

# Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

## CPAC BULLETIN

### August 2017

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**MEETING:** The Climate Protection Action Committee **WILL NOT** meet in August. The next meeting is scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm at City Hall Annex, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the [Community Development Department website](#).

#### EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Water & Resiliency** – August 11, 1:30-3:20 pm, Faneuil Hall. Boston Greenfest panel with Dr. Tamim Younos, Green Water-Infrastructure Academy; Dr. Rob Moir, Ocean River Institute; Rachel Miller, Rozalia Project for a Clean Ocean; and others. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Sunny Cambridge Workshops** – [August 12](#), 2:00-4:00 pm, Democracy Center, Nelson Mandela Room, 45 Mt. Auburn St. and [August 24](#), 6:00-8:00 pm, Lesley University, Room 3-098, 1815 Mass. Avenue. [Sunny Cambridge](#) information sessions on how to go solar in Cambridge, including how to access solar financial incentives. For more information, contact Meghan Shaw, Cambridge Energy Alliance, [mshaw@cambridgema.gov](mailto:mshaw@cambridgema.gov) or 617-349-5323.
- **Envision Cambridge** – August 23, 6:00-8:00 pm, Russell Youth Center, 680 Huron Avenue. Meeting of the Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee.
- **Ellen Douglas at NEAQ** - September 14, 7:00 pm, New England Aquarium Simons IMAX Theatre. [Extreme Events & Climate Change: What We Know and What We Can Do](#). *Speaker:* Ellen Douglas, PE, PhD, Associate Professor of Hydrology, School for the Environment, UMass Boston.
- **Planning for Net Zero** – October 11, 8:30 am – 1:00 pm, District Hall, Boston. The MAPC Clean Energy Forum will focus on cities planning for net zero.
- **Climate & Energy Executive Course** – October 15-20; Harvard Kennedy School. Executive Education course on [Climate Change and Energy: Policy Making for the Long Term](#). Application deadline is August 15<sup>th</sup>; course fee is \$8,500.
- **I2SL Annual Conference** – October 15-18, Boston Marriott Copley Place. The [annual conference of the International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories](#) will be held in Boston this year. The conference will feature a panel about the initiatives underway in Cambridge and Boston to increase the energy efficiency of our laboratory buildings.
- **GreenBuild 2017** – November 2017, Boston Convention Center. The international green building conference and expo of the U.S. Green Building Council will be held in Boston again next year. Persons interested in serving on the host committee or conference subcommittees should [visit the USGBC Massachusetts Chapter website](#).
- **Friends of Alewife Reservation Walks** - [Friends of Alewife Reservation](#) is a stewarding and educational non-profit for the Alewife Reservation in northwest Cambridge and for the surrounding city natural resources of marshes and wetlands abutting Belmont and Arlington. It focuses on implementation of federal stormwater regulations, flooding and water quality in the Little River, and development improvement projects such as work at Blair Pond.
- **350MA.Org** - [350 Massachusetts](#) is a volunteer-led, campaign-focused initiative connecting and organizing a strong grassroots coalition to address climate change and build a just and secure future

beyond fossil fuels. Meetings are held every two weeks. During the summer of 2017, meetings will be held at Harvard Epworth Church, 1555 Mass. Avenue in the sanctuary, 7:00-9:00 pm, on July 18 and August 1, 15, and 29 (no meeting on July 11). Note this meeting location is temporary while the usual meeting location at First Church undergoes some renovation work.

- **Green Cambridge** - [Green Cambridge](#) works to bring neighborhood resiliency to individuals and communities across Cambridge by empowering individuals to embrace renewable energy, practice urban agriculture, care for our urban tree canopy, and utilize sustainable transportation. Green Cambridge meets monthly at the Eastern Bank community room in Harvard Square, usually on the third Thursday of every month from 7:00-8:30pm. All are welcome and invited to attend! For more information and a listing of community events, including volunteer opportunities at our prototype urban farm, please visit: [greencambridge.org](http://greencambridge.org).

## NEWS

- **Storm Surge Barriers for Charlestown & East Boston** – The City of Boston is working on designs for storm surge barriers in [Charlestown](#) and [East Boston](#) to protect the city from rising seas. The barrier designs involve vegetated berms, wetlands, and new open space. The Charlestown barrier, which would be located on the site of the Schrafft Building, would also provide protection to Somerville and Cambridge by blocking storm surges. Modeling of storm surges associated with sea level rise in Boston Harbor identified the Schrafft site as a major entry point for flooding that would run to Sullivan Square and onto the North Point area if no action is taken. City staff from Somerville and Cambridge have participated in advisory group meetings at the invitation of the City of Boston, which has received grant funding from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. These barriers align with the recommendations of the [Climate Ready Boston](#) report. [[WBUR, 8/2/17](#)]
- **New MIT Climate CoLab Contests** – The MIT Climate CoLab has [seven contests](#) in progress to crowdsource climate change solutions. The contests cover the categories of Shifting Attitudes and Behaviors; Land Use: Agriculture, Forestry, Waste Management; Buildings; Energy Supply; Adaptation; Carbon Pricing; and Transportation. Proposals made to the contests are evaluated by experts and are eligible for awards, including cash prizes.
- **Climate Change at Mt. Auburn Cemetery** – Citizen scientists are collecting data on phenology of vegetation at Mount Auburn Cemetery to track the effects of climate change. The citizen scientists observe and record data on the relationship of plants to climate, noting when the plants leaf out and when flowers bloom. Since last year, two dozen volunteers have recorded about 10,000 observations. Research from other locations show that spring is starting earlier and winter is starting later. [[WBUR, 6/28/17](#)]
- **Massachusetts Commercial PACE Guidelines Proposed** – Based on legislation passed in 2016 and signed by Governor Baker, MassDevelopment has proposed guidelines for a new commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program. Commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential buildings with 5 or more units would be able to access financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. This type of energy financing contrasts with bank financing in that it works as a betterment assessment that is administered through the property tax system. City Councils and Town Meetings would have to vote to adopt the program before it can come to their community. Property owners agree to place a lien that stays with the property until it is paid. An owner can sell the property with the lien and transfer it to the next owner. This allows for projects with longer payback periods up to 20 years to be financed and the loan may possibly be off balance sheets. Many states, such as Connecticut, already have successful commercial PACE programs up and running that are financing millions of dollars of clean energy improvements. MassDevelopment is seeking public comments on the draft guidelines by September 10<sup>th</sup>. To download the proposed guidelines and see more information, visit the [MassDevelopment website](#). For more information about PACE, visit the [PACENation website](#).

- **Mass. Considering New Biofuel Rules** – The Commonwealth is considering [new regulations](#) that would classify tree products such as wood pellets as renewable energy and count the contributions to the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals. The proposal is controversial because research indicates that it takes a long time for new trees to grow large enough to sequester the amount of carbon emitted by burning wood. Other studies find that burning wood increases emissions. [[Climate Central, 8/7/17](#)]
- **Timing of Sea Level Rise Risks** – The Union of Concerned Scientists has mapped the entire U.S. for chronic inundation risks associated with sea level rise in their report [When Rising Seas Hit Home](#). This is flooding at high tide on top of sea level rise without storm surges. As sea level rises, low lying coastal areas will see a continuous increase in “nuisance flooding” that will occur daily in contrast to storm surge flooding that occur during periodic major coastal storms such as hurricanes and nor’easters. Chronic flooding poses an existential threat. Many communities such as Miami already face this problem and many more have 20 years or less to plan for chronic flooding. Hundreds of communities will face this type of flooding by the end of the century. The UCS study is attempting to provide estimates to communities of the timing of these risks so that they can plan ahead. Cambridge, which is protected in the near term by its position behind the Charles River Dam and the Amelia Earhart Dam on the Mystic River, may face the risk of chronic flooding toward the end of this century if no action is taken. It is also possible that major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will slow the pace of climate change and buy more time for communities.

## RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Jobs** – [Sustainability Director](#), Town of Concord (closing date 8/10/17). Trust for Public Land, [Climate Smart Cities Program Manager - Green Infrastructure](#); [Parks for People Program Director](#). [Energy & Sustainability Analyst](#), City of Cambridge Public Works Department; 30 hours/week. [Tree Inventory/Management Plan Intern](#), City of Cambridge Public Works Department. [Urban Designer](#), City of Cambridge Community Development Department. [Waste Reduction Outreach Assistant](#), City of Cambridge Public Works Department. [Construction & Sustainable Procurement Specialist](#), City of Cambridge. [Communications Manager](#), City of Cambridge Community Development Department.
- **Fix AC** – [New York Times article](#) on the importance of improving air conditioning technology and upgrading to state of the art equipment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Close Store Doors to Save Energy** – If you’re annoyed by retail stores that keep their doors open during summer while running their air conditioning – an energy wasting behavior - [Keep it Cool](#) is a crowdsourcing campaign to tag those locations on the internet and social media to encourage energy conservation. Stores that keep their doors closed can also be tagged to receive affirmation.
- **Climate Mitigation Gap** – A new paper in Environmental Research Letters titled [The Climate Mitigation Gap: Education and Government Recommendations](#) argues that government programs and school text books fail to promote the most effective climate change mitigation actions while promoting less effective actions. The article is open source.
- **Urban Heat Islands of Chelsea** – [A story on WBUR](#) about urban heat islands, public health, and climate justice in Chelsea, MA.
- **Integrating Climate Change into Hazard Mitigation Planning** – Former ICLEI staff Missy Stults, Ph.D. published an open source paper in *Climate Risk Management* on [Integrating climate change into hazard mitigation planning: Opportunities and examples in practice](#).
- **Ingredients for Climate Success** – The Acadia Center prescribes 8 strategies that Massachusetts needs to pursue to meet the targets of the Global Warming Solutions Act. [[Commonwealth, 7/28/17](#)]
- **Draft USGCRP Climate Change Special Report** – The draft special report from the National Climate Assessment written by scientists from 13 federal agencies has been leaked to the [New York Times](#). The

report documents that climate change is already being felt by Americans. The Trump Administration has not released the report. The report can be downloaded through the New York Times article.

- **Unlocking Ultra Low Energy Performance in Existing Buildings** – A new white paper from the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy on [Unlocking Ultra-Low Energy Performance in Existing Buildings](#).
- **Cambridge Recycling News** - Waste reduction fights climate change! [42% of US greenhouse gas](#) emissions are from materials management. Help us meet Cambridge's waste reduction goals and stay informed with the monthly [Cambridge recycling e-newsletter](#). Full of practical information, helpful tips, and fun events, this newsletter regularly receives compliments from the many Cambridge residents already subscribed! You can sign up quickly [here](#).
- **Cambridge Climate Change Preparedness & Resilience** – The City its climate change vulnerability assessment that is serving as the foundation for a climate change preparedness plan that is being developed. The CCVA Report – Part 1 covers the risks of increasing temperatures and precipitation and CCVA Report – Part 2 focuses on the risks of sea level rise and storm surges. Both reports are available on the [CCPR project webpage](#), which also provides other information and documents from meetings. The CCPR Plan development has started with a focus on the Alewife area. After a second neighborhood is studied, the full plan will be developed with a goal of completion in 2018. Interested people can send an email to [jbolduc@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jbolduc@cambridgema.gov) to be placed on the project email list.
- **Cambridge Solar Map** – The [Cambridge Solar Tool](#) provides a web-based interactive tool to find out the potential for installing solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops in the city. The tool also evaluates the financial feasibility of installations and makes comparisons to alternative investments. The tool is designed by Mapdwell and based on the research of the [MIT Sustainable Design Lab](#) led by Dr. Christoph Reinhart. The City's [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#) program can assist interested property owners with finding installers and understanding the financial aspects. The Mapdwell tool was upgraded in September 2015 and can now be viewed in Spanish.
- **Opt Out of Unwanted Mail** - Do you get unwanted mail from retailers, credit card companies, or cable/phone companies? You can opt out of mailings from over 4000 companies with Catalog Choice and help reduce waste. For example, you can stop getting weekly circulars from Global Direct, they will honor opt-out requests, so add them to "your choices". Just register for FREE at <https://cambridge.catalogchoice.org> to create an account to start cleaning out your mailbox. To date, over 3700 Cambridge residents have signed up and opted out of nearly 25,000 different unwanted mailings!
- **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.
- **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.

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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](mailto: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.