

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

Municipality: City of Gloucester

Project Title: Gloucester Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP)

Award Year (FY): 2022

Grant Award: \$63,396.15

Match: \$28,253.75

Match Source: \$11,020 Cash, \$17,234 In-kind

One or Two Year Project: One Year Project

Municipal Department Leading Project: Community Development – Planning Division

Project Website: <https://gloucester-ma.gov/1182/Climate-Action-and-Resilience-Plan-CARP>

Community Overview:

Gloucester is a mid-sized coastal City, population of 30,162 (2020 Census), located north of Boston in the Cape Ann region. Gloucester's abundant natural resources, vibrant arts community, as well as fishing and maritime heritage make Gloucester a unique place to live and work. Gloucester's Environmental Justice communities are clustered in the City's relatively dense downtown district and are adjacent to Gloucester's working waterfront. About 39% of Gloucester's population lives in these census areas. All 9 of Gloucester's Environmental justice census areas are low income (median income less than 65% of the state median) and two are also minority (25% or more residents identify as a race other than white). With climate change, Gloucester faces growing risks from higher temperatures, heavier precipitation, flooding, and larger storms. The combined effects of storms and sea level rise could also create substantial flooding in the city as early as 2050 - and much of Gloucester's critical infrastructure is at risk. The entire community will be impacted by climate change, whether directly by the effects of increased heat, storm intensity, and flooding, or indirectly by the burden on the city to mitigate damages.

Project Description and Goals:

Given these challenges, the City of Gloucester has long been committed to addressing climate change. The creation of a Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) provides a broader, public facing strategy and identifies clear goals to move the community forward. The CARP will also help the City situate our previous and planned adaptation work within the scope of clear climate mitigation and resilience goals.

The completed CARP includes both community-wide and municipal goals, an inventory of GHG emissions in Gloucester, and individual and integrated actions to achieve the City's goals. The Plan also identified a timeline of steps, and potential funding mechanisms for implementation of priority actions.

The City's Climate Action and Resilience Plan represents the collective efforts of City residents, stakeholders, experts, municipal staff, and community organizations. Direct input during

community workshops, in survey responses, at stakeholder meetings and on social media was the driving force behind action identification.

The process of planning for the City's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) was led by Gloucester's Clean Energy Commission in partnership with the City's Community Development Department. Community members and stakeholders were the driving force behind action identification, with over 500 climate actions suggested by the public at community workshops, in stakeholder meetings, and through surveys.

In addition to these baseline outreach strategies, a new effort piloted as part of this planning process was Meeting-In-A-Box. This is an outreach strategy that leverages local networks to get input from residents in the spaces they already feel comfortable. Interested local organizations were invited to have a representative attend a training to learn how to run an action identification workshop in their own organization. Our Engagement Interns also supported facilitation by local organization volunteers. Meetings at Gloucester High School, the Annisquam Village Church, and SeniorCare Inc. brought new voices to the table and highlighted the specific needs of these populations.

Special care was taken in this planning effort to include youth voices. One of our Engagement Intern positions was reserved to be filled by a Gloucester High School (GHS) student who acted as an ambassador to GHS's principal, students and teachers. Some of the outreach strategies targeted toward youth included:

- Posting flyers at GHS,
- Articles in the Gillnetter (school newspaper),
- Posting links to the survey and announcements of other engagement opportunities on Google classroom,
- Creating a Climate Action and Resilience bulletin board at the high school,
- Offering National Honors Society volunteer hours to students who participated in community workshops, and
- Frequently posting on the city's Innovate Gloucester's Instagram account.

As a result of these strategies, almost a quarter of survey respondents were under the age of 18, a significant amount of youth engagement in local City planning.

Results and Deliverables:

Based on Gloucester's climate planning efforts to date, as well as input from municipal staff and community members, the CARP is designed to be bold, but also realistic, to guide the City's mitigation and resilience efforts going forward. The plan does this by balancing aspirational goals with tangible strategies.

The goals outlined in the CARP were created through input during the City's second community workshop, where participants were asked to image a clean climate future in the form of a "Post Card to the Past." The CARP's goals represent the community that Gloucester is moving towards.

The plan also lays out several potential actions that the City can take to reach the vision identified in our goals. Climate actions intersect with many facets of life in Gloucester, from the built environment, infrastructure that keeps the City running, public health and livelihoods, to the natural world. As such, the CARP's goals and strategies are organized into seven planning areas including: Buildings, Infrastructure, Energy, Natural Resources, Solid Waste Management, Mobility, and Social Resilience.

To demonstrate how Gloucester plans on achieving its climate goals, this Plan also identifies the realm of influence of each strategy. This allowed us to define more clearly what the City's role looks like moving each goal and action forward.

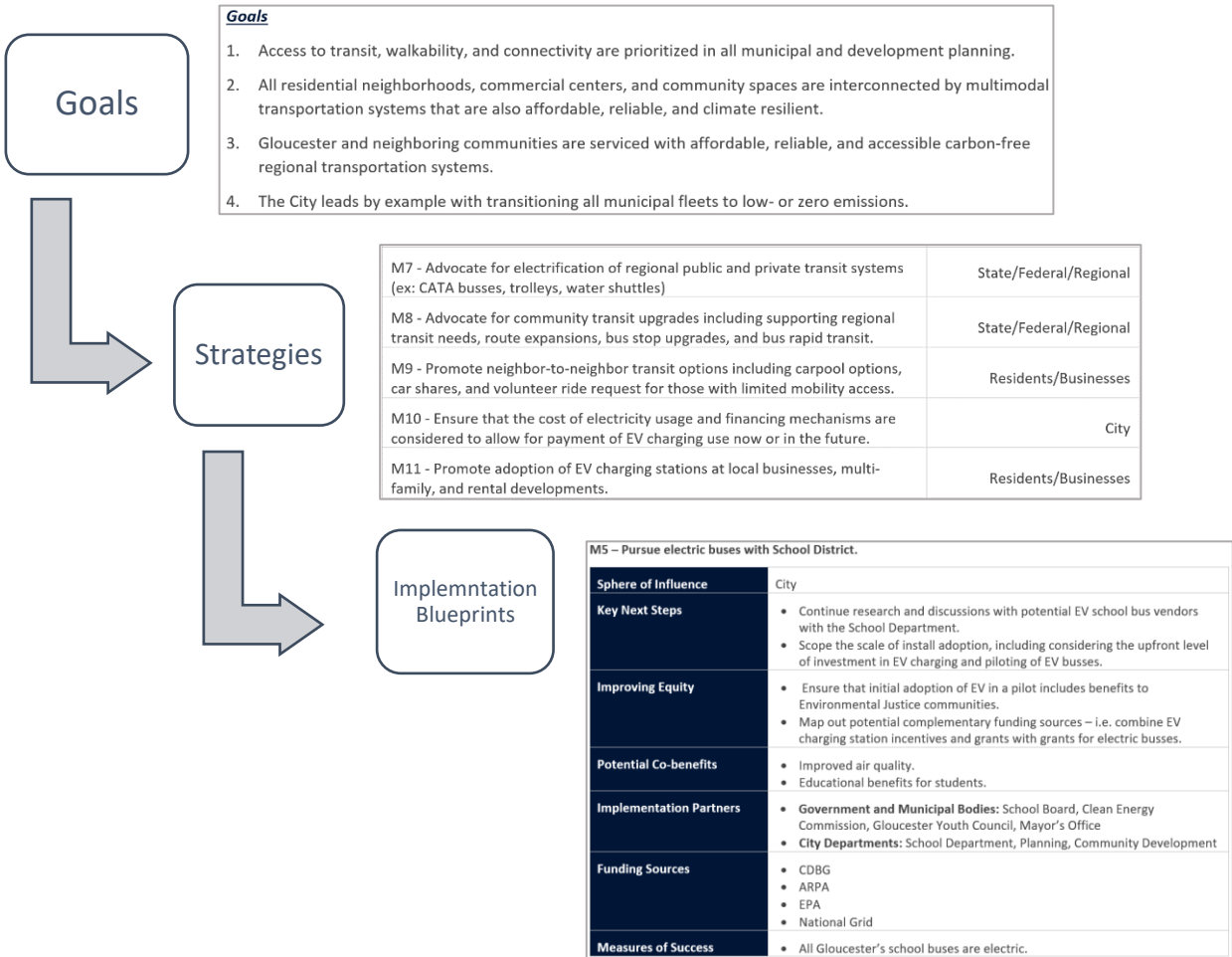
All CARP strategies are organized into the following "Realm of Influence" categories:

- **City** - Strategies organized under this realm of influence are those that the City's elected officials and/or staff can lead and advance by leveraging grant funding, community partnerships, and other resources at the City's direct disposal. These strategies include enhancing municipal staff and organizational capacity, upgrades municipal facilities, infrastructure, and management of public spaces, coordination of local community organizations, and safety initiatives.
- **City Ordinances or By-Laws** – Strategies under this category involve review and changes to the current City's ordinances, by-laws, or policies that must be passed by the City Council and/or other City Boards and Commissions. These strategies require political support from community members and from elected officials. The role of the City in these strategies is to provide technical support and initiate a public process to garner support and feedback on any proposed changes.
- **Residents/Businesses** – These are strategies which individual residents and/or businesses, including landlords, can take to contribute to community-wide climate efforts. For example, installation of rooftop solar, at-home composting, participating in energy saving incentives offered by utility partners, switching to EVs, taking public transit, and more. City staff will strive to provide technical and financial assistance, as well as educational materials to help promote and encourage implementation of these strategies by individuals and businesses.
- **State/Federal/Regional** – For these strategies, City staff will leverage opportunities to advocate for regulatory changes and resource provisions at the regional and state level.

The final plan document, available on the project's website, also provides implementation blueprints for several strategies identified by the Clean Energy Commission as being a high priority for implementation with in our current planning context. However, the broad nature of

the CARP’s goals means that the City can shift focus to other strategies, or integrate new strategies as new information, technologies, opportunities, and funding becomes available.

Plan Structure Example



Lessons Learned:

Some key takeaways from the CARP planning effort include:

- Building additional staff support into the grant request was extremely successful in allowing us to do more targeted and in-depth outreach. As part of this effort, the City hired two youth interns funded by MVP. This greatly improved our capacity to reach out to community members.
- The Meeting-in-a-box format was successful at bringing more voices into planning efforts but most organizations preferred to rely heavily on our youth interns to facilitate at their groups rather than getting trained to facilitate themselves. In the future we could consider offering more simplified materials to any organization who is interested in collecting

community input and use interns or grants to local community groups to target workshops at organizations of interest.

- Outreach in the zoom format allowed for a much larger number of participants in workshops and events than in previous planning efforts. Engaging residents in conversation was also more challenging. In future planning, if possible, a mix of virtual and in-person events could be effective.
- Bringing in experts to discuss possible climate actions at Community workshops was a great way to prompt discussion on climate strategies. Residents of Gloucester come from a variety of backgrounds in terms of their understanding of possible solutions. When asked how the City should take Climate Action in early workshops some participants expressed a lack of expertise was limiting their participation in the conversation. By bringing in experts in later workshops it gave both those with more background on the subject and less material to draw from and discuss how it applies to Gloucester's unique setting and challenges.

Partners and Other Support:

This project was led by Gloucester's Clean Energy Commission (CEC) in partnership with the City's Community Development Department staff and support from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Many residents and stakeholders kindly took the time to participate in the variety of surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, and workshops that were part of this Plans development.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with Action Inc., the Gloucester Housing Authority, the Cape Ann Climate Coalition, the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), The Open Door, TownGreen2025, the City's Engineering Department, Building Department, Health Department, and Conservation Department. Gloucester High School students, the Annisquam Village Church Creation Care Team, and SeniorCare Inc. participated in our Meeting-in-a-box pilot program.