



November 2019

## CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

### NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Veena,

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 [Veena Dharmaraj](mailto:Veena.Dharmaraj@sierraclub.org).

## Clean Energy and Climate

Window to Vote on 2021 IECC Updates Open till Dec 6<sup>th</sup>



The voting window for the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) for registered municipal officials is open now through Dec. 6th. For more information on steps to log into your account and vote on the proposals, [watch this helpful tutorial guide](#) developed by our partners at Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN). Voting is quick and easy, and voting on all proposals can be completed in

less than an hour.

For those with limited time, the [‘Massachusetts Top Priority Voting Guide’](#) includes the top 45 recommendations of our national technical partners at the Energy Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC) and adds eight additional proposals that will help Massachusetts improve efficiency, lower energy costs, and make progress towards our climate goals. Voting on these top priority proposals can be completed in 20 minutes.

For those who have a little more time, the [Energy Efficient Codes Coalition's \(EECC\) Top Priority Voting Guide](#) highlights around 90 key proposals with the biggest impact. If you would like to dig deeper and vote on all proposals, you can access EECC's comprehensive voting recommendations for [residential proposals here](#) and [commercial proposals here](#). Reach out to [Veena Dharmaraj](#) if you have questions.

## Brookline Bans Gas Connections for New Buildings



Brookline has voted to [ban the installation of fossil fuel piping](#) (Article 21) in new construction and in major renovations of existing buildings. This would require heat, hot water, and appliances that are installed during new construction and gut renovation to be all-electric. Through this bylaw, Brookline hopes to reduce emissions from the building sector, which accounts for two-thirds of all emissions in the town. The bylaw, which will help Brookline reach its 2050 carbon neutral goal, needs to be approved by the Attorney General's office. It exempts gas piping for backup electric generators, propane for outdoor heating and cooking, and lines for gas meters and places where commercial cooking is done.

## Cambridge Announces Building Energy Retrofit Program



The City of Cambridge, in partnership with Eversource, has launched the [Cambridge Building Energy Retrofit Program](#) to help building owners and facility managers access resources they need to make energy efficiency upgrades to reduce their energy use and cut their carbon footprint. Targeted at buildings over 25,000 square feet, the program is aligned with Cambridge's Net Zero Action Plan to reduce building greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

This program will benefit large commercial, institutional, and residential buildings that are subject to the city's [Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance \(BEUDO\)](#) to cut their carbon footprint. Buildings that come under BEUDO are responsible for over 70% of building emissions in Cambridge.

### **Six Communities Receive \$1.73 Million in Grants to Support Energy Efficient Affordable Housing**

Six communities—Cambridge, Gloucester, Hanson, Northampton, Holbrook, and Boston—have been awarded \$1.73 million to support affordable housing developments built to [passive house standards](#). Funded through Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's [Affordable Access for Clean and Efficient Energy \(AACEE\) Program](#), the grant will result in 540 high-efficiency houses and provide energy savings and improved indoor air quality for low-income households, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Multi-family buildings built to [passive house](#) standards generally use 40% less total energy than energy stretch code-compliant buildings. The annual energy use of 8-12 passive house multi-family apartments is roughly equivalent to the average existing single-family suburban home in Massachusetts. These affordable housing projects will use a range of strategies including resiliency features for potential flooding, efficient heat pump heating and cooling technology, improved access to mobility options like bike paths, high levels of insulation and air tightness, generous provision of fresh air with heat recovery for ventilation, and better windows.

## Somerville Expands Renewable Component in Community Choice Energy Program, Worcester Program Launching Soon



Somerville recently expanded the renewable energy component in its Community Choice Energy (CCE) program to 10% beyond the state mandated requirement. In 2020, consumers will have 25% clean electricity powering their homes, with the option to opt in for 100% renewable energy at a slightly higher price. This move was made possible largely due to a May 2019 campaign of Mothers Out Front, which resulted in over 700 Somerville residents signing postcards asking the city to raise the percentage of renewable energy in their electricity. Much of Somerville's renewable energy—solar, wind, small hydro, and anaerobic digestion—comes from the city's partnership with [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#).

Beginning in February 2020, Worcester residents will have the option to purchase energy through the [Worcester Community Choice Electricity Aggregation](#) program. Participating customers will receive an additional 20% renewable electricity from renewable energy projects in New England, over and above the minimum amount required by state law, for a total of 36% renewable electricity in 2020, 38% renewable electricity in 2021, and 40% renewable electricity in 2022.

[Community Choice Energy](#) program allows a city or town to buy energy in bulk for the community, which simultaneously lowers the cost of energy, provides longer term price stability, and allows for more clean and renewable energy choices.

### Mayflower Wind Wins New Offshore Wind Contract

Mayflower Wind Energy won Massachusetts' second offshore wind contract for 804 megawatts of generation capacity. The wind farm will be built 20 miles south of Martha's



Vineyard and is expected to deliver power by the mid-2020s.

With the combined 1,600 MW between Vineyard Wind—who won the first round of contracts—and Mayflower Wind, Massachusetts has now fulfilled its procurement obligation under the [2016 energy diversity law](#). The cumulative project could power more than half a million homes and lower the Commonwealth’s greenhouse gas emissions. Officials have not yet revealed the final price of electricity offered by Mayflower Wind.

## Pollution and Toxics

### Natick Expands Composting Program



When the town of Natick completed its successful food composting pilot many of the original 500 household participants wanted to continue. [Natick Neighbors Compost](#), an all-women’s citizen volunteer group began to research possible food waste haulers and look at pricing. [Black Earth Compost](#) was chosen as the food waste hauler.

During the pilot program 40% of garbage in the town was found to be food waste. Food waste costs less to compost than to pay to incinerate as trash. Since the pilot, the number of households no longer adding their food waste to the garbage stream has grown to over 800 households. Members of the Natick Neighbors Compost team volunteered their time on weekends at community events, including the town’s annual Earth Day festival and farmer’s market, and other venues to spread the word. New signers receive a free curbside composting bin, a roll of compostable food waste bags, and a kitchen counter bin. For more information, contact [Karen Mallozzi](#).

## Micro-Grants Available for Waste Reduction Projects

Competitive grant funding is still available for the 2019 Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection' (MassDEP) [Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant](#). This grant program provides small amounts of funding (up to \$5,000) for eligible municipalities, regional authorities, for-profit, and non-profit organizations for innovative, short term initiatives that promote source reduction, reuse, or repair in Massachusetts. Projects focused on recycling or composting are not eligible for this grant. MassDEP hopes to foster grass-roots activities that benefit the environment and local economy by enhancing the value or extending the lifespan of materials that otherwise would end up in the trash.

To learn more about grant evaluation criteria, timelines, expectations, eligible use of grant funds, and example project ideas read the [grant guidelines](#). For more information contact [Erin Victor, MassDEP](#).

## Clean Transportation

### MBTA Board Unanimously Votes to Electrify Commuter Rail



The MBTA Board voted unanimously to create a new [Commuter Rail Transformation Office](#) within three months to oversee electrification of the system and increase the frequency of service. The resolution calls for pilot programs on three lines—Providence/Stoughton Line, Fairmount Line, and Newburyport/Rockport Lines. Additionally, it calls for service on the Fairmount Line and the "environmental justice" section of the Newburyport Line that connects Boston to Lynn, Revere, Chelsea and Everett to be as frequent and at the same fare level as rapid transit.

The board also approved the creation of a bus transformation office to develop and implement environmental, financial, procurement, operational, and stakeholder engagement strategies to improve the bus network. While it is unclear how the T will pay for these changes or the timeline for implementation, the Board stressed these actionable steps were worth targeting soon to improve commuter experience.

## **North Shore Coalition Releases Transportation Vision**



Officials from 18 urban and rural communities on the North Shore have signed a [joint vision statement](#) to fix the regions' inadequate and underfunded transportation infrastructure. This initiative facilitated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) aims to improve transportation access and positively impact the region's housing and workplace needs.

The vision includes 19 recommendations that municipalities can pursue with neighboring communities to improve transportation in the North Shore. Congestion, failing bridges, and infrequent trains and buses are some of the issues that will be addressed. Improvements will include creating a regional bike share program, municipal green fleets, improved water transportation services, and an electrified and reliable commuter rail service.

Proposed funding options include increasing the state gas tax by 15 cents per gallon to raise an additional \$450 million a year, surcharges on transportation network companies like Lyft and Uber, and more equitable tolling. You can read more about the [coalition's funding principles here](#).

## **New Grant Opportunity Seeks to Catalyze Adoption of Clean Transportation Solutions**



The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) has announced a new grant funding opportunity called [Accelerating Clean Transportation Now \(ACTNow\)](#), that seeks to catalyze the adoption of clean transportation solutions via business and project finance models, user engagement, technology, or other innovative approaches.

Areas of interest include light-duty vehicles, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, mass transit, and an “other” category to include innovative projects such as vehicle-to-grid and time-of-use electric vehicle charging. [Click here for the RFP](#) details. Interested applicants can begin establishing ideas and connections for the grant through [this Slack channel](#). Completed applications are due by March 3, 2020. For more details, reach out to [cleantransportation@masscec.com](mailto:cleantransportation@masscec.com).

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