



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC

Communities Planning Together

CCRPC Long Range Planning Energy Sub -Committee

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Tuesday, December 20, 2016

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 pm

CCRPC Office, 110 West Canal Street, Suite 202, Winooski, VT.

Attendees:

Catherine McMains, Jericho
Robin Pierce, Essex Junction
Irene Renner, Essex
Matt Burke, Charlotte
Geoff Forward, Richmond
Keith Epstein, South Burlington

Staff:

Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager
Melanie Needle, Senior Planner
Emily Nosse-Leirer, Staff Planner

1. Meeting Minutes from 11/15/2016

The minutes were approved.

2. Update on Energy Resource Mapping

At the last meeting, Melanie had planned to determine how many acres of energy generation area were available in the region given local/regional constraints. Unfortunately, the data required to complete this exercise have not been received from the State. Melanie will complete this mapping and analysis as soon as the data are received.

3. Act 174 Technical Assistance

Staff held an Act 174 training on 12/8 to educate municipalities on the energy mapping process and the analysis and target methodology (discussed in Item 5 below). Meeting attendance is detailed below. Another training will be held in February.

- # of attendees – 21
- # of municipalities represented – 10 (11 if you count the City of St. Albans)

- Number of evaluations returned - 18
- Number of evaluations rating the workshop good or excellent – 17 (if you average the score of the 5 top questions on the review sheet)

The other components of CCRPC's Act 174 Technical Assistance contract are helping a small number of municipalities write energy plans that follow the standards (by July 2017) and breaking down regional data to the town level (by April 2017).

4. Analysis and Target Methodology

Information on the analysis and target standards is the latest “new” information CCRPC has received for the Regional Energy plan. A PowerPoint with this information is available on the Regional Energy Plan webpage. The Department of Public Service has released a guidance document to assist RPCs in breaking down regional energy use projections to the local level, as well as estimating energy use per town from the bottom up. Melanie gave an example of how data from the American Community Survey could be used to estimate energy use, emphasizing that these data are the best available, even though they aren't perfect, and the committee discussed it. Jeff Forward suggested that energy committees may be able to play a role in crowd-sourcing data collection. Matt Burke suggested that CCRPC's municipalities may appreciate having access to a list of all data sources and calculations used, since some of them may be curious about it. Jeff asked about the difference between the Energy Dashboard and the LEAP model, and Regina Mahony mentioned that there will be a meeting to discuss this issue in January for RPC staff. After which, CCRPC staff will bring that information back to this committee.

Jeff Forward mentioned that there is a VT Fuel Use Survey being completed that might be worth looking into, especially because national assumptions likely overestimate gas consumption. Robin Pierce asked why the delivered fuel dealers were not contributing data to this project. Melanie will follow up on this issue.

Melanie mentioned that CCRPC has a separate contract with VEIC to determine how VMT in Chittenden County might change through encouraging mode shift (riding the bus instead of driving, for example) instead of just striving to have everyone drive an EV. The committee discussed that a cultural shift is required for people to want to drive less.

The committee discussed their ongoing concern that switching the transportation sector to 90% renewable will be extremely difficult, especially because biofuels, which “count” as renewables, require a very large energy input to be produced.

Melanie mentioned that CCRPC staff met with VT Gas to discuss their future plans, and that VT Gas will share their gas use projections for the next 20 years with us. Staff hopes to receive this information in January 2017.

The committee asked whether the energy use estimated for home heating in 2050 by the LEAP model takes into account weatherization, and Melanie said yes the LEAP assumptions model heating system efficiency and shell efficiency together. Together it is estimated that efficiency will increase by 10%-20% depending on fuel type. The switch to heat pumps also cause the level of efficiency to rise. When combined with heat pumps shell efficiency is expected to increase by 50% .

The Committee asked why are wood pellets a lower proportion of the fuel mix compared to cord wood. Staff will look into this further and recalled that future marketability of cord wood is better than pellets.

5. Update on municipal planning commission meetings and feedback on local constraints to date

Since the committee's last meeting, the City of Burlington has provided CCRPC with input on regional energy mapping. The City's biggest concern is that areas designated for concentrated future growth are not appropriate for large scale energy development, nor are historic districts or parks.

6. Review of Energy Standards Implementation Pathways (60 minutes)

The Committee discussed the existing actions in the ECOS Plan and Climate Action Guide and began to discuss the best way to combine the content and review it going forward.

Regina provided an overview of how the Regional Energy Plan will ultimately be included in the updated 2018 ECOS Plan. The Regional Energy Plan process underway now will help to establish content for our Regional Energy Plan that will likely be incorporated either in entirety or by reference. Some of the content may raise up and be included in the ECOS strategy section of the Plan or as another part of chapter 4 as this is the chapter where CCRPC includes the content to meet State and Federal long range planning requirements.

Regina also explained that State statute requires that town plan and regional plan are consistent and it's the RPC's responsibly to ensure that town plans are consistent with regional plans. Towns all meet the ECOS goals in different diverse ways.

The Committee asked How do the actions get implemented? Regina explained that we do understand that these pathways are lofty. By identifying timing and who is responsible is one way to help us to identify what can be done within the timeline of the Plan. In the updated ECOS Plan we may identify what we are going to do in Year 1-3, Year 4-5. We do acknowledge that we don't have control over all the pathways asked for in the energy compliance standards.

Conversation ensued regarding planning language being weak The Committee agreed that the preference is to use strong actionable language and to provide examples that are relevant to regional and town plans.

Jeff Forward offered that ECOS Action 3.2.7.3 would be improved by removing the reference to PACE and to replace it with language that promotes loan programs that make energy efficiency more affordable.

Keith identified that different towns are doing different things regarding energy. For example, South Burlington requires all new development to follow the State Energy Stretch Code. Williston has descriptive language for bike facilities. The Committee agrees that they would like to pick actions from each town and show how municipal language will meet the standard rather than having language that says every town should have a stretch code, for example. Additionally, educating towns on the benefits of the stretch code is another approach. CCRPC could also offer the list of energy policies as a menu of options to pick from when conducting town plan reviews.

Resource Links: [Regional Plan Energy Standards](#), [ECOS Plan](#), and [Climate Action Guide](#)

7. Next Steps (5 minutes)

The Committee agreed to that they would review the Climate Action Guide strategies/actions and compile a list of their top choices. Committee members will send Melanie their choices by

1/11/2017. Karen offered to post a question to VPA asking planners to provide examples of their energy regulations and town plan language that they are most proud of. Next meeting is 1/17/2017