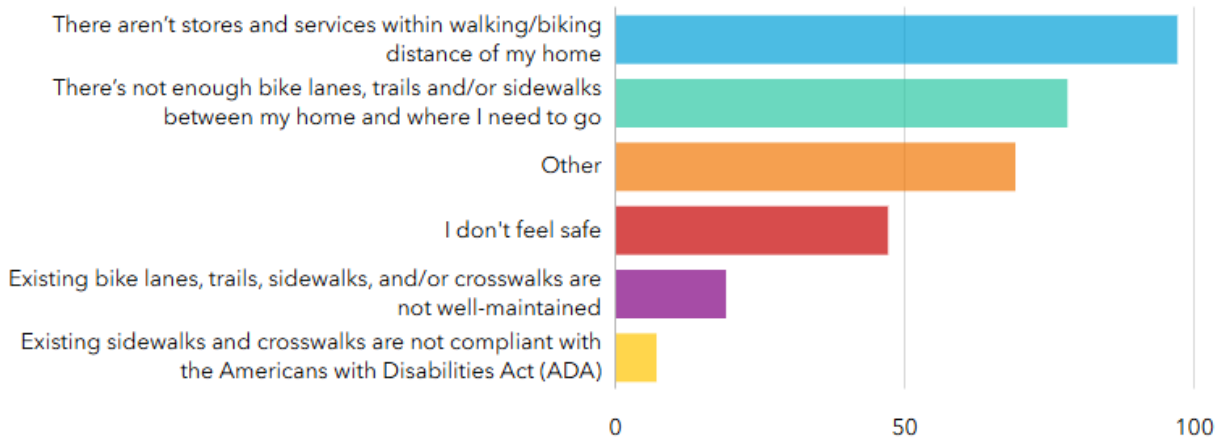


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 229 responses, 50% of respondents stated that public transportation **doesn't take them where they need to go**, 48% stated that **there are no stops or stations close to them**, and 32% stated that **it takes too long to get to where they need to go**.

24% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents stated that certain types of trips are more convenient in a vehicle (e.g. dropping a child off at school before traveling to work), especially in a rural area.
- Several respondents stated that rural public transportation doesn't coincide with work hours.
- Several respondents stated that public transportation is not consistent or frequent enough to rely on.
- Several respondents stated that they would need to transfer buses in order to use public transportation to commute to work.

Question 21: Why don't you walk or bike?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who did not answer "walk" and "bike" to Question 16.

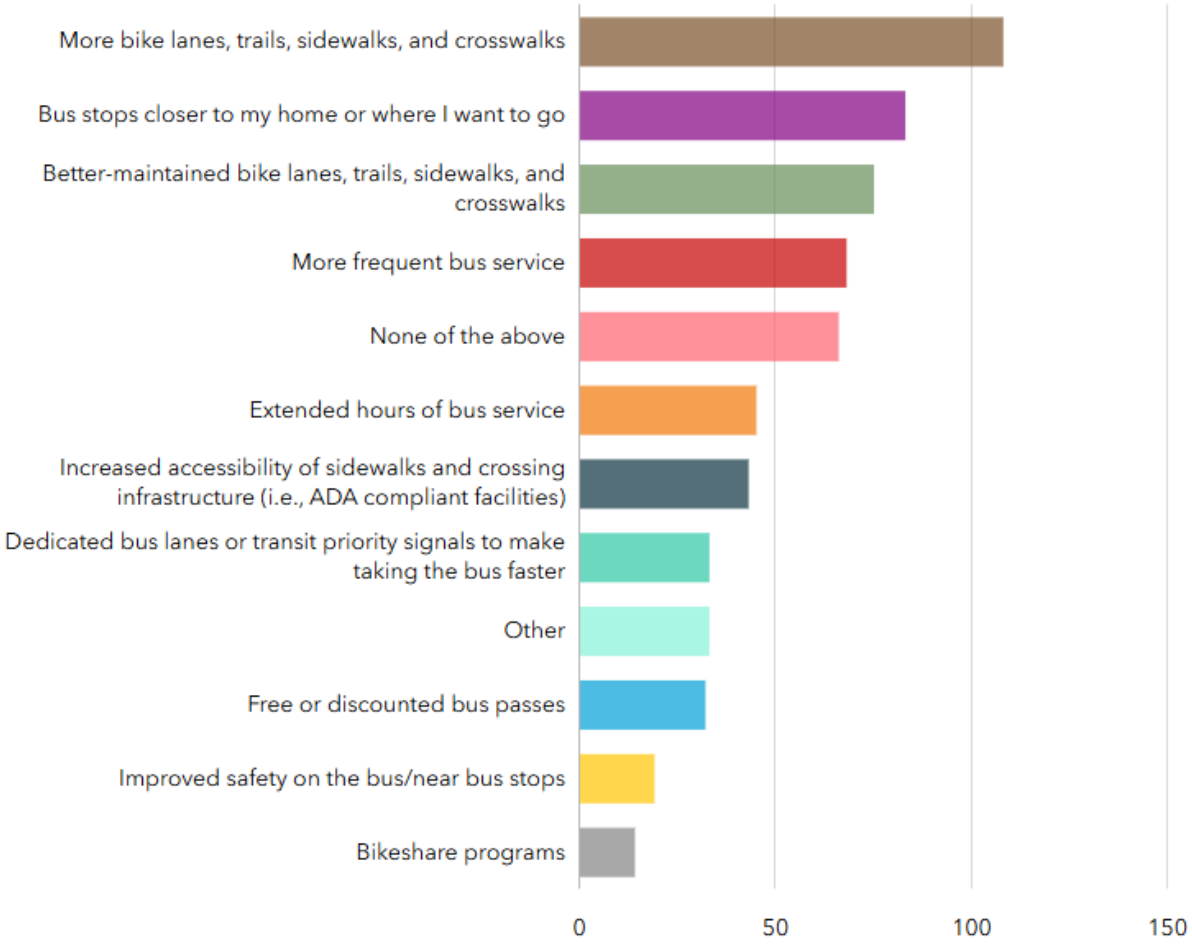


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 206 responses, 97 respondents (47%) stated that **there aren't stores and services within walking/biking distance of my home**, 78 respondents (38%) stated that **there's not enough bike lanes, trails, and/or sidewalks between my home and where I need to go**.

69 respondents (33%) selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents stated that weather conditions or health conditions prevent them from walking or biking.
- Several respondents stated that walking or biking would take too long to get where they need to go, especially if they are in a hurry.
- Several respondents stated that it is difficult to transport children or goods (groceries, etc.) by foot or by bike.

Question 22: What would make you consider walking, biking, and/or taking public transportation?
Note: This question was only shown to respondents who did not answer "walk," "bike," and "public transportation" to Question 16.

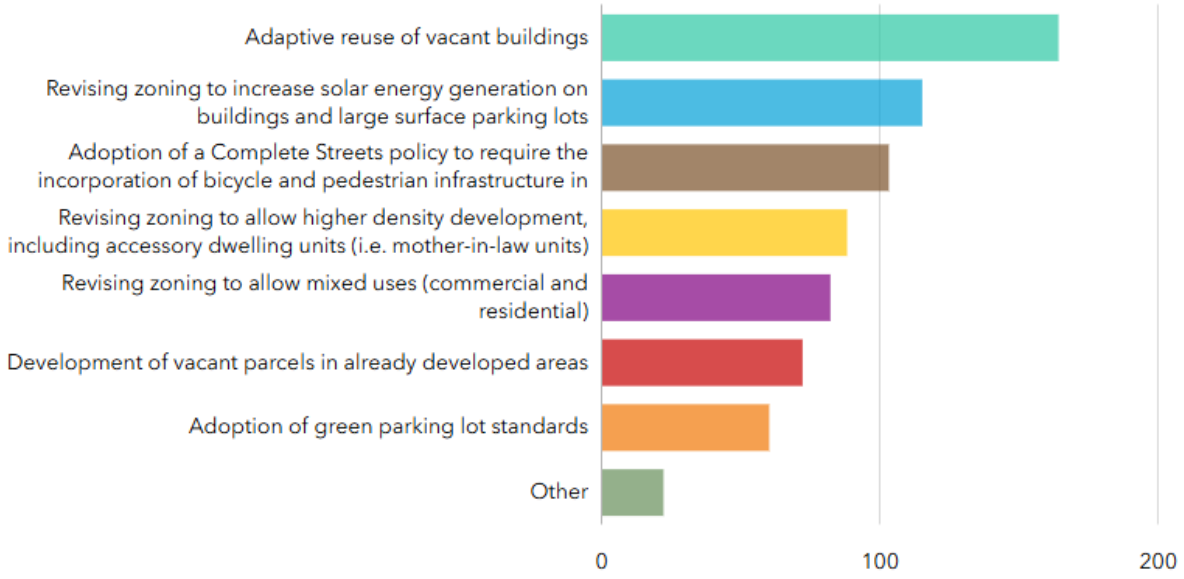


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 233 responses, 46% of respondents selected **more bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, and crosswalks**, 36% selected **bus stops closer to my home or where I want to go**, 32% selected **better-maintained bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, and crosswalks,** and 29% selected **more frequent bus service.** 28% of respondents selected **none of the above**.

14% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents stated that they would like to see more transit options such as inter-city rail, subways, and trolleys.
- Several respondents stated that they would like sidewalks to be wider and for gaps in the sidewalk and trail network to be closed. Respondents would also like to see bike lanes be wider and protected by buffers or barriers.
- Several respondents stated that they would like to see more law enforcement addressing speeding and distracted/reckless driving.

Question 23: Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?



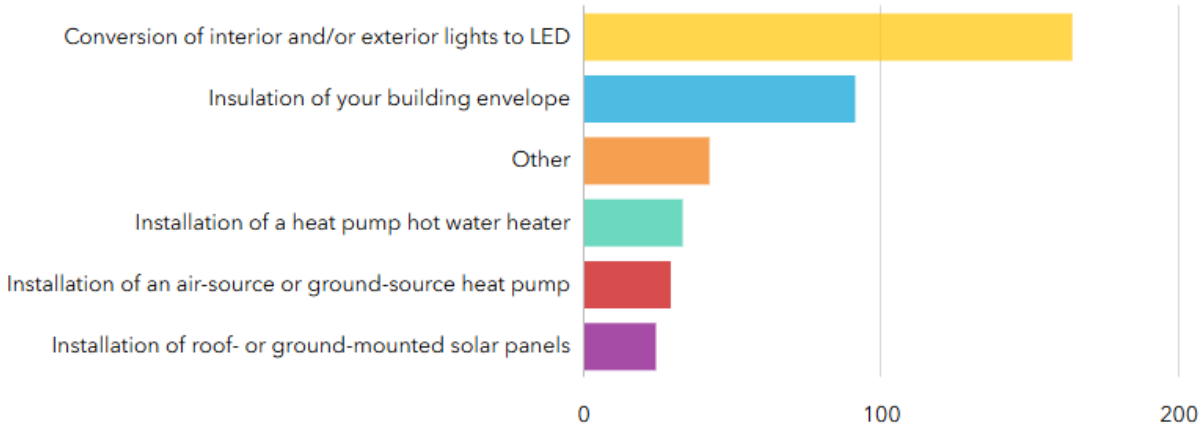
Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities. Out of 236 responses, 70% of respondents selected **adaptive reuse of vacant buildings** as a top priority. Other top priorities include **revising zoning to increase solar energy generation on buildings and large surface parking lots** (49%) and **adoption of a Complete Streets policy** (43%).

22 respondents (9%) selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Respondents are supportive of revising zoning to allow for houses smaller than 1,200 square feet.
- Respondents are supportive of land acquisition for parks and greenspace.
- Respondents are supportive of policies to encourage employers to allow employees to work from home to reduce vehicle use.

Section 4: Buildings and Infrastructure

Question 24: Have you made any of the following energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to your home?

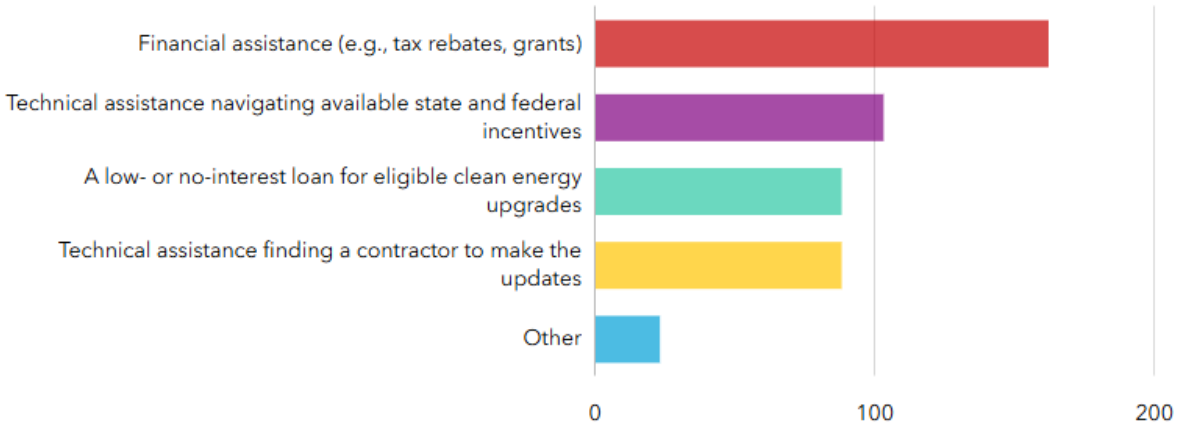


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 200 responses, 82% have **converted interior and/or exterior lights to LED** and 46% have **insulated their building envelope**. **Installation of a heat pump hot water heater, air- or ground-source heat pump, and roof- or ground-mounted panels** were less common, with less than 15% of respondents completing these upgrades.

21% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Some respondents have installed more efficient natural gas furnaces or other types of hot water heaters, like on-demand hot water heaters or solar hot water heaters. Other respondents use energy-efficient appliances like refrigerators, washers, and dryers, and unplug appliances when not in use to conserve energy.
- Some respondents are planning on installing heat pumps when they replace their furnace.
- Some respondents have subscribed to clean energy through their electric utility.

Question 25: Which of the following would make you consider making energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to your home?

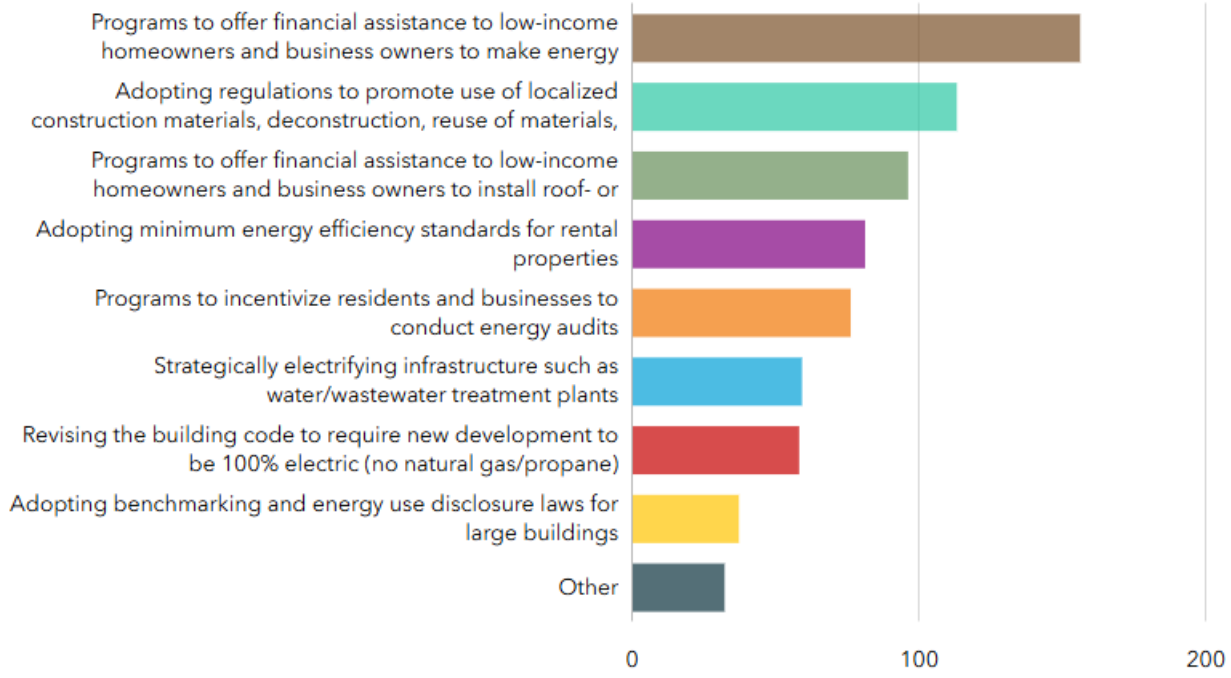


Respondents were asked to select as many answers as applied. Out of 200 responses, **financial assistance (e.g. tax rebates, grants)** (81%) and **technical assistance navigating available state and federal incentives** (52%) were most likely to make respondents consider making energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades to their home.

12% of respondents selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Several respondents stated that they would not consider making energy efficiency or clean energy upgrades to their home.
- Some respondents stated that wait times for qualified contractors are too long and that more qualified contractors are needed.

Question 26: Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities. Out of 236 responses, 66% of respondents selected **programs to offer financial assistance to low-income homeowners and business owners to make energy efficiency/clean energy upgrades** as a top priority. Other top priorities include **adopting regulations to promote use of localized construction materials, deconstruction, reuse of materials, and minimization of construction waste** (48%), **programs to offer financial assistance to low-income homeowners and business owners to install roof- or ground-mounted solar panels** (41%), and **adopting minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties** (34%).

32 respondents (14%) selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Some respondents emphasized the need to upgrade the electric grid to handle the increased demand due to electrification of buildings and expressed concerns about lack of heat during power outages with electric heat sources.
- Some respondents also noted that increased electrification might not reduce emissions as much as desired due to the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity.
- Respondents wanted to see more incentives and less regulations for electrification. They would also like to see incentives for middle-class households and not just low-income households due to the expense of heat pumps, etc.

Section 5: Other Sectors

Question 27: Which of the following would you be most supportive of in your community?



Respondents were asked to select their top five priorities. Out of 236 responses, 44% of respondents selected **planting more trees** as a top priority. Other top priorities include **upgrading the electric grid to handle increased demand from electrification** (42%), **installing renewable energy (wind/solar) on municipal/County property**, (41%), **programs to conserve existing, native trees and plants by removing invasive species** (33%), and a **residential composting program** (33%).

12 respondents (5%) selected "Other." Their responses are summarized below:

- Respondents stressed that change should be voluntary and not infringe on the rights of property owners.
- Respondents would like diverse sources of power and heat, including efficient use of natural gas.

Section 6: Final Thoughts

Question 28: Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team that the survey did not address?

Out of 79 responses, the most common themes are summarized below:

- Some respondents are concerned that more mandates will cause property tax increases, in turn causing more residents to leave New York State to states with lower property taxes. These respondents would like to see a more balanced approach, with realistic goals and timelines for implementation.
- Other respondents are concerned that too much climate planning has been done in the region without significant follow-through. These respondents would like to see the climate emergency treated with urgency and actions that will have the most impact on emissions prioritized.
- Some respondents are concerned about lack of federal support for climate action.
- Respondents emphasized the need to consider the unique challenges that rural communities face when developing the CCAP. These respondents would like to see a focus on resiliency for agriculture, natural resources, and rural residents.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Appendix C.3: Round 2 Community Survey Analysis

Prepared by Highland Planning // August 27, 2025

OVERVIEW

The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) is developing a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, and the responses to this survey will provide valuable information to prioritize and implement strategies to reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate pollution. This survey focuses on priorities for the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan and asks respondents to rank their priorities across sectors.

ACCESSIBILITY

The survey was available online through Survey123. The survey was also available in Spanish.

PROMOTION

The survey was promoted through email, at the virtual public meetings, and at pop- up events held throughout the project area.

SURVEY PERIOD AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

The survey was open from Jul1 21, 2025 through August 22, 2025 and received a total of 97 responses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section defines all of the questions asked in the survey and provides a brief summary of the responses to each question. The summarized responses are shown in italics immediately following each question.

Section 1: First, a little about you...

1. In which County do you live?

   Most survey respondents live in Monroe County (35% of respondents), Seneca County (20% of respondents), or Ontario County (18% of respondents). Less than 10 responses were received from the remaining counties in the G/FLRPC region.

2. What is your zip code?

   14456 (Geneva area), with 9% of responses, 14521 and 14860 (Seneca County), totaling 13% responses, and 14450 (Fairport area), with 6% of responses each, were the most common responses.

3. Which best describes your race or ethnicity?

   Most survey respondents identify as White (93% of respondents).

4. Are you of Hispanic or Latinx origin?

   Most survey respondents are not of Hispanic or Latinx origin (97% of respondents).

5. What is your age?

   Most survey respondents are over 65 (34%) or between 45 and 64 years old (31%).

Section 2: Strategy Prioritization

Respondents were asked what the most important strategies were to be implemented in the next 3-5 years. Respondents were asked to select their top 5 priorities for each sector; the summaries of findings are below.

6. Transportation and Land Use
   Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the transportation and land use sector. Out of 96 responses, the top five responses were:
   - *Adopt climate adaptation policies to reduce runoff, encourage native plants, manage stormwater, and promote overall **(49 responses)***
   - *Implement Smart Growth planning, Complete Streets policies in land use, zoning reform, and comprehensive planning to prioritize mixed-use development in urban and village centers and prevent sprawl into agricultural land **(38 responses)***
   - *Expand and maintain green spaces to mitigate the heat island effects associated with impervious surfaces **(34 responses)***
   - *Develop and implement a regional program to help communities plan for climate adaptation and resiliency **(34 responses)***
   - *Continue to evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks **(28 responses)***

7. Additional Comments/Explanations for Transportation and Land Use priorities:
   Respondents emphasized transportation and land use as the most urgent sector, calling for phasing out gas-powered vehicles, expanding EV charging, and investing in transit, biking, and walking. They want direct, action-oriented policies (rather than education) that reduce car dependence, improve neighborhood livability, and address climate adaptation and flooding risks.

8. Buildings and Infrastructure
   Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the building and infrastructure sector. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:
   - *Utilize Land Banks to repurpose vacant and derelict properties **(40 responses)***
   - *Invest in policies and programs to reduce energy costs and consumption by optimizing energy use (energy audits and benchmarking) to lower GHG emissions in buildings **(34 responses)***
   - *Explore a pilot program for geothermal energy and networks on a community scale in new and existing developments **(30 responses)***

9. Additional Comments/Explanations for Buildings and Infrastructure priorities:
   Respondents emphasized the need for reliable renewable energy, strong utility partnerships, and especially financing and incentives to make upgrades affordable. Education alone was seen as insufficient, while vacant property reuse and efficiency programs were viewed as opportunities to align climate goals with revitalization.

10. Electric Power and Energy
Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the electric power and energy sector. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:
    - *Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to increase grid capacity, create, meet, and expand their energy goals ensuring customer affordability remains a key consideration **(53 responses)***
    - *Conduct feasibility studies and pilot programs to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on NYS DACs and communities with environmental risks **(33 responses)***
    - *Capitalize on existing state and federal funding opportunities, and pilot innovative financing strategies (e.g., zero-to-low interest financing, gap funding) to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects **(30 responses)***

11. Additional Comments/Explanations for Electric Power and Energy priorities:
Respondents called for a rapid transition away from fossil fuels, stronger government oversight of utilities, and more renewables on rooftops, parking lots, and brownfields to protect farmland. Nuclear power was divisive, but there was broad agreement on the urgency of grid upgrades and ensuring local communities benefit from projects.

12. Agriculture and Working Lands
Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the agriculture and working lands sector. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:
    - *Establish a tree fund to increase and replace lost tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals **(44 responses)***
    - *Support programs to conserve open space in collaboration with land trust organizations, private landowners, and municipalities **(42 responses)***
    - *Encourage crop and livestock diversification to improve resilience to pests, diseases, and climate variability. For example, agroforestry, intercropping, silvapasture and polyculture can enhance biodiversity **(28 responses)***

13. Additional Comments/Explanations for Agriculture and Working Lands priorities:
Respondents stressed supporting farmers with financial incentives, technical assistance, and a greater role in decision-making to make climate-friendly practices viable. Key priorities included reducing methane, regenerative farming, crop diversification, water quality improvements, and low-cost solutions like tree planting and land restoration.

14. Materials Management
Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the materials management sector. Out of 96 responses, the top three responses were:
    - *Expand composting facilities, programs, and funding for medium to large waste producers to reduce the amount of food in landfill, in accordance to NYS Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling law. Over time, extend support to include small scale waste producers. **(53 responses)***
    - *Support innovation of alternative materials for single use plastics. **(30 responses)***
    - *Develop a construction and demolition waste reduction program and policies for new construction and renovation focused on reuse, contractor training, and market capacity building for reclaimed material. **(22 responses)***

15. Additional Comments/Explanations for Materials Management priorities:
Comments reflected enthusiasm for composting, food donation, and compostable alternatives, alongside repair and reuse to prevent waste. Concerns about recycling inefficiencies and e-waste exports reinforced the need for upstream solutions like Extended Producer Responsibility and stronger local coordination.

16. Industry and Workforce
Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for the industry and workforce sector. Out of 91 responses, the top three responses were:
- *Define and integrate clean energy pathways into skilled trade and educational programs. **(42 responses)***
- *Develop a working group with employers, employees, and other regional partners to identify workforce needs and gaps to support collaboration in planning for the future of the regional workforce **(35 responses)***
- *Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields. **(34 responses)***

17. Additional Comments/Explanations for Industry and Workforce priorities:

Respondents emphasized creating well-paying, long-term jobs and ensuring disadvantaged communities benefit from clean energy workforce development. Government support, infrastructure-aligned siting, and training programs were seen as critical to meeting the demands of the clean energy transition.

18. Build Regional Capacity
Survey respondents were asked to prioritize climate actions and recommendations for building regional capacity. Out of 93 responses, the top three responses were:
- *Advocate for supportive policies at local, state, and federal levels can create a conducive environment for sustainable practices. For example, tax incentives, grants, or subsidies for farmers adopting sustainable methods. **(44 responses)***
- *Provide community-wide education on rebates and incentives related to funding for climate-related improvements **(43 responses)***
- *Increase the participation of local municipalities to pursue Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Communities certification and begin implementing action items. **(41 responses)***

19. Additional Comments/Explanations for Building Regional Capacity priorities:

Respondents emphasized the need for clear governance, accountability, and messaging that highlights cost savings, health, and community benefits. They called for consistent greenhouse gas inventories, stronger local decision-making, and more support for municipalities and citizen groups to build political will and sustain climate action.

Section 3: Implementation

20. Are there any organizations you are aware of that would be potential partners to help implement any of these strategies?

    24 respondents gave suggestions of potential partnerships, with many respondents leaving lists of several partnerships. The top suggestions were the Climate Solutions Accelerator, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and various Land Trusts throughout the region.

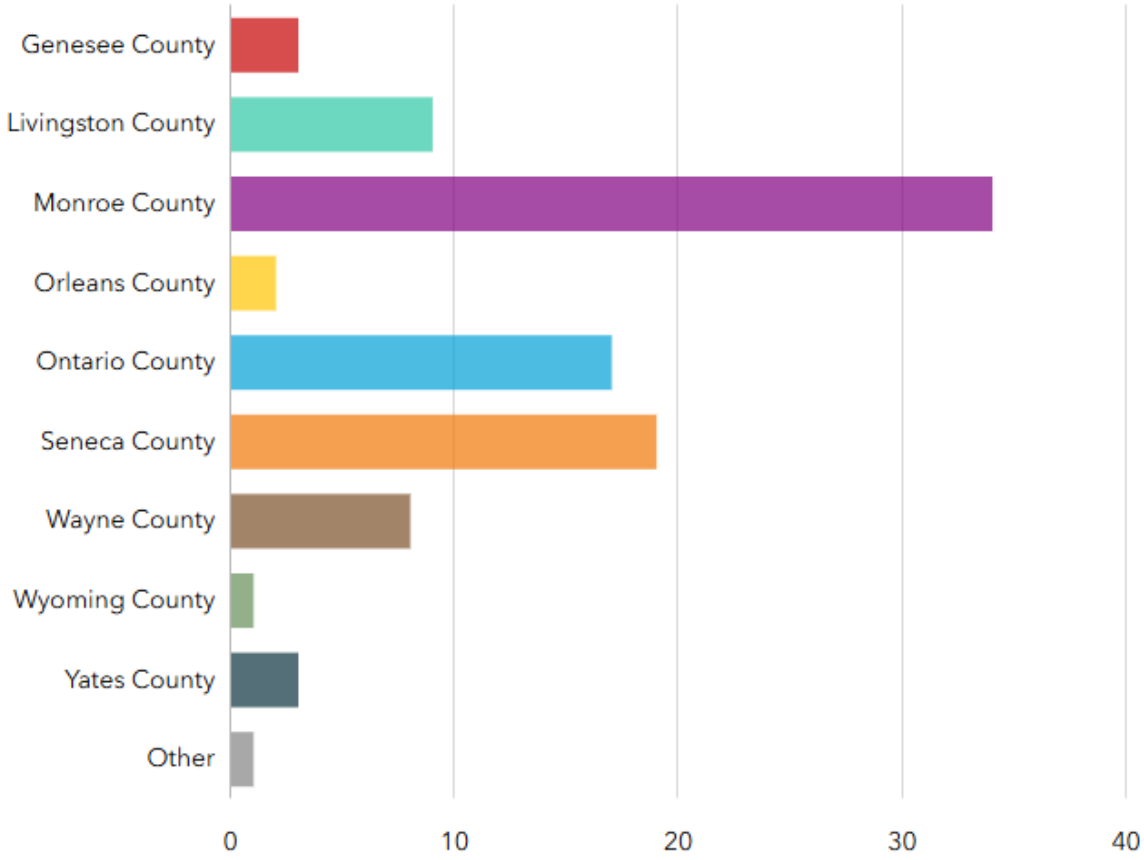
21. Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team that the survey did not address?

    Respondents stressed that buildings and transportation should remain top priorities, with system-level actions and utility upgrades needed to support electrification. They also highlighted the importance of local government accountability, better communication to reach rural communities, and low-hanging fruit like no-till farming and lawn alternatives. A few raised broader policy concerns or simply expressed appreciation for the project.

This section lists each question included in the survey and summarizes the responses received.

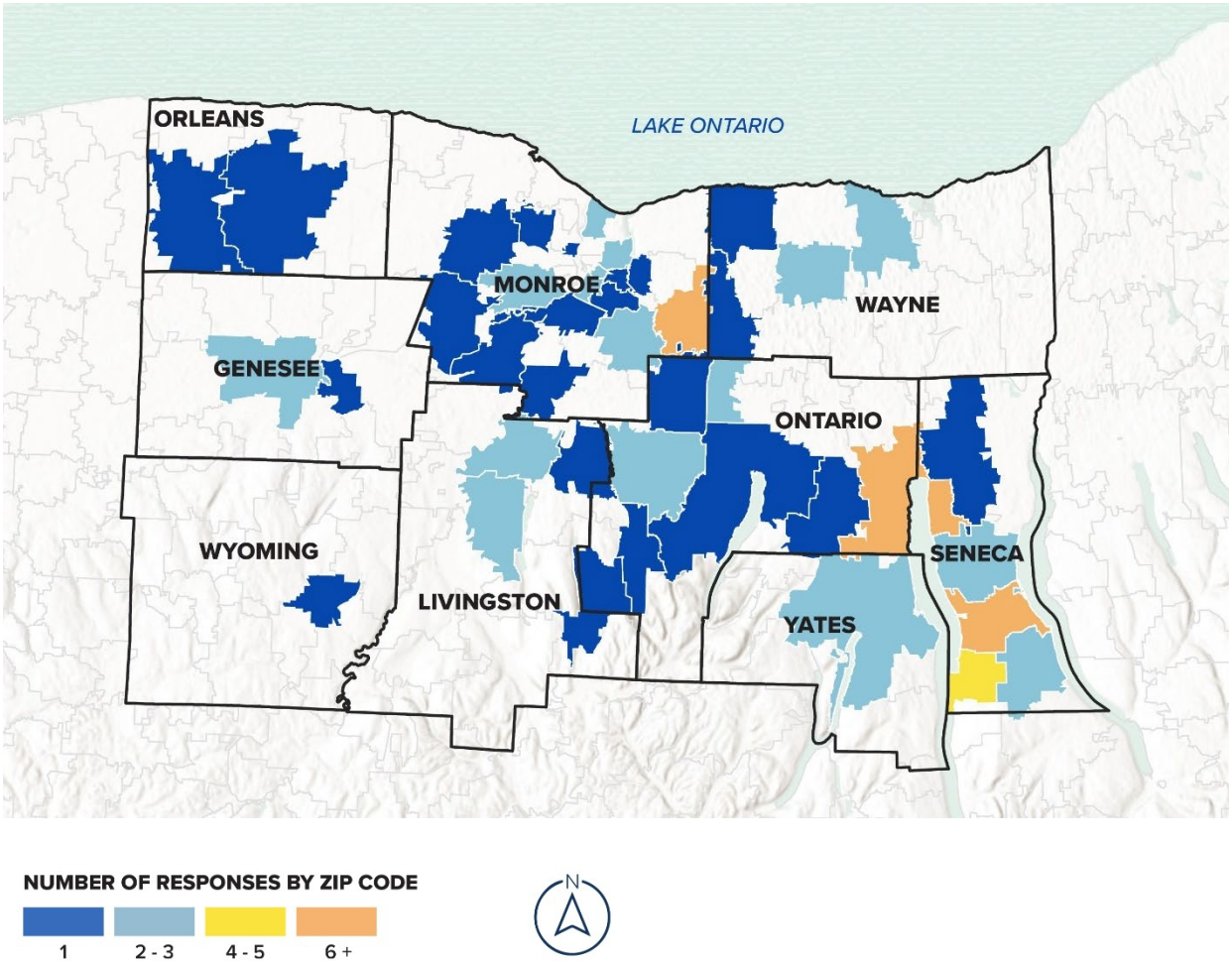
Section 1: First, a little about you…

Question 1: In which County do you live?



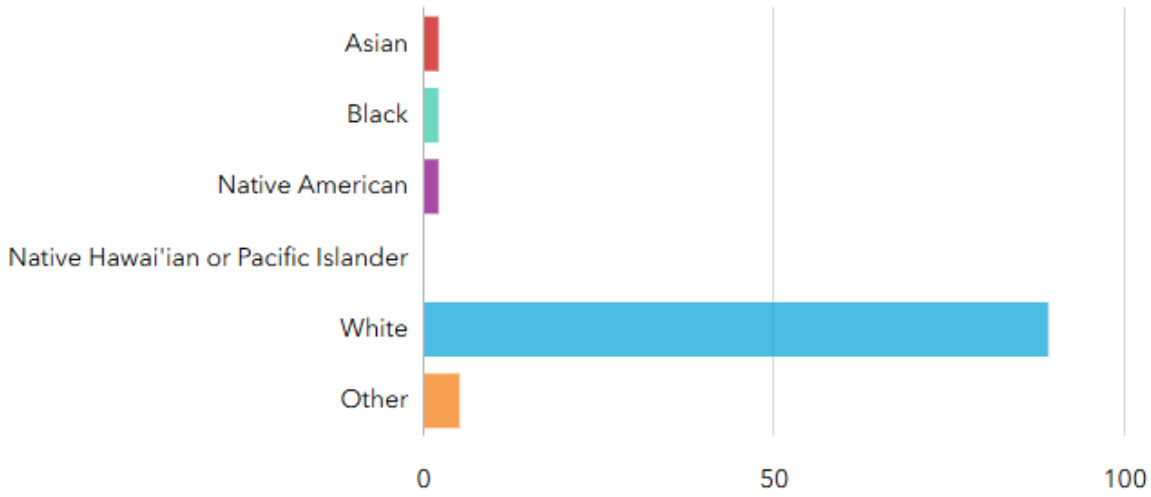
Out of 97 responses, **Monroe County**, with 35% of responses, and **Seneca County**, with 20% of responses, were the most common responses. Ontario County had 18% of responses, Livingston County had 9% of responses, and Wayne County had 8% of responses. Genesee County, Yates County, Orleans County, and Wyoming County had fewer than 2% of responses each. One respondent chose "Other," and was from Schuyler County.

Question 2: What is your zip code?



Out of 97 responses, **14456**, with 9% of responses, **14521**, with 7% responses, and **14450** and **14860**, with 6% of responses each, were the most common responses. 14456 is a zip code that includes the Geneva area, 14521 is a zip code that includes the Lodi area of Seneca County, 14450 is a zip code that includes the Fairport area, and 14860 is a zip code that includes the Ovid area of Seneca County. These zip codes are shown in orange in the above map.

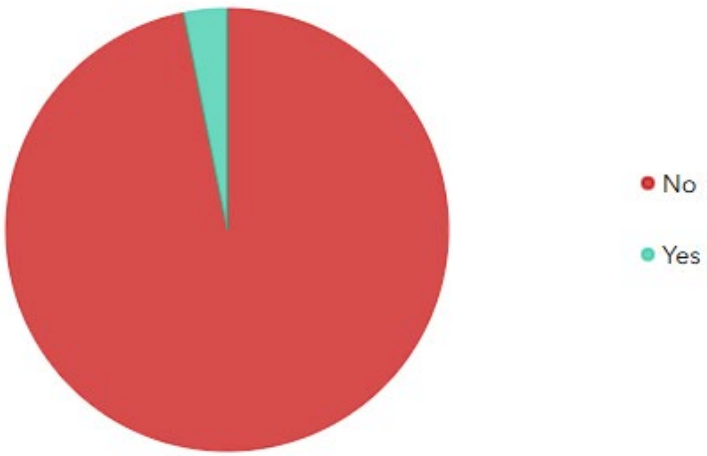
Question 3: What best describes your race or ethnicity?



Respondents were able to select as many answers as applied. Out of 96 responses, 93% of respondents selected **White**. 2% of respondents selected **Black**, 2% selected **Asian**, and 2% selected **Native American**.

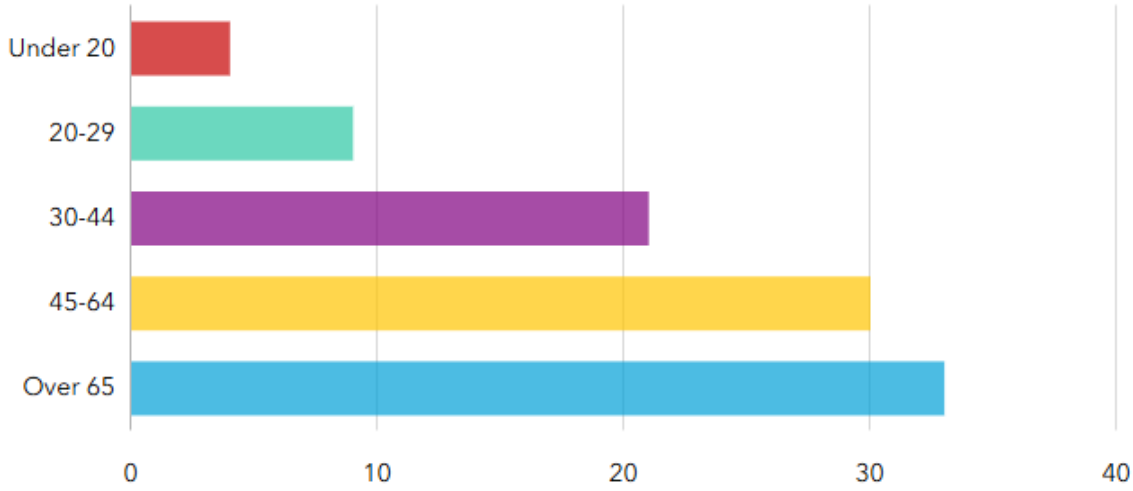
5% of respondents chose "Other." One of these respondents identified as Hispanic.

Question 4: Are you of Hispanic or Latinx origin?



Out of 95 responses, 97% **did not identify as being of Hispanic or Latinx origin**. 3% of respondents **identified as being of Hispanic or Latinx origin**.

Question 5: What is your age?



Out of 97 responses, 34% were **over 65** years old, 31% were **45-64** years old, and 22% were **30-44** years old. 9% of respondents were **20-29** years old, and 4% were **under 20** years old.

Section 2: Strategy Prioritization

Question 6: Transportation and Land Use Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top five priorities for the Transportation and Land Use sector from a list of 23 strategies. Out of 96 responses, the top five responses were:

1. Adopt climate adaptation policies to reduce runoff, encourage native plants, manage stormwater, and promote overall (49 responses)
2. Implement Smart Growth planning, Complete Streets policies in land use, zoning reform, and comprehensive planning to prioritize mixed-use development in urban and village centers and preventing sprawl into agricultural land (38 responses)
3. Expand and maintain green spaces to mitigate the heat island effects associated with impervious surfaces (34 responses)
4. Develop and implement a regional program to help communities plan for climate adaptation and resiliency (34 responses)
5. Continue to evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks (28 responses)

The rest of the strategies received less than 24 responses. Five respondents selected "Other" and suggested the following strategies:

- Create/expand active transportation entity region-wide to serve as a hub for funding, advocacy, and mandates to increase transportation share for walking, biking, and public transit. Like the CC accelerator, but for active transportation.
- Closer access to services: grocery stores, doctors, DSS, etc., so less miles have to be driven to get to the services people need.

Question 7: Transportation and Land Use Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation
Out of 17 responses, respondents consistently emphasized that this is the most urgent sector for climate action. Comments called for retiring gas-powered vehicles, expanding EV charging, and investing more heavily in transit, biking, and walking options. Many felt education is not the priority; they want direct, action-oriented policies that reduce car dependence and improve quality of life through walkable neighborhoods and better access to services. Climate adaptation also came through as a key concern, with several noting flooding risks and the need for regional resilience planning.

Question 8: Buildings and Infrastructure Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Buildings and Infrastructure sector from a list of 12 strategies. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:

1. Utilize Land Banks to repurpose vacant and derelict properties **(40 responses)**
2. Invest in policies and programs to reduce energy costs and consumption by optimizing energy use (energy audits and benchmarking) to lower GHG emissions in buildings **(34 responses)**
3. Explore a pilot program for geothermal energy and networks on a community scale in new and existing developments **(30 responses)**

The rest of the strategies received less than 30 responses. Four respondents selected "Other" and suggested the following strategies:

- Utilize zoning code reform to create mixed use, dense, neighborhoods in transit accessible neighborhoods to reduce the use of private transportation.
- Convene the region's IDAs to work on an agreement that creates lower emissions standards for new development. For example, tax abatement standards are not available for projects that use fossil fuels for greater than X% of project energy consumption.

Question 9: Buildings and Infrastructure Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation
Out of 8 responses, respondents focused on affordability and practicality. Respondents stressed that electrifying buildings will require reliable renewable energy and stronger utility partnerships, but above all, financing and incentives are needed to make upgrades feasible for homeowners, renters, and businesses. Education alone was seen as insufficient unless paired with direct financial support. Vacant property reuse and energy efficiency programs were also viewed as opportunities to align climate goals with economic revitalization.

Question 10: Electric Power and Energy Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Electric Power and Energy sector from a list of 13 strategies. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:

1. Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to increase grid capacity, create, meet, and expand their energy goals ensuring customer affordability remains a key consideration **(53 responses)**
2. Conduct feasibility studies and pilot programs to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on NYS DACs and communities with environmental risks **(33 responses)**

3. Capitalize on existing state and federal funding opportunities, and pilot innovative financing strategies (e.g., zero-to-low interest financing, gap funding) to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects **(30 responses)**

The rest of the strategies received less than 28 responses. Three respondents selected "Other" and suggested the following strategies:

- Retrofit nuclear reactors to use Thorium instead of Uranium. No more bomb material.
- Build more Nuclear Plants/retrofit fossil fuel plants with FGD.

Question 11: Electric Power and Energy Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation

Out of 8 responses, respondents called for a rapid shift away from fossil fuels, with strong government leadership to hold utilities accountable. Many expressed interest in publicly owned utilities, citing frustration with current providers. There was broad support for renewables like solar and wind, especially on rooftops, parking lots, and brownfields to avoid loss of farmland. Protecting natural resources and ensuring host communities benefit from projects were recurring themes. Nuclear energy was divisive, with some strongly opposed, while others stressed the urgency of grid upgrades and local generation to support building and vehicle electrification.

Question 12: Agriculture and Working Lands Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Agriculture and Working Lands sector from a list of 16 strategies. Out of 95 responses, the top three responses were:

1. Establish a tree fund to increase and replace lost tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals **(44 responses)**
2. Support programs to conserve open space in collaboration with land trust organizations, private landowners, and municipalities **(42 responses)**

3. Encourage crop and livestock diversification to improve resilience to pests, diseases, and climate variability. For example agroforestry, intercropping, silvapasture and polyculture can enhance biodiversity (28 responses)

The rest of the strategies received less than 24 responses. One respondent selected "Other" but did not provide a written response.

Question 13: Agriculture and Working Lands Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation

Out of 11 responses, respondents saw agriculture as important for resilience and local identity, even though it contributes fewer emissions than energy or transportation. Many urged support for farmers through financial incentives, technical assistance, and inclusion in decision-making to make climate-friendly practices viable. Priorities included reducing methane emissions, promoting regenerative agriculture, diversifying crops and livestock, and addressing harmful algal blooms in regional water bodies. Tree planting and land restoration were also framed as effective, low-cost opportunities with broad benefits.

Question 14: Materials Management Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Materials Management sector from a list of 19 strategies. Out of 96 responses, the top three responses were:

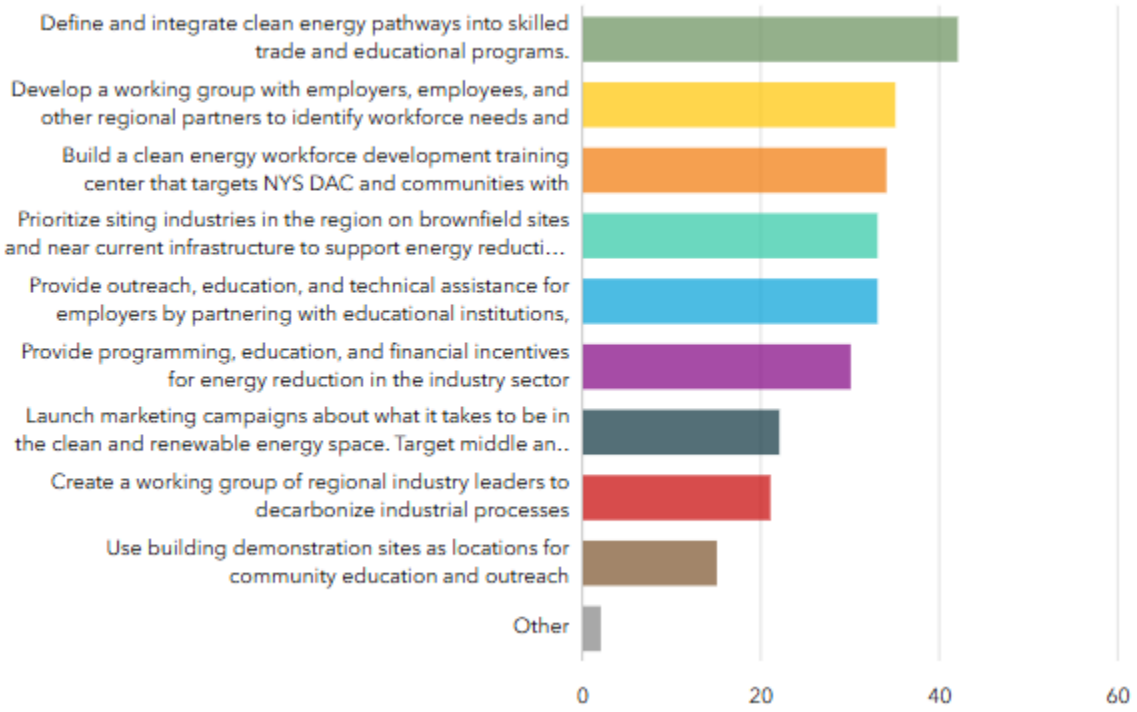
1. Expand composting facilities, programs, and funding for medium to large waste producers to reduce the amount of food in landfill, in accordance to NYS Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling law. Over time, extend support to include small scale waste producers. **(53 responses)**
2. Support innovation of alternative materials for single use plastics **(30 responses)**
3. Develop a construction and demolition waste reduction program and policies for new construction and renovation focused on reuse, contractor training, and market capacity building for reclaimed material. **(22 responses)**

The rest of the strategies received less than 22 responses. One respondent selected "Other" but did not provide a written response.

Question 15: Materials Management Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation

Out of 8 responses, respondents showed enthusiasm for waste diversion and circular economy solutions. Many called for expanded composting, food donation programs, and compostable alternatives to plastics, while others stressed repair and reuse as essential to diverting waste. Concerns were raised about ineffective recycling systems and the export of e-waste, with some skepticism about whether certain efforts, like food waste composting, are worthwhile. Overall, respondents supported moving responsibility upstream through Extended Producer Responsibility and stronger local coordination.

Question 16: Industry and Workforce Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Industry and Workforce sector from a list of 9 strategies. Out of 91 responses, the top three responses were:

1. Define and integrate clean energy pathways into skilled trade and educational programs. **(42 responses)**
2. Develop a working group with employers, employees, and other regional partners to identify workforce needs and gaps to support collaboration in planning for the future of the regional workforce **(35 responses)**
3. Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields. **(34 responses)**

The rest of the strategies received less than 34 responses. Two respondents selected "Other" and suggested the following strategies:

- Programming for those in industries that will disappear or be affected and creating a regional plan for them (Gas stations, mechanics, fossil fuels). We should offer training for new industries and jobs, but need to address those disappearing as well.

Question 17: Industry and Workforce Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation
Out of 5 responses, respondents focused heavily on workforce needs for the clean energy transition. They stressed the importance of creating good-paying, long-term jobs and ensuring disadvantaged communities benefit from training and hiring. Government was seen as a key partner in coordinating programs and funding workforce development at the necessary scale. Some suggested aligning industry siting with existing infrastructure to reduce costs and improve access. While a few noted the disruptive potential of AI, the dominant theme was urgency in preparing a skilled workforce for rapid buildout.

Question 18: Building Regional Capacity Strategy Prioritization



Respondents were asked to select their top three priorities for the Building Regional Capacity sector from a list of 10 strategies. Out of 93 responses, the top three responses were:

1. Advocate for supportive policies at local, state, and federal levels can create a conducive environment for sustainable practices. For example, tax incentives, grants, or subsidies for farmers adopting sustainable methods. **(44 responses)**
2. Provide community-wide education on rebates and incentives related to funding for climate-related improvements **(43 responses)**
3. Increase the participation of local municipalities to pursue Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Communities certification and begin implementing action items. **(41 responses)**

The rest of the strategies received less than 28 responses. One respondent selected “Other” but did not provide a written response.

Question 19: Building Regional Capacity Strategy Prioritization – Additional Explanation

Out of 4 responses, respondents emphasized governance, accountability, and messaging. Many felt climate action needs to be framed in terms of cost savings, health, and community benefits to resonate with a wider audience. Respondents supported more consistent greenhouse gas inventories for accountability but stressed that resources and decision-making must remain local. Building political will was seen as critical, with calls to support citizen groups, expand municipal participation in the Climate Smart and Clean Energy Communities programs, and channel funding to local governments to sustain momentum.

Section 3: Implementation

Question 20: Are there any organizations you are aware of that would be potential partners to help implement any of these strategies?

24 respondents gave suggestions of potential partnerships, with many respondents leaving lists of several partnerships. Below is the list of potential partners sorted by frequency of the number of times respondents suggested them.

- Climate Solutions Accelerator – 5
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (county-level + general references) – 4
- Finger Lakes Land Trust / Genesee Land Trust / Genesee Valley Conservancy / TapRoot Community Land Trust (land trusts grouped) – 3
- Reconnect Rochester – 2
- STEPS Project – 2
- Color Your Community Green network/teams – 2
- United Way (regional and Seneca County references) – 2
- Impact Earth – 2
- Libraries (public libraries, Finger Lakes Library System, library forums) – 2
- Local Manufacturers (Thermofisher, Röchling, Bausch & Lomb, CooperVision, Kraft, Grey Metal, Barilla) – 2
- Seneca Lake Guardian – 1
- Save Our Sodus (Sodus, NY) – 1
- Institute for Local Self Resiliency / Adaptation Leader – 1
- NOFA-NY (organic farming network) – 1
- Finger Lakes Cider House / Good Farmers Guild / Headwater Food Hub – 1
- Taproot Collective / Rochester Ecology Partners / local farmers markets / Lori's Natural Foods – 1
- Foodlink (hunger relief organization) – 1
- Local Grange organizations – 1
- CSA (general reference) – 1
- Metro Justice – 1
- LaBella (design/engineering firm) – 1
- Rochester Youth Climate Leaders – 1
- MK Gandhi Institute – 1
- YMCA – 1
- Causewave – 1
- MARC (Monroe Avenue Revitalization Coalition) – 1
- SEAC (South East Area Coalition) – 1
- Luann Meyer (Barton & Loguidice) – 1
- Golisano Institute of Technology (RIT) – 1
- NY Pollution Prevention Institute (RIT) – 1
- Zeliff Farms (regenerative agriculture) – 1
- Blueprint Geneva – 1
- Miscellaneous reference: utilities, developers, Coop Extension – 1
- Miscellaneous reference: chips, data centers, AI must come first– 1

Question 21: Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team that the survey did not address?

Out of 19 responses, respondents emphasized that buildings and transportation remain the most critical sectors for driving down emissions and called for system-level actions that make it easier for residents to transition away from fossil fuels. Several raised concerns about electrification straining an already limited grid, underscoring the need for utility upgrades to match state mandates. Others highlighted local government accountability, stressing that municipalities need clear, measurable goals; funding opportunities; and support to act on climate commitments.

In addition, respondents mentioned the importance of education and communication, both to engage rural communities that lack environmentally friendly options and to make complex climate topics more accessible to the general public. Some flagged specific opportunities such as no-till farming, lawn management alternatives, and partnerships with the Amish community to reduce agricultural impacts. Finally, a few comments raised broader political and policy concerns, including federal rollbacks of climate regulations and the impact of tariffs on recycling markets, while others simply expressed appreciation for the project and its community focus.

C.4

Appendix C.4: Focus Group Members

Agriculture and Working Lands

- Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Northeast Dairy Producers Association
- Amanda Grisa, Genesee Land Trust
- Craig Kahlke, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Danielle Cummins, Genesee County Farm Bureau
- Emmaline Long, Yara North America
- Jack Klapper, Livingston County Farm Bureau
- Janet van Zoeren, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Jared Elliott, Genesee Soil & Water Conservation District
- Jason Oliver, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Justin Jackson, New York Wine & Grape Foundation
- Ken Estes, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Lorna Wright, Genesee Land Trust
- Mary Austerman, NY Sea Grant/Cornell University
- Maura Slocum, Genesee Valley Conservancy
- Nadia Harvieux, Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Nancy Glazier, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Rachel Chrostowski, WNY Land Conservancy
- Tim Welch, Genesee Soil & Water Conservation District
- Tonya Van Slyke, Northeast Dairy Producers Association

Buildings

- Bret Garwood, Home Leasing
- Carol Wheeler, City of Rochester
- Christina McPike, WinnCompanies
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Shawn Burr, Rochester Housing Authority

Electric Power

- Carly Norton, NYSEG
- Christina Ficichia, AVANGRID
- Haylee Ferington, EDF
- Joseph Sayre, RG&E
- Leslie Vishwanath, National Grid
- Michael Jachles, AVANGRID

Industry and Economic Development

- Andreas Finken, Arkema
- Bill Bacon, Livingston County Economic Development
- Chris Suozzi, Genesee County Economic Development Center
- Dave Hewitt, Seneca County IDA
- Greg Albert, Empire State Development
- Jean Lucas, Eco Waste Solutions
- Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Empire State Development
- Leah George VanScott, Greater Rochester Enterprise
- Matt Hurlbutt, Greater Rochester Enterprise
- Melody Warner, Carestream
- Michael Dobel, Orleans Economic Development Agency
- Mike Lipar, Finger Lakes Economic Development Center of Yates County
- Nate Salpter, Sweet Farm
- Philip Bove, Sunnking
- Robyn Brookhart, Liberty Pumps
- Ryan Davis, Ontario County Office of Economic Development
- Suzanne Hunt, Hunt Country Vineyards

Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC)

- Holly Sienkiewicz, Common Ground Health
- Janielle Crocker, Connected Communities
- Karel Titus, STEPS
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Peter Varquez, Keuka Housing Council
- Tammy Westbrook, Connected Communities

Materials Management

- Alex Pierce, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Carla Jordan, Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management
- Caroline Berkemeier, Genesee County
- Caroline Ding, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute at RIT
- David Pannucci, Waste Connections
- Jackie Ebner, Resource Recycling Systems
- Kali Smith, Sunnking Sustainable Solutions
- Karen Nozik, Goodwill Finger Lakes
- Kyle Black, Waste Connections
- Madison Quinn, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Robert Putney, Impact Earth
- Ryan Staychock, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Yasmin Guevara, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services

Transportation

- Cody Donahue, Reconnect Rochester
- Dave Belaskas, RTS
- Devin Blue. Wyoming County Highway Department
- Edward Campany, Livingston County
- Jim Stack, Genesee Transportation Council
- Jodi Binnix, Genesee Transportation Council
- Kevin Rooney, Wayne County Highway Department
- Krist Mooney Graves, Greater Rochester Clean Cities
- Laura Wadhams, Genesee County Highway Department
- Mary Staropoli, Reconnect Rochester
- Olivia Arnone, Causewave Community Partners
- Rusty Korth, RTS
- Tim Hens, Genesee County Highway Department

Workforce Development

- Darlene Necaster, SUNY Geneseo
- Darren Burdick, NYS Department of Labor
- Dave Seeley, Rochester Works
- Jay Lazorony, GLOW Workforce Development Board
- Jen Geiger, NYS Department of Education
- Julia Murphy, NYS Department of Labor
- Kerry O'Connor, Greenspark Solar
- Lee Koslow, Rochester Works
- Maria Velaquez, Genesee Community College
- Mike Woloson, Finger Lakes Works
- Nick Brown, Greenspark Solar
- Samantha Adikson
- Tish Williams, Genesee Community College

C.5

Appendix C.5: Focus Group Notes

Focus Groups Round 1 | January 2025

- Agriculture and Working Lands | January 7, 2025
- Buildings | January 8, 2025
- Electric Power | January 9, 2025
- Industry and Economic Development | January 14, 2025
- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) | January 15, 2025
- Materials Management | January 21, 2025
- Transportation | January 22, 2025
- Workforce Development | January 23, 2025

Focus Groups Round 2 | April 2025

- Agriculture and Working Lands Focus Group | April 21, 2025
- Buildings | April 23, 2025
- Electric Power | April 24, 2025
- Industry and Economic Development |April 28, 2025
- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) | April 28, 2025
- Materials Management | April 30, 2025
- Transportation | April 30, 2025
- Workforce Development | May 1, 2025

Focus Groups Round 3 | June 2025

- Agriculture and Working Lands | June 5, 2025
- Buildings | June 10, 2025
- Electric Power | June 12, 2025
- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) |June 17, 2025
- Materials Management | June 19, 2025
- Transportation | June 24, 2025
- Workforce Development | June 26, 2025

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Agriculture and Working Lands Focus Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Liz Podowski King, Highland Planning
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Jeff Ayers, Yates County
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Jae Darling, Seneca County
- Ken Estes, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Tim Welch, Genesee Soil & Water Conservation District
- Jared Elliott, Genesee Soil & Water Conservation District
- Emily End, Yates County
- Nancy Glazier, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Emmaline Long, Yara North America
- Craig Kahlke, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Justin Jackson, New York Wine & Grape Foundation
- Jack Klapper, Livingston County Farm Bureau
- Nadia Harvieux, Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Janet Van Zoeren, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Jason Oliver, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Northeast Dairy Producers Association
- Danielle Cummins, Genesee County Farm Bureau
- Maura Slocum, Genesee Valley Conservancy

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Agriculture and Working Lands sectors. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture/working lands
    1. Agriculture contributes 9% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Natural and working lands removed the equivalent of nearly 15% of total GHG emissions in 2022 (carbon sequestration)
    3. Fertilizers were the main sources of GHG emissions from agriculture
- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. Support for planting more trees, preventing deforestation and conserving existing trees, removing invasive species, developing farmland and agricultural protection plans, and transitioning non-road equipment to zero-emission technology
    2. Desire to see solar energy production focused on non-agricultural lands instead of pulling prime farmland out of production
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from agriculture/working lands
    1. Support local agricultural entities to develop and implement education and outreach programs about carbon farming practices that will enhance carbon sequestration, increase soil health, climate resilience, and crop productivity.
    2. Transition non-road equipment to zero-emission, from small lawn equipment, to offroad agriculture and construction equipment, when the technology becomes available.
    3. Support programs to increase tree cover, establish tree canopy goals across the County, and consider creating a tree fund, prioritizing planting trees in vulnerable areas. Consider supporting an expansion of the City of Rochester's Reforest Rochester Fund.
    4. Increase tree planting projects in urban and suburban areas and increase reforestation to regenerate and expand healthy forest ecosystems.

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for resilient agriculture in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of agriculture/working lands?
    1. Sustainability (environmental, economic, and social)
    2. Minimal impact on natural resources/limit use of resources
    3. Good for the community and workers
    4. Help businesses thrive and grow for future generations
    5. Healthy soil
    6. Biodiversity
    7. Conserve water
    8. Sustainable practices: crop rotation, cover cropping, etc. to create a self-sustaining agricultural system
    9. Food security
    10. Community engagement and stewardship of the land
    11. Lots of opportunity but comes down to cost/complexity
    12. Build on strengths (abundance of fresh water, relatively mild climate)

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting farmers, foresters, etc.?
    1. Wetter springs and falls make it harder to plant and harvest
    2. New and increased pests
    3. Migration of climate refugees from other parts of the country could lead to increased development pressure on agricultural/working lands
    4. Algal blooms (more prevalent than 10 years ago) and erosion runoff
        1. Can pit communities against farmers
- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions or how have you seen farmers, foresters, etc. preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    1. Silvapasture
    2. Looking at different crops/breeds (e.g. sorghum)
    3. NYS Dept of Agriculture and Markets Climate Resilient Farming Program
    4. Sourcing green/blue fertilizers
    5. Manure-based renewable energy
    6. Installing solar energy

- What are the barriers for farmers, foresters, etc. to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Tech-heavy
    2. Hard to scale
    3. Hard to articulate or quantify return on investment (have to invest a lot of time/money to see results)
    4. Business climate – NYS goals are more ambitious than rest of country and could put agricultural industry at a competitive disadvantage

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help farmers, foresters, etc. overcome these barriers?
    1. Need to invest in research and development to bring costs down and help farmers implement and make informed decisions
        1. Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program is a good resource
    2. Help farmers and foresters access land protection programs such as conservation easements
    3. Help farmers understand their carbon footprint
    4. Motivate family farms to stay in agriculture
    5. Need infrastructure to support electrification and more efficient pumps for irrigation and manure handling
    6. Focus on mitigation (short-term) instead of just carbon sequestration (long-term)
        1. Larger farms are subject to more regulations so they have more funding/resources/specialized employees to tackle emissions
    7. Connect with other regions to understand what works there (regions like Virginia that have climates similar to what ours will be in the future)
    8. Engage local and influential contacts within farming communities to create “influencers”
        1. Stein Farms in LeRoy
        2. Tom Corcoran
        3. Donn and Chad Branton
            1. Donn is chair of Genesee County Ag and Farmland Protection Board

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Buildings Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Mary Underhill, Livingston County
- Bret Garwood, Home Leasing
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Shawn Burr, Rochester Housing Authority

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Buildings sector. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from buildings
    1. Buildings contribute approximately 43% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Includes direct emissions from onsite burning of fossil fuels (for heat) and indirect emissions from the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity

- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. LED lights and insulation are common energy efficiency upgrades that respondents have made
    2. Heat pump hot water heaters, air- or ground-source heat pumps, and roof- or ground-mounted solar panels are not common
    3. Respondents are supportive of financial assistance for clean energy upgrades and solar, and regulations to promote use of localized construction materials/reuse of materials/minimization of construction waste
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from buildings
    1. Implement air-source heat pumps and geothermal energy networks for municipal buildings and pilot net-zero buildings
    2. Provide gap funding to support pre-weatherization work for mold removal, panel upgrades, and other things that need to be done before energy efficiency upgrades are made

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for resilient building stock in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of the regional building stock?
    1. Nature-based solutions
    2. Basic weatherization (older building stock)
    3. Adaptive reuse of vacant buildings
    4. Changing guidelines

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting homeowners, developers, etc.?
    1. Insurance costs will increase (especially for multi-unit buildings), already high
        1. Is a barrier to building new housing as well
    2. Flucuations in temperatures could cause water damage from pipes bursting
    3. Extreme cold: a lot of homes are heated by wood, which could cause house fires and poor indoor air quality
    4. Tree deaths from invasive species could cause damage to buildings as homeowners cannot afford to remove dead trees
    5. A lot of mobile homes and trailers, more vulnerable
    6. Flooding: ice damage and erosion

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions or how have you seen homeowners, developers, etc. preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    1. Energy audits
    2. Due diligence when siting new development
    3. Switching to heat pumps
    4. Making sure critical facilities (warming/cooling centers, etc.) have backup energy supply
    5. Participating in Clean Energy Communitiies and Climate Smart Communities program

- What are the barriers for homeowners, developers, etc. to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Cost of retrofitting existing buildings
    2. Cost of electricity and demand on grid
    3. Availability of contractors and access to materials and supplies
    4. Technology (cold climate)
    5. Need assistance with grantwriting
    6. Municipalities have a limited budget, the majority of which is spent on highways and water infrastructure
        1. Can't justify increase in taxes for climate action
    7. Government assistance going away (e.g. solar)
    8. Rental housing (a lot of incentives are for owner-occupied)
    9. Long wait times between paying for project and receiving rebate/tax credit (need to reduce upfront cost)
    10. Distrust in government, especially since COVID

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help homeowners, developers, etc. overcome these barriers?
    1. Increase awareness of existing incentives and return on investment
        1. Need to focus on benefits to local community/environment and not on climate change
    2. Find a way to reduce the cost of electricity regionally
    3. Focus on small habits/actions that add up but don't cost anything (e.g. unplugging when not home, etc.)
    4. Include actions that can help municipalities be competitive for grant funding

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
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Electric Power Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Carly Norton, RG&E
- Leslie Vishwanath, National Grid
- Michael Jachles, AVANGRID/RG&E
- Christina Ficicchia, AVANGRID/RG&E
- Haylee Ferington, EDF
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Electric Power sector. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from electric power
    1. Electric power contributes approximately 17% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Electricity use has increased since 2010; however, the grid has become cleaner over the same period

- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. Respondents were supportive of upgrading the electric grid to handle increased demand from electrification, installing renewable energy (wind/solar) on municipal/County property, and forming a Community Choice Aggregation to negotiate cheaper, cleaner electricity for their communities
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from electric power
    1. Partner with energy stakeholders to study grid capacity and create goals to build capacity for electrification
    2. Increase the adoption of rooftop solar installations by residents and businesses through effective programming and education
    3. Pilot/support proof of concept for renewable energy projects of varying types (e.g. community solar, microgrids, agrivoltaics) that advance innovative design and ownership models

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for a resilient electric grid in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of electric power?
    1. Fewer outages and faster restoration times
    2. Dependable mix of renewables and energy storage
    3. Already seeing significant impacts (from storms)
    4. Not a bottleneck for other climate actions
    5. Remain resilient, reliable, and affordable while introducing clean energy into the mix

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting the electric grid?
    1. Higher maintenance costs, which can limit expansion without greater investment
    2. Not just electrification, but AI and data centers are taxing the grid
    3. Figuring out how to distribute cost of capacity upgrades
    4. Need for battery energy storage, which has been a controversial issue for communities

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions or how have you seen electric utilities preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    1. Customer-focused programs to encourage adoption of heat pumps, EVs, and energy efficiency
    2. Targets for fleet and buildings
    3. Trying to increase mobilization after storms
    4. Smart meters
    5. Environmentally friendly siting practices (wetlands, endangered species, etc.)
    6. Innovation (e.g. goats instead of mowing)

- What are the barriers for you/your organization/electric utilities to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Focus in NYS on mandates rather than pilots or goals
    2. Education
    3. Regulations
    4. Cost and equity/affordability for customers

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Local government workshops
        1. Focus on the benefits
    2. Education and correcting misinformation
    3. Promote programs and funding that utilities offer
    4. Provide examples of good local laws for solar, wind, and battery energy storage

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Industry and Economic Development Focus Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Bill Bacon, Livingston County Economic Development
- Greg Albert, ESD
- Matt Hurlbutt, Greater Rochester Enterprise
- Ryan Davis, Ontario County Economic Development
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Industry and Economic Development sector. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from industry
    1. Industry contributes approximately 12% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Includes direct emissions from onsite burning of fossil fuels and indirect emissions from the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity
    3. Also includes by-products in manufacturing and GHGs in products and equipment (e.g. certain refrigerants)
- Overview of findings from community survey

1. Respondents were supportive of programs to incentivize large producers of greenhouse gas emissions to reduce their carbon footprint and encourage green industries in the region

- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from industry
    1. Facilitate research, development, and demonstration to expand green industry based on demand for products and services
    2. Include green industries in economic development plans

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for resilient industry and economic development in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of industry and economic development?
    1. Improved technology, not just electric
    2. Let the market dictate which direction to go
    3. Overall sustainable, able to compete with other regions
    4. Affordable
    5. Keep the industry we do have and attract new
    6. Need more power available for large industrial sites
        1. Clean energy is replacing, not adding to capacity
        2. Need to focus on efficiency as well

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting industry and economic development?
    1. Need to invest in critical infrastructure

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions or how have you seen industries preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    2. Smart growth (development on brownfields, infill, adaptive reuse, etc.)
    3. Green facilities like Edwards Vacuum (100% green facility)
    4. Reducing waste

- What are the barriers for you/your organization/industry to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Mindset of being all-in on one technology and not being open to others (e.g. hydrogen)
    2. Regulations
    3. Outreach for existing programs
    4. Not enough energy supply
    5. Aging infrastructure
        1. Cost prohibitive to pay for grid updates and takes time
        2. ISO studies
    6. Affordability/competition
    7. Uncertainty
    8. Municipal planning and zoning process (community opposition)

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Planning studies (where to site geothermal/solar/nuclear power in the region)
    2. Update zoning and comprehensive plans

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
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LIDAC Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Katrina Lim, Highland Planning
- Tammy Westbrook, Connected Communities
- Janielle Crocker, Connected Communities
- Peter Varquez, Keuka Housing Council
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review LIDAC in the GFLRPC region, the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory, and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region that will impact LIDAC. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of LIDAC, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions LIDAC are undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

LIDAC in the GLFRPC Region

- LIDAC are primarily located in Rochester, Batavia, and parts of Orleans County, Wyoming County, Seneca County, Yates County, and Wayne County, and the Tonawanda Seneca Reservation
- Some counties do not meet the EPA definition of LIDAC but also can be considered low-income/disadvantaged

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
    1. LIDAC communities tend to emit fewer emissions but experience higher levels of air pollution, primarily from industrial, energy, and transportation sources
- Overview of findings from community survey

1. Respondents are most concerned about the increased spread of invasive species and/or disease, extreme heat, water pollution, exacerbation of environmental justice issues, air pollution, reduced agricultural productivity, flooding, and food insecurity, which all disproportionately impact LIDAC

- Overview of draft strategies
    1. Support community organizations serving underrepresented populations to assist with accessibility of affordable clean energy and energy efficiency improvements
    2. Other sectors' strategies that are expected to have benefits for LIDAC are increasing ridership and schedule efficiency for public transportation; improving pedestrian and cyclist safety through built infrastructure; providing gap funding for pre-weatherization work; and supporting programs to increase tree cover and plant trees in vulnerable areas

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for resilient LIDAC in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of LIDAC?
    1. Fewer communities that meet the definition of LIDAC
    2. Improved health
    3. Reduced indoor air pollution
    4. Safe/clean water
    5. Affordable electricity
    6. Access to jobs/transportation choices

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting LIDAC?
    1. Flooding, extreme heat, extreme cold/winter storms
    2. Influx of people moving to the region, exacerbating some of the current inequalities and shortages we have (e.g. housing)
    3. Reduced ability to evacuate during extreme weather events/natural disasters
        1. FEMA is reimbursement basis; don't have money upfront for hotels, etc.
        2. Reduced mobility makes it harder to get to warming/cooling centers
    4. Awareness of impending events; might not receive alerts due to reduced access to broadband or language barriers
    5. Power outages can be deadly for people that rely on medical equipment

- How have you seen LIDAC preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    1. Reducing waste (e.g. Buy Nothing) and composting

2. Community gardens
3. Mutual aid
4. Energy efficiency grants

- What are the barriers for LIDAC to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Cost
    2. Knowledge of climate smart practices
    3. Other priorities

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Community education
    2. Climate Smart Communities
    3. Having resources on available programs and attending community events to hand out resources
    4. Grantwriting

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Materials Management Focus Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Karen Nozik, Goodwill Finger Lakes
- Jackie Ebner, Resource Recycling Systems
- Ryan Staychock, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Kyle Black, Waste Connections
- Caroline Ding, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute at RIT
- Madison Quinn, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Caroline Berkemeier, Genesee County
- Alex Pierce, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Kali Smith, Sunnking Sustainable Solutions

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Materials Management sector. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from waste
    1. Waste contributes approximately 5% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Includes emissions from landfills and wastewater treatment facilities

- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. Respondents are supportive of residential composting program, reuse centers, public recycling bins in downtown areas, e-waste collection events, and community repair programs
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from waste
    1. Diversion of organic waste from the landfill
    2. Develop a Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction program or policy
    3. Create a regenerative demand for material regionally and locally to reduce VMT and overall waste

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for a resilient waste and materials management system in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of waste and materials management?
    1. Circular
    2. Upstream
    3. Coordinated and consistent
    4. Education/communication
    5. Tangible metrics/data

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting waste and materials management?
    1. Fire (wildfires, etc.)
    2. Insurance
    3. Solar panels (end of life)
    4. Battery recycling

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions or how have you seen the waste management industry or facilities preparing for climate change and/or implementing climate-smart practices?
    1. Energy and waste audits
    2. Legislation (e.g. better bottle bill, single-use plastic ban)
    3. Working with entrepreneurs to build a local sustainable supply chain (NextCycle)
    4. Green purchasing
    5. Organics management planning

- What are the barriers for you/your organization/the waste management industry/facilities to prepare for climate change and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Funding (curbside residential composting is very expensive but anaerobic digestion is getting more funding)
    2. Culture that prioritizes convenience
    3. Cost of labor
    4. Zoning

5. As new materials are invented, need to figure out how to dispose of them properly

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Work with Cornell Cooperative Extension to educate communities
    2. Grantwriting
    3. Support collaboration between counties such as GLOW

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Transportation Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Rusty Korth, RTS
- Edward Campany, Livingston County
- Dave Belaskas, RTS
- Jody Binnix, GTC
- Jim Stack, GTC
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Cody Donahue, Reconnect Rochester
- Kristy Mooney Graves, Greater Rochester Clean Cities

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Transportation sector. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation
    1. Transportation contributes approximately 40% of regional GHG emissions
    2. Includes emissions from both on-road and non-road sources

- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. Most common transportation modes are driving (99%), walking (40%), and biking (15%)
    2. Rideshare/carpool (5%) and public transportation (3.5) are less common
    3. 24% of respondents have a plug-in hybrid or battery electric car and 16% said their next car will be electric
    4. The expense of buying an EV, lack of charging stations, and concerns about reliability of EVs are the biggest barriers to adoption
    5. 37% of respondents would consider using transit if there were more stops closer to their home or where they need to go and 31% would consider using transit if there were more frequent service
    6. 48% of respondents would consider walking/biking if there were more bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, and crosswalks and 34% would consider walking/biking if this infrastructure were better-maintained
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions from transportation
    1. Switching transportation to zero or low emission alternatives
    2. Increase ridership and schedule efficiency for public transportation
        1. RTS suggested schedule frequency instead of efficiency
    3. Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through built infrastructure
    4. It was also suggested to add a strategy related to transit-oriented development

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for a resilient transportation system in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future of transportation?
    1. Transportation choice
    2. Variety of fuels (not just electric)
    3. Increased public health
    4. Freedom
    5. Low carbon
    6. Higher speed rail (passenger and freight)
    7. Reduced car dependency
    8. Truck stop electrification
    9. Better enforcement of anti-idling

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting the transportation system?
    1. Need for street trees for people walking, biking, or waiting for transit
    2. Need access to shelters
    3. Snow removal from sidewalks and bus stops

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions from transportation, prepare for climate change, and/or implement climate-smart practices?
    1. Coordinate programming with bus schedule
    2. Active transportation plans (can lead to grants for implementation)
    3. Vulnerability assessment and resiliency plans
    4. Complete Streets legislation
    5. Fleet conversions

- What are the barriers to increasing the resiliency of and reducing emissions from the transportation system?
    1. Time for fleet turnover
    2. Demand for EVs does not match availability
    3. Technology is not there yet for medium and heavy duty
    4. Need workforce to operate/maintain EV fleet
    5. Funding is mostly federal

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Facilitate connections between different agencies
    2. Active transportation plans
    3. Positioning for funding opportunities
    4. Incorporate into comprehensive plans

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Workforce Development Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)
Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Tyler Carey, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Dave Seeley, Rochester Works
- Lee Koslow, Rochester Works
- Jennifer Geiger, NYS Department of Education
- Darren Burdick, NYS Department of Labor
- Michael Woloson, Finger Lakes Works
- Darlene Necaster, SUNY Geneseo
- Nick Brown, Greenspark Solar
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review the preliminary results from the community survey and greenhouse gas inventory and the draft measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region that will impact workforce development. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of workforce development, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current actions to prepare the workforce for green jobs, barriers to preparing the workforce for green jobs, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Preliminary Findings/Measures:

- Overview of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
    1. There are workforce development opportunities in several sectors, including in clean and renewable energy (2.5% of all regional jobs), clean transportation, and waste management

- Overview of findings from community survey
    1. Several actions that respondents were supportive of (e.g. planting more trees, upgrading the grid, installing renewable energy, etc.) will have implications for the workforce
    2. Respondents also were supportive of workforce development programs to connect community members with jobs in clean energy/energy efficiency fields and incentives to encourage green industries in the region
- Overview of draft measures to reduce GHG emissions
    1. Other sectors' strategies are expected to have implications for workforce development, such as switching transportation to zero or low emission alternatives, transitioning non-road equipment to zero-emission technology, and increasing tree planting in urban and suburban areas
    2.

Group Discussion:

- What is your vision for a resilient workforce in the Genesee Finger Lakes region? What is the importance of climate action to the future workforce?
    1. Better awareness of clean energy jobs, especially for youth
        1. People need to know that it's not a trend/phase
    2. Better pathways
    3. Access to training
    4. Support for companies to attract workers
    5. Proactive about worker safety

- In what ways do you see/foresee extreme weather events caused by climate change impacting the workforce?
    1. Need for companies to have emergency preparedness plans
    2. People relocating away from the region

- What steps are you/your organization taking to reduce emissions and prepare the workforce for climate change/green jobs?
    1. Grant programming for businesses to address skills gap
    2. Remote work
    3. Fleet conversion
    4. Materials management (composting, reduce plastics, local purchasing)

- What are the barriers to preparing the workforce for green jobs?
    1. Similar to barriers for skilled jobs in general
        1. Enticing younger people to apprenticeships
        2. Need more soft skills
        3. Need better workplace cultures
        4. Need a living wage

2. Still emerging, not differential pay compared to other jobs
3. Limited openings besides electricians
4. Defining green jobs/job titles
5. Estimating demand for green jobs in the future
6. Mismatch between where workers are and where job opportunities are
    1. Lack of public transportation or start/end times don't sync well with transit
7. Uncertainty surrounding federal funding for workforce development
    1. Estimated 10% cut

- How can the GFLRPC, directly or indirectly, help overcome these barriers?
    1. Help project what jobs will grow in the region
    2. Convene clean energy businesses and connect them with schools and workforce development service providers

Next Steps: GFLRPC will refine draft measures to present at the next focus group meeting in March.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Agriculture and Working Lands Focus Group Agenda

Date: Monday, April 21, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Nancy Glazier, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Janet Van Zoeren, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Tonya Van Slyke, Northeast Dairy Producers Association
- Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Northeast Dairy Producers Association
- Jason Oliver, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Justin Jackson, New York Wine & Grape Foundation

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Agriculture and Working Lands sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey still showed support for planting more

trees, preventing deforestation and conserving existing trees, removing invasive species, developing farmland and agricultural protection plans, and transitioning non-road equipment to zero-emission technology. There is also a strong desire to see solar energy production focused on non-agricultural lands instead of pulling prime farmland out of production as well as education for farmers on new methods to reduce GHG, chemicals, and soil erosion.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) removing carbon from the region through sustainable forestry practices and 2) removing carbon from the region through sustainable agricultural practices. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Remove carbon from the region through sustainable forestry practices:
    a. **Measure:** Reduce carbon emissions in forestry practices
    b. **Measure:** Offset energy use in forestry practices
    c. **Tool:** Support programs to conserve open space in collaboration with land trust organizations, private land owners, and municipalities.
    d. **Tool:** Establish a tree fund to increase tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including LIDAC areas, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals.
    e. **Tool:** Increase land restoration activities to enhance the carbon sequestering potential of forestlands.
    f. **Tool:** Forest carbon credits program
2) Remove carbon from the region through sustainable agricultural practices:
    a. **Measure:** Decrease methane emissions
    b. **Measure:** Decrease fertilizer use and emissions
    c. **Measure:** Offset energy use in agricultural practices
    d. **Tool:** Support local agricultural entities to develop and implement education and outreach programs that will enhance carbon farming, carbon sequestration, increase soil health, climate resilience and adaptation, and crop productivity.
    e. **Tool:** Create a program to audit and provide resources to lower GHG emissions for farms in the region. (Like an energy audit, but for ag practices)
    f. **Tool:** Facilitate sharing of climate-related agriculture research with local farmers and the agriculture industry
    g. **Tool:** Increase financial resources to support farmers with manure management.
    h. **Tool:** Implement food and methane waste digestors
    i. **Tool:** Increase financial resources to support farmers to manage fertilizer use in a climate smart way.
    j. **Tool:** Encourage and incentivize agrivoltaics.
    k. **Tool:** Develop purchase agreements for the sale of bio-energy. Encourage and pilot community-scale bio-energy production and distribution.

l. **Tool:** Support and implement strategies put forth in Farmland Protection Plans, and Agriculture Environmental Management Plans.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) What is the effect of the federal funding freeze on the measures? Where will the funding come from?
    a. The plan will be able to be adjusted based on what happens and we will focus on creative ways/projects to reduce GHG. We will also determine priority measures as part of the planning process.
    b. We will look for funding from the State. They have ambitious goals for the CLCPA and will need to provide funding to the regions to reach those goal, but we are unsure exactly what that will look like.
2) Who is going to implementing each measure/tool?
    a. For education, Cornell/CCE
    b. Cornell's Nutrient Management Spear program can help with auditing farm footprints
3) Need more details on potential partners, funding sources, and examples of where a measure/tool has worked in the past (either within the region
4) What is needed from farmers? More paperwork?
5) Need to be careful where agrivoltaics are sited (not on forests or prime farmland)
6) Need to add silvapasture
7) Utilize County Soil and Water Districts

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Buildings Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Bret Garwood

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Buildings sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey still showed:

1) LED lights and insulation are common energy efficiency upgrades that respondents have made

2) Heat pump hot water heaters, air- or ground-source heat pumps, and roof- or ground-mounted solar panels are not common
3) Respondents are supportive of financial assistance for clean energy upgrades and solar, and regulations to promote use of localized construction materials/reuse of materials/minimization of construction waste

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) advance the decarbonization of buildings and infrastructure and 2) adopt zero-emission codes and standards for buildings. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Advance the decarbonization of buildings and infrastructure:
    a. **Measure:** Transition to air-source and ground-source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in all buildings.
    b. **Measure:** Explore a pilot program for geothermal energy networks on a community scale in new and existing developments.
    c. **Measure:** Identify and upgrade utilities through leakage emissions initiatives.
    d. **Measure:** Reduce embodied carbon (the greenhouse gas emissions that occur when building materials are produced, transported, and used) from buildings.
    e. **Tool:** Invest in policies and programs to reduce energy costs and consumption by optimizing energy use (energy audits and benchmarking) to lower GHG emissions in buildings.
    f. **Tool:** Establish financing mechanisms for energy efficiency upgrades for buildings with focus on LIDAC communities.
    g. **Tool:** Promote localized construction materials, deconstruction, reuse of materials, and recycling to minimize construction waste.
    h. **Tool:** Provide gap funding to support pre-weatherization work in all existing buildings.
    i. **Tool:** Incentivize building envelope insulation efforts and energy efficiency purchases in all existing buildings.
    j. **Tool:** Create educational programs to support the transition to more energy efficient technologies such as appliances and change user behavior to reduce energy consumption.
    k. **Tool:** Utilize land banks to repurpose vacant and derelict properties.
2) Adopt zero-emission codes and standards for buildings:
    a. **Measure:** Adopt minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties with the certificate of occupancy.
    b. **Tool:** Continually educate planning and permitting staff on state-wide guidance and policies, energy codes, and methods for incentivizing and implementing decarbonization of buildings.
    c. **Tool:** Develop and adopt historic building standards in local buildings and zoning codes to allow for opportunities to increase energy efficiency in historic preservation districts. Educate planning boards and historic preservation groups on these updates.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Like the idea of geo-thermal energy networks
    a. Would be better in new development
    b. Not sure how it would impact cost
    c. Can community steam be added?
2) Add “monitor” to “identify and upgrade utilities”
3) Need to address grid issues (not just leakage, but also capacity)
4) Instead of only focusing on HVAC, include gas stoves and dryers
5) High costs upfront could be a deterrent, need to provide rebate at time of sale
6) Ongoing costs are an issue too
7) Could add a tool about reducing complexity of rebates
8) Concerned about overregulation and public pushback
9) For historic buildings that are hard to upgrade, will there be exceptions?
    a. Recognize potential challenges to making historic buildings all-electric, but there are opportunities to weatherize and make more energy-efficient (windows, doors, etc.).
10) Need tools for renters as well

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Electric Power Focus Group Agenda

Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Leslie Vishwanath, National Grid
- Michael Jachles, AVANGRID/RG&E
- Christina Ficicchia, AVANGRID/RG&E
- Haylee Ferington, EDF

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Electric Power sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey still showed strong support for upgrading the electric grid to handle increased demand from electrification, installing renewable

energy (wind/solar) on municipal/County property, and forming a Community Choice Aggregation to negotiate cheaper, cleaner electricity.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) expand renewable energy capacity and 2) create regional support mechanisms to advance electric power and energy initiatives. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Expand renewable energy capacity:
    a. **Measure:** Increase electrical grid capacity.
    b. **Measure:** Increase large scale renewable energy generation to supply clean electricity to the region.
    c. **Measure:** Increase the adoption of rooftop solar installations.
    d. **Measure:** Reduce embodied carbon (the greenhouse gas emissions that occur when building materials are produced, transported, and used) from buildings.
    e. **Tool:** Pilot/support proof of concept for innovative renewable energy projects of varying types (e.g. community solar, microgrids, agrivoltaics).
    f. **Tool:** Conduct feasibility studies to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on LIDAC communities.
    g. **Tool:** Expand municipal and emergency operation resiliency with the integration of battery storage and microgrid technologies.
    h. **Tool:** Capitalize on existing state and federal funding opportunities, and pilot innovative financing strategies (e.g. zero-to-low interest financing, gap funding) to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.
    i. **Tool:** Develop model zoning and policy language for renewable energy projects.
    j. **Tool:** Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to decarbonize the regional grid.
    k. **Tool:** Encourage the adoption of Community Choice Aggregation and other innovative renewable energy project agreements.
2) Adopt zero-emission codes and standards for buildings:
    a. **Tool:** Develop targeted programs for reaching high energy users.
    b. **Tool:** Utilize existing AMPED Clean Energy Hub to provide education and technical assistance about funding and rebate programs for residents and business owners.
    c. **Tool:** Utilize existing Clean Energy Communities program to provide education and technical assistance about funding and rebate programs for municipalities.
    d. **Tool:** Create region-wide Solarize, community solar, and heat pump campaigns.
    e. **Tool:** Facilitate a region-wide conversation about the role of renewable energy.
    f. **Tool:** Provide service and educational material on energy conservation and reduction practices.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Does NYSERDA already have model zoning?
    a. If it already exists and needs to be noted, we can change language to "expand on existing language"
    b. United Solar Energy supporters and New Yorkers for Clean Power are also good resources
2) Target outreach to municipalities with moratoria
3) Add microgrid to feasibility studies tool
4) For education on energy and conservation practices, add smart meters, demand response, and off-peak charging
5) Also reach out to IDAs about business parks
6) How is the NYS Energy Plan factored into this plan?
    a. Looked at the scoping document and energy sector plan but will review updates from March State Energy Planning Board meeting.

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Industry and Economic Development Focus Group Notes

Date: Monday, April 28, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Laura O'Sullivan, ESD
- Dave Hewitt, Seneca County IDA
- Chris Suozzi, GCEDC

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Industry and Economic Development sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey still showed support for incentivizing large producers of greenhouse gas emissions to reduce their carbon footprint and encourage green industries in the region.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). The measures and tools for the Industry and Economic Development sector are as follows:

1) Decarbonize industrial processes in the region:
    a. **Measure:** Decarbonize and retrofit industrial processes by adopting zero emission technologies, improving energy efficiency, and transitioning to carbon-free and renewable energy sources (i.e. refrigeration, methane capture).
    b. **Tool:** Create a working group of regional industry leaders to decarbonize industrial processes.
    c. **Tool:** Site industries in the region for energy reduction.
    d. **Tool:** Provide programming, education, and financial incentives for energy reduction in the industry sector.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Aligns with ESD's CLCPA lens (incentives such as Green Excelsior tax credit, extra points for LEED, etc.)
2) Like prioritizing brownfields over greenfields, build-ready where there is infrastructure already, and infill projects
    a. GRE has a database of available sites (brownfields)
3) Amend industry siting tool to include agricultural protection
4) Who will manage the working group? Will they provide the programming, education, and financial incentives?
    a. The plan is for municipalities to pick up and implement. Could be County-led or GFLRPC working with partner organizations across the region. GFLRPC could provide information about what financial incentives exist.
5) Connect companies with green supply chains (for example, semi-conductor highway between Albany and Columbus (GoSemi office within ESD))
    a. Added bonus of reduced VMT if local

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

LIDAC Focus Group Notes

Date: Monday, April 28, 2025
Time: 3 PM – 4:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Katrina Lim, Highland Planning
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed LIDAC sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. Respondents were most concerned about increased spread of invasive species/disease, water pollution, extreme heat, and air pollution as a result of climate change, all of which will disproportionately impact LIDAC.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to

support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). There are a number of tools from other sectors that will have benefits for LIDAC:

- Expand active transportation infrastructure and access to micro-mobility modes especially in LIDAC communities.
- Evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in LIDAC communities.
- Establish financing mechanisms for energy efficiency upgrades for buildings with focus on LIDAC communities.
- Conduct feasibility studies to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on LIDAC communities.
- Establish a tree fund to increase tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including LIDAC areas, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals.
- Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets LIDAC communities and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields.
- Support community organizations serving underrepresented populations to assist with accessibility of affordable clean energy and energy efficiency improvements.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Conduct a regional vulnerability analysis and target LIDAC for climate adaptation plans?
    a. Funding from the state through Climate Smart, State's climate adaptation plan, and State's reforestation plan?

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Materials Management Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Time: 10 AM – 11:30 AM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Jackie Ebner, Resource Recycling Systems
- Kali Smith, Sunnking Sustainable Solutions
- Caroline Berkemeier, Genesee County
- Caroline Ding, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute at RIT
- Yasmin Guevara, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Carla Jordan, Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management
- Joyel Bennett, Goodwill Finger Lakes
- Madison Quinn, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Alex Pierce, Livingston County Environmental Management Council

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Materials Management sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to

the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey still showed strong support for residential composting programs, reuse centers, public recycling bins in downtown areas, e-waste collection events, and community repair programs.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into three categories: 1) reduce the amount of waste put into the landfill, 2) sustainably manage landfills, and 3)build capacity for the region to reduce, reuse, and recycle material. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Reduce the amount of waste put into the landfill:
    a. **Measure:** Reduce disposal of waste.
    b. Tool: Expand composting programs and funding for large food waste producers to reduce the amount offood in landfills.
    c. **Tool:** Provide programs and funding for large food waste producers to reduce amount of food landfilled.
    d. **Tool:** Encourage and incentivize large food waste producers and municipalities to write and fulfill goals of Organics Management and Local Solid Waste Management plans.
    e. **Tool:** Develop partnerships with municipalities and schools to support pilot programs on organics management/waste reduction.
    f. **Tool:** Develop a construction and demolition waste reduction program and policies for new construction and renovation.
    g. Tool: Create a regenerative demand for material regionally and locally to reduce VMT's and overall waste.
2) Sustainably manage landfills:
    a. Measure: Encourage landfills to use the latest technology of methane capturefor active and closed landfills.
    b. Tool: Expand waste-to-energy facilities in the region.
    c. **Tool:** Increase tipping fees or tax to include externality costs.
    d. **Tool:** Encourage end of life for landfills to maximize use for local residents in the area – i.e. open space, photovoltaic power, etc.
3) Build capacity for the region to reduce, reuse, and recycle material
    a. **Tool:** Expand educational campaigns to encourage recycling, composting, and reduce overall waste.
    b. **Tool:** Continue to promote education and awareness in schools and public institutions on best practices for waste management.
    c. **Tool:** Support existing goals and programs outlined in the New York State Solid Waste Management Plan.
    d. **Tool:** Encourage reuse, repair, and upcycle through programming and education.
    e. **Tool:** Encourage the standardization and adoption of recycling strategies for public places and events.
    f. **Tool:** Provide and promote e-waste collection in strategic locations.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Programs for large producers already exist but funding is needed is smaller producers (1-2 tons per week)
    a. State regulations are changing in 2026 (from 2 tons to 1 ton per week)
    b. Add “medium” to tool language instead of just large
    c. Use same definition as state regulations (more than 1 ton per week)
2) Loophole in existing state regulations – exempt if more than 25 miles from a composting facility, increasing to 50 miles in 2026 regulations
    a. Focus on creating more composting facilities to close the loophole, but these are hard to site/permit due to zoning
3) CAFOs can bring up to ½ ton of manure to anaerobic digesters
    a. Concern about covering storage ponds due to methane emissions
4) Be specific about the type of material we want to create regenerative demand for – just organic material or all material (circular economy)
5) Like focus on construction and demolition
    a. Add tool around reuse of construction material
    b. There are four tools for organics, and only one for construction and demolition
    c. Interview existing construction and demolition recycling facilities to understand their needs for growing and developing their market
    d. Need to train contractors on separating/reusing waste
6) Add tool for sustainable procurement policies
    a. Lowest bidder doesn’t usually include deconstruction, etc.
    b. MA and CA have good examples
7) Not in favor of waste-to-energy facilities in the region, does this mean methane capture? Incineration? Anaerobic digestion?
    a. Not sure if these can be considered diversion or renewable energy
    b. The Finger Lakes Preservation Act limits siting
    c. There will be public pushback
    d. DEC has a lot of regulations on methane capture, talk to Region 8
    e. EPA database of Landfill Methane Outreach Program (LMOP) can show potential to expand capture
    f. If they generate too much electricity, then they can be regulated as a power plant instead of as a solid waste facility
8) Add senior homes and hospitals to tool about schools and public institutions
9) Build partnerships with nonprofits
    a. Hard with current procurement policies
10) Need funding/incentives, not just education and awareness
11) Regulations on single-use plastics (bans)
    a. Can lead to innovation and green jobs
12) Strengthen language
    a. Don’t use “encourage” or “promote”

13) Monroe County has a new app that will help people know where to bring items to recycle
14) Geneva ReUse Systems is a good model
    a. Recently received seed funding from Ontario County

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Transportation Focus Group Notes

Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Time: 1 PM – 2:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Edward Campany, Livingston County
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Kevin Rooney, Wayne County
- Dave Belaskas, RTS
- Olivia Arnone, Greater Rochester Clean Cities
- Cody Donahue, Reconnect Rochester
- Jim Stack, GTC
- Kristy Monney Graves, Greater Rochester Clean Cities
- Omar Aponte, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- Laura Wadhams, Genesee County

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Transportation sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to

the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. The survey showed that the most common mode of transportation was still driving following by walking and biking. Rideshare/carpool and public transportation are less common. About three-fourths of respondents owned a ga-powered car as their primary vehicle, but about a fifth of these respondents said their next car will be electric. The expense of buying an EV, lack of charging stations and concerns about reliability of EVs are the biggest barriers to adoption. Respondents were most likely to consider using transit if there were more stops closer to their home or where they need to go or if there were more frequent service. Respondents were most likely to consider using walking or biking if there were more bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, or crosswalks or if this infrastructure were better maintained.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into three categories: 1) increase zero emission passenger vehicle adoption, 2) increase zero emission bus and truck adoption, and 3) reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Increase zero emission passenger vehicle adoption:
    a. **Measure:** Invest in zero emission passenger vehicles.
    b. **Tool:** Adopt fleet efficiency policies for municipalities and businesses.
    c. **Tool:** Develop fleet inventories for municipalities and businesses.
    d. **Tool:** Develop municipal and business EV infrastructure plans that identify gaps in EV charging service and locations for EV charging infrastructure, anticipate trend changes for EV ownership, and identify barriers to charging for residents and business owners.
    e. **Tool:** Expand EV charging infrastructure in municipal lots and private parking lots/garages at points of interest (centers of employment, schools, grocery stores, etc.), and incentivize residential charging.
    f. **Tool:** Expedite and standardize permitting for installation of alternative fuel and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
2) Increase zero emission bus and truck adoption:
    a. **Measure:** Invest in zero emission public transit vehicles.
    b. **Measure:** Invest in zero emission school bus fleet.
    c. **Measure:** Invest in zero emission trucks.
    d. **Tool:** Expand zero emission refueling and upgrades for bus and truck facilities.
3) Reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled:
    a. **Tool:** Expand active transportation infrastructure and access to micro-mobility modes especially in LIDAC communities.
    b. **Tool:** Invest in educational campaigns and implement programs and policies to encourage people to walk, bike, or take public transportation by subsidizing transit passes, or shared mobility programs.

c. **Tool:** Work with large employers, municipalities, etc. to promote transportation demand management strategies to increase the share of employees who walk/bicycle or take public transportation to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
d. **Tool:** Evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in LIDAC communities.
e. **Tool:** Create and expand "Buy Local/Buy Green" campaign to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
f. **Tool:** Implement traffic calming measures. Identify roadways for road diets to reduce speeds region wide.
g. **Tool:** Create anti-idling zones centered around environmental justice communities, school zones, pedestrian-centric areas, and transit stations where appropriate.
h. **Tool:** Encourage replacing traffic lights with roundabouts where it is feasible to reduce time idling and improve traffic safety.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Need standards for site planning for EV charging stations
    a. Amenities to improve user experience like shelter or co-locating
    b. GTC has an Amenity Playbook which will be approved in June
2) Need better enforcement of people parking in EV spaces without charging
    a. Fee after charging is complete
3) Simplify installation for residential EV chargers
    a. Electric panel upgrades
4) Permitting is not a big issue
5) Intelligent speed limiting has benefits for fleet efficiency and traffic safety
    a. NYC DCAS has a 2024 pilot program
6) Fast chargers on municipal lots are expensive to install
    a. Charged at the peak usage rate, a more expensive rate than usual due to the type of meter (industrial)
7) What about near-zero emission vehicles?
8) Electrify truck stops to reduce truck idling for heat or A/C
9) Like upgrading facilities, add hydrogen fueling
10) Add incentives for medium and heavy duty vehicles as cost is prohibitive
11) Another barrier is downtime to charge during emergencies, would need additional vehicles
12) Also need fire walls for insurance
13) There are only a few bus manufacturers, causing supply chain issues
14) Need to consider different frameworks to move people vs. Goods
    a. Short-haul rail for freight
15) EVs cause stress on infrastrcuture due to added weight
16) Focus on mode shift instead of reducing VMT
    a. VMT is seen as a measure of economic growth
17) Roundabouts are hard for bicyclists and pedestrians to navigate

    a. Don’t necessarily reduce crashes (more side swipes) but do reduce injury crashes
18) Continue State air quality monitoring
19) Co-locate businesses with transit
    a. Need to coordinate early with RTS to ensure comptability
20) Add carpooling as a strategy for large employers
21) Eliminate parking minimums from zoning codes

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Workforce Development Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025
Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Michael Woloson, Finger Lakes Works
- Dave Seeley, RochesterWorks!

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to provide an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, a recap of the first focus group meeting in January, and the results of the community survey. Attendees then reviewed and discussed the draft measures and tools for the Workforce Development sector.

CPRG Update: GFLRPC has decided to move their deadline to submit the CCAP from December to September to align with their original contract. GFLRPC will have two years until the end of the contract to refine and implement strategies. Additionally, a low-income/disadvantaged community (LIDAC) benefits analysis is no longer required. However, GFLRPC has decided to complete the benefits analysis as an appendix to the CCAP after submission to the EPA.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 1: At the first focus group meeting in January, the group reviewed preliminary survey results, preliminary findings from the GHG inventory, and preliminary GHG reduction measures. Attendees then participated in a group discussion surrounding their vision for the future of the sector, challenges related to the impacts of climate change, current climate actions the sector is undertaking, barriers to the implementation of climate actions, and ways in which GFLRPC can help overcome these barriers.

Updated Survey Results: The community survey closed at the end of January, shortly after the first focus group meeting. Several actions that respondents were supportive of (e.g. planting more trees, upgrading the grid, installing renewable energy, etc.) will have implications for the workforce. Respondents also were supportive of workforce development programs to connect community members with jobs in clean energy/energy efficiency fields and incentives to encourage green industries in the region.

Draft Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). The measures and tools for the Workforce Development sector are as follows:

1) Strengthen the green workforce:
    a. **Tool:** Collaborate and plan for the industrial and workforce future with regional partners.
    b. **Tool:** Support workforce development by partnering with educational institutions, expanding training capacity, and updating training content for existing industries.
    c. **Tool:** Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets LIDAC communities and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields.
    d. **Tool:** Use building demonstration sites as locations for community education and outreach.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the draft measures and tools:

1) Like the idea of a workforce training center, but may be hard to do with all the different specialized skillsets/occupations
2) Like building demonstration sites
3) Have a hard time connecting/collaborating with green employers, need to increase partnership
    a. Have strong relationships with manufacturing and healthcare
    b. Hard to market green jobs, focus on building interest in electricians, HVAC, construction, skilled trades, etc. which dovetail with green jobs
    c. Could help to communicate/outreach about what a clean energy job/career pathway is
    d. Conduct a workforce analysis?
4) Supportive services, especially transportation, remain a barrier

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the draft measures and tools to refine them and will present the final measures and tools at the next focus group meeting in June/July.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Agriculture and Working Lands Focus Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025
Time: 11 AM – 12:00 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Nancy Glazier, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Jason Oliver, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Amanda Grisa, Genesee Land Trust
- Nadia Harvieux, Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Maura Slocum, Genesee Valley Conservancy

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Agriculture and Working Lands sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) removing carbon from the region through sustainable forestry practices and 2) removing carbon from the region through sustainable agricultural practices. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Remove carbon from the region through sustainable forestry practices:
    a. **Measure:** Reduce carbon emissions in forestry practices
    b. **Measure:** Offset energy use in forestry practices
    c. **Measure:** Increase carbon storage in soils through biochar production from slash and thinning biomass

d. **Tool:** Support programs to conserve open space in collaboration with land trust organizations, private land owners, and municipalities.
e. **Tool:** Establish a tree fund and replace lost tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including LIDAC areas, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals.
f. **Tool:** Increase land restoration activities to enhance the carbon sequestering potential of forestlands.
g. **Tool:** Promote and expand the utilization of forest carbon credits program
h. **Tool:** Provide biochar education and encourage pilots

2) Remove carbon from the region through sustainable agricultural practices:
a. **Measure:** Decrease methane emissions
b. **Measure:** Decrease fertilizer use and emissions
c. **Measure:** Offset energy use in agricultural practices
d. **Measure:** Incorporate water smart land management practices
e. **Tool:** Encourage crop and livestock diversification to improve resilience to pests, diseases, and climate variability. For example agroforestry, intercropping, silvapasture and polyculture can enhance biodiversity
f. **Tool:** Support local agricultural entities to develop and implement education and outreach programs that will enhance carbon farming, carbon sequestration, increase soil health, climate resilience and adaptation, and crop productivity.
g. **Tool:** Train consultants, like CCE and agency staff on COMET-Farm for farm operations and provide resources to lower emissions. (Like an energy audit, but for ag practices)
h. **Tool:** Facilitate conducting and sharing of climate-related agriculture research and technology (like precision agriculture, remote sensing, and data analytics) with local farmers in the agriculture industry. Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to help assess the effectiveness of implemented tools and measures
i. **Tool:** Increase financial resources to support farmers with manure management.
j. **Tool:** Implement and expand the operations of food and methane waste digestors with appropriate regulation and guidelines
k. **Tool:** Support existing Nutrient Management Spear Program to support farmers to manage fertilizer use in a climate smart way and promote best practices for soil health
l. **Tool:** Site appropriate land for agrivoltaics, create a reporting and monitoring program to track system operation, compliance, and performance
m. **Tool:** Develop purchase agreements for the sale of bio-energy. Encourage and pilot community-scale bio-energy production and distribution.
n. **Tool:** Support and implement strategies put forth in Farmland Protection Plans, and Agriculture Environmental Management Plans.
o. **Tool:** Incorporate strategies for efficient water use and management to address water scarcity and improve agricultural productivity. For example, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and soil moisture management

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) Should add soil amendment/biochar as an agricultural tool (overlap with forestry)
2) Specify that education and outreach is for farmers and general public
3) Make promotion of soil health more direct and also include goal to increase adoption of cover crops and reduced tillage
4) Precision agriculture and manure injection are two main tools used to decrease fertilizer use, could these be added?
5) A lot of carbon-reducing agricultural practices require three-phase power, which is very expensive to install and not available in a lot of areas. Could this tool be added to support some of the other tools?

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Increasing financial resources to support farmers with manure management
        i. Manure management can cost anywhere from hundreds of thousands of dollars to over a million
        ii. There is grant funding available, but there is still a large cost share
        iii. Could look into community/shared manure systems, but these are controversial, require education for community buy-in
        iv. Should connect farms producing manure with those who need it (similiar to circular economy tool in Materials Management)
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. Dairy Advancement Program through Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY
    b. Climate Resilient Funding
    c. American Farmland Trust
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. Soil and Water Districts
    b. Crop consultants (e.g., WNY Crop Management Assoc., ACS)
    c. New York Farm Viability Institute
    d. NYS Grape Growers Association

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
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Buildings Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025
Time: 3 – 4 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Felipe Oltramari, Genesee County
- Christina McPike, WinnCompanies
- Mary Underhill, Livingston County
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Buildings sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) advance the decarbonization of buildings and infrastructure and 2) adopt zero-emission codes and standards for buildings. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Advance the decarbonization of buildings and infrastructure:
    a. **Measure:** Transition to air-source and ground-source heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in all buildings.
    b. **Measure:** Explore a pilot program for geothermal energy and community steam networks on a community scale in new and existing developments.
    c. **Measure:** Reduce emissions leakage through monitoring, identifying, and upgrading utilities.

d. **Measure:** Reduce embodied carbon (the greenhouse gas emissions that occur when building materials are produced, transported, and used) from buildings.
e. **Tool:** Invest in policies and programs to reduce energy costs and consumption by optimizing energy use (energy audits and benchmarking) to lower GHG emissions in buildings.
f. **Tool:** Establish financing mechanisms for energy efficiency upgrades for buildings with focus on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks
g. **Tool:** Incentivize the development of buildings with low embodied carbon (LEC) such as localized construction materials, deconstruction, reuse of materials, and recycling to minimize construction waste.
h. **Tool:** Provide gap funding to support pre-weatherization work in older building stock, with a focus on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks
i. **Tool:** Incentivize building envelope insulation efforts and energy efficiency purchases in all existing buildings.
j. **Tool:** Create educational programs for businesses, homeowners, and renters to support the transition to more energy efficient technologies (such as appliances and changing user behavior) and financial assistance options that help address cost-related challenges
k. **Tool:** Utilize land banks to repurpose vacant and derelict properties.

2) Adopt zero-emission codes and standards for buildings:
    l. **Measure:** Adopt minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties with the certificate of occupancy.
    m. **Tool:** Continually educate planning and permitting staff on state-wide guidance and policies, energy codes, and methods for incentivizing and implementing decarbonization of buildings.
    n. **Tool:** Develop and adopt historic building standards in local buildings and zoning codes to allow for opportunities to increase energy efficiency, including weatherization in historic preservation districts. Educate planning boards and historic preservation groups on these updates.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) Community steam is inefficient unless buildings are properly insulated, and it's also very expensive to make all-electric (electric resistance boilers) but there are examples of district geothermal networks, and it may be possible to convert district steam (such as in Rochester) to geothermal
2) Who enforces emissions leakage? Might this be a better fit for the Electric Power sector?
3) Reword historic building standards to "develop and adopt energy efficiency standards for historic buildings"

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Educational programs
        i. There is a lot of funding available, but it's fragmented so people might not know what type of funding exists and what they're eligible to pursue and how to pursue it
        ii. Having some type of technical assistance to go along with the educational programming, such as the Building Energy Exchange in NYC could enhance this effort
        iii. Developing and sharing case studies
    b. Geothermal energy networks
        i. Focus on innovation and adaptation
        ii. Use of existing infrastructure
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. Clean Heat program
    b. HCR Weatherization Assistance Program
    c. NYSERDA
    d. PACE program
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. Habitat for Humanity (weatherization)
    b. Pathstone Community Action
    c. Genesee Valley Rural Preservation Council

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Electric Power Focus Group Notes

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025
Time: 3 – 4 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Emma Falkenstein, Highland Planning
- Christina Ficicchia, AVANGRID
- Michael Jachles, AVANGRID
- Haylee Ferington, EDF

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Electric Power sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into two categories: 1) expand renewable energy capacity and 2) create regional support mechanisms to advance electric power and energy initiatives. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Expand renewable energy capacity:
    a. **Measure:** Increase electrical grid capacity.
    b. **Measure:** Increase large scale renewable energy generation to supply clean electricity to the region, in appropriate areas
    c. **Measure:** Increase the adoption of rooftop and parking lot solar installations, with an emphasis on commercial land in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks

d. **Tool:** Conduct feasibility studies to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on NYS DACs and communities with environmental risks
e. **Tool:** Conduct Microgrid and battery storage feasibility pilot studies
f. **Tool:** Expand municipal and emergency operation resiliency with the integration of battery storage and microgrid technologies.
g. **Tool:** Capitalize on existing state and federal funding opportunities, and pilot innovative financing strategies (e.g. zero-to-low interest financing, gap funding) to support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.
h. **Tool:** Expand on existing model zoning and policy language for renewable energy projects. Target outreach to municipalities with solar moratoria in place
i. **Tool:** Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to create, meet, and expand their energy goals
j. **Tool:** Encourage the adoption of Community Choice Aggregation and other innovative renewable energy project agreements.

2) Create regional support mechanisms to advance electric power and energy initiatives:
    k. **Tool:** Develop targeted programs for reaching high energy users. Use pilot projects to promote this technology's successs (ex. IDA)
    l. **Tool:** Utilize existing AMPED Clean Energy Hub to provide education and technical assistance about funding and rebate programs for residents and business owners.
    m. **Tool:** Utilize existing Clean Energy Communities program to provide education and technical assistance about funding and rebate programs for municipalities.
    n. **Tool:** Facilitate a region-wide conversation about the role of renewable energy.
    o. **Tool:** Provide service and educational material on energy conservation, reduction, and demand response practices (for example, charging your EV at night, smart meters)

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) Increase electrical grid capacity in strategic areas <u>while ensuring system reliability</u>
2) Partner with utilities and other energy stakeholders to create, meet, and expand their energy goals, <u>ensuring customer affordability remains a key consideration</u>
3) Provide service and educational material on energy conservation, reduction, and demand response practices (for example, charging your EV at night, smart meters) <u>through active community outreach and engagement</u>
4) Clarify the difference between facilitating a regional conversation and community outreach/engagement
5) Clarify that appropriate areas for large-scale renewables means brownfields

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Partnering with utilities and other stakeholders
    b. Community outreach and education
    c. Expanding on existing model zoning and policy language for renewable energy projects
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. Community benefits agreements with solar projects can help pay for energy efficiency upgrades in LMI homes (ex. Roseland)
    b. Climate Smart Communities
    c. NYSERDA
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. New Yorkers for Clean Power
    b. Climate Solutions Accelerator

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

LIDAC Focus Group Notes

Date: Friday, June 27, 2025
Time: 4 – 5 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Karel Titus, STEPS
- Patti LaVigne, Livingston County Environmental Management Council
- Janielle Crocker, Connected Communities

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for LIDAC.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). There are a number of tools from other sectors that will have benefits for LIDAC:

- Expand active transportation infrastructure and access to micro-mobility modes especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks
- Evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks
- Create anti-idling zones centered around NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, school zones, pedestrian-centric areas, and transit stations where appropriate

- Conduct a regional level climate vulnerability assessment with an emphasis on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks for climate adaptation planning
- Establish financing mechanisms for energy efficiency upgrades for buildings with focus on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks
- Provide gap funding to support pre-weatherization work in older building stock, with a focus on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks
- Increase the adoption of rooftop and parking lot solar installations, with an emphasis on commercial land in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks
- Conduct feasibility studies to site region-wide renewable energy installations to maximize local power generation, with an emphasis on NYS DACs and communities with environmental risks
- Establish a tree fund to increase and replace lost tree cover and avoid deforestation across strategic land types, including NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, to enhance carbon sequestration. Increase tree inventory data and establish regional tree canopy goals.
- Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields.
- Support community organizations serving NYS DACs and communities with environmental risks to assist with accessibility of affordable clean energy and energy efficiency improvements.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) Transportation tools seem very urban-centered, may need to clarify or expand what active transportation and micromobility modes are
2) Evaluate and expand public transportation in rural areas
3) Add landfills as an area to install solar (simplify to brownfields or underutilized land)
4) Not just tree planting, but also forest management to address dead trees and undergrowth
5) Potentially break out clean energy workforce development training center into two tools: one enhancing existing programming and the other building the physical center
6) Define pre-weatherization
7) How is “communities with environmental risks” being defined?
    a. This is being used to expand on the NYS definition of disadvantaged communities to include other communities in the region that are disadvantaged but don’t meet that definition

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Improving and weatherizing housing

    b. Tree cover
    c. Workforce development
    d. Public transportation
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. Tree City USA
    b. Soil and Water District for flood mitigation and tree plantings
    c. PEC
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. Community colleges and BOCES

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Materials Management Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025
Time: 10 – 11 AM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Natalie Riley
- Madison Quinn, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Kyle Black, Waste Connections
- Nate Jones, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Missy Hall, NYS Pollution Prevention Institute
- Carla Jordan, Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Soild Waste Management
- Caroline Berkemeier, Genesee County
- Yasmin Guevara, Monroe County Department of Environmental Services
- Jackie Ebner, Resource Recycling Systems

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Materials Management sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into three categories: 1) increase landfill diversion, 2) sustainably manage landfills, and 3) build capacity for the region to reduce, reuse, and recycle material. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Increase landfill diversion:

a. **Measure:** Reduce disposal of waste.
b. **Tool:** Expand composting facilities, programs, and funding for medium to large food waste producers to reduce the amount of food in landfills, in accordance with NYS Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law. Over time, extend support to include small scale waste producers.
c. **Tool:** Provide programs and funding for large food waste producers to reduce amount of food landfilled.
d. **Tool:** Encourage and incentivize medium to large food waste producers and municipalities to write and fulfill goals of Organics Management and Local Solid Waste Management plans.
e. **Tool:** Develop partnerships with municipalities, schools, and private entities (like CAFOs) to support pilot programs on organics management/waste reduction.
f. **Tool:** Develop a construction and demolition waste reduction program and policies for new construction and renovation focused on reuse, contractor training, and market capacity building for reclaimed material.
g. **Tool:** Support innovation of alternative materials for single use plastics.
h. **Tool:** Encourage waste districts locally, ensure that garbage, recycling, and food waste is all included in a single pick up to reduce VMT.
i. **Tool:** Create a demand and develop a market for material regionally and locally to reduce VMT's and overall waste.
j. **Tool:** Increase tipping fees or tax to include externality costs (AKA Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT))

2) Sustainably manage landfills:
   a. **Measure:** Encourage landfills to use the latest technology of methane capture for active and closed landfills.
   b. **Tool:** Encourage end of life for landfills to maximize use for local residents in the area – i.e. open space, photovoltaic power, etc.
   c. **Tool:** Incentivize early implementation of landfill gas recovery systems and review policies that incentizie early implementation
3) Build capacity for the region to reduce, reuse, and recycle material
   a. **Tool:** Expand education and awareness on recycling, composting, and waste reduction, especially at schools and public institutions.
   b. **Tool:** Support sustainable procurement policies for public institutions region-wide
   c. **Tool:** Support existing goals and programs outlined in the New York State Solid Waste Management Plan.
   d. **Tool:** Encourage reuse, repair, and upcycle through programming, education, incentives, and incubator projects.
   e. **Tool:** Encourage the standardization and adoption of recycling and waste diversion strategies for public places and events.
   f. **Tool:** Provide a space for waste diversion research for specific materials (i.e. textile recycling, etc.)
   g. **Tool:** Provide and promote e-waste and other hard to dispose of item collection in strategic locations.
   h. **Tool:** Promote model policies for municipalities to reduce waste and promote circularity.

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) You need to have personnel working on landfill diversion, Monroe County and Ontario County have been successful in implementing initiatives because they have personnel working on programs
2) C&D programs and policies can take time and resource investment but can be something that has larger diversion opportunities given the volume and weight
3) The alternatives to single-use plastics will be very challenging in this region due to the quantity of farms that use plastics in their daily operations
    a. A good place to start would be single-use food serviceware or some sort of EPR (extended producer responsibility, similar to paint and electronics) bill at the state level
    b. There are recycling programs for gloves where they take the gloves back and make them into rubber mats and other things
    c. In Ontario County, plastics manufacturers are large employers so it might be better to focus on recovery on the tail end instead of a ban
4) Rather than focusing on the education and awareness for consumers, setting up infrastructure and pilot projects will have more of an impact
5) Getting everything picked up in a single pick up is going to be a heavy lift, getting buy-in from private haulers on Pay-As-You-Throw or even districting might be more feasible
    a. There are pilots where food and yard waste are collected with normal waste and then sorted out at the transfer station based on bag color (e.g. green for food waste)

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Composting and food waste diversion
        i. Focus on the medium and even small producers as the large producers have a lot of support already
        ii. Capacity of end-use sites is a limiting factor, need more facilities but these are hard to site
        iii. Perhaps a hub and spoke model could be successful
        iv. Drop-off locations need to be convenient or additional VMT can offset emissions reduction (e.g. farmer's market, transfer stations, etc.)
    b. C&D program
    c. Single-use plastics
    d. Education and awareness
    e. Developing market for circular economy
    f. Pay-As-You-Throw and waste districts
    g. Reuse, repair, and upcycling
    h. NYS Solid Waste Management Plan

    i. Standardization of recycling and waste diversion strategies for public places and events
        i. Separate waste receptacles are good, but if the community isn't educated enough on them or they are not clearly marked with what material goes where it becomes useless.
    j. E-waste and hard to dispose of item collection
        i. Needs to include battery education
    k. Promote model policies for municipalities
        i. Refer to EcoPark in Monroe County
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. DEC Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Program (50% match) for infrastructure/capital projects and Municipal Food Scraps Recycling Grant Program to start/expand composting programs
    b. Syracuse University has a funding guide
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. Natural Upcycling
    b. Impact Earth
    c. Goodwill
    d. Geneva Reuse Center (Diane Cohen)

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Transportation Focus Group Notes

Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025
Time: 2 – 3 PM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Rachel Scudder, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning
- Jim Stack, GTC
- Dave Belasks, RTS
- Edward Campany, Livingston County
- Kristy Mooney Graves, GRCC
- Cody Donahue, Reconnect Rochester

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Transportation sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). Measures and tools for this sector were separated into four categories: 1) increase near zero emission passenger vehicle adoption, 2) increase near zero emission bus and truck adoption, 3) reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled, and 4) support adaptation and resiliency in the built environment. The measures and tools for each category are as follows:

1) Increase near zero emission passenger vehicle adoption:
    a. **Measure:** Invest in zero or near zero emission passenger vehicles.
    b. **Tool:** Adopt fleet efficiency policies and fleet inventories for municipalities and businesses.

c. **Tool:** Develop municipal and business EV infrastructure plans to
    i. Identify gaps in EV charging service
    ii. Identify locations for EV charging infrastructure
    iii. Anticipate trend changes for EV ownership
    iv. Identify barriers to charging for residents and business owners
    v. Address barrier to harging access for residents and business owners
    vi. Include strategies for enforcing EV-designated parking spaces
d. **Tool:** Expand EV charging infrastructure in municipal lots and private parking lots/garages at points of interest (centers of employment, schools, grocery stores, etc.), and incentivize residential charging.
e. **Tool:** Expedite and standardize the permitting process for installation of alternative fuel and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

2) Increase near zero emission bus and truck adoption:
    f. **Measure:** Invest in near zero emission public transit vehicles.
    g. **Measure:** Invest in near zero emission school bus fleet.
    h. **Measure:** Invest in near zero emission trucks.
    i. **Tool:** Expand zero emission refueling and upgrades for bus and truck facilities.
    j. **Tool:** Invest in shore power to provide long-haul trucks, construction vehicles, and municipal vehicles with access to external electrical power while parked at designated locations
3) Reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled:
    k. **Measure:** Implement strategies to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and VMT
    l. **Tool:** Expand active transportation infrastructure and access to micro-mobility modes especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks
    m. **Tool:** Invest in educational campaigns and implement programs and policies to encourage people to walk, bike, or take public transportation by subsidizing transit passes, or shared mobility programs.
    n. **Tool:** Work with RGRTA, large employers, municipalities, etc. to promote transportation demand management strategies to increase the share of employees who walk/bicycle or take public transportation to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
    o. **Tool:** Evaluate public transportation service gaps to determine where new and enhanced routes should be located, especially in NYS DAC communities and communities with environmental risks
    p. **Tool:** Create and expand “Buy Local/Buy Green” campaign to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
    q. **Tool:** Implement traffic calming measures. Identify roadways for road diets to reduce speeds region wide.
    r. **Tool:** Create anti-idling zones centered around NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks, school zones, pedestrian-centric areas, and transit stations where appropriate.
    s. **Tool:** Encourage replacing traffic lights with roundabouts where it is feasible to reduce time idling and improve traffic safety.

    t. **Tool:** Invest in Intelligent Speed Assistance technology for municipal and commercial fleet vehicles to reduce speeding and increase pedestrian and driver safety
4) Support adaptation and resiliency in the built environment:
    a. **Tool:** Implement Smart Growth planning, Complete Street policies in land use, zoning reform, and comprehensive planning to prioritize mixed-use development in urban and village centers and prevent sprawl into agricultural land uses
    b. **Tool:** Conduct a regional level climate vulnerability assessment with an emphasis on NYS DAC and communities with environmental risks for climate adaptation planning
    c. **Tool:** Adopt climate adaptation policies to reduce runoff, encourage native plants, manage stormwater, and promote overall biodiversity
    d. **Tool:** Expand and maintain green spaces to mitigate the heat island effects associated with impervious surfaces
    e. **Tool:** Support and implement strategies put forth by County or Municipal Hazard Mitigation Plans
    f. **Tool:** Develop and implement a regional program to help communities plan for climate adaptation and resiliency
    g. **Tool:** Encourage developers to coordinate with RGRTA early in the site selection process to ensure alignment with transit service capabilities

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) No mention of zero emission trucks/busses, should be consistent about “zero and near zero”
2) Reduce single occupancy VMT, not VMT overall, and increase public transit VMT and miles traveled by walking/biking
    a. VMT is an economic/population growth indicator
    b. Could also change to “increasing alternative forms of transportation”
3) We have to get communities on board with denser development and show the benefits, changing zoning will just lead to opposition otherwise
    a. Add a tool around outreach/education
    b. People are worried about property values and traffic/parking, but traffic increases are usually minimal and property values usually go up because of added amenities
    c. Medium-density housing (townhouses, apartments above ground-floor retail) can encourage younger families to move in and older residents to age-in-place
4) Change preventing sprawl into agricultural land to into protected land (protected farmland, woodland, etc.)
5) Instead of evaluating public transportation gaps, lobby/advocate for increased transit funding to support local operations, RTS already knows where the gaps are but funding is the limiting factor
6) Combine roundabouts with traffic calming tool

7) Add housing, not just mixed-use development
8) Consider breaking out personal vehicles vs. municipal and business fleet vehicles
9) Add tool about educating the public/fleet operators on EVs, including costs, maintenance, driving experience, noise, safety, etc. (could apply for bus/truck fleets as well)
10) Consider other behavior incentives for EV drivers (e.g. free parking in downtown areas, HOV/bus lane access)
11) Invest in MHDV fleet charging sites, both at an "anchor" fleet depot as well as stand-alone "shared hub" fleet charging sites
12) Engage with local utilities to identify capacity available for EV charging as well as fleet assessments (light duty and medium/heavy duty)
13) Incentivize fleets to reduce their VMT by right sizing their fleets with smaller/more efficient vehicles (not just EVs)

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Fleet efficiency policies and inventories for municipalities and businesses
        i. DOT wants to add a registration fee for electric vehicles that municipalities would not be exempt from, which would cost more annually than gas tax
    b. Expand active transportation infrastructure
    c. Educational campaigns
    d. Buy Local/Buy Green
    e. Expand zero emission refueling and upgrades for bus and truck facilities
    f. Smart Growth planning, Complete Streets, etc.
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. Need to be creative – can be surcharges on Uber/Lyft, DoorDash, Amazon, registration fees, etc.
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. RTS
    b. Reconnect Rochester
    c. GTC

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.

GENESEE FINGER LAKES REGION
COMPREHENSIVE
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Workforce Development Focus Group Notes

Date: Friday, June 27, 2025
Time: 10 – 11 AM
Location: Virtual (Teams)

Participants:

- Jenny Loewenstein, GFLRPC
- Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
- Michael Woloson, Finger Lakes Works
- Dave Seeley, Rochester Works

Overview: Staff from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (GFLRPC) and Highland Planning met with the participants above to review and discuss the revised measures and tools and implementation strategy for the Workforce Development sector.

Recap of Focus Group Meeting 2: At the second focus group meeting in April, GFLRPC provided an update on the Climate Pollution and Reduction Grant, Highland Planning presented the updated survey results, and attendees reviewed and provided feedback on the draft measures and tools.

Revised Measures and Tools: A measure is an action or strategy taken to reduce GHG emissions (the what) whereas a tool is a method, resource, or technique used to support the implementation of a measure(s) (the how). The measures and tools for the Workforce Development sector are as follows:

1) Strengthen the green workforce:
    a. **Tool:** Develop a working group with employers, employees, and other regional partners to identify workforce needs and gaps to support collaboration in planning for the future of the regional workforce
    b. **Tool:** Provide outreach, education, and technical assistance for employers by partnering with educational institutions, expanding training capacity, and updating training content for existing industries.
    c. **Tool:** Build a clean energy workforce development training center that targets NSYS DAC and communities with environmental risks and provides services to connect residents with jobs in energy efficiency fields.
    d. **Tool:** Use building demonstration sites as locations for community education and outreach.

e. **Tool:** Define and integrate clean energy pathways into skilled trade and educational programs
f. **Tool:** Launch marketing campaigns about what it takes to be in the clean and renewable energy space. Target middle and high school students

Group Discussion: Attendees provided the following comments/questions about the revised measures and tools:

1) Like the building demonstration sites – SUNY Geneseo has an energy management system where they've been showing students how the utilities at the college are managed and how to make reductions in energy usage

Implementation Strategy: Attendees discussed the following questions:

1) Which measures and tools should be prioritized?
    a. Working group and education for employers
        i. Balance of planning ahead but also doing something now
        ii. Case studies of employers who are already making these changes who can share their experience and are a trusted voice
2) What are potential funding sources for these measures and tools?
    a. NYS DOL Renewable Energy Training Initiative
    b. NYPA
    c. NYSERDA – directly to businesses (e.g. clean energy internship program)
3) Who are potential partners for implementing these measures and tools?
    a. Workforce Development Institute
    b. Workforce Development Board
    c. One Stop System Partners (meeting 8/5)
    d. BOCES
    e. Education Success Foundation
    f. Rochester City School District – Sheldon Cox and Rebecca Ferry

Next Steps: GFLRPC will use the feedback on the revised measures and tools to finalize them. A full draft of the plan will be shared with focus group members by mid-August. After a final round of edits, the plan will be submitted to the EPA in late September. Another round of public outreach is planned in July and August, including webinars and pop-up events throughout the region.