

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

CPAC BULLETIN

June 2015

MEETING: The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for June 11, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, 2nd floor meeting room. The meeting will focus on consideration of a solar energy recommendation, follow up on MIT Climate CoLab contest on mitigating the urban heat island, and time for subcommittees to meet. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the [Community Development Department website](#).

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **City Council Hearing on Net Zero Task Force Report** – June 9, 3:00 pm, City Hall, Sullivan Chamber. The Health & Environment Committee of the City Council will hold a public hearing on the Getting to Net Zero Task Force recommendations. The final recommendations are available on the [Task Force webpage](#).
- **Somerville Environmental Film Night** – June 9, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, Arts at the Armory Café, 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville. The event is a free showing of the documentary “Plastic Planet”, about worldwide plastic pollution. A discussion will follow. For more information, [click here](#). Sponsored by Somerville Climate Action.
- **Mid-Cambridge Climate Preparedness Presentation** – June 10, 7:00 to 8:30 pm, Spaulding Rehab, 1575 Cambridge Street, Cullinane Room. City staff will present results of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and discuss the results with residents.
- **Energy Efficiency in Real Estate Marketplace Webinar** – June 24, 10:00 to 11:00 am. This webinar, sponsored by the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership, will involve a presentation by Craig Foley, RE/MAX’s Chief of Energy Solutions. He will highlight the importance of being able to recognize energy efficient characteristics of homes and provide resources that real estate professionals can use to stay up to date on the rapidly changing technologies that contribute to a comfortable, healthy, and affordable living environment. To register, [click here](#).
- **Climate Ride Northeast** – September 17-21. This event raises funds for climate action organizations, raises awareness of climate change, and promotes sustainable lifestyles. The Northeast bicycle ride follows a 320 mile route from Bar Harbor, Maine to Boston. Riders can choose from among more than 100 beneficiaries to support. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Georgetown Energy Prize** - Cambridge residents are competing with 50 cities nationwide for the \$5 million [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#) and we’re In It to Win It! To win we need to reduce our energy use the most and we have less than two years to do it. We need the best, most creative ideas to eliminate wasted energy and transform our community into the city of the future. Only one city will get the prize, and in order to Win It Cambridge needs everyone to get involved. To get started, visit <http://cambridgeenergyalliance.org/winit> and keep your eyes out for more contests, free giveaways, and fun events to help Cambridge save energy and Win It!
- **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. Free wildlife and history educational

tours, clean ups and conservation initiatives for the silver maple forest. "Virtual" Tour of the Reservation: [click here](#).

- **Walk/Ride Day Corporate Challenge** – Annual workplace competition in which organizations throughout Cambridge and surrounding cities and towns compete one day each month from April through October to have staff check in their commute online and consider healthier and more environmentally friendly choices (transit, bicycle, walk, etc.) Data show significant green shifts among participants on Walk/Ride Days and other days throughout the month. Promoted by Green Streets Initiative, a Cambridge-based grassroots group. [Register your company for the Challenge here](#).
- **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. All meetings are held at First Church Cambridge, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA and begin at 6:30 PM. More info at www.350MA.org.
- **Green Cambridge** - Green Cambridge is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization and a founding chapter of the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN). Green Cambridge works to create a more sustainable Cambridge, and to protect the environment for the health and safety of all. Green Cambridge meets monthly at the Eastern Bank community room in Harvard Square, usually on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30pm. All are welcome and invited to attend! For more information and a listing of community events, please visit: <http://www.greencambridge.org/>.

NEWS

- **FY16 Budget Highlights** - The City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, which includes new support for sustainability initiatives in the Community Development Department. The FY16 budget includes funding for a new Net Zero Planner to coordinate implementation of the Getting to Net Zero Task Force Recommendations. Other highlights including \$50,000 for transit strategic planning; \$75,000 for planning on the Grand Junction Community Path; \$60,000 to support implementation of the Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance; \$90,000 for a Low-Carbon Energy Supply Study; \$20,000 for a fee-bate feasibility study; and \$80,000 for solar ready design guidance and solar proliferation strategy. Other City departments also have sustainability initiatives built into their budgets. These budget allocations represent a significant increase in sustainability spending by the City, adding to the existing base of work. For more information, [see the FY16 Budget here](#).
- **Cambridge Public School District Names Green School Awardee** – On Earth Day 2015, the U.S. Department of Education and the President's Council on Environmental Quality recognized the Cambridge Public School District as one of 14 school districts nationally with a [2015 Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability Award](#). The award recognizes Cambridge's efforts to improve the sustainability performance of operations at our public schools and addressing sustainability in the school curriculum.
- **Biodiesel Conversion** – The Cambridge Public Works Department is converting the City's main diesel fuel tank at the Public Works Yard to B20 biodiesel. The new fuel will contain 20 percent vegetable oil produced by collecting and processing waste vegetable oil from sources within 500 miles. Peterson's Oil Service will supply the B20 fuel beginning July 1st. In addition to providing direct air quality benefits, B20 also reduces the carbon footprint of the City's diesel vehicles such as garbage packers and heavy duty equipment. Producing biodiesel from waste vegetable oil has less environmental issues than producing the vegetable oil from field crops. All municipal diesel vehicles that refuel at the DPW yard will be using B20.
- **Cambridge Installing Truck Side Guards** – The City of Cambridge and the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center announced a [partnership to install truck side guards and other measures on City-owned vehicles](#) to enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. The truck side guards will be installed on heavy duty vehicles such as garbage packers. The side guards, which are designed to sweep aside

pedestrians and cyclists, rather than being swept under the vehicle. Research in the United Kingdom found that side guards reduce bicyclist fatalities by 61 percent and pedestrian fatalities by 20 percent. In addition to the side guards, the project will involve installing additional blind spot mirrors or cameras and posting educational messages inside or outside of large trucks to increase awareness of all road users about avoiding truck blind spots. The City and the Volpe Center will work on a vehicle redesign strategy to implement the measures on up to 50 vehicles. It is hoped the initiative will inspire the installation of the measures on private trucks. This initiative came about through social media when a member of Mayor David Maher's staff happened to walk by the scene of a crash involving a garage truck and a bicycle and saw the twisted remnants of the bicycle (the rider was treated and is ok). She posted a picture of the bicycle frame on social media, which reached Dr. Alex Epstein at the Volpe Center, who then contacted the Mayor's office within an hour.

- **Citywide Plan Update** – The [Request for Qualifications](#) has been issued seeking a consultant team for the Citywide comprehensive plan. Climate change will be one of the key drivers considered in the planning process. Responses are due June 22 and the Community Development Department is aiming to launch the process in September.
- **Boston Properties & Forest City Named Green Lease Leaders** – The Institute for Market Transformation and the U.S. Department of Energy recognized the [2015 Green Lease Leaders](#) who are owners, tenants, and brokers who utilize “green leases” to drive energy and water efficiency in commercial buildings. Among the recognized leaders are two companies with substantial holdings in Cambridge: Boston Properties and Forest City. Green leases help to overcome issues in the lease process involving the sharing of responsibilities and costs around efficiency improvements and operations.
- **Park(ing) Day Call for Proposals** – The Community Development Department is seeking participants for the 2015 Cambridge Park(ing) Day celebration. This event is an international event in which metered parkign spaces are transformed into “parks” for a day. Previous years have seen many creative ideas including gymnastics, bicycle-powered smoothies, book swas, dance floors, micro parks, nature reserves, games, dog parks, and concerts. The 2015 Park(ing) Day will be observed on September 18th. To submit a proposal, [see the application form by clicking here](#). Applications are due by June 30th. For more information, contact Jennifer Lawrence, jlawrence@cambridgema.gov.

RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **MIT Report on Solar Incentives** – A new MIT report out of MIT, titled [The Future of Solar Energy](#), discussed the role of solar energy in combatting climate change. It also recommends changes to the way incentives are structured. The Solar Energy Industry Association takes some issues with the report. [[EcoRI News, 5/12/15](#)]
- **Regional Benefits of Efficiency & Solar** – The Acadia Center released two reports on the value of energy efficiency and solar energy. [Winter Impacts of Energy Efficiency in New England](#) estimates that if existing energy efficiency programs were not in place this past winter, demand would have been 14% higher, the price of wholesale electricity would have been 24% higher, and the overall costs of electricity would have been \$1.5 billion higher. [Value of Distributed Generation: Solar in Massachusetts](#) estimated that the value of solar to the grid is 22 to 28 cents per kilowatt-hour and there is an additional societal benefit worth 6.7 cents per kwh. [[EcoRI News, 5/1/15](#)]
- **Economics of Green Districts** – [Building the Cities of the Future with Green Districts](#) is a McKinsey & Co. article about the value of Green Districts, such as ecodistricts and LEED Neighborhoods.
- **Seattle Study on Outcome of Comprehensive Plan** – [Seattle Sustainable Neighborhoods Assessment Project](#) is a report commissioned by the City of Seattle to evaluate the results of Seattle's 299-2014 Comprehensive Plan. Hint: things didn't turn out as planned. [[Governing, 5/15](#)]

- **GHG Inventories & Green Power** – Folks at the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute and others are challenging the voluntary purchase of renewable energy certificates in offsetting greenhouse gas emissions. In an [open letter](#) to decision makers involved in corporate sustainability, REC purchases, and practitioners, they lay out their argument. A [related blog post by Michael Gillenwater](#), executive director of the institute, goes into more detail and provides references.
- **Northeast Not in an Energy Crisis** – In the [first of a three part series written by the Acadia Center and published in the online Commonwealth magazine](#), the argument is made that the region is not in an energy crisis that warrants natural gas pipeline expansion.
- **Ecological Hotspots** – Researchers at the Harvard Forest published a paper in the Journal of Applied Ecology titled [Land-use impacts on the quantity and configuration of ecosystem service provisioning in Massachusetts, USA](#). The paper discussed the value, and limitations, of ecological hotspots and includes data on Cambridge.
- **Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment** – The City is working on preparing a vulnerability assessment that will serve as the foundation for a climate change preparedness plan that will follow. The [project webpage](#) provides background information and documents from meetings. Interested people can send an email to 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!
- **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.
- **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.

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.