
*Governor's Council on Climate
Change (GC3)*

*Adaptation Planning and
Implementation Working Group
Meeting Minutes*

April 23, 2020

Zoom Meeting

10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Attendance:

Welcome and Introductions

Facilitated by Working Group Co-Chairs – George Kral, Matt Fulda

- Co-chair Matt Fulda began this meeting via the Zoom platform at approximately 10:04 AM and introduced both himself and the agenda for the meeting. Co-chair George Kral and other subgroup lead also introduced themselves. The final agenda has been posted on the same page as these minutes.

Update on Process and Timeline

Facilitated by Brian Thompson

- Brian Thompson, from CT DEEP, went over a few objectives for the meeting and a general timeline for the work group. An image of the overall timeline for the GC3 can be seen in the uploaded meeting slides.
 - Brian mentioned that working groups were attempting to keep to the original GC3 timeline, despite obstacles posed by circumstances surrounding COVID-19. Subgroups will be meeting every 5-6 weeks.
- Brian went over a list of proposed tasks, based on a monthly timeline, which can be viewed on the uploaded meeting slides. He also went over a general meeting schedule for the Adaptation Planning and Implementation working group.
- Brian also quickly addressed what sections of the drafted table of contents would need to be addressed by subgroups within this working group, which can be seen in the uploaded slides.

Equity and Environmental Justice

Facilitated by Dr. Mark Mitchell

- Dr. Mitchell posed Hurricane Katrina as an example of a failed emergency response to an environmental scenario in which vulnerable people/populations were primarily impacted.
- Dr. Mitchell pointed out that certain populations are more vulnerable to climate change and its repercussions. Stated that adaptation plans need to be hyper-local so that every individual has equal access to knowledge and resources regarding response planning.
- **Key Environmental Justice Principle:** The process is just as important as the outcome. Involving the community in the planning process is crucial.
- Dr. Mitchell's presentation can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides.
- Matt Fulda closed out this part of the agenda by thanking Dr. Mitchell and adding that all the GC3 players are looking for new ways to incorporate equity and environmental justice into the GC3 process.
 - In order to produce a comprehensive plan, the GC3 will need to ensure that every community is engaged in a way that ensures their needs are incorporated into the final plan.

Theme Area Progress Report

Facilitated by Theme Area Leads: Transportation, Utility Infrastructure, Land Use/Buildings, Public Health & Safety

Definition of Scope

Example Problems/Gaps/Needs

Public Health and Safety Group update:

Facilitated by Lori Mathieu and Laura Hayes

- The Public Health and Safety (PH&S) subgroup has established its own smaller subgroups to address specific GC3-related PH&S topics.
- A specific slide documenting the PH&S status and updates can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides.
- Laura Hayes stated that the PH&S group has begun defining their scope, which includes several components (foci):
 - Health Equity Focus
 - Health Outcome Focus
 - Community Resilience Focus
 - Specific definitions, as provided by the PH&S group can be viewed on the corresponding uploaded meeting slides.
- Laura then went on to address some gaps and needs that the PH&S group has identified, which include:
 - Flood and Storms
 - Air Quality
 - Extreme Heat
 - Drinking Water
 - Recreational Waters
 - Definitions of these gaps and needs can be seen on the uploaded meeting slides
- Some of the subgroups of this working group have also identified individual gaps and needs (these are outlined in the meeting slides).
- Laura presented a diagram of the CDC's BRACE (Building Resilience against Climate Effects) which can be viewed on the meeting slides. This program was designed to identify ways in which states can address the negative health impacts of climate change. One of the biggest gaps that is being identified within the PH&S subgroups is the necessity for the first two steps of this BRACE framework:
 1. Conducting a vulnerability assessment
 2. Projecting the disease burden
 - Connecticut has NOT been one of the states funded by the CDC to address the health impacts of climate change so other resources have been necessary.
 - Lori Mathieu added that ultimately the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health would like to see Connecticut become one of those states.
- George Bradner commented that it will be important to be inclusive of towns and entities when considering long-term health recovery from environmental and health impacts.

Transportation Group update:

Facilitated by Robert Bell

- Robert Bell stated that it would be important to consider the importance of transportation in terms of two categories: 'infrastructure' and 'systems'.

- The draft scope that the group has defined includes:
 - Using existing climate preparedness planning to identify and address transportation investment needs
 - Utilizing best available climate models and data to identify best practices for transportation planning
 - **Key consideration:** “Fix it first” approach of maintaining infrastructure in good repair to increase its effectiveness from a resilience perspective.
- There is an important component of infrastructure design that occurs at the local level, where community input can help frame issues and help those issues be addressed during the design process. This is crucial in making sure that the systems being designed work for the most number of people/populations.
- Robert identified some gaps, problems and needs faced by this working group. The comprehensive list can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides.

Utility Infrastructure Group update:

Facilitated by Todd Berman

- Todd stated that part of the discussion on scope has been about what defines utility infrastructure and what components it deals with. The group ultimately decided that some of the key components of utility infrastructure are:
 - Dams
 - Electricity
 - Storm and Flood Control
 - Communications Infrastructure
 - Fuel Infrastructure
- Todd included an interconnectedness diagram to demonstrate how all of these components impact and interact with one another. This graphic can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides.
- This group is starting to develop an indicators and targets model and are aiming to begin drafting their part of the report in late May. They have found some gaps and needs which will need to be addressed- these can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides.

Land Use and Buildings Group update:

Facilitated by Matt Fulda and George Kral

- Matt stated that the general scope of this group, which will be expanded upon, has two components:
 - Identifying and promoting sustainable land use development and building practices
 - Addressing coastal zone and floodplain management regulations, stormwater management practices, and building codes (both commercial and residential) through a sustainability and adaptation lens
- Matt went through a list of identified gaps and needs which can be viewed on the uploaded meeting slides. Matt stated that more gaps would likely be identified as the group continued to draft their recommendations.

- George Kral added that it would also be critical to create facilities that would allow municipal governments to have the capacity for hyper-local resilience planning.

Discussion of Intersections and Synergies

Facilitated by Working Group Members and Brian Thompson

- Brian Thompson posed three discussion questions for comment from working group members (full questions can be viewed in the uploaded meeting slides) in regards to these topic areas:
 - 1. Scope
 - 2. Problem/Gaps/Needs
 - 3. Equity and Environmental Justice
- Attending member Leticia Colon de Mejias made the point that many households have multiple indoor health barriers and addressing those would require retrofitting housing codes.
- Laura Hayes asked about what the overall timeframe is for adaptation and mitigation implementation so that specific working groups can prioritize suggestions and recommendations.
 - Brian Thompson responded that 2050 would be the best current available timeframe for working groups to utilize.
- Dr. Mark Mitchell added that in regards to housing, there are a number of diverse issues that are specific to low-income households that need to be addressed via multiple programs. He also commented that the transportation group may need to expand their scope to talk not just about infrastructure, but about the actual modes of transportation and how accessible those are to varying demographics/populations. Additionally, what can be done to make alternative forms of transport more safe/appealing for those without motor vehicles.
 - Matt Fulda responded that this would be good to focus on, and has also been a focal point of state and federal interest in the past few years and significant implementation and funding efforts are underway in many areas.
- Attending member Alysse Buzzelli that many of the points brought up by Mark Mitchell should also be considered by the Land Use and Buildings group because there is a lot of overlap in what that group is working on.
- Attending member Alexander Felson added that there should be more consideration of tradeoffs in infrastructure and that the larger system needs to be evaluated to determine what is worth fixing and what might be retrofitted/rebuilt.
 - Todd Berman asked for more models to look at that might help determine prioritization in regards to infrastructure.
 - Matt Fulda stated that it would be looked into.
 - Alexander Felson added that both North Carolina and Florida have some interesting examples that might be worth looking at. Excess egress routes might be a consideration for disinvestment.
 - Attending member Kevin Grigg added that many state and private entities have asset prioritization models that might be of use to working groups, depending on whether they could find one that addresses the right infrastructure.

Public comments

- One member of the public commented that Hartford is such an example of an area where transportation considerations are vital because much of the population does not own a car. This individual also professed support for electric buses and utility vehicles as a potential method for reducing pollution within the transportation sector.
 - Matt Fulda commented that this was definitely a great example of cross-pollination among the transportation group and other groups, as having a next generation of electric transport vehicles poses the need for supporting infrastructure and resources.
- Attending member Joanna Wozniak-Brown added that we need to consider vulnerable populations' access to transportation especially in smaller rural areas where public transportation is usually limited (as compared to urban areas).
- Attending member Denise Savageau added that municipal solid waste should be added to the list of considered utilities, and asked how working group leads envision cross-collaboration to promote mitigation and adaptation.
 - Matt Fulda responded that many members were collaborating and coordinating recommendations across working groups so as to ensure that recommendations coming from the various groups are compatible and consider the recommendations and concerns of other groups.
 - Brian Thompson added that each working group has a DEEP staff member associated with it, so DEEP will have a significant role in pointing out those interconnections and making sure that the necessary discussions between groups are taking place.
- Attending member Leticia Colon de Mejias pointed out that an equity lens needs to be considered first and foremost so that the most pressing issues for communities are being addressed. Many of these issues are heightened by environmental concerns and so people on these working groups need to be able to understand what individual concerns these communities face. She posed the possibility of creating some sort of webinar opportunity for working group members to ask questions about these equity problems.
 - Both Matt Fulda and Kevin Grigg proposed bringing this discussion into the overall GC3 conversation, and presenting it at the next GC3 meeting.

Next Steps and Adjourn

- Brian Thompson stated that next steps would be to continue to update the 2011 recommendations. Also, for individual groups to continue to identify their problems, gaps and needs.
- The Science and Technology lens will also need to be considered in a future meeting. A webinar might be provided by the Science and Tech group for people from other working groups.
 - Attending member Mary-beth Hart stated that they will be working on putting together a webinar soon.

- Upcoming meetings will be posted online with dates, times and call-in info. The next anticipated meeting for this group is around June 10th.
- The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:14 PM.