

Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap
Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2023
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM (Zoom)

Panel Members Present:

Chris Castano, Allan Thompson, Betsy Lesnikoski, Ed Larson, Jamey Fidel, Luke McNally, Abby Long, Scott Duffy, Joe Short, Liz Gleason, Molly Willard, Charlie Hancock, David Lane, Tom Beck

Panel Members Absent:

Chris Brooks, Chris Fife, Chris Lindgren, Trevor Allard, Steve Hardy, Stanley Robinson, Tucker Riggs, Gabe Russo

Staff Present:

Christine McGowan (VSJF), Katharine Servidio (FPR), Danny Fitzko (FPR)

Guests/Members of the Public:

David Beurle (Future iQ), Celine Beurle (Future iQ), Brittany Rempe (Future iQ)

I. Welcome and Updates

- Danny welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Tom Beck, who is replacing Chief Don Stevens on the Advisory Panel.
- The March 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

II. Project overview and update on Stakeholder Survey #2

- David B. briefly spoke about the stakeholder engagement process so far and highlighted the recent 15+ engagement sessions held to identify the preferred future. The survey received around 200 responses and Scenario B has consistently been identified as the preferred future.

III. Strategic Pillars and Recommendations

- David B. provided an overview of the draft Strategic Pillars, introduced the Strategic Themes for each pillar, and asked for initial feedback from the Advisory Panel.
- Overall, the sense is that the Strategic Pillars are on the correct track and well-defined. The Strategic Themes may need more input through a survey that will be sent out to Advisory Panel members and further refined at the June in-person meeting. Multiple comments were made around the desire for more specific details, the prioritization of the recommendations, and the need for both short-term actions and longer-term strategies. Other comments included:
 - Ed identified some areas for further development/discussion and asked to have those discussions before the draft report if it will be based on this work.

- Joe expressed concern that we still have a long way to go - thematically it all makes sense but the question of how and by whom remains for all the themes.
- Charlie suggested identifying where we are recommending something new and where there is already a related program or initiative in place.
- Molly suggested explaining in each Strategic Theme how those actions support and promote forest businesses, loggers, landowners, foresters, etc.
- Abby would like to see more about outdoor recreation in the Connect the Dots theme.
- Jamey suggested that the June meeting include a discussion of the organization of the Draft Recommendations report and the structure of the recommendations. It would be good to have some solid ready-to-go recommendations in addition to more broad recommendations that will need more work.
- Betsy highlighted the need to support the recommendations with detailed information to the legislature.
- Luke voiced appreciation for the mention of the plastic-based economy and identified that we have room to tell the story about using forest products to build and heat our homes. That type of storytelling is engaging and will resonate with the public.
- Liz mentioned her work with Farm-to-Plate and pointed out that what works so well in that model is the accessible nature of the plan – while the initial audience is the legislature, the plan is written for a wide audience with diverse perspectives.

IV. Next Meeting

- June 7, 2023, in-person meeting. The location is TBD but will probably be at VTC again.

V. Other Announcements and Public Comments

- There were no other announcements or members of the public present to provide public comment.