

CAMBRIDGE 'GETTING TO NET ZERO'

TASK FORCE FRAMEWORK

Background

Climate protection and reducing our carbon footprint to mitigate climate change has been a high priority for the City of Cambridge. Cambridge has been recognized as a national leader for our commitment to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and our efforts to become a greener city and a model for other communities.

The Connolly Petition has garnered strong support for the topic of reducing carbon emissions from building operations and has facilitated much constructive dialogue in the community, including at the Planning Board, City Council and panel discussion convened by the mayor, and has been a catalyst in bringing the issue of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings to the forefront.

To ensure a collaborative process, the City Manager will appoint a Task Force to study the technical aspects in greater detail and develop comprehensive, actionable, long and short term recommendations.

Goal/Purpose

The Task Force is charged with advancing the goal of putting Cambridge on the trajectory towards becoming a “net zero community”, with focus on carbon emissions from building operations. This includes reducing energy use intensity of buildings and taking advantage of opportunities to harvest energy from renewable resources.

The group will examine strategies and develop recommendations that address the following topics:

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment
- improve energy efficiency and conservation in existing and new buildings
- support renewable energy generation, both on- and off-site
- best practices to engage/educate users and influence occupant behavior

The Task Force will develop actionable recommendations that are comprehensive, practical, and implementable and at the same time bold in their vision; these may include changes to City ordinances, zoning, policies, and other directives. The work of the Task Force should continue to advance Cambridge’s role as a regional and national leader in addressing environmental issues.

Resources

The City will support the work of the Task Force with the following:

- City staff, from all relevant departments (Community Development Department, Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, School Department, and Finance Department, among others) will provide subject matter expertise, as needed, and resources including organizational structure and logistics support, presenting the city’s plans and strategies, and coordinating consulting advice.
- The City will engage technical consultants to assist with subject matter advice and analysis.
- Staff will assist with a public engagement process to get input from the broader community and create a positive and motivating public information strategy. This could include social media, online resources, and public meetings.

Members

The City Manager will appoint a task force with members that include subject matter experts and diverse representation from stakeholder sectors.

Community advocates/residents	3
University/Climate Compact representatives	2
Planning Board	1
Business/property owner/developer representatives	2
Subject matter experts in topics such as building design, construction and operation, development economics, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technology and policy including the concept of Renewable Energy Certificates	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>

Timeline

First meeting of Task Force	January 2014 (<i>Dec 2013, depending on availability</i>)
Tier 1 recommendation	April 2014
Final recommendations	December 2014

Interim actions

<i>Consultant Selection</i>		<i>Task Force Appointment</i>	
Determine consultant scope and prepare RFP	Oct 2013	Issue call for Task Force members	Week of Oct 21, 2013
Issue RFP for consulting assistance	Nov 2013	Interview potential Task Force members	Nov 2013
Consultant selection	Dec 2013 - Jan 2014	Task Force appointments and possible first meeting	Dec 2013

Logistics

- The Task Force will meet at least monthly.
- City staff will facilitate Task Force meetings.
- Background materials provided to members will include the Connolly Petition, meeting notes from the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board hearings, and information on Cambridge efforts to address carbon emissions from building operations.
- To ensure efficient operation within a short timeline, it is expected that Subcommittees will be set up to investigate specific topics and report back to the full Task Force.
- The Task Force will submit progress reports to the City Manager and City Council on a quarterly basis.
- Task Force meetings will be open to the public.
- Social media, online resources, and public meetings will be used to engage the broader community.