

Staff Report

This report was developed by staff from the Manager's Office on January 22, 2021

This report provides details about:

1. Feedback themes
2. Feedback from advisory boards and commissions
3. All feedback
4. Staff recommendations for revisions to the draft plan

1. Feedback Themes

The draft [Climate Action and Response Plan¹](#) was published on November 16, 2020 and the public comment period ran until December 18, 2020. Staff also attended advisory board and other meetings in January to gather additional feedback. Based upon our review of the feedback, we have compiled the following list of themes for the Council's consideration. These are comments that came up multiple times from different sources:

- The plan is comprehensive and generally accessible
- Racial equity should be a central element of implementation across all actions
- Action priorities could be further clarified
- Tree protection and green space should be more emphasized
- Limitations on the Town's regulatory authority should be explained
- We need to help our residents understand how this plan is relevant to them
- We need to help advisory boards and residents understand how they can help
- The plan should say more about "micromobility" (e.g., electric scooters, bikes)
- Incentives are needed to drive change
- The plan should say more about food systems
- Resilience and flood protection should be more emphasized
- Regional collaboration should be more emphasized

2. Feedback from Advisory Boards and Commissions

Staff attended meetings for each of the Town advisory boards and commissions listed below. This [summary document²](#) captures the detailed feedback for each meeting.

- Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board
- Community Design Commission
- Housing Advisory Board
- Human Services Advisory Board

¹ <https://www.sustainchapelhill.org/featured/2020/2/18/climate-action-and-response-plan>

² <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=47998>

- Justice in Action Committee
- Planning Commission
- Parks, Greenways and Recreation Commission
- Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board
- Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board

3. All Feedback

All of the feedback received as of January 22, 2021 is found within the following documents:

- [Feedback Survey for Draft Plan³](#)
- [Public Feedback - Emails and Virtual Office Hours⁴](#)
- [Feedback from Advisory Boards and Commissions⁵](#) (same as section 2)

The [Public Feedback Summary⁶](#) document includes information about the contact/organization, the date it was received, how the feedback was shared, as well as the outreach methods used to share the plan and seek feedback.

4. Staff Recommendations for Revisions to the Draft Plan

Based on our review of the feedback received to date, as well as our own reflections on the draft plan, we recommend to Council that the draft plan be revised to address the items bulleted within the categories listed below. Where we have a specific page location or example in mind, we have also provided that detail. These items capture the themes listed above, as well as the additional recommendations highlighted in the public feedback documents from section 3 (linked above).

Equity

- Explain how equity is central to plan implementation across all actions
- Reference local resilience assessment data in the context of climate equity
- Explain how resiliency is an equity issue: impacts vs. resources to adapt (p. 60)

Natural Environment

- Emphasize tree and natural area protection as priority actions
- Emphasize resilience and green infrastructure as key “adaptation” strategies
- Connect tree protection and green infrastructure with development process

³ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=48002>

⁴ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=48004>

⁵ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=47998>

⁶ <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=48000>

Collaboration

- Emphasize regional collaboration, including other towns and examples
- Explain limitations on the Town's regulatory authority and how advocacy helps
- Explain the relationship between "Town" and "Community" actions (p.18)
- Add schools to the list of possible composting partners (p. 56)
- Add Town's role to "support, advocate" for State and utility climate goals (p.36)

Communication

- Provide an introductory message from leadership that frames the plan
- Consider developing a standalone executive summary
- Emphasize that it will take action across all sectors to achieve our goals
- Clarify the Town's near-term priorities for action
- Help residents better understand how this plan is relevant to them
- Help advisory boards and residents better understand how they can help
- Explain relationships between actions (e.g., reduced waste and vehicle emissions)
- Add more images of Chapel Hill and project examples, where possible
- Provide more investment options for renewable energy projects
- Explain that sustainable development includes "redevelopment and infrastructure"
- Look for places where actions can be strengthened with wording and timing
- Explain the "80/20 rule" approach to emission reduction focus in the near-term
- Add information about "total cost of ownership" for Town investments
- Add "future ready" to the list of sustainable community qualities (p. 6)
- Add "people, economy and environment" to 4th bullet (p. 6)
- Add context to the chart comparing the Town with other cities (p. 13)
- Add that it's "every community's responsibility" to reduce emissions (p. 14)
- Add storytelling callout boxes to reinforce actions (pp. 26-57)
- Add that leadership has committed to making climate action a top priority (p. 66)
- Indicate that implementation begins after adoption (p. 67)
- Add green infrastructure ordinance to 2022 milestone and remove 2023 (p. 67)
- Add the next five-year update to the plan (p. 67)

Drivers for Action

- Consider a goal of 50% carbon reduction by 2030, instead of 40-50% (p.8)
- List more incentives that can be explored to drive change
- Provide examples of how we can build climate action into our decision-making
- Focus on partnerships with our largest carbon emitters
- Add "property assessed clean energy (PACE)" as a driver for renewable energy

- Add “green banks” as a driver for investments in clean energy technologies
- Emphasize the urgency of climate action (p. 2)

Benefits

- Add job creation as a co-benefit (pp. 19, 23-25)
- Draw connections between green job creation and a livable wage
- Add “reduced risk” and “increased productivity” to the list of benefits (p. 22)
- Move p.22 about community benefits of climate action near p. 19
- Add co-benefits of green building callout box (p.30)
- Mention property investment as a co-benefit within the plan (pp. 32-33)

Buildings and Energy

- Explore options for enhanced refrigerant management
- Evaluate the benefits of a “green rentals” program
- Explain the term “greening the grid” early on in the plan (p. 4)
- Modify the definition of “net zero energy” to include on-site renewables (p. 8)
- Add “learn and heal” to list of + public health impacts from green building (p.29)
- Clarify relationship between compact development and affordable housing (p.29)
- Add “guidance” to what Town can do to encourage green building upgrades (p.32)
- Explain how energy efficiency helps us reach our renewable energy goals (p.34)

Transportation and Land Use

- Say more about “micromobility” (e.g., electric scooters, e-bikes)
- Add language inclusive of mobility for people with disabilities
- Experiment with ways to promote greenways as travel corridors
- Emphasize how good local jobs can reduce transportation-related emissions
- Explain why it’s important to electrify buildings and phase out natural gas
- Share national context for transportation emissions to drive local action (p. 11)
- Provide more examples of how this plan connects with the LUMO rewrite (p. 41)
- Explain the connection between VMT and land use patterns (p. 41)
- Add “and destinations” to last strategy listed for sustainable development (p.41)
- Add “ability to get around during fuel disruptions” to resilience column (p. 42)
- Add “or perceived as unsafe” to first paragraph about biking and walking (p. 43)
- Add estimated lifecycle costs under implementation cost figures (p. 45, 47)
- Add “and connectivity” for strategy bullet about transit (p. 49)
- Add “by increasing capacity on high-demand routes” to 2nd paragraph (p. 49)

- Explain difference between EV infrastructure and increasing EV ownership (p. 51)
- Add "and residential charging" to vision statement (p. 51)
- Add "urban heat island effect from asphalt" as a negative under impacts (p. 52)
- Explain that TDM can also reduce parking demand (p. 53)
- Consider how TDM vision statement could include mode shift (p. 53)
- Add GoTriangle's vanpools and ride share matching to "who can help?" (p. 53)
- Add + resiliency impact of "more travel options during disruption events" (p. 54)

Waste, Water, Other

- Reference Agua Vista in connection to water monitoring efforts
- Explain that water conservation saves energy and reduces emissions
- Look for connections between water and a new green building policy
- List OWASA as a potential partner for community solar
- Explain why methane is a potent greenhouse gas (p.12, 55)
- Consider showing or noting reductions in water-related emissions (p. 55)
- Add that OWASA has an active energy management plan (p. 55)
- Add homeowners associations as those who can help with waste (p. 56, 58)
- Add forecast curve to graph, if available (p. 56)
- Clarify definition of zero waste (p. 56)
- Say "where [resources] go when we're done with them" in 1st paragraph (p. 56)
- Say "A zero waste community sees 'waste' as a resource that's wasted." (p. 56)
- Add "and awareness" to the strategy about education (p. 57)
- Add to table positive health/equity impacts about better use of public land (p. 57)
- Recognize OWASA as a partner (p. 58)
- Add to table positive health impact about "biophilia" and green spaces (p. 59)

Resilience

- Highlight any positives we can keep from COVID response (e.g., on-road paths)
- Prioritize protections for residents most vulnerable to climate change
- Say more about local food systems and their connection to climate action
- Explore strategies for resiliency and extreme heat
- Add "fostering social networks" to resilient community list (p. 5, 60)
- Emphasize that resiliency cannot be an alternative to carbon reduction (p. 60)
- Consider adding indicator for social capital or neighborhood cohesion (p. 61)
- Say more about how green infrastructure will be implemented (p. 62)
- Add lawn care to list of education topics (p. 63)

- Add plan ambassador program to list of education topics (p. 63)
- Add water conservation measures to list of resilience strategies (p. 64)
- Say more about the physical and mental benefits of nature (p. 62)
- Add that green infrastructure also helps to recharge groundwater (p. 62)
- Add "public health" to bullet about economic benefits education topic (p. 63)

Technical Edits

- Add organizations and boards to list of contributors under acknowledgements
- Include links to the appendix and methodology in the final plan
- Utilize UNC's corrected numbers using corrected source data and units
- Note that while it's permitted, wood is not being burned by UNC in GHG report
- Use consistent terms for "resident" and "individual", where possible
- Use consistent tense in first paragraph of "What is a GHG inventory?" (p. 11)
- Correct spelling for "San Francisco" (p. 13)
- Change the solid waste icon to the trash can (p. 13)
- Add and label the Y axis for the GHG Projections chart (p. 14)
- Clarify implementation timing for north/south bus rapid transit project (pp.4, 49)
- Reduce visual confusion/repetition with the charts in the last section (pp. 26-57)
- Change row label to "Type of Impact" in all "Other Benefits" tables (pp. 26-57)
- Add "already" to "What is the Town doing?" callout boxes (pp. 26-57)
- Use darker green for word "diesel" (p. 39)
- Change title to "expand" rather than "extend" (p. 43)
- Add "(BRT)" to end of title (p. 49)