

Community Climate Conversation: Community Input to Belfast's Climate Action Plan on June 14, 2022

Comments from Attendees

For a summary of this event please see: <https://abcdbelfast.omeka.net/items/show/117>.

In addition to the group discussion summarized in the website link above, participants also submitted the following written ideas and thoughts (on index cards; and via Google form for those on Zoom):

We here in Belfast live in one of the better parts of the U.S. The climate is moderate and so far our precipitation and recharge is sufficient to sustain us. Some parts of the country are not so fortunate. People from less fortunate places may move here. We need to be ready for growth.

A future with:

- Restored aquatic ecological systems: Rivers, bay, wetlands, streams - plus a thriving fishing community
- Old growth forests sequestering CO2
- Trains & trolleys
- City surrounded by local farms

Would like to see K-12 educational (i.e. public education) curricular framework that is skills-based and predictive of climate-based challenges.

Equitable distribution of the "dividends" of moving towards renewables-based energy (e.g. funding for training or re-training for a renewables-based energy sector), or in terms of subsidies for those who by socioeconomic status/resources (a la Efficiency Maine, but more sensitive to the disadvantaged).

Zoning and building ordinances that go beyond "industry standard" to advantage climate-sensitive construction practices. And "dividend" (e.g. in fee reduction) to those adopting climate-conscious technologies in construction. (e.g. use of "green concrete," better insulation profiles, or lessen soil-permeability.)

The end of the Nordic Fish Factory in Belfast & back in Norway. Encourage businesses that don't destroy the environment by destroying wild habitat, increasing traffic, noise & light pollution & dumping their waste in the ocean.

Land use: Using unconventional spaces like roofs to put plants, energy producing processes, & spaces for humans to be. These can be used as major garden spaces, socializing spaces, or energy producing.

Traffic circles!

Integrating food waste back into the soil to increase carbon sequestration.

Reduce the use of plastic.

Companies take responsibility for amount of packaging & carbon footprint.

Cleaner cars, trucks, airplanes, trains, buses!

Education - Reach Belfast Area:

a) Bi-weekly articles in Republican Journal / Free Press

b) Outreach - various venues (and track progress):

- Heat Pumps

- Solar

- Insulation

- *with financing options that may be available such that new installation is spread over months at same rate (or less) paid now for utilities.

c) Grants for energy audits - Belfast area homes - lottery to receive.

Using Intelligence to create infrastructure that is cost effective, environmentally conscious, and implemented all throughout society.

Creating an environment around a net-zero (impact cars, facilities, and making a low impact on the daily livings of farmers, miners, etc.)

Transportation: Redesigning city vehicles to adapt solar panels into roofs. Redesigning bus system like a city to support the people who don't want to walk or to use cars less.

This would also help with transportation emissions because of the redesigned solar panel buses.

Land Use:

Assessment and mindful choice as a community around limiting impermeable and permeable but non-living surfaces, and preserving plus increasing live plant/tree surfaces.

Community Outreach:

Education using a temperature camera (can't think of right name).

Yard tours & farm tours to showcase:

- the cooling and climate-regulating power of "foliage height diversity" (FHD), which correlates closely to biodiversity;
- undisturbed soil hydrology;
- permeable solutions to modern landscape needs;
- live green roofs (do we have any in town?); etc.
- climate-resilient & climate-enhancing food production.

Enlist schools? Students? to replicate Barron-Gafford et al on "Photovoltaic Heat Island Effect" for our region, to assess benefits/risks of the solar arrays our state is so quickly subsidizing the installation of. (Barron-Gafford put 3 thermometers 2.5 meters off the ground, in the middle of a commercial solar array, a parking lot, and wild land, all within one sq. kilometer. They (I think) took midday and midnight temperatures for 1 year to compare.)

Metrics should encompass more than just reduced GHG emissions.

Social metrics (socioeconomic) - Who is creating and how?

- Miles driven
- Heat pumps installed
- Solar panels installed
- Percent of population that supports climate action
- Percent of impermeable surfaces.

Safe & healthy community that operates in balance with natural systems & individuals

Municipal & businesses that routinely incorporate consideration of nature in discussion & project designs.

I think humans are often motivated by self-interest. It is only a few folks who are dedicated to a larger vision. Most of us have limited income and energy and also a limited time line, so we want to know 'what's in it for me?' Yes, better world, but what is in it for me? I am not cynical. I just think this is how people work. So---free electric bus that goes every hour out to Reny's and Hannafords and around to MD offices---what's in it for me is convenience and thrift and easy access as well as less pollution. Subsidies for heat pumps. What's in it for me? Less pollution but also lower energy bills. I think this is one way to get people's attention and also participation.

I have no understanding how we can ignore an industry that will increase Belfast's carbon footprint by 5-7 times. There is no question that industry has to get on board to mitigate the climate crisis. We have the opportunity to say no to an industry that is nowhere close to being sustainable and is designed to grow a luxury item for people in Boston and New York. How can the climate crisis committee not address this 500 lb gorilla in our midst??

Rapid transition to a green energy future--widespread electrification of energy, transport, and industrial systems. Accurate accounting of GHG balance of energy production from biomass and other sources. Infrastructure and lifestyles are energy efficient--and not just for those who are economically advantaged. Fair pricing of electricity, which we do not have now. Maintain healthy ecosystems so that we retain or improve the carbon sink in natural and managed vegetation and on agricultural lands. local food and sourcing of other products as much as feasible.

Climate change is a complex issue, both in terms of the remediation of existing problems and preventing future issues. I am interested in the process that the Climate Crisis Committee and City Council will use to arrive at local priorities and a feasible, impactful action plan. Research is needed to define the scope of problems (and their urgency), identify potential strategies, assess levels of responsibility (govt, private sector, community) and calculate comparative cost-benefits. This process needs to be thought through early on and gain the formal endorsement of the City Council.



Community Climate Conversations are co-sponsored by All of Belfast Climate Dialogues (ABCD), a project of the Belfast Free Library, and the City of Belfast Climate Crisis Committee. **Learn more:** www.belfastlibrary.org/abcd-events

