



# Updating New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan

## Greater Nashua Community Conversation in Nashua, NH

*Summary Report by NH Listens, January 2024  
Mikayla Townsend & Carrie Portrie*

### Purpose and Background

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In August 2023, New Hampshire was granted federal funding to update New Hampshire's Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The four-year program runs from 2023-2027. Objectives of the plan are to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting the creation of good jobs and lowering energy costs for families.
- Empower community-driven solutions in neighborhoods overburdened from pollution and impacts of climate change by directly seeking input from those communities.
- Deliver cleaner air by reducing harmful air pollution in places where people live, work, play and go to school.

These plans are part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **They lead to additional implementation funding that will support community-engaged projects** with an effort to focus on Justice40 investments among the sectors of air pollution and greenhouse gas reductions ([see more on Justice40 here](#)).

New Hampshire Listens is working on behalf of the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to design and facilitate community engagement—an essential component of NH's Priority (PCAP) and Comprehensive Climate Action Plans (CCAP).



*Figure 1. Community Conversation in Nashua, NH, January 18, 2024*



Between December 2023 and early February 2024, NH Listens hosted a series of conversations and gatherings that offered time for people to learn, listen, and talk with each other to help develop a priority climate action plan for the state. From these conversations, NHDES will identify priority projects and linking measures based on community engagement along with a series of analyses by (March 1, 2024; [see more about the CPRG process](#) and [training/technical tools](#)). The PCAP allows the state to apply for implementation funding from the federal government (April 1, 2024) to move projects forward in New Hampshire ([see more about the implementation grants](#)).

The conversations focused on talking about local issues and potential solutions in many different areas of concern:

- Agriculture
- Commercial and Residential Buildings
- Electricity Generation and/or Use
- Industry
- Natural and Working Lands
- Transportation
- Wastewater
- Wastewater & Materials Management

*Each climate action plan requires meaningful community engagement. The design and initial efforts to identify climate action priorities must actively involve the participation of people who live in communities that experience a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards that affect their quality of life [...] There is much to talk and engage about across New Hampshire!*

(NH DES - <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>)

## Goals, Facilitation, and Participation

On January 18, 2024, NH Listens, NHDES, and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) held an in-person community conversation in Nashua, NH. The purpose of the gathering was to share information about the Climate Action Plan and have a conversation about implementation grant goals and projects that can be implemented in Greater Nashua. This meeting continued ongoing conversations about key priorities for reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire. Additionally, NH Listens and NHDES were interested in identifying/building a list of local and statewide partnerships, so that projects locally and statewide include a robust mix of perspectives needed to move this work forward.

Participants engaged in a workshop that allowed them to review near-term, high priority, implement ready priorities, projects, programs, and policies that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions ([see slides and transcriptions on the Carsey School of Public Policy Page](#)). Projects prepared were derived from previous online meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community



conversations. They were organized by sector. The sectors are as follows: Transportation, Electricity Generation and/or Use and Industry, Commercial and Residential Buildings, Natural & Working Lands and Agriculture, and Waste & Materials Management and Wastewater. Participants reviewed projects as they related to the said sectors and worked through the prompts provided.

### **The four overarching questions for the evening's workshop were:**

- What is needed to effectively achieve this project? What would make success possible in NH?
- What successful examples have you seen?
- What prevents progress or acts as a barrier?
- Who needs to be involved? Identify partners on the ground.

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### **Participants attended from:**

- Amherst
- Brookline
- Hudson
- Mason (x2)
- Nashua (x9)
- Pelham (x2)
- Raymond
- No community share

### **They identified with the following organizations/affiliations when asked:**

- 350 New Hampshire (x2)
- City of Nashua (x3)
- Conservation Commission
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Granite State Organizing Project
- Hudson Sustainability Committee
- Mason energy commission
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission, Amherst Commissioner
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- NH Network
- NH Businesses for Social Responsibility
- Pelham Community Power Committee
- Planning Board
- No affiliation shared (x2)

## Themes and Key Points

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During the workshop, community members worked together to identify priorities, barriers, and potential partnerships. Participants provided input across three rounds of small group conversation, switching sectors with each round, which provided multiple perspectives for each of the five sectors.

### Transportation

- Community members discussed expanding public transportation and other mass transit options to reduce the frequency of personal vehicles on the road.
- Other transportation infrastructure considerations were *micro-transit* options to accommodate bikes, scooters, and walking.
- Municipal departments with fleets were also brought up about opportunities to electrify their fleet of vehicles.
- Potential partners include local public and private transit providers and select municipal departments.



*Figure 2. Community Conversation in Nashua, NH*

### Electricity Generation and/or Use and Industry

- The conversation around electrifying vehicle fleets was also discussed in this sector, as well as supporting EV infrastructure expansion.
- Participants talked about the importance of developing business models and maintenance management for EV infrastructure and use.
- Partnerships named include research universities, technical schools, and energy companies and providers.



## **Commercial and Residential Buildings**

- High-level priorities for this sector include creating incentives for builders to consider energy efficiency, EV charging capacity, and greenspace conservation regarding new buildings.
- There was conversation around having a central location for the public to access information, resources, and services around energy efficiency in buildings.
- Potential partnerships named include utility companies, builders and developers, and residential property owners.

## **Natural & Working Lands and Agriculture**

- Community members in this sector highlighted open space and the need for open space protection and education to the public about the benefits of urban forestry.
- Partners identified in this sector include local schools and universities, local businesses, and conservation organizations.

## **Waste & Materials Management and Wastewater**

- Community members discussed the infrastructure investment needed for wastewater treatment facilities, expanding capacity, and moving towards anaerobic digesters.
- Participants discuss varying opportunities for recycling including public education, collecting compost, and capturing and using methane.
- Potential partners include sustainability committees, waste management companies, and high-residency business owners.

## **Opportunities for Engagement Moving Forward**

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**Nashua is one of the eight communities where NH Listens and NHDES is hosting in-person meetings during the first phase of engagement under the Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant.** Participants spent time reflecting on current projects and discussing potential implications for Greater Nashua. When debriefing the activity, NH Listens asked participants to identify supplementary priorities for greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction in Greater Nashua.

### **Additional priorities for the Greater Nashua include:**

- Providing accessible, comprehensive public education that provides information, resources, and potential services providers related to projects that can be funded with the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants.
- Addressing Nashua's multi-family dwellings by providing opportunities to reduce energy output for new and existing buildings.
- Preserving existing greenspace, forests, and local agriculture and mitigating loss of ecosystems and economies that are dependent of these places.



## Additional Resources

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New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Climate Pollution Reduction Grants. <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>.

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (2023). NHDES using EPA grant to update state's Climate Action Plan. <https://www.des.nh.gov/news-and-media/blog/nhdes-using-epa-grant-update-states-climate-action-plan>.

Executive Office of the President of the United States (n.d.) Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: Frequently asked questions: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CEQ-CEJST-QandA.pdf>.

The White House (n.d.). Justice 40: A whole-of-government initiative. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (2023). Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program: Planning grant question and answer document. <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/climate-pollution-reduction-grants-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>.

## NH Listens, NH Department of Environmental Services, and Nashua Regional Planning Commission Contacts

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