



July 2021

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Friend,

The Climate Leadership Newsletter features stories of environmental and climate action in Massachusetts. It provides a platform to highlight work being done by municipalities, climate leaders, and local groups in communities across the Commonwealth. To share local climate actions in your community, email [Emma Brown](#).

Clean Energy and Climate

Brookline Incentivizes Fossil Fuel-Free Buildings



In June, the Town of Brookline once again passed two warrant articles aimed to reduce fossil fuel installation in new buildings. Rather than an outright ban, such as the one [passed at Town Meeting in 2019](#), which was then turned down by the Attorney General's Office, these warrants require that people applying for special construction permits agree to go fossil-free in exchange for permit approval. The ordinances are aimed at helping the state meet its climate emissions goals—buildings account for 27% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The Attorney General's Municipal Law Unit will review Brookline's new ordinances before they go into effect. The office has 90 days for review, which can be extended to six months. Should the ordinances pass the AGO's review, municipalities across the state may follow Brookline's suit in passing similar ordinances.

DOE's 2021 Resource Guide Now Available

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

FOR STATE & LOCAL LEADERS

"Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Resources for State and Local Leaders " provides an overview of new and high-impact energy efficiency and renewable energy resources for states, local governments, and K–12 school districts. The resource guide also spotlights partnership opportunities and resources for public sector stakeholders from across the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). [Download the 2021 Resource Guide.](#)

MAPC Awards \$400,000 in 'Accelerating Climate Resiliency' Grants to 12 Boston-Area Projects



Twelve Boston-area municipalities have been awarded a total of \$400,000 in grants to work advancing local climate change resiliency. "Accelerating Climate Resiliency" funding is in partnership between The Barr Foundation and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in Boston. Individual grants range in size from \$12,000 to \$50,000 per project and are designed to drive long-term transformative change by

investing in impactful, short-term local projects. This is the third round of funding for the program, and the projects range from a building retrofit campaign for energy efficiency, to addressing food insecurity, to a public art series. [Read more about the projects and program on MAPC's website.](#)

Clean Transportation

PVTA to Debut Electric Buses with New Northampton-Springfield Express Route



Expected to begin in July 2021, the Pioneer Valley will get a new express bus connecting Northampton, the Holyoke Mall, and downtown Springfield. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) recently received a \$487,000 grant from MassDOT to pilot the new express route.

The pilot would provide hourly bus service between Northampton, the Holyoke Mall, and Union Station in downtown Springfield from 7am to 8pm on weekdays and Saturdays. Buses between Holyoke Mall and Union Station would run every thirty minutes.

The agency plans to use electric buses for the new service, which the PVTA began on their P21E route back in 2017, which is an express between Springfield Union Station and downtown Holyoke, with a charging station located at the PVTA's Springfield Union Station bus terminal.

Boston Plans to Launch E-Cargo Bike Delivery Pilot in 2022



The City of Boston has begun developing a plan to potentially launch an e-cargo bike delivery pilot program set to start in the Spring of 2022. This pilot program comes in an effort to reduce congestion and air pollution on downtown streets.

In August of 2020, the city issued a “request for information” from potential vendors and delivery companies to understand the role they could potentially play in Boston’s delivery systems. The city then sent out an advertisement expressing that “Parcel delivery services must be reconstructed to support our goal of carbon neutrality, get goods to our residents in a more efficient manner, and optimize the use of our curb space.” The advertisement was targeted to delivery companies, but the lack of interest from delivery companies likely comes from a lack of financial or political incentives.

The city is now aiming to change those financial and political incentives to make them more favorable to bike deliveries. In March 2021, the city published a “post solicitation report”, which stated “The City of Boston, through the Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge, has contracted with Nelson/Nygaard to design and potentially launch an e-cargo bike delivery pilot program. Over the next few months the City will work to identify the potential regulatory, administrative, and operational challenges to e-cargo bike delivery within the City of Boston, and establish a strategy to address those challenges.”

The city is looking into different e-cargo delivery methods, and having conversations with city leaders and other stakeholders to determine which model would best support the city’s mobility, safety, and climate goals.

Toxics and Pollution

State Officials Revoke Permit for Controversial Biomass Plant in Springfield, MA



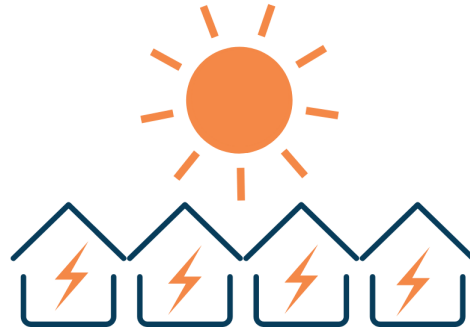
After nearly a decade of protest, the plans to create a biomass plant in Springfield have been brought to an end. Advocates working to stop the development of the biomass plant made strong arguments regarding the wood-burning power plant, stating that the plant would pollute the city and negatively contribute to climate change. The plant was expected to burn one ton of wood a minute and emit large amounts of fine particulate matter, as well as other harmful pollutants. Environmental regulators said the decision came from “heightened focus on environmental and health impacts on environmental justice populations from sources of pollution”, especially since Springfield, MA is known to have one of the highest rates of asthma.

With the climate bill Governor Baker signed in March of 2021, The Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, it is unlikely the developer of the plant would be able to find another way to build it.

Starting in 2019, the Baker administration began trying to diversify the energy forms the state was using, to encourage diversion from fossil fuels. The Baker administration considered altering rules to indicate woody biomass as a source of renewable energy. Environmental advocates oppose the rule changes for biomass, stating that it would increase carbon emissions, create more pollution in the form of soot, and lead to greater deforestation.

Grants and Webinars

MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge



MetroWest

Solar + Clean Heat Challenge

Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, and Natick are [collaborating to provide residents with discounts](#) on clean energy technologies. The [MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge](#) program offers no-cost clean energy audits as well as discounts on solar panels, air-source heat pumps, and ground-source heat pumps to homeowners and small business owners. The program is the result of collaborations between municipal staff and local volunteers.

The campaign will also include informative sessions such as webinars, “Meet the Installer events”, and booths at local farmers markets so residents can learn about the benefits of clean energy technologies from the installers. The chosen installers are Ace Solar, New England Ductless, and Achieve Renewable Energy, and all of the companies are based in Massachusetts.

The program will run from June – December 2021. For more information, visit [MetroWestCleanEnergy.com](https://www.metrowestcleanenergy.com).

MassCEC’s Accelerating Clean Transportation for All (ACT4All) Program



MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN ENERGY CENTER

MassCEC seeks applications under the [Accelerating Clean Transportation for All](#) (“ACT4All”) Program that pilot innovative, broadly replicable clean transportation adoption and deployment program models that further the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ climate and equity goals. ACT4All aims to address inequities in the clean transportation sector by seeking applications that explicitly increase access to clean transportation technologies and modalities and decrease health impacts and related burdens from the existing transportation system. Under ACT4All, MassCEC seeks to fund projects that will pilot or demonstrate innovative business and/or

incentive models to meet these twin goals of increasing access and reducing burden, as well as funding projects which broaden the market for clean transportation technologies through consumer education and awareness. MassCEC is making awards ranging from \$100,000 - \$500,000 to successful applicant teams.

An [informational webinar](#) will be held on July 15 at 2:00pm ET, office hours will be held throughout July and August, and applications are due by 4:00pm ET on September 7. [Learn more and apply here.](#)

Greentown Labs Announces the Healthy Buildings Challenge



[Greentown Labs](#), [Saint-Gobain](#), and the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#) (MassCEC) have announced the Greentown Launch [Healthy Buildings Challenge](#), seeking applications from startups with buildings-related technologies that optimize for the health of people and the climate, together. The Healthy Buildings Challenge is interested in solutions within building materials, coatings, and envelope systems, as well as digital platforms, monitoring, and supplemental technologies that advance building sustainability and wellbeing for building occupants. Startups with solutions at the prototype stage or beyond are encouraged to apply.

Accepted startups will benefit from mentorship, networking opportunities, educational workshops, and partnership-focused programming to support their collaborations. Participants will also receive desk space and membership at Greentown Labs for the duration of the program and \$25,000 in non-dilutive grant funding. Applications for the Healthy Buildings Challenge are due by August 25 at 11:59 p.m. ET. [Learn more here.](#)

MassEnergyInsight User Trainings Scheduled

DOER and the MEI Team will be offering training sessions for new and experienced users of MassEnergyInsight, the free online energy benchmarking and tracking tool available to all municipalities, water/wastewater districts, and regional school districts.

The training will be offered online and will be divided into three sessions. Sign up for

one or all three.

1) July 22, 10:30 AM -12:15 PM: **Understanding & Setting Up MEI**

[Register here](#)

2) July 29, 10:30 AM -12:15 PM: **Entering Data & Keeping Your City/Town up to Date**

[Register here](#)

3) August 5, 10:30 AM -12:15 PM: **Basic Reports**

[Register here](#)

Visit www.MassEnergyInsight.net for more information.

Resources and Reading List

- [As new Green Community, Hopedale seeks energy upgrades saving \\$31K annually](#) (MetroWest Daily News)
- [At Long Last, DCR Releases Master Plan for Safer Parkways](#) (StreetsBlog Mass)
- [For the Great Marsh, a restoration project grows greater still](#) (Boston Globe)
- [MBTA Will Paint 4.8 Miles of New Bus Lanes This Summer](#) (StreetsBlog Mass)
- [Mayflower Wind plans connection point in Somerset at Brayton Point](#) (The Herald News)
- [A Daily Ray of Hope](#). The Sierra Club has been offering a “Daily Ray of Hope” email for years, and we could all use a bit of that right now. Subscribers get a beautiful picture from the natural world along with some words of wisdom every morning. [Sign up today and bring some joy to your inbox.](#)

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Corrin Moss and Aileen McDonald contributed to this newsletter.



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