

Maine Climate Council Action Plan  
**FAQ**

**What does historic preservation have to do with Maine's Climate Action Plan?**

First some statistics:

- Buildings and their construction together account for 39 percent of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions annually.
- Transportation accounts for about 29 percent of annual carbon emissions in the United States, according to the EPA.

Many historic buildings in Greater Portland are found in walkable neighborhoods close to public transportation, municipal resources, green spaces, and commercial centers. While data shows that 56% of Maine's homes were built before 1980 and rely on fuel oil for heating, many historic buildings constructed before 1940 were built without fossil fuels and can survive in a world without them. These historic structures and neighborhoods are a model for land use and building design in the next century.

In addition, climate change is already impacting historic buildings and communities in Maine. Greater Portland Landmarks has a long tradition of helping owners adapt and conserve their buildings and building materials. Helping owners make their buildings more resilient to the effects of climate change is a natural extension of our ongoing preservation services.

**Where can I learn more about Maine's Climate Action Planning?**

[www.climatecouncil.maine.gov](http://www.climatecouncil.maine.gov)

**How can historic buildings help to reduce carbon emissions?**

Maine does not have the time or resources to replace our existing building stock. Therefore, re-use matters. A building that is renovated or repurposed, rather than replaced, produces about half the greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime when compared to tearing that building down and replacing it. In addition, reusing building materials is recycling on a large scale. Many well-maintained historic materials will have a longer life span than new replacement building materials and will therefore reduce the energy needed to produce and transport those materials.

**What can I do to make my home more energy efficient?**

Buildings built before our over-reliance on fossil fuels are often oriented and built to take advantage of passive opportunities for daylighting and solar gain as well as orientation to the prevailing winds for cooling breezes in summer. Optimize your historic home's passive features! You can also download a copy of our publication, *The Energy Efficient Old House* <https://www.portlandlandmarks.org/shop/the-energy-efficient-old-house>

**What can I do to make my home more resilient to the impacts of climate change?**

Greater Portland Landmarks is working to document resources at risk, educate potentially impacted communities and property owners on best practices in hazard mitigation for historic resources, and assist with local efforts to increase the region's resiliency to climate change. This fall we will launch our new building owner guide, so stay tuned!

<https://www.maine.gov/mhpc/programs/protection-and-community-resources/climate-change>