

Recommended Sectors for a Climate RFP

Climate Change Advisory Committee
Board of Commissioners' Budget Retreat | January 6, 2026

Agenda

- **Board Charge to the CCAC**
- **Structure of a Climate Action Plan “Sector”**
- **Community Engagement and Seven Climate Sectors**
- **Evaluation Criteria/Funding Sources**

Board Charge to CCAC

Recommend to the Board major subject areas, or sectors, that can guide decisions about an RFP for a climate action plan.

- 1. Identify sectors that capture or organize related climate goals for each subject area.**
- 2. Sync these sectors with the Comprehensive Plan and Equity concerns.**

Additionally, the CCAC also identified evaluation criteria that potentially inform each climate sector, for example, transparency, feasibility, cost, etc.

Structure of a Climate Sector



Recommended Sectors



Community engagement, including the development of public/private partnerships, is a crucial dimension of every sector, both in public involvement in the design and in the implementation of a climate action plan.

Agriculture



Sector

AGRICULTURE

Related Climate Goals:

Affordable leases and loans for farmland, incentives for sustainable and smart agriculture (e.g., soil regeneration, biodiversity, rotational grazing, cover crops), transferable development rights program, drought resilient crops, carbon-absorbing soil amendments, strengthened farmland protection program, low-carbon food production, local infrastructure and access to food (farm-to-market)

Equity

Affordability, access to financing, local food sources

Comprehensive Plan

AGR Policy 1-5, Strategies 1-6, 9 action items. Cf. also Chatham Co. Farmland Preservation Plan 2025-2028)

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area:

<https://planchathamtracking-chathamncgis.hub.arcgis.com/pages/agriculture>

Built Environment/Energy and Energy Efficiency



Sector

BUILT ENVIRONMENT/ ENERGY and ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Related Climate Goals:

Energy-efficient buildings; expanded solar, geothermal (ground source) energy, sustainable building and construction methods, smart home energy and energy efficiency upgrades through “Electrify the Triangle,” public partnership with commercial and industrial entities to encourage renewable energy and energy efficiencies, C-PACE funding approach for commercial and industrial facilities, and renewable energy generation (solar, geothermal).

Equity

Access to funding for energy upgrades in low-income homes. reduced energy burden (lower utility costs); potential green job training.

Comprehensive Plan

Resiliency Big Idea; Resilience Policy 3, Strategy 3.1, 3.2; Resiliency Objective, Secondary; Housing Policy 3, Strategy 3.5, Economic Development Policy 3; Strategy 3.3

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area: N/A

Transportation



Sector

TRANSPORTATION

Related Climate Goals:

100% County EV fleets, expanded EV charging stations, multimodal hubs, free ridership buses and expanded public transit routes, EV school buses, bicycle lanes for transportation,

Equity

Greater access to public transportation, free ridership and expanded public transportation routes, including rural areas

Comprehensive Plan

Land Policy 4, Strategy 4.1; Natural Resource/Resiliency Action Item 6

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area: N/A

Natural Eco-Systems



Sector

NATURAL ECO-SYSTEMS

Related Climate Goals:

Expanded protection for natural habitats (forests, wetlands, wildlife habitat, streams etc.), wetlands restoration, strengthened UDO tree protection in residential developments

Equity

Provision for communities at risk to access natural eco-system interventions (e.g., wetlands restoration, tree planting), tree coverage (shading), particularly in more extreme heat, support for small landowners of woodlands

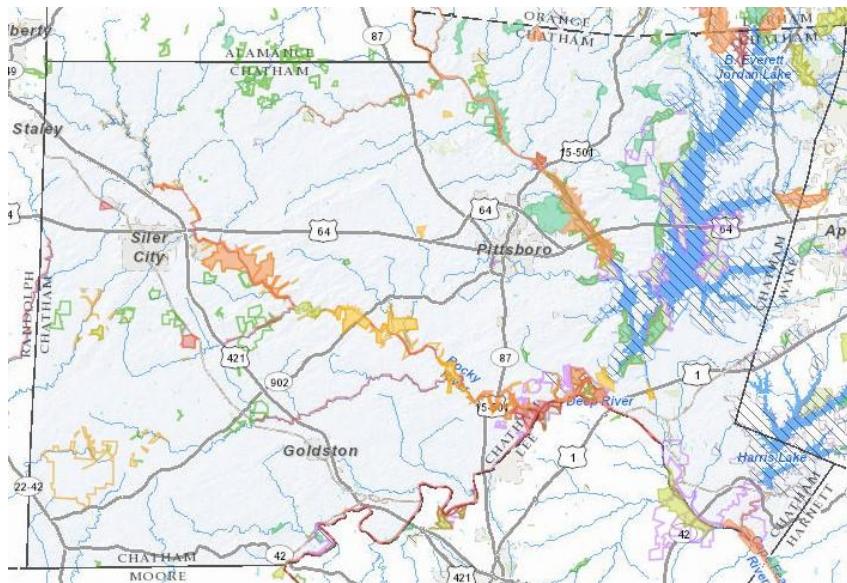
Comprehensive Plan

BI (20,000 add'l. acres); NR strategy 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 5.1

Plan Chatham Focus Area:

<https://planchathamtracking-chathamncgis.hub.arcgis.com/pages/natural-resources>

Land Use Planning



Sector

LAND USE PLANNING

Related Climate Goals:

Compact community designs, increased tree cover, green belts around towns, transferable development rights (complements land-use planning for more effective management of urban growth and land conservation), and more...

Equity

Community engagement, equity impact assessments before approving major projects.

Comprehensive Plan

NR strategy 3.3, 5.1

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area:

<https://planchathamtracking-chathamncgis.hub.arcgis.com/pages/land-use>

Waste and Water Management



Sector

WASTE and WATER MANAGEMENT

Related Climate Goals

Enhanced recycling and composting, stormwater management, diversion of food waste and paper from landfills, increased number of recycling centers

Equity

Climate-resilient infrastructure that protects vulnerable populations that often face greater risks from flooding, drought, and toxic hazards

Comprehensive Plan

NR strategy 2.4; Resiliency Strategy 3.4 and 3.5; Resiliency Policy 6; Resiliency strategy 6.1; Natural Resource/Resiliency Action Item 7

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area: N/A

Climate Resiliency



Sector

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Related Climate Goals:

Integrated climate resiliency in governance, budgeting, and land use planning, mapping exposure, resiliency hubs, local food distribution system, extreme heat preparedness, community gardens, surveillance measures for emerging disease-carrying insects from warmer temperatures.

Equity

Accessibility (food, water, power, shelter) during natural disasters, vulnerable communities' inclusion in resiliency planning, reduced "energy burden"

Comprehensive Plan

Resiliency Rec. 1, policy 1, strategy 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3., 3.4

Plan Chatham Tracking Focus Area: N/A

EVALUATION

Criteria potentially applicable to all sectors of a Climate Action Plan

1. Community Engagement

- *Public participation*: Is the public invited to contribute to the design and implementation of the climate action plan? Will such engagement help to ensure that the plan's goals and actions become locally relevant, and strengthen social capital?
- *Transparency*: Will the plan build public trust? How can it publicly track progress? Can technology help transparency, e.g., a public dashboard showing the planning and progress of planned developments in the County?
- *Education*: Will the plan increase community awareness of the programs available to reduce individual contributions to GHG emissions? Increase resilience? And strengthen communication between the County and the communities it serves?
- Overall, how will the plan use an inclusive community dialogue to engage stakeholders on climate action priorities and build buy-in for project support.

EVALUATION

Criteria potentially applicable to all sectors of a Climate Action Plan

2. Equity

- *Disproportionate impacts:* Are climate hazards (heat, flooding, drought) impacting certain demographic groups more harshly?
- *Affordability:* How do the plan's actions affect affordability in the County? Are its resources affordable to all in the community? Do certain measures require low-income subsidies? How can the County address electricity and transportation costs that disproportionately burden lower income residents?
- *Accessibility:* Does the plan engage vulnerable populations in relevant decisions? Does its implementation provide such populations with resources to benefit from each sector's objectives?
- *Food security:* How do the plan's agricultural and resiliency strategies impact local food systems?

EVALUATION

Criteria potentially applicable to all sectors of a Climate Action Plan

3. Feasibility—Near and Long-Term

- *Costs*: What is the approximate cost for the plan's main goals? Do such expenses impact local communities or municipalities? Are these shared or subsidized costs? Can such costs be minimized with public-private partnerships?
- *System change*: Does the plan require changes in County programs, policies, or ordinances in order to achieve critical targets or goals?
- *Funding*: Is available financial backing (e.g., grants, rebates, financial incentives) adequate for county staffing to implement and maintain a program?

EVALUATION

Criteria potentially applicable to all sectors of a Climate Action Plan

4. Public-Private Partnerships

- *Job Training:* How can the plan identify opportunities to reskill the local workforce for employment in an evolving green economy? Can public-private arrangements enable a more just transition in local employment?
- Overall, how can partnerships with public entities, including companies and community-based organizations leverage their expertise, resources, and networks to implement any programs and policies that the County would not be able to achieve alone.

EVALUATION

Criteria potentially applicable to all sectors of a Climate Action Plan

5. Performance

- *Greenhouse gas emissions:* How do the actions of individual sectors enable progress toward the reduction in GHG emissions and/or sequestration of carbon?
- *Resilience potential:* How do actions of individual plan sectors help to build community resilience?
- *Implementation timelines:* Are performance goals for sector actions a thoughtful, achievable, and stepwise process?
- *Co-Benefits:* What non-primary benefits can be expected from the plan's implementation?
- *Lead County Department:* What County department is assigned lead responsibility for implementing each action?

Financial Mechanisms for Equitable Climate Action

Grants

Pros: Grants do not have to be repaid and enable local governments to be the sole owner and operator of a project.

Cons: Require government capacity to apply and manage; grants typically have strict spending restrictions and burdensome reporting requirements.

Partnerships

Pros: Require little/no upfront funding and can leverage private sector expertise to spark innovation.

Cons: Local government forgoes some agency and its ability to recoup cost savings, capture revenue generation and build community wealth.

Loans and Private Credit

Pros: Loans provide upfront capital and can spread the cost of a project across the useful life of the asset.

Cons: Loans add debt to the balance sheet, require ongoing payback and may have stipulations on how the borrowed capital can be spent.

Bonds

Pros: Bonds enable local governments to borrow large amounts of upfront capital with fixed low-interest rates and long repayment periods.

Cons: Issuing general obligation bonds can be a politically charged process if local government requires voter approval.

Budget

Pros: Government budget funds can be available immediately and can have few restrictions.

Cons: The amount of funding available each year is limited, so large projects could potentially exhaust an agency's entire capital budget for the year.

Fees, Taxes and Revenues

Pros: New or raised taxes and fees can produce stable sources of ongoing revenue that can provide consistency and budget flexibility.

Cons: New or increased taxes and fees require significant political capital and community support to implement; may have equity and affordability concerns.

