



**COMMUNITY CLIMATE**  
COLLABORATIVE

# C3's Policy Recommendations for Municipal Planning

Charlottesville, VA | October 2020

Climate touches every aspect of our community — our health, our food, our economic well-being, and the affordability of our homes and businesses. C3 asks Charlottesville City Council to adopt a resolution to develop Charlottesville's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans with a *climate lens* that serves as a guide for the prioritization of intersectional solutions.



# Background

## Climate Leadership and the Importance of Intersectional Solutions

Charlottesville's City Council has set community-wide [climate goals](#) of a 45% reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. The City Council has also expressed its intention to equitably address climate change in its Climate Action Plan. Climate solutions exist that can help the City meet multiple goals at once, such as increasing housing affordability and reducing GHG emissions. For example, skillfully-crafted equitable housing policies can alleviate household energy burden by reducing energy expenditures and, thereby, increase housing affordability while lowering GHG emissions. However, the potential equity benefits of climate programs and the potential climate benefits of other policies (such as housing, transportation, zoning, etc.) are not an inevitable outcome of them and must be intentionally designed by City staff and decision-makers.

C3 believes that if reducing GHG emissions and improving climate justice, energy equity, and transportation equity are not considered in Charlottesville's long-range blueprint for the future, the City's ability to invest in intersectional policies that could help it simultaneously advance multiple goals will be hindered.

## Overview

### Comprehensive and Strategic Planning Processes

Comprehensive Plans are documents designed to guide forthcoming actions of a community by presenting a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affect the local government. This includes guidance on how to make decisions on the expenditure of public funds, cooperative efforts and issues of pressing concern.

Strategic Plans provide a framework that ensures that the priorities set by the City Council are clear to all city staff, that goals are laid out that respond to priorities, that objectives are achieved that meet the goals, and that the City government is accountable for meeting community needs. Like Comprehensive Plans, Strategic Plans serves as a tool to guide program expenditures and work in concert with the City's more long-range blueprint for the future- the Comprehensive Plan.

Both the Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan, two important compasses for future decision making, are only developed every 4 to 5 years and are currently being elaborated. This pressing topic for local advocacy offers a great opportunity to ensure that topics of importance for Charlottesville are not worked in silo and that intersectional solutions that can benefit multiple goals at once receive a higher priority in future policy developments.



## Climate Leadership and the Importance of Intersectional Solutions

In recent years, climate solutions in Charlottesville have mostly been associated with the [City's value](#) of being "A Green City" and [Strategic Plan's Goal](#) of providing "A Beautiful and Sustainable Natural and Built Environment". C3 believes that, in order to benefit from all the potential synergies associated with climate solutions, the City should use a *climate lens* when trying to achieve its values and goals.

For instance, under the existing City's Values and Strategic Plan's Goals and Objectives clear synergies with climate solutions could be found for better advancing the following values, goals and objectives:

- City Value 1: "*Economic Sustainability*";
- City Value 3: "*Quality Housing Opportunities for All*";
- City Value 5: "*A Green City*"; and
- City Value 6: "*America's Healthiest City*".
- Strategic Goal 1: "*Inclusive, Self-sufficient Community*":
  - Objective 1.3: "*Increase affordable housing options*".
  - Objective 1.4: "*Enhance the Financial Health of Residents*"; and
  - Objective 1.5: "*Intentionally Address Issues of Race and Equity*".
- Strategic Goal 3: "*Beautiful and Sustainable Natural and Built Environment*":
  - Objective 3.1: "*Engage in Robust and Context Sensitive Urban Planning and Implementation*";
  - Objective 3.3: "*Provide a variety of transportation and mobility options*";
  - Objective 3.4: "*Be responsible stewards of natural resources*".

## Call to Action

C3 urges the Charlottesville City Council to adopt a resolution to ensure that: the City's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan are developed with a *climate lens* that serves as a guide for the prioritization of intersectional solutions that promote climate solutions in an effective and equitable manner. The resolution should establish the following key topics as part of the review criteria when considering adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan and as a guide for target setting of relevant City's Departments:

- Energy Equity:
  - Narrow the [gap that exists for renters, lower-income households, and people of color](#) trying to access energy efficiency or solar energy investments.
  - Increase energy and housing affordability for those that most need it.
- Transportation Equity:
  - Provide accessible, affordable, and reliable public transportation to residents of communities of color and lower income households that must travel to obtain better jobs, secure educational opportunities and get quality health care.



- Recently passed [HB585](#) requires Charlottesville to consider "*comprehensive plan strategies to promote transit-oriented development for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated transportation, housing, and land use planning.*"
- Food Equity:
  - All people should have the [ability and opportunity](#) to grow and/or access healthful, affordable, and culturally significant foods.
- Healthy and Sustainable Community:
  - Charlottesville will more easily live its value of becoming America's Healthiest City by increasing access to: (i) more comfortable and energy-efficient homes; (ii) better public-transportation systems; and (iii) healthful, affordable, and culturally-significant foods.
- Economically Competitive and Sustainable Community:
  - Local and inclusive investment in green infrastructure [builds economic opportunity, lifts people out of poverty, and increases the offer of local green jobs.](#)
  - [Transit expenditures tend to provide more jobs](#) and local business activity than most other transportation investments
  - [Investment in transit](#) can yield 50 jobs per \$1 million invested, and offers a \$5 economic return per \$1 invested. [Business sales increase by \\$3](#) per \$1 invested.
  - If every low-income household in Charlottesville reduced their energy bill by 10%, nearly \$ 1,000,000/year would be freed up that could be spent locally.
  - Energy efficiency reduces running costs for businesses, making them more competitive, sustainable, and more likely to be successful.
  - Green businesses are more attractive to locally and countrywide increasingly climate-aware consumers.

## How to act

**Charlottesville must plan for climate!** Add your voice by endorsing [C3's Letter to Charlottesville City Council on Strategic and Comprehensive Planning](#).

In addition, [provide your feedback to Charlottesville City Council's next Strategic Plan](#). Public comments can also be received via [email](#) or at City Council's virtual meetings.

- **Strategic Plan Meeting Schedule** (public comment at beginning and end of meeting):
  - [Nov 20, Work Session #2, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.](#)
  - [Dec 15, Work Session #3, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.](#)

Add your voice! Your climate action is critical to Charlottesville's Climate Leadership!