



May 2022

## CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

### NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Emma,

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](mailto:Emma.Brown).

## Clean Energy and Climate

**Mayor Wu announces plan to prepare Boston for extreme heat**



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu unveiled a new comprehensive, "[Heat Plan](#)", to keep

Bostonians safe from increasingly hot weather in the summer months. Solutions include expanding tree coverage and shade cover, more water bottle filling stations in schoolyards, and green roofs. Many of these solutions also reduce carbon emissions in the city. Climate change and the Heat Island effect are causing dangerously hot weather in dense urban areas such as Chinatown, Dorchester, East Boston, Mattapan, and Roxbury. The Heat island effect is caused by the asphalt and concrete absorbing solar energy and radiating heat. The most effected areas are also previously redlined areas, meaning the hottest weather effects poor residents of color disproportionately.

### **Steamship Authority parking lot in Falmouth will become a solar farm**



Sustainability goals will be met through the collaboration between two Massachusetts groups with the installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility. The collaboration is between NextGrid and the Steamship Authority. These renewable energy installations will be built on Steamship Authority land, the Thomas B. Landers Road parking lot in Falmouth, and are planned to be online by 2024.

The installations will be 5,900 kW for the solar farm and 6,100 kW's for the battery storage facility respectively. Leasing of the land will cost NextGrid about \$8.9 million over 20 years. The Steamship Authority is pursuing net-zero status at its Woods Hole terminal and this will be a major step toward that goal.

### **UMass Amherst sets emissions goal for 2032**



UMass Amherst has announced a plan to reach carbon zero by 2032, nearly a full two decades ahead of the state-wide target of 2050. The plan aims to power the campus with 100% renewable energy, and transition all of its vehicles to electric models. It includes no provisions for carbon offsets.

Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy said UMass Carbon Zero, a project that has been in the works for two years, was inspired by student's commitment to sustainability, and the desire to provide an example to other institutions across the country, and remain a leader in the environmental sector. The university expects to invest nearly \$500 million into accomplishing this goal, drawing the funding from a wide variety of state, federal, and philanthropic sources, as well as university funds.

The plan will begin by retrofitting 40 buildings to demonstrate feasibility, before tackling the remaining 300 structures. Fossil fuel powered electricity production will be replaced by geothermal wells and solar arrays, while steam heating systems will be switched over to low-temperature hot water with geothermal elements. Overall, the plan is expected to reduce operational expenses by 20%.

## **Clean Transportation**

**MassDOT adding solar canopies in New Bedford, Plymouth, Harwich**



The [New Bedford Park and Ride](#), along with locations in Plymouth and Harwich will become the first in the state to feature solar carports. The New Bedford site falls in Eversource territory, which provides better incentives under SMART, the [Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target](#). It has also been recently renovated with a number of new accommodations, and features electric vehicle charging stations, all of which contributed to the decision.

The carports will provide lighting to the lot, power the EV chargers, and will offer users some protection for their vehicles against New England weather. The project is funded in part by the Department of Energy Resources' Lead by Example Program, and represents a collaboration between that agency and the Department of Transportation to decarbonize the transportation sector. Solar carports are an appealing option as they make efficient use of public space to improve its existing function and offer a source of clean energy.

The Park and Ride carports are part of the DOT's ongoing solar initiatives, which in total is estimated to generate three megawatts of power, and save \$7 million over a 20-year period.

### **Mayor Wu's First Budget Proposal Features Bus Lane Projects, Safer Streets, and Transit-Oriented Housing**



Mayor Wu's administration has made their first 2023 municipal budget pitches. Wu described the proposed pitches as an "unprecedented investment because this is an unprecedented moment." The pitches have set a \$3.6 billion capital budget which funds major construction projects, a third of which are city street and sidewalk projects.

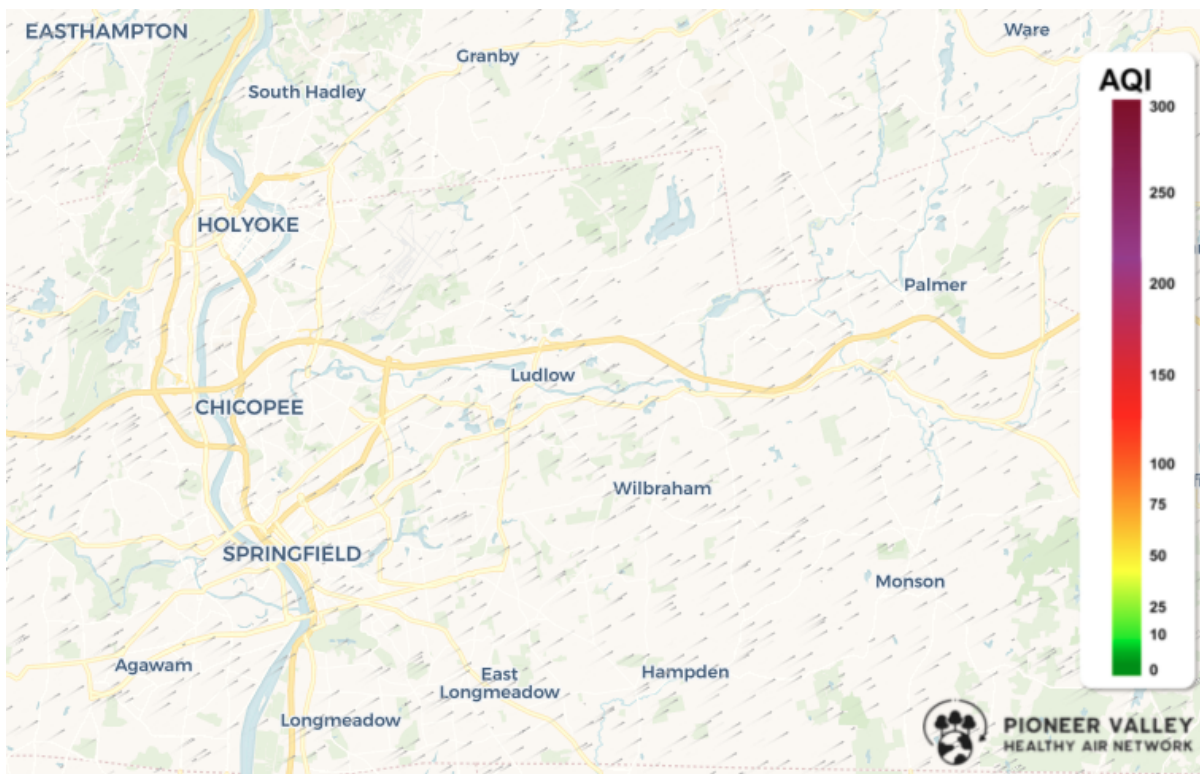
The capital budget includes \$39.5 million for proposed redesigns of Blue Hill Avenue and Mattapan Square to increase the efficiency and safety of the bus routes going through them. An additional \$6 million has been allocated for new dedicated bus lane construction projects, specifically mentioning Columbus Ave, Warren St, and Malcolm X Blvd. The budget also increases funding for Boston's "strategic bike network" program, with an allocation of over 3 times the program's predicted spending for 2022.

The budget also received a boost of \$559 million from pandemic relief funding, a portion of which has gone into making the 23, 28, and 29 bus routes free of charge for 2 years. These 3 bus routes are some of the busiest (with 28 being the busiest in the city) and run through Mattapan and Dorchester. The budget is also expected to allocate funds to Wu's existing plan to electrify Boston's school bus fleet.

Outside of transportation, the budget has a significant focus on housing program investments, with the goal of increasing homeownership rates.

## **Toxics and Pollution**

**New website helps Pioneer Valley residents track air quality**



Attorney General Maura Healy's office, in partnership with the cities of Holyoke, Springfield, and Yale University, has launched an [interactive website](#) to track air quality in the Pioneer Valley region. The site's map covers several communities, including Easthampton, Holyoke, Chicopee, and Springfield, and uses network of 80 sensors to measure ozone, particulate matter, and other toxins in the air, reporting information using the Air Quality Index, and more accessible recommendations like "its a great day to be active outside."

The website comes as part of Healy's Clean Air Initiative, and is designed "to help a region that has long been disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices, and consistently has among the highest rates of asthma in the country." It will serve both as an important tool to help underserved communities make informed decisions about their respiratory health based upon minute-to-minute air quality information, and as a basis for future policy. The AG's Environmental Protection Division will use this information to in its handling of cases in these communities that have been disproportionately effected by injustices, environmental or otherwise.

## Grants and Webinars

### Town of Medfield Climate Action Plan Workshop – Countdown To Net Zero

The draft of the Town of Medfield Climate Action Plan, TOMCAP, is ready for public review and discussion.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Committee, MAPC, and the town of Medfield are hosting an interactive workshop to introduce the draft of the climate action plan and to discuss the draft with residents, town administrators and committee heads.

The in person workshop will be held on Thursday, May 19th 7-8:30 p.m. at Dale St. School.

Register at <https://mapc.ma/medfield-cap> Email [TOMCAP@medfield.net](mailto:TOMCAP@medfield.net) with any questions.

## **Applications are now open for SGA's Champions Institute**

Building upon two successful years, the Active Streets, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup> Champions Institute hosted by Smart Growth America and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides comprehensive training to help local leaders become champions for Complete Streets in their communities. [Elected officials are invited to apply now](#) and join the [Q&A webinar on May 24 at 4:00 p.m.](#)

## **Heat Preparedness Week May 23 to May 27, 2022**

MAPC is working with partners and municipalities across the region to better prepare our communities for rising temperatures and extreme heat. This May, we're hosting the second annual "Heat Preparedness Week" to raise awareness about extreme heat in our region, how it's impacting public health, and the strategies to prepare and plan for extreme heat. We will be hosting and highlighting events around the region and sharing a social media toolkit for you to use to highlight regional and local work that addresses extreme heat.

For more information or to participate in Heat Prep Week, including access to the social media toolkit please contact Sasha Shyduroff at [SShyduroff@mapc.org](mailto:SShyduroff@mapc.org).

## **Massachusetts Offshore Wind Industry Ports Investment Challenge**

We are pleased to announce the release of the [Massachusetts Offshore Wind Industry Ports Investment Challenge](#). With support from the recently established Massachusetts Offshore Wind Industry Investment Fund, MassCEC is seeking to competitively select and fund qualified applicants or applicant teams to implement eligible maritime port redevelopment and improvement projects that will have significant impact on the advancement of the offshore wind sector and capture high-value supply chain and workforce opportunities in the Commonwealth.

Through this competitive solicitation, MassCEC intends to utilize state grant resources to leverage significant investments in specific rehabilitation and redevelopment activities that will directly enable a Massachusetts port facility to provide critical services and supplies for the offshore wind industry, including manufacturing and fabrication, pre-assembly and staging, operation/service support capabilities, and other activities that are directly connected to offshore wind projects and generate new employment opportunities and sustainable local economic benefits.

For this solicitation, the total available budget has been set at Fifty Million Dollars (\$50,000,000), and MassCEC is seeking to leverage private and other funds to invest in high-value offshore wind port projects across the coastal regions of the Commonwealth. MassCEC may increase or decrease funding at its sole discretion.

## **Lunch & Learn Virtual Workshop Series Offered**

The Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and UMass Collins Center for Public Management are offering free municipal energy-focused Lunch & Learn sessions. Each Wednesday, starting May 25th, grab your lunch, hop on Zoom, and hear each of the expert panelists share their experiences. Registration on the [website](#) required. You will receive the Zoom link for each workshop after registering. Each workshop will focus on the following topics:

- May 25, 2022 @ Noon: **Municipal Microgrids Revisited**
- **\*\*Note: there is no session on June 1, 2022\*\***
- June 8, 2022 @ Noon: **Leveraging Volunteer Committees to Achieve Green Goals**
- June 15, 2022 @ Noon: **Peer Experiences with Hybrids, Electric Vehicles (EVs), and EV Charging Stations**
- June 22, 2022 @ Noon: **Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings: Successes, Challenges, and Strategies**
- June 29, 2022 @ Noon: **Energy Justice and Increasing Access for All**

Please note each workshop is a separate Zoom link, so please register for each workshop individually on the website. This workshop series is supported by a DOER Regional Energy Planning Assistance grant.

## MassCEC Offers Equity Workforce Training Planning Grants

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) released a funding opportunity for **Equity Workforce Planning Grants of \$50,000 each**. These grants allow organizations to work with employers and partners to develop plans for career training programs for residents of Massachusetts Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods and/or fossil fuel workers. The planning grants are intended to assist and prepare organizations for future large-scale, multi-year equity workforce training funding opportunities that will lead participants to employment in climate critical occupational categories. Webinars and office hours are also being offered.

Applications are due July 1. Visit [MassCEC's website](#) for more information.

## Resources and Reading List

- [MCAN's New Report on Clean Energy](#)
- [Springfield, West Springfield taking part initiative to reduce carbon footprint](#)
- [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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