Developing New Hampshire's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

Technical Input Session 5: Transportation

Summary Report by NH Listens, May 2025

Purpose and Background

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 investments in Low Income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC) across the economic sectors of air pollution and greenhouse gas reductions.

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

Between January 2025 and May 2025, NH Listens is hosting a series of conversations, or Technical Input Sessions, for people to learn, listen, and inform a CCAP for the state. The CCAP allows NHDES to identify strategies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the near- and long-term. The CCAP must touch on all significant GHG sources and sinks across economic sectors present in New Hampshire.

Technical Input Sessions provide opportunities for NH agencies, outside experts, stakeholders, and the public to discuss and vet potential GHG emission reduction measures for inclusion in the CCAP. The five Technical Input Session conversations are organized by these economic sectors defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Transportation
- Commercial and Residential Buildings
- Electrical Generation and/or Use
- Agriculture and Natural/Working Lands

- Industry and Waste/Materials Management

Goals, Facilitation, and Participation

On May 13, 2025, NH Listens and NHDES held the fifth technical input session for the Transportation sector. The purpose of this gathering was to:

- Provide context about New Hampshire's greenhouse gas inventory.
- Draft preliminary strategies to reduce GHG emissions in the sector.
- Share models for analyzing measures.

In addition, NHDES engaged participants in discussions about their experience in the sector regarding modeling, innovative practices, cross-collaboration, and barriers to implementation.

Participants engaged in a workshop that allowed them to review possible strategies that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase efficiency. The potential strategies prepared were derived from previous meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community conversations.

During the workshops, NH Listens helped keep time, facilitated group discussion, and made sure everyone who attended had a chance to contribute. **15 people attended the session, 23 people registered.** Collectively, they named key considerations and priorities relevant to CCAP planning in the Transportation sector.

*Thank you to **Anna White**, Resilience Coordinator at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, for participating as a guest speaker.*

Focus Areas

The focus areas for this session were:

- Reduce Emissions from Off-Road Vehicles
- Optimize Land Use and Mobility to Improve First/Last Mile Connections

NHDES provided relevant information through slides and corresponding guidance documents to inform participants on the measures' alignments with EPA's required elements. **Participants reviewed these measures and provided feedback on their appropriateness; they also suggested additional actions to ensure a comprehensive and effective implementation approach (find agendas and guidance documents on the NHDES CCAP landing page)**. The potential measures prepared were derived from previous meetings, including individual interviews with statewide providers, cross-sector stakeholder conversations, and community conversations.

Themes and Key Points

During the technical input sessions, participants provided information and resources related to their experience in the sector. See **Resources** for the full list of organizations, programs, reports, and case studies shared by participants in this session.

Strategy 1: Reduce Emissions from Off-Road Vehicles

Measure 1.1. Expand the Use of Electric and Alternative-fuel Off-road Vehicles

- Alternative fuels help reduce co-pollutants associated with fossil diesel, particularly important for less sophisticated off-road equipment.
- Electric alternatives are emerging for recreational vehicles like dirt bikes, offering comparable functionality to traditional models.
- Projects can incorporate renewable energy generation into power electric equipment, creating fully clean energy systems.
    - Vermont DOT successfully deployed a Volvo ECR25 Electric compact excavator around 2022–23. New Hampshire has an electric wheel loader at Lancaster's Transfer Station powered by on-site solar.
    - New York City transitioned their entire fleet of on- and off-road diesel vehicles to renewable and biodiesel fuel, demonstrating viability for hard-to-electrify vehicles.
    - The Volkswagen Mitigation Trust is available in New Hampshire to support off-road vehicle electrification projects.
- Hybrid electric options serve as transitional solutions, with hybrid snow groomer projects currently underway in New Hampshire, including at Loon Mountain.
- Low carbon fuel standards in California include mandates for forklift electrification, providing an example of a regulatory framework.

Strategy 2: Optimize Land Use and Mobility to Improve First/Last Mile Connections

Measure 2.1. Align Housing and Transportation Solutions

- There is a state Senate bill proposing to allow residential development in all commercial zones statewide, with communities exploring height minimums in downtown and transit-oriented districts.
- Participants noted several mixed-used developments that would support vibrant, effective communities to live and commute in.
    - Tuscan Village in Salem features commercial space below residential units.
    - Londonderry is building The Village on Technology Hill as a sustainable mixed-use community.
    - Portsmouth's Lafayette Road project includes affordable housing with walking and biking paths connecting to the city center, designed to generate public transit demand. The town also identified the need to align multiple planning efforts (climate

action, Route 1 corridor improvements, bike and pedestrian plans) for maximum co-benefits.

- Recognizing the importance of zoning and planning at the municipal level was also discussed. The 2008 NH Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook needs refreshing to provide current model ordinances for municipalities.
- Participants recommended including planning bus shelters during initial construction and using development review checklists that assess transit accommodation potential.
- Additionally, projects should incorporate internal bicycle parking in apartment buildings and parking garages for weather protection and security.

Measure 2.2. Expand Employer-Based Telework and Alternative Work Schedules

- Hospitals facing staffing shortages could implement park-and-ride services for employees, like existing programs for private schools, to improve recruitment and job satisfaction.
- Employers can reduce office space costs and capital investments by supporting remote and hybrid work arrangements, creating financial motivation for flexible work policies.
- The current momentum away from remote work policies presents challenges for implementing telework-focused measures, making this a complex time to advance such strategies.
    - While telework expanded significantly during COVID-19, there's currently a trend toward return-to-office mandates in both corporate America and the federal government.
- Existing models of employer-sponsored transportation services demonstrate feasibility for expanding similar programs to other sectors with staffing needs.

Measure 2.3. Expand Park-and-Ride Infrastructure

- Park-and-ride facilities can significantly reduce long-distance vehicle travel when effectively integrated with reliable transit services.
- Park-and-ride lots currently have a significant number of unregistered vehicles, creating maintenance and management challenges that discourage DOT expansion efforts.
- The C&J bus service at Pease Portsmouth reduced its frequency, yet parking demand remained high, leading to paid parking that increases commuter costs.
    - Introduction of parking fees at previously free lots creates financial disincentives for commuters to use public transit options.
- Boston's shuttle services from train stations to workplaces demonstrate effective last-mile connectivity options that could be replicated elsewhere.
- Portsmouth's bike and pedestrian plan includes safer cycling routes to Pease park-and-ride, creating first-mile solutions that could reduce vehicle miles traveled to Boston.
- NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard") resistance can derail park-and-ride projects; participants discussed the planned I-89 Exit 17 Lebanon location, which was blocked by neighbors concerned about loitering and illegal activities.

Measure 2.4. Develop Regional Rideshare and Demand-Responsive Transit Service

- Participants expressed a long-term vision for a statewide commuter line connecting rural and urban regions, such as a route from Nashua to Littleton or across Route 101, to enhance regional mobility.
    - Recent rural transit support from organizations, like the NH Charitable Foundation, highlights potential for alternative funding sources amidst shifting federal priorities.
- Limited bus schedules—often just twice daily—undermine the practicality and usability of existing transit services.
- Enhanced service frequency and speed along major corridors (e.g., I-95) could improve connectivity and attract pre-pandemic commuter volumes, particularly via private providers like C&J.
    - Municipalities, like Nashua, continue to advocate for cross-border commuter rail service in partnership with agencies like MBTA, despite significant hurdles to implementation.
- Leveraging existing data to analyze post-COVID traffic, ridership, and transit costs could inform smarter investments and planning strategies under the CCAP.
    - A regional transit study is underway in Cheshire County, though implementation faces challenges due to limited coordination capacity and lack of state funding.
    - Efforts to advance projects such as the Capital Corridor have stalled due to a lack of funding from the state.
- Deep-rooted biases against bus use persist, as evidenced by an example where a business owner resisted visible transit stops in front of their store, underscoring the need for social change.
    - There's a public misconception about public transit that could be countered through positive marketing and education.
- State agencies could lead affordable, collaborative outreach campaigns with towns, Regional Planning Commissions, and transit operators to promote transit alternatives and reduce stigma.

Climate Action in New Hampshire

Across the five technical input sessions hosted in May, participants identified the following programs and projects as being instances of great climate action work being done in New Hampshire and the greater New England Region.

Transportation	The Volkswagen Mitigation Trust has been utilized as a funding mechanism for electric vehicle charging infrastructure development in New Hampshire.

Buildings	The town of Peterborough, NH, has adopted heat pump policies to encourage building electrification.
Electricity Generation	Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire's non-profit alternative to for-profit utilities has helped drive down electricity rates statewide, while offering clean energy-focused portfolios.
Agriculture and Natural & Working Lands	In Walpole, NH, a local brownfield was transformed into a public parking lot—featuring the town's first EV chargers.
Industry and Waste & Materials Management	New Hampshire Network's Plastics Working Group launched a pilot program to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

Resources

Participant-Shared Resources

088 General Council Agenda (2025, Mar 21). *NH Department of Environmental Services*. https://media.sos.nh.gov/govcouncil/2025/0423/088%20GC%20Agenda%20042325.pdf

A "Next Generation" Transit System for the Monadnock Region. *Southwest Region Planning Commission*. https://www.swrpc.org/programs-services/transportation/transit-and-shared-ride-improvement-feasibility-study/

Alternative Fueling Station Locator. *U.S. Department of Energy*. https://afdc.energy.gov/stations#/station/356155

Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. *City of Portsmouth*. https://www.portsmouthnh.gov/planportsmouth/bicycle-pedestrian-plan

Capitol Corridor. *NH Department of Transportation*. https://www.dot.nh.gov/about-nh-dot/divisions-bureaus-districts/rail-transit/capitol-corridor

Foundation awards more than $3.2 million through Community Grants program (2025, Jan 30). *NH Charitable Foundation*. https://www.nhcf.org/what-were-up-to/foundation-awards-more-than-3-2-million-through-community-grants-program/

GT73 Electric Motorbike. *Riding Times*. https://ridert.com/products/gt73-electric-motorbike-dirt-ebike?srsltid=AfmBOopm3fmXN_Ng-xMtWrZ3Kt7pH7LZ1pEzphXRJ3I0Fg3OpwKF0qpH

Mayor Adams Announces Full City Fleet Has Completed Transition to Renewable Diesel. *City of New York*. https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/733-24/mayor-adams-full-city-fleet-has-completed-transition-renewable-diesel

Nashua re-CODE. https://www.nashuarecode.com/

North Branch Construction Breaks Ground on The Village on Technology Hill in Londonderry, NH (2025, Jan 22). *North Branch Construction*. https://www.northbranch.net/article/north-branch-construction-breaks-ground-on-the-village-on-technology-hill-in-londonderry-nh

Portsmouth 29640. *NH Department of Transportation*. https://www.dot.nh.gov/projects-plans-and-programs/project-center/portsmouth-29640

Portsmouth's Climate Future: A Roadmap to Net Zero Emissions and Climate Resilience (2024 Aug). *City of Portsmouth*. https://files.cityofportsmouth.com/sustainability/Climate/CAP_Final.pdf

NH Listens & NH Department of Environmental Services Contacts

NH Listens

- Carrie Portrie, PhD, Research Assistant Professor & Program Manager, Carrie.Portrie@unh.edu
- Mikayla Townsend, Program Coordinator, Mikayla.Townsend@unh.edu

NH Department of Environmental Services

- Kurt Yuengling, Community Engagement Specialist, Environmental Health Program, Air Resources Division, kurt.r.yuengling@des.nh.gov