

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

CPAC BULLETIN

October 2012

MEETING: The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for October 11, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 2nd floor meeting room. The [agenda](#) will be posted on the Community Development Department website. The featured topic this month is climate change and sustainability in Cambridge public schools.

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Cycling & Walking for Sustainable Cities** – October 15, 4:30 to 6:00 pm, Gund Hall (48 Quincy St.), Room 112, Harvard Graduate School of Design. [Promoting Cycling & Walking for Sustainable Cities: Lessons from Europe and North America](#); speaker: John Pucher, Professor of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers University.
- **Climate & Conflict Discussions at MIT Museum** – The MIT Museum will present a series of discussions about climate and conflict. The remaining two discussions are: Oct. 16, 6:00 to 7:30 pm, *Is America Profiting from Climate Change?* with John Reilly, MIT economist and co-director of the Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change; Oct. 30, *Heat & Violence* with Nathan Black, French Environmental Fellow at the Harvard Center for the Environment. For details, click [here](#).
- **Global CleanTech Meet Up** – October 15 to 18, Boston & Cambridge; Boston Convention Center. Opportunity for innovators, investors, and companies to meet and form partnerships. The event includes a tour of innovative companies in Cambridge and Boston who are creating the clean energy economy. Sponsored by Mass. Clean Energy Center, New England Clean Energy Council, Mass. Technology Transfer Center, and Fraunhofer USA. Registration fees apply. For more information, click [here](#).
- **Climate Catastrophe: Let's Talk About It** – October 16, 7:00 pm, Cambridgeport Baptist Church, 459 Putnam Avenue. Presented by GreenPort Co-Founder Steve Wineman. From melting in the Arctic to a summer of record heat, drought and fires in the US, the indicators of climate catastrophe are mounting. This forum will confront a critical question: have we reached the point where we should acknowledge that catastrophe is no longer avoidable? Based on Steve Wineman's provocative essay [Crossing the Chasm: From Denial to Acceptance of Climate Catastrophe](#). Join the meeting for a discussion of thoughts and feelings about the unfolding collapse.
- **Working for the Green** – October 18, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, Devens Common Center, Devens, MA. A conference on accelerating green growth throughout the Commonwealth. Keynote address by Gregory Bialecki, Secretary of Housing & Economic Development. Sponsored by Mass Audubon, Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, and others. For more info and to register, click [here](#).
- **AltWheels Fleet Day** – Monday, October 22, Four Points by Sheraton, Norwood. This annual [event](#) aimed at vehicle fleet managers is organized by AltWheels and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.
- **SoL's Leading and Learning for Sustainability Workshop** – November 7 to 9, 2012, Bedford, MA; with Peter Senge, Joe Laur (SEED), and Darcy Winslow (Nike Foundation and Former Head of Women's Performance Division). The Leading and Learning for Sustainability workshop is a synthesis of core organizational learning disciplines—systems thinking, mental models and collaborative inquiry, personal mastery and building shared vision—and the practical know-how developed within the SoL Sustainability

Consortium over the past decade, much of which is captured in the book, [The Necessary Revolution](#). This workshop will focus on how these core learning disciplines can build capabilities for Sustainability Leadership—seeing systems, collaborating across boundaries with ease, and shifting from reactive problem solving to creating new futures. For more information, please [click here](#) or contact Lisa Kim at programs@solonline.org or 617-300-9560. Fees apply.

- **Green Streets** – This initiative encourages people throughout Cambridge (and Somerville and surrounding cities and towns) to use a green form of transportation (transit, bicycle, walk, skate) on a designated day of the month and to wear a green-colored item of attire. The goal is to make Cambridge and neighboring cities safer, quieter, and friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, and to minimize the use and impact of cars. Generally, the designated day is the last Friday of the month. Check the [Cambridge Green Streets Initiative website](#) for more info and incentives.

NEWS

- **Cambridge Solar Map Launched** – The new [Cambridge solar map tool](#) has been launched. The web-based tool enables users to find a building and obtain an estimate for the size of a rooftop solar photovoltaic system, the associated financial analysis and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and information on how to take the next steps for an installation. The map tool was developed by the [MIT Sustainable Design Lab](#), headed by Dr. Christoph Reinhart, and [Modern Development Studio](#), a Boston-based design workshop. The Sustainable Design Lab modeled the solar radiation falling on each square meter of virtually all 17,000 rooftops in Cambridge and the amount of electricity a solar photovoltaic system could generate if it is placed on the most solar-friendly portions of the roof. Modern Development Studio, led by Eduardo Berlin, created a web viewer and a financial module to translate the solar data into a useful report for users. The report estimates the cost of the system, the financial incentives that apply, and then analyzes the payback and return on investment, which is compared to alternative investments in the stock market, gold, and Treasury bonds. The modeling performed by the MIT group takes into account the pitch of the roof, shading from nearby structures and trees, reflectance off other surfaces, and other factors. While the solar map does not substitute for an onsite assessment by a professional installer, it is a tool for property owners to start considering solar photovoltaic systems. The City's [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#) program can assist residents and businesses in locating installers and understanding the incentives. Dr. Reinhart has estimated that if all of the roof area rated as excellent or good by his modeling were to have solar PV panels installed, Cambridge could generate about a third of its electricity demand from solar within its own borders. While practical issues would preclude installing that amount, the figure illustrates that there is great untapped solar energy potential in the city.
- **Cambridge Innovation Survey** – The Community Development Department is conducting an online survey of businesses in the innovation sector, including green and clean tech firms. Firms in this sector located in Cambridge are eligible to respond. The information that is gathered will help the City plan for ways to better support startups and other firms that are developing products and services to fight climate change. The survey can be found [here](#).
- **Cambridge Sustainability Audio Tours** – The Terrascope Youth Radio Project at MIT, a program funded by the National Science Foundation, worked with the Cambridge Community Development Department to create a [self-guided, 13 stop tour of sustainability points of interest](#) in the city. A team of urban teens researched and produced all the audio segments.
- **Cambridge Park(ing) Day** – On September 21, 16 vehicle parking spaces were converted into temporary “parks”. The initiative was part of Cambridge’s participation in International Park(ing) Day. For a list of participants and photos and videos, click [here](#).

- **Ominious Changes in the Arctic** – According to the [National Snow & Ice Data Center](#), sea ice over the Arctic Ocean fell to its lowest extent since satellite data began to be collected in 1979. The previous record was set in 2007, however NSIDC said this year's record was occurred without the unusual weather conditions that contributed to the 2007 extreme melt. The thickness of the sea ice has also declined, which makes it less resistant to summer melting. Previous modeling indicated that the Arctic would lose all of its summer ice cover by 2100. But the shrinkage in sea ice extent has progressed faster than the models predicted. NSIDC scientist Julienne Stroeve said "We may be looking at an Arctic Ocean essentially free of ice only a few decades from now." While melting Arctic sea ice does not raise global ocean levels, a warmer Arctic will contribute to melting of Greenland's ice sheet, which if it enters the ocean will cause sea level rise. The ice sheet resting on Greenland contains enough water to raise sea level by about 25 feet if all of it melts. [Research](#) has documented that melting of Greenland's ice sheet has been accelerating over the past two decades. [NASA reported that in July this year](#) the Greenland ice sheet experienced rapid thawing over about 97% of its surface area. The extent of the melting was the greatest observed in over 30 years of satellite observations. There is evidence from ice cores that wide-scale melting on Greenland happens every 150 years. But if the extensive melting occurs repeatedly, it is an ominous sign. While melting of the Arctic ice cap may not be a concern for sea level rise in the short term, modeling indicates that the changes in the Arctic will cause more extreme summers and winters in North America and Europe due to alteration of the jet stream. [[Washington Post, 8/28/12](#)]

RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Solar Hot Water Grants** – The [City's Cambridge Energy Alliance program is offering grants for the installation of solar hot water systems](#). The City grants complement the [state solar hot water rebates available from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#) and government tax incentives. The City grant covers 50% of out of pocket costs up to \$2,000 after the MassCEC rebate is applied. Applications must be received by November 19, 2012.
- **Climate Science Videos** – The [National Research Council has produced a series of short videos](#) that explain the science around climate change and how multiple lines of evidence form the basis for the scientific consensus that climate change is happening and is largely due to human influence.
- **Jobs & Recycling** – The Environmental Business Council of New England and MassRecycle have produced a report on the contribution of the recycling sector to the Massachusetts economy. The study, titled [Recycling and Jobs in Massachusetts: A Study of Current and Future Workforce Needs](#), finds that the recycling industry constitutes over 2,000 establishments employing nearly 14,000 people.
- **Reduce Junk Mail** - Easiest way to save resources? Say no to junk mail! Each year American households receive a total of 104.7 billion pieces of junk mail or 848 pieces of junk mail per household, requiring 6.5 million tons of paper. Unwanted mail isn't just a nuisance it's also a source of tremendous waste as trees, water and other resources used during production and printing are wasted along with the fuel during the delivery and recycling process. Help save paper, water and fuel resources by stopping the waste at its source - tell these companies to stop sending you things you don't want. Anyone can sign up and create a free account at [catalogchoice.org](#) and start opting-out of unwanted catalogs, junk mail, phone books, and credit card offers today. For more information, contact the [Product Stewardship Institute](#).
- **Check Out Watt Meters at the Library** – Cambridge residents can borrow a "kill-a-watt" meter from the Main Public Library to measure how much electricity their home appliances and devices use. The meters come with a guide on how to use them and information on how to save energy. The meter kits and guide were developed by the [Sprouts of Hope](#) group based at the King Open School.
- **MBTA Rider Tools** – The MBTA has a number of [rider tools](#) that help riders to anticipate arrival times of buses, subways, and commuter trains and to receive alerts of delays. These tools can be used on iPhones, Android phones, text messages, emails, and the Web. There is also a trip planning tool.

- **NSTAR Green** – Residential and small business electric customers of NSTAR can opt to purchase renewable electricity generated by wind energy farms. To sign up for the service, visit the [NSTAR website](#).
 - **Cambridge Energy Alliance** – The [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#), a program of the City of Cambridge Community Development Department helps residents, businesses, and organizations to obtain energy efficiency and renewable energy services. You can sign up for energy audits and ask questions through the energy advisor service.
 - **Sustainable Business Leader Program** - SBLP is a comprehensive certification program that supports local businesses in improving their environmental business practices and reducing their carbon footprint. For more information please visit the [SBLP website](#) or email to katrina@sbnboston.org.
 - **MCAN Low Carbon Living Program** – The [Massachusetts Climate Action Network](#) works with its local member organizations to develop teams of 5 to 8 households to assess their household carbon footprints and undertake actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program is based on the Low Carbon Diet workbook and involves 3 to 4 meetings.
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About the CPAC Bulletin:

The Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) is a City of Cambridge advisory body appointed by the City Manager to assist in the implementation of the Cambridge Climate Protection Plan. Please forward this bulletin to other interested people. Anyone who would like to be added to the email distribution list should contact John Bolduc at jbolduc@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4628. For more information about Cambridge climate protection activities, see <http://www.cambridgema.gov/climate>. Recent issues of the CPAC Bulletin are posted on the webpage.