

Freeport Priority Climate Action Area

Improve Municipal Operations - Building Efficiency and Electrification, Fleet Electrification

Description: Provide equipment upgrades and building efficiency improvements to priority municipal buildings. Install EV chargers in municipal buildings to support future electrification of the municipal fleet.

Benefits: Equipment upgrades and efficiency improvements can result in lower heating costs in the winter and cooling costs during the summer, saving the town money. Electrifying the municipal fleet will result in lower GHG emissions and less volatile fueling costs.

Equity: Municipal buildings are often used as cooling centers for the community during extreme heat events and warming centers in the winter months, providing safe housing for those that do not have access to A/C or those that have lost heat.

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Create a climate change education, outreach, and engagement program

Description: Launch a campaign that includes webinars, events, and media to teach the community about climate hazards impacting the town now and in the future.

Benefits: Creating an understanding of the ways in which climate change will influence our daily experience can help build support for climate action in the community. Informing the community about possible impacts, and existing resources and solutions that can protect them, is essential to building resilience in a community.

Equity: Historically underrepresented populations most vulnerable to climate change impacts are often left out of or unable to participate in community engagement. Targeting outreach and support to these populations can build resilience by ensuring they can access the resources needed to more easily adapt to climate hazards and impacts.

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Integrate climate considerations into a local emergency management plan

Description: Ensure that the local emergency management plan includes climate considerations and details responses to climate hazards and impacts, including extreme heat, flooding, power outages, etc.

Benefits: A local emergency management plan helps communities prepare for natural disasters, protect vulnerable populations, implement effective emergency recovery efforts, and build resilient communities. Additionally, this document can help the town create a pipeline of projects ready for FEMA funding which are increasingly focused on climate resilience.

Equity: An emergency management plan would help Freeport identify and protect the town's most vulnerable populations, who are disproportionately impacted by climate hazards. It will also provide a central location for information about resources that will support the community during a climate hazard event.

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Share a full-time Sustainability Coordinator with Yarmouth – co-develop a Freeport Climate Action Plan

Description: Work with the Town of Yarmouth to co-develop Climate Action Plans with GPCOG and a new Sustainability Coordinator. The Climate Action Plan would include a GHG inventory and a vulnerability assessment report, and an action plan that prioritizes climate actions based on established targets for emission reduction and climate resilience.

Benefits: Working regionally amplifies impact and developing climate actions alongside a neighboring town strengthens both town Plans. This position creates a single point of contact to lead the town's climate action work instead of adding to existing staff's workload and shows a unified commitment to building climate resilience and reducing emissions.

Equity: A dedicated staff member working on sustainability in the town will expand municipal capacity to support coordination and ensure a focus on the town's most vulnerable populations.

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Protect and conserve green space and trees

Description: Set targets for increasing green space and tree planting to increase shade and water access in public spaces and carbon sequestration.

Benefits: Green space benefits residents' health by improving air quality and reducing the impact of heatwaves on elderly and vulnerable populations.

Equity: Historically, the most vulnerable populations within a community have the least access to open, green space. Low-income communities and communities of color are often overburdened by environmental pollution. Creating an equitable plan to conserve and increase open, green space can improve the resilience of these communities and lessen impact of climate hazards like increased heat.

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Reduce vehicle miles traveled through an increase in public transit use and bike/pedestrian infrastructure

Description: Implement strategies that increase public transit ridership and alternative transportation modes, including bike and walking infrastructure.

Benefits: Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in most communities in Maine. Increased public transit ridership can greatly reduce the amount of GHG emissions and harmful local air pollution. In addition, these strategies improve livability of a town by reducing traffic.

Equity: Provides transportation access to elderly residents who cannot drive, residents without a car, and those living below the poverty line who can't afford the rising costs of fuel.

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Standardize assessment of climate considerations into project evaluation

Description: Develop a project evaluation tool that will identify sustainability benefits and impacts of projects before deciding on capital investments and support the consideration of climate hazards into project development.

Benefits: Understanding the emission impacts and resilience benefits of potential projects as the council and municipal staff are considering investments

Equity: A project screening tool can identify equity concerns and ensure the needs of underserved communities are considered in project investments.