



CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENT: VISION, GOALS & STRATEGIES

DRAFT APRIL 25, 2021

A fundamentally important component of the comprehensive plan will be developing the plan's visions, goals, and strategies related to each plan element. This draft document, which focuses on Climate and the Environment, lays out initial ideas that have been identified in existing plans and programs, discussions at Task Force meetings, input from the Community Workshop (November 19, 2020), and interviews with various stakeholders. Items that have been drawn from a particular source are identified below. Other items paraphrase input that has been raised or are best practices from other communities working on similar challenges and initiatives. Racial equity is included as an overarching vision; associated goals and strategies are embedded throughout each topic. The following terms are used in the document:

Vision – the big picture of what Carrboro wants to be

Goal – outcome-focused “what” Carrboro is trying to achieve

Strategy – “how” Carrboro will achieve the goal

Project – specific initiatives that will be undertaken to implement the strategy

CLIMATE ACTION

Vision: The Town is a leader in mitigating climate change, and in increasing resilience to climate change impacts for both residents and the environment. The Town prioritizes strategies to increase the resilience of BIPOC, low-income, and other residents who are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Goal 1: Achieve 80% reduction in per capita greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as compared to 2010 levels (Town Council, Community Climate Action Plan, updated October 2020)

Strategy 1.1 Increase use of renewable energy sources, e.g., solar for all residents, including low-income residents.

Projects:

- a) Advocate for more expansive renewable energy County and State legislation, ordinances, and policies.
- b) Develop distributed renewable energy sources that financially benefit the Town, residents and business owners (ECPP).
- c) Identify funding opportunities to increase municipal or community based solar projects (ECPP).

- d) Partner with public agencies or organizations to increase opportunities to access renewable energy (CCAP).
- e) Evaluate the potential to integrate renewable energy infrastructure during the review of development permits.
- e) Continue to pursue renewable energy supply portfolios and microgrid creation opportunities from Duke Energy.

Strategy 1.2 Increase access from a range of housing types to walkable, high-density nodes with alternative and affordable forms of transportation options. (Carrboro Connects Task Force)

Projects:

- a) Expand free public transportation service to low- and moderate-income households and non-ambulatory populations throughout the week, including Sundays, by considering different passenger vehicle types. (Community Meeting/ECPP 2020)
- b) Continue to seek funding from the Triangle Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program and partner with surrounding transit authorities. (CCAP/ECPP).
- c) Continue to increase sidewalk quantity and quality. (Community Meeting)
- d) Continue to implement the Safe Routes to Schools Action plan. (CCAP, Community Meeting)

Strategy 1.3 Integrate Climate Action with the Local Living Economy (CCAP)

Projects:

- a) Expand the Worthwhile Investments Save Energy (WISE) Program and Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund. (EERLF)
- b) Collect and communicate data on food-related greenhouse gas emissions for dining facilities and households in Carrboro. (ECPP)
- c) Assess the opportunities for a circular economy within Carrboro.
- d) Study opportunities to support the creation of local businesses that provide needed goods and services which are not currently available in Carrboro.

Goal 2: Achieve 80% reduction in municipal emissions by 2030 (Energy and Climate Protection Plan, updated October 2020)

Strategy 2.1 Increase the energy efficiency of municipal buildings. (ECPP)

Projects:

- a) Conduct building energy audits of all municipally owned buildings (ECPP).
- b) Continue to upgrade building equipment with more energy efficient technology (ECPP).
- c) Improve resilience against climate concerns with energy backup generators for new critical facilities (Eno-Haw).
- d) Consolidate municipal uses of buildings and improve building operations and maintenance best practices.

Strategy 2.2 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to municipal fleet operations. (ECPP, Carrboro Connects Task Force)

Projects:

- a) Right size the vehicle fleet (ECPP).
- b) Replace internal combustion vehicles with electric vehicles and/or alternative fuel vehicles, as the market continues to improve (ECPP).
- c) Reduce vehicle idling (ECPP).
- d) Reduce staff travel to meetings.
- e) Accurately track fuel use, mileage, and lifecycle cost data, to prioritize fleet transition.
- f) Develop a clean vehicle procurement process that aligns to Business Enterprise goals.

Goal 3: Expand equitable community participation in the decision-making and implementation of climate change goals and policies. (Town Council, Carrboro Connects Task Force)

Strategy 3.1 Create meaningful partnerships to engage with community members. (CCAP)

Projects:

- a) Convene a community-led climate action table comprised of community-based organizations and resident leaders (CCAP).
- b) Transparently communicate government decisions from vision to implementation in culturally responsive ways (e.g., language accessibility and neighborhood-based meetings.) (Community Meeting)
- c) Evaluate current community engagement opportunities for accessibility and cultural appropriateness.

Strategy 3.2 Value members as advisors in community engagement processes. (Carrboro Connects Community Workshop)

Projects:

- a) Develop a Participatory Budgeting process for the Town at-large, and a Green Neighborhood participatory budgeting program that returns saved money to the specific neighborhood (CCAP), especially in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.
- b) Support Town staff with additional resources to enhance community participation goals and strategies. (Community Workshop)
- c) Train and task departmental advisory boards with residential seats with conducting Racial Equity Impact Analyses (REIA) for departmental policies and processes.

- d) Compensate advisory board members so that board participation is accessible to low-income individuals who cannot volunteer their time to participate.
- e) Provide follow-up communication concerning ordinance and policy changes that have received community feedback.

Goal 4: Enable lower-income residents and small business owners to participate and benefit from climate resiliency programs. (Climate Action Plan, RainReady Carrboro)

Strategy 4.1 Increase participation of rental properties in energy, drinking water, and climate resiliency building programs. (Carrboro Connects Task Force)

Projects:

- a) Establish a Rental Property Task Force and Process. (CCAP)
- b) Establish a certificate program and public database for the energy performance of rental housing. (CCAP)

Strategy 4.2 Expand access to weatherization, energy efficiency, and water conservation measures for residents and business owners. (CCAP)

Projects:

- a) Pursue compliance with voluntary section of building code or request specific energy performance rating/measures as a part of land use and/or building permit, especially for affordable housing units/projects. (CCAP)
- b) Develop technical assistance programs for small businesses owners and income-qualified homeowners and renters to install weatherization, energy efficient, and water conservation measures. (CCAP)
- c) Develop a free or low-cost financing program for weatherization, energy efficient, and water conservation measures. (adapted from CCAP).

Strategy 4.3 Expand access to residential landscaping and green stormwater infrastructure measures for greater lot, neighborhood, and watershed scale resilience and environmental quality as well as community enjoyment of outdoor spaces.

Projects

- a) Build upon the 2020 RainReady study to pilot a residential scale program, with attention to equity, program access, and affordability.
- b) Expand on previous and current stormwater outreach efforts such as the new Stormwater and Watershed Homeowners Manual
- c) Explore opportunities for closer coordination between stormwater and affordable housing programs

ENVIRONMENT/ECOSYSTEM

Vision: Preserve, protect, and restore natural areas and ecologically sensitive and productive areas through all feasible means (Carrboro Vision 2020, Small Area Plan for Carrboro's North Study Area). Plans and policies will improve equity by increasing the community's access to experiencing natural places, especially for those who currently have less access.

Goal 1: Develop a coordinated land use plan that encapsulates the community vision. (Town Council)

Strategy 1.1 Pursue development provisions that preserve and maintain natural areas by incorporating environmentally sensitive development and building practices. (Carrboro Vision 2020)

Projects:

- a) Establish a comprehensive framework for plans, policies, and regulations with relation to natural hazard mitigation. (Eno-Haw)
- b) Continue to ensure compliance of standards for conservation lands, wetlands, and steep slopes. (Small Area Plan).
- c) The Town has updated standards. To ensure implementation, plan submissions should include documentation of the natural and cultural features occurring on the proposed project. Additionally, the Town should create an ordinance that ensures that development does not isolate conserved lands. (Small Area Plan)
- d) Identify the opportunity for cluster development, low impact development, brownfield redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and native "greenscape" requirements in future development plans. (Bolin Creek Watershed)
- e) Regularly assess standards and ordinances based on current best practices or issues.

Goal 2: Conserve and restore watersheds, ecosystems, and native species. (Eno-Haw Hazard Mitigation Draft Plan, Carrboro Vision 2020, Little Creek Watershed Assessment, Morgan Creek Local Watershed Plan, Bolin Creek Watershed Restoration Plan)

Strategy 2.1 Support native plantings throughout town (Land Use Ordinance).

Projects:

- a) Develop a native pollinators program to provide technical assistance on native planting for Carrboro residents (renters and homeowners) and business owners. (CCAP)
- b) Support formation of the community-led tree coalition for tree preservation throughout Carrboro (CCAP, ECPP).
- c) Establish stabilizing vegetation in stream channel restoration projects. (Little Creek Watershed)

- d) Work with OWASA and Town of Chapel Hill to improve riparian vegetation condition along sanitary sewer rights of ways and greenways. (Little Creek Watershed)

Strategy 2.2 Expand stormwater management measures as part of ecosystem enhancement, watershed restoration, climate resilience, and quality of place improvements.

Projects:

- a) Establish a program to identify and prioritize opportunities for water quality retrofit projects (Bolin Creek Watershed Restoration Plan, Morgan Creek Local Watershed Plan, CCAP, NDPEs Phase II).
- b) Implement bioengineering/restoration methods to protect and/or restore aquatic habitats due to climate change impacts or development. (Morgan Creek Local Watershed Plan, Bolin Creek Watershed Restoration Plan, CCAP)
- b) Offer technical and financial assistance to renters and homeowners for residential installation of green infrastructure,. Include an ability to offer priority to more flood prone and lower income residents (RainReady)
- c) For each program, use a Racial Equity Impact Assessment to evaluate and prioritize projects.

Strategy 2.3 Create new initiatives to recognize how historical norms have led to soil quality degradation and emphasize the importance of the protection and restoration of soil quality as a crucial component of ecosystem and community enhancement. (Interviews)

Projects

- a) Explore new approaches and tools for soil quality protection as part of land use permits.
- b) Recognize and promote the importance of soil organic carbon content. Coordinate with efforts to expand composting (adapted from CCAP).
- c) Develop new outreach and technical assistance to accelerate access to information on soil quality and pursuit of soil restoration projects.

Goal 3: Promote policies and access to natural areas and ecosystems to be equitable across race, income, and ability, especially in neighborhoods that have been denied historically underserved. (Town Council)

Strategy 3.1 Ensure environmental policies and zoning tools do not have disparate impacts based on race and income, and undo harm from historical policies and zoning. (Town Council)

Projects:

- a) Evaluate individual permits within a broader context of cumulative burden, to ensure that stormwater impacts do not continue to burden lower-income neighborhoods in areas that are more prone to flooding. (Community Workshop)

- b) Investigate land use planning and flood mitigation tools and approaches to better address stormwater related impacts to already burdened properties.
- c) Conduct Racial Equity Impact Assessments on ordinances and actions taken thus far on any policy.
- d) Audit decisions made within committees or decision-making bodies to see if variances, permits, and exceptions align to ordinances.
- e) Determine if all populations have access to natural areas to recreation.

Strategy 3.2 Support neighborhood organizing efforts and outreach to neighborhoods, seeking to repair and build trust with local government, to meaningfully engage traditionally underrepresented community members in environmental decision-making (Community Workshop).

Projects:

- a) Conduct targeted outreach to vulnerable and underrepresented groups (Bolin Creek Watershed Plan, RainReady Carrboro), and create liaisons between the Town government and neighborhoods (Community Workshop).
- b) Offer community members multiple modes of learning about and engaging with proposed policy changes.