

Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap

ADVISORY PANEL CHARTER

1. Purpose

[Act 183](#) of 2022 directs the Commissioner of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (the Commissioner) to convene an advisory panel to review and counsel in the development and implementation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap.

2. Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities

2.1 Advisory panel structure

The advisory panel consists of representatives from stakeholder groups specifically identified in Act 183, and other representatives as appropriate, to be selected by the Commissioner. The panel shall be coordinated by the Commissioner or his designees as chair and assisted by support staff from the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

The advisory panel work will begin upon final selection of representatives by the Commissioner (expected August 2022). An orientation for all panel members will be held prior to or at the first panel meeting. The advisory panel work will conclude after submission of the final report and recommendations to the General Assembly on or before January 1, 2024.

2.2 Selection of advisory panel members

Advisory panel members are selected and appointed by the Commissioner. Prospective members shall indicate interest in appointment to the panel by electronically submitting the [Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap Advisory Panel Interest Form](#).

The Commissioner seeks a diverse and comprehensive representation of stakeholders and will consider the ability of prospective members to represent the varied populations within their stakeholder group. In some cases, the Commissioner may appoint multiple members of a stakeholder group to recognize unique and varied populations within the group. The Commissioner may also consider the availability of a prospective member to attend all advisory panel meetings, sufficiently prepare for advisory panel meetings, and contribute to the work of the advisory panel.

2.3 Advisory panel roles

The advisory panel consists of representatives for statutory stakeholder groups and representatives for other appropriate partners or stakeholder groups as determined by the Commissioner. The advisory panel chair (Commissioner or designee) coordinates

and leads panel meetings and discussions. The advisory panel support staff provide administrative and technical assistance to the panel and chair.

2.3.1 *Statutory stakeholder groups*

The following stakeholder groups shall be represented on the advisory panel by at least one member:

- a. Forest products enterprises
- b. State agencies
- c. Investors
- d. Forestland owners
- e. Foresters
- f. Loggers
- g. Truckers
- h. Wood products manufacturers
- i. Recreation specialists
- j. Education representatives
- k. Trade organizations

2.4 Responsibilities of advisory panel members

Advisory panel members should expect to spend sufficient time in advance of scheduled meetings to thoroughly read any materials provided to facilitate discussion and effective collaboration. After review and consideration, the advisory panel shall develop advice for the Commissioner to consider during the decision-making process.

All advisory panel members are expected to represent the positions and needs unique to their represented stakeholder group at large which may or may not align with the members' individual beliefs. Advisory panel members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, constructive, and collaborative manner.

Advisory panel members may be removed and replaced at the discretion of the Commissioner, including for lack of attendance or for willful and/or severe misconduct violating the group agreement expectations.

3. Key Dates and Workplan

3.1 Development and implementation

The selected contractor will provide a detailed timeline and workplan containing specific advisory panel tasks to be completed during the development and public stakeholder process. The advisory panel tasks will support the Commissioner and/or selected contractor in achieving the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap goals and intended outcomes (Section 4). In addition to reviewing draft and final recommendations and documents, examples of potential advisory panel tasks include

identifying potential stakeholders, facilitating outreach to potential stakeholders, and promoting the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap process.

The implementation timeline is established in Act 183.

3.1.1 *Implementation timeline*

TASK	COMPLETION DATE
Draft recommendations due to General Assembly	July 1, 2023
Final recommendations due to General Assembly	January 1, 2024
Final report due to General Assembly	January 1, 2024

3.2 Meetings

It is expected that the advisory panel will meet at least quarterly, beginning in August 2022 and ending in December 2023 (approximately 6 meetings). The exact number of meetings will be based on workload and final timelines. Advisory panel members should expect to participate in a combination of in-person, virtual, and/or hybrid meeting formats. Meetings will occur during standard business hours (Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm) unless a different time is agreed to by all advisory panel members, the chair, and support staff.

4. **Goals and Intended Outcomes**

4.1 Goals

The advisory panel may be asked to review and counsel on the process and work undertaken by the Commissioner and/or selected contractor to meet the content requirements of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap identified in Act 183 or other objectives as identified in the workplan.

4.1.1 *Content requirements identified in Act 183*

a. Reports

- i. identify any previous recommendations contained in existing data, plans, and industry-level research completed over the past 10 years
- ii. identify infrastructure investment and funding to support and promote forest products enterprises
- iii. identify regulatory barriers affecting the forest economy
- iv. identify opportunities for all State agencies to engage with and enhance the forest products sector
- v. identify methods or programs that forest enterprises can utilize to access business assistance services

- b. Recommendations
 - i. develop recommendations to support education and training of the current and future forest products sector workforce
 - ii. develop recommendations on how to maintain access by forest products enterprises to forestland and how to maintain the stewardship and conservation of Vermont forests as a whole
 - iii. recommend consumer education and marketing initiatives
 - iv. recommend how to clarify the roles of various public entities and nongovernmental organizations that provide certain services to the forestry sector and to ensure coordination and alignment of those functions in order to advance and maximize the strength of the forest products industry
- c. Proposals
 - i. propose policy recommendations to support and strength the forest economy
 - ii. propose alternatives for the modernization of transportation and regulation of forest products enterprises, including modernization of local and State permits
 - iii. propose methods to enhance market development and manufacturing by forest products enterprises, including value chain coordination and regional partnerships

4.2 Intended outcomes

The advisory panel may be asked to periodically review and provide feedback on the likelihood of the process and development of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap to meet the intended outcomes identified in Act 183, or other outcomes as identified in the workplan, if the recommendations and proposals in the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap were accepted and acted upon by the General Assembly or other responsible organization.

4.2.1 *Intended outcomes identified in Act 183*

- a. increase sustainable economic development and jobs in Vermont's forest economy
- b. promote ways to expand the workforce and strengthen forest products enterprises in order to strengthen, modernize, promote, and protect the Vermont forest economy into the future
- c. promote the importance of healthy, resilient, and sustainably managed working forests that provide a diverse array of high-quality products now and in the future

- d. identify actionable strategies designed to strengthen, modernize, promote, and protect the forest products sector in Vermont, including opportunities for new product development, opening new markets for Vermont forest products, adopting modern manufacturing processes, and utilizing new ways to market Vermont forest products

5. Communication and Decision-making Process

5.1 Advisory panel communication

The advisory panel is expected to use a consensus model for developing advice to the Commissioner. Consensus shall consist of a simple majority of members agreeing with the proposal and no members finding the proposed advice unacceptable. At the discretion of the chair, minority proposals may be included as further information in the advice provided to the Commissioner. If consensus cannot be reached, all opinions may be submitted to the Commissioner for consideration.

5.2 Decision-making process for recommendations and report content

All decisions determining the selection of recommendations and report contents during both the development and implementation of the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap shall be made by the Commissioner. The Commissioner will consider the advice of the advisory panel and results of the public stakeholder process during decision-making.

6. Group Agreement and Conflict Resolution

6.1 Group agreement

The advisory panel will develop a group agreement establishing guidelines for member conduct and expectations for participation. All advisory panel members will agree to follow the group agreement during meetings and discussions relating to the work of the advisory panel.

6.2 Conflict resolution

Any member of the advisory panel, support staff, or selected contractor shall notify the Commissioner of concerns or conflicts that impede the ability of the member, staff, or contractor to participate in and/or engage with the advisory panel. All members, support staff, and the selected contractor are expected to pursue resolution of a concern or conflict in good faith.

7. Compensation

Upon request, members are entitled to receive mileage reimbursement compensation at the current State mileage reimbursement rate.