

# Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

## CPAC BULLETIN

July 2015

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**MEETING:** The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for July 9, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room. The meeting topics include the municipal electricity supply contract, Climate CoLab urban heat island contest follow up, the City's development review process in terms of sustainability, and committee workgroups. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the [Community Development Department website](#).

### EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **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](#).
- **Rising Seas Summit** – November 12-13, Hyatt Cambirdge. This is an annual professional conference convening national and local government, industry, academia, and environmental NGOs to highlight the interrelationships between sea level rise, climate change and extreme events. Sponsored by the Association of Climate Change Officers. Registration fees apply; early-bird rates apply until July 31<sup>st</sup>. For more information, [click here](#).
- **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](http://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

- **MIT Issues Climate Change Conversations Report** – MIT Vice President for Research Maria Zuber released a report from the MIT Climate Change Conversation Committee. The report is open for comments from the MIT community until July 15. Last year, Zuber announced the establishment of the committee which was charged with seeking broad input from the MIT community on how the U.S. and the world can most effectively address global climate change. The Committee worked with the MIT community to identify pathways to effective climate change mitigation, including how the MIT community might constructively move the global and national agendas forward through education, research, and campus engagement. The committee sponsored lectures and discussions, a debate on fossil fuel divestment, listening sessions, and an idea bank. Over the summer, Zuber, Provost Marty Schmidt, Energy Initiative director Bob Armstrong, and Environmental Solutions Initiative director Susan Solomon will review the report and community input and present recommendations to MIT President Rafael Reif. President Reif will announce a plan for community-wide MIT action on climate change in the fall. The report acknowledges there is a limited window of time to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. The Committee states the most important outcome of the process has been the widespread agreement in the MIT community that the Institute should take bold action to contribute to the solution of climate change, including publicly and visibly stating its principles for combating climate change at the highest levels. Suggested actions are organized around standing up for science and truth; transforming the campus into a Living Laboratory for climate change; and accelerating solutions to the climate threat. The recommendations include establishing an Ethics Advisory Committee to examine ethical issues such as disinformation campaigns, leading to engagement with entities involved in spreading disinformation and ultimately divesting from those entities that persist in spreading disinformation; applying a campus-based carbon pricing system to provide effective signals for capital and operational decisions; and declaring climate change as a focus for a major capital campaign to support research on solutions. On the topic of divestment, the Committee was against a blanket divestment from fossil fuel activities, but three-fourths of the Committee supported targeted divestment from companies whose operations are heavily focused on the exploration for and/or extraction of the fossil fuels that are least compatible with mitigating climate change, for example, coal and tar sands. To see the full report, [click here](#). [[MIT news release, 6/15/15](#)]
- **Governor Baker Changing SREC Auction** – The Baker Administration is changing the rules for how solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs) are auctioned in Massachusetts, which will reduce financial support for solar energy generators. The Administration says that speculation by hedge funds and Wall Street investors is driving up the cost of SRECs which they believe affects electricity costs. SRECs are bought by utility companies to comply with the Commonwealth's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Every year the utilities purchase SRECs, as well as RECs from other renewable sources such as wind turbines. Any unsold SRECs are then put up for auction. In recent years, speculators have been buying up SRECs at auctions in anticipation of tightening markets and profits. The Administration estimates that the change in auction rules will reduce SREC revenue by \$20 million annually. Under the new rules, the first half of SRECs will only be available to utilities and other power suppliers who need to comply with the RPS. The other half will be available to any party, but no one party may buy more than 10% of the available RECs. The Baker Administration has also sided with the utilities by keeping caps on net metering credits in place until a new state solar program is developed. The net metering cap has been reached in the National Grid territory and is being approached in the Eversource territory. Net metering credits are an important financial support for solar energy. After the cap is reached, no more net metering will be allowed, except for small solar PV systems. [[Commonwealth, 7/2/15](#)]
- **Georgetown University Energy Prize** - Cambridge is *In It to Win It!* and is picking up steam in its campaign for the \$5 million [Georgetown University Energy Prize](#). You may have seen the Win It! ad in the summer CityView magazine, but be on the lookout for more opportunities to get involved as the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program Team Energy interns kick off their canvassing activity around town this month. The City has been collecting great ideas for action from students through the

Georgetown Pledge postcard campaign and from other residents through a number of Community Brainstorm sessions and the new, online [WinIt Ideas Forum](#). Be sure to weigh in on how you can help Cambridge Win It!

## RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **[MIT SustainabilityConnect](#)** – Video and presentations from the March 2<sup>nd</sup> [MIT SustainabilityConnect event](#) are posted. The event for the MIT community convened 125 people to address how to “make MIT a game-changing force for sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” [[MIT news release, 6/9/15](#)]
- **[Social Cohesion & Climate Resilience](#)** – Interesting [post from the Center for American Progress](#) on the role and importance of social cohesion in community climate resilience.
- **[Businesses Response to Climate Change – Titans or Titanics? Understanding the business response to climate change and resource scarcity](#)** is a new report from the Carbon Trust that examines the attitudes of large businesses and challenges of transitioning to a sustainable world. The report is based on interviews, roundtables, and market research.
- **[Pope’s Climate Change Encyclical](#)** – Pope Francis’ encyclical about climate change and the environment is [available here](#). [Real Climate](#), the climate science blog, reviews the encyclical.
- **[National Green Building Adoption Index](#)** – The [2015 National Green Building Adoption Index](#) reports on the uptake of green building practices by tracking LEED and Energy Star certifications in 30 major U.S. metro commercial markets. In the 2015 report, the Boston market, which includes Cambridge, dropped from #16 in the U.S. to #21. Minneapolis/St. Paul is ranked #1 for the second consecutive year with San Francisco a close second. The analysis is conducted by Maastricht University in cooperation with CB Richard Ellis.
- **[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](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.