

Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

CPAC BULLETIN

April 2016

MEETING: Note, the April meeting will be held at a different location and start earlier than usual. The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for April 14, 5:30 pm, Martin Luther King, Jr. School, 102 Putnam Avenue. The first portion of the meeting will convene at the front entrance of the school for a tour of the sustainable design features of the new school and will then convene in Room 3006 (Music) for a presentation by the project architect, followed by regular business. The regular agenda will focus on climate protection metrics and other business. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the [Community Development Department website](#).

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Policy Forum on Greening the MLS** – April 14, 8:30 to 10:00 am, 50 Milk Street, 17th Floor, Boston. This forum, sponsored by the USGBC MA Chapter, will be about “auto populating the MLS with energy efficiency and solar PV content” using the Home Energy Labelling Information eXchange (HELIX) The speakers are Carolyn Goldthwaite of the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership and Craig Foley, chief of energy solutions for RE/MAX Leading Edge. [To register, click here](#).
- **MIT Sustainability Summit** – April 15, MIT Sloan School. This year’s event will focus on three themes: disruptive product design and materials sourcing; transformative business models; and pipelines for innovation. [For more information and to register, click here](#).
- **Sustainability On Campus & Main Street** – April 15 at Hampshire College, Amherst; April 16 in Northampton. Learn about best practices and resources to advance sustainable development on campuses and in communities. For more information and to register, see [the conference website](#).
- **Cambridge Science Festival** – April 15-24. This is the annual 10-day festival celebrating science with all kinds of exhibits, demonstrations, talks, etc at venues across the city and beyond. Several climate change related events are on the schedule. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Building Tech Forum 2016** – April 21, 5:30-8:30 pm, Greentown Labs, 28 Dane Street, Somerville. This forum is about trends in building technology and improving building performance. Sponsored by USGBC Massachusetts. [For more information and to register, click here](#).
- **Green Line Extension Re-Design** – April 27, 5:30-6:30 open house; 6:30-9:00 pm presentation/Q&A, St. Anthony’s Parish Hall, 400 Cardinal Medeiros Avenue, Cambridge. The MBTA will host a public workshop about the re-design and potential cost savings strategies for the Green Line Extension project. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Biodiversity for a Livable Climate** – Saturday, April 30, Harvard Peabody Museum. The title of the conference is “the Power and Promise of Biodiversity: Visions of Restoring Land, Sea and Climate.” For more information and to register, [click here](#).
- **BASG** – May 3, 6:00 pm, Venture Café, One Broadway. The topic will be “The Momentum Towards Sustainability and Challenges Facing Youth.” The speakers are Eric Magers, Director of the Green Team and Green Scholars Programs in the Manchester-Essex Regional School District, and Ricky Stern, Executive Director of “e” Inc. [For more information and to register, click here](#).

● **ACCO Climate Fundamentals Academy** – May 24-25, MIT. This workshop will provide participants with a foundation for understanding greenhouse gas emissions and related reporting and disclosure frameworks, strategies for engaging stakeholders and leading organizational change, assessing the legal and policy landscape and examining the economic implications of climate change. Participants will learn about specific initiatives in their localities, states and regions, as well as relevant national and international activity.

- GHG-101: Basics of GHG Accounting, Reporting & Disclosing GHG Emissions
- Governance-101: Engaging Stakeholders & Establishing Strategies for Leading Organizational Change
- Governance-102: Understanding the Legal/Policy Landscape & Determining the Best Strategy for Your Organization
- Economics-101: The Economics of Climate Change
- Case Studies on Regional Climate Initiatives
- Special Guest Remarks from Local Officials

MIT in partnership with ACCO is offering a 20% discount on registration. Use promo code **CFA-Discount-MIT** when prompted. [For more information and to register, click here.](#)

● **NEEP Summit** – June 13-14, Omni Mount Washington Resort, Bretton Woods, NH. This annual meeting is sponsored by the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership. [For more information and to register, 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.](#)

● **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

● **City Manager Richard Rossi Retiring** – City Manager Richard Rossi announced he will not seek an extension of his contract, which expires at the end of June 2016. He has been with the City for 45 years in a range of capacities including Purchasing Agent, Acting Commissioner of Public Works, Acting Director of the Water Department, and for 32 years as Deputy City Manager. During his tenure he has been an advocate of sustainability and fostered and supported many major initiatives, including the Net Zero Action Plan, Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, the Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance, and many others. He will be missed. The City Council will conduct a process to appoint a new City Manager.

● **GUEP Update** – *From the GUEP campaign:* It has been incredibly quick, but the [Georgetown University Energy Prize \(GUEP\)](#) is now at the halfway mark, leaving just one year for the City of Cambridge

government and residents to reduce its total energy use through the [Win It Campaign](#). In the past year, we have accomplished many projects and initiatives designed to help us win the GUEP! To read about the multiple initiatives that Cambridge implemented and all the things we've accomplished, check out the [Warm Home Cool Planet Blog!](#)

Cambridge will continue to provide outreach to citizens to make them aware of the progress of the [Campaign](#). Currently, there is a sign posting throughout Cambridge that will update citizens on how many home energy assessments we've achieved. Check our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts for constant updates, and visit the Win It website to learn more and [sign up for a free home energy assessment!](#) We've got plenty still left to do!

- **Spring Showers Bring Limited Time Offer on Rain Barrels** - Capture the rainwater from your roof and store it in a rain barrel for later use in your garden. Purchase a 60-gallon rainwater collection system for \$79.00. This offer is valid until May 12th. To provide the lowest cost, the company is arranging for a general delivery of the rain barrels on Thursday, May 19th, from 4-7 p.m., at Cambridge DPW yard, 147 Hampshire Street. If rainwater is not captured and allowed to soak back into the ground, rivers and streams do not have the chance to sustain or "recharge" themselves. By capturing rainwater, you are reducing stormwater runoff, conserving water and recharging the groundwater. A local non-profit agency, [Green Cambridge](#), is offering to install rain barrels for Cambridge residents free of charge. If you prefer to install them yourself, the rain barrel arrives with simple instructions for fast and easy installation. For more information, to order online and to check out the design and variety of color options log onto the [Great American Rain Barrel Company website](#), click on "Shop Local Programs" and select "Cambridge". You can also order by phone (800) 251-2352 toll free when specifying the City of Cambridge promotion.
- **Sunny Cambridge** - The City of Cambridge has launched [Sunny Cambridge](#), an exciting new program to help residents learn about solar energy and receive online quotes from local installers through an easy-to-use online platform. Sunny Cambridge is focused on helping residents that have any kind of property, including [single-family homes](#), [condominiums](#), [rental properties](#), and [commercial properties](#). The program website is [www.sunnycambridge.org](#) and is offered in partnership with local solar marketplace provider, [EnergySage](#).

For those curious about the benefits of solar, there are a number of great reasons to go solar in Cambridge today, including:

- Reduce or eliminate your electricity bill
- Increase the value of your property
- Reduce your carbon footprint
- Help create local green jobs
- Earn solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs) from producing solar energy and generate income from your panels!
- Help Cambridge to achieve its zero energy goals and to win the [Georgetown Energy Prize](#) competition to win \$5 million for Cambridge!

In order to participate, simply sign-up at [www.SunnyCambridge.org](#).

- **Solar & Affordable Housing** – The Cambridge Housing Authority is featured in an [article in the UrbanLand](#) magazine about organizations that make solar installations on affordable housing work. Since housing organizations often cannot access the solar tax incentives, the use of solar on affordable housing can be more challenging. The Cambridge Housing Authority was an earlier adopter of solar photovoltaic technology and has a portfolio of 440 kilowatts on five sites.
- **MIT Climate Sit-In** – The MIT Administration and Fossil-Free MIT, a student-led group, reached an agreement in March that brought an end to the group's months-long sit-in at the administration offices over

MIT's plans to address climate change. The agreement covers four action areas: moving towards campus carbon neutrality as soon as possible; establishing a climate action advisory committee to consult on the implementation of MIT's Plan for Action; developing a set of strategies and benchmarks for MIT's engagement with industry, government and other institutions; and convening a forum on the ethics of the climate issue. [[MIT News, 3/3/16](#)]

- **Emergency Preparedness for Businesses** – Working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the CDD Economic Development Division has created an [emergency preparedness tool kit](#) for small businesses and organizations. The tool kit provides guidance and technical resources on developing a continuity plan to help small businesses and organizations take some early steps to ensure recovery after disasters ranging from fires to power outages to weather impacts.
- **Solar Net Metering Legislation Enacted** – Governor Charlie Baker signed legislation that raises the solar net metering cap by three percent for municipal and large private solar photovoltaic projects. Cambridge Mayor Denise Simmons signed onto a [letter from Massachusetts mayors and town managers](#) to the Legislature urging the resolution of the net metering issue. The previous caps had been hit, which was hindering new projects to move forward because they could not access this important incentive. The legislation also reduces the value of net metering credits, which is the compensation to the solar owner for selling electricity to the grid, by about 40%, reflecting the declining costs of solar PV. The net metering caps do not affect small residential projects. It is expected that the new caps will be hit within about one year as the solar market has accelerated in recent years. The Legislature will have to revisit the issue by then. Senator Brian Downing, who was the Senate's lead negotiator on the compromise legislation, notes the need to develop a comprehensive approach that avoids the stop-start problem, which has a negative effect on the solar market. [[WBUR, 4/11/16](#)]
- **Highest Spike in CO2 Ever** – According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii measured an increase of 3.05 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in 2015. This was the largest year to year increase observed in the most important greenhouse gas since the observatory started collecting measurements 56 years ago. Other data shows that CO2 levels are now higher than any time in human history. 2015 was also the fourth year in a row that CO2 levels increased by more than 2.0 ppm. The rate of increase in atmospheric CO2 has been accelerating in recent years. Increases in atmospheric CO2 are largely the result of burning fossil fuels. [[Mashable, 3/10/16](#)]
- **2012 CBECS Data Rolling Out** – The U.S. Department of Energy has released the [2012 Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey \(CBECS\) data](#), which forms the basis for many of the Energy Star building energy performance ratings. Until now, Energy Star ratings have been based on 2003 data. The data shows that between 2003 and 2012, commercial building floor area expanded in the U.S. by 22 percent, but energy use only rose 7 percent. This was attributed to higher energy efficiency standards for new construction. The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) had indicated earlier that with the availability of the 2012 CBECS data, they would begin to update Energy Star scores, releasing all the updated scores at the same time in 2018.
- **Antarctic Melting Could Be Worse** – A new study based on modeling of previous eras of global warming applied to contemporary greenhouse gas emission scenarios indicates that runaway melting of land ice on Antarctica could be triggered if emissions are not curtailed. The study indicates the melting could push average global sea levels up by more than three feet by the end of this century. Sea levels would continue to rise for centuries. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had found in its most recent assessment that Antarctica would contribute a negligible amount to sea level rise this century. Sea level rise could be relatively higher on the U.S. East Coast due to local factors such as subsidence and changes in ocean currents. The modeling also indicated that if the goals of the recent Paris Climate Summit are achieved, the Antarctic ice remains relatively intact. [[Climate Central, 3/30/16](#)]

RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Job** – The Commonwealth is seeking a [State Zero Net Energy Coordinator](#).
- **Climate Interactive** – [Climate Interactive](#), a non-profit organization that grew out of the MIT Sloan School, provides a variety of tools to better understand the dynamics of climate change. The tools include: C-Roads emissions reduction simulator; C-Learn web-based climate simulation for education; Climate Scoreboard to track the effectiveness of the Paris Climate Summit commitments; Climate Bathtub Simulator to understand the relationship between GHG emissions and atmospheric CO2; and the World Climate international climate negotiations role play simulation.
- **ASLA Video on Trees, Temperature, Pollution** – The American Society of Landscape Architects has a [nice, short video](#) explaining the role of urban forests in cooling the city and managing stormwater.
- **Possible Predictor for Eastern US Heat Waves** – Scientists have found a pattern of water temperatures in the North Pacific Ocean that appears to predict the occurrence of heat waves on the U.S. East Coast, as much as 50 days in advance. It's not clear why the pattern is associated with heat wave occurrence. [[New York Times, 3/28/16](#)]
- **Wind, Solar, & Storage** – This article in Vox presents recent trends in renewable energy and energy storage, documenting the rapid expansion of solar and wind. The article also points out that this rapid expansion is not enough to stave off dangerous climate change as fossil fuel use continues to grow as well. [[Vox, 3/27/16](#)]
- **Drive Clean Seattle** – Seattle has a program to electrify the transportation sector called [Drive Clean Seattle](#). [[Seattle Times, 3/10/16](#)]
- **NAS Extreme Weather Attribution to Climate Change** – The [National Academy of Sciences has a new report](#) that says it is now possible to attribute climate change to worsening of some extreme weather events. In the past, scientists generally said that it was not possible to tie specific weather events to climate change. The NAS found that climate change can be linked to heat waves, drought, and extreme precipitation. Attributing climate change to tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires is more difficult. [[USA Today, 3/11/16](#)]
- **Leadership for Existing Buildings** – The State & Local Energy Efficiency Action Network's [2020 Leadership Agenda for Existing Commercial and Multifamily Buildings](#) lays out the baseline actions that states and communities can take by 2030 to demonstrate national energy efficiency leadership.
- **Electrification in Palo Alto** – The [City of Palo Alto, CA has developed strategies to electrify buildings and vehicles](#). Electrification is a fundamental strategy to achieve a fossil free future in conjunction with reduced energy use and decarbonization of the electricity supply. Electrification will need to displace natural gas and other fossil fuels in building heating systems and gasoline and diesel in vehicles.
- **Shared RE for Low & Moderate Income Consumers** – The Interstate Renewable Energy Council has a report titled [Shared Renewable Energy for Low- to Moderate-Income Consumers: Policy Guidelines and Model Provisions](#), which aims to guide utilities, policymakers, regulators, and developers in implementing shared renewable energy systems that can provide tangible benefits to low and moderate income individuals and households.
- **Case Against Gas Pipelines** – The Acadia Center makes the case that we do not need new natural gas pipelines. [[Commonwealth, 3/14/16](#)]
- **Supreme Court & the Clean Power Plan** – A special interview by the [Harvard University Center for the Environment](#) with legal experts about the possible outcomes of the EPA Clean Power Plan challenge before the Supreme Court.
- **Community Solar Market Report** – Deloitte assesses the market for community shared solar in [Unlocking the Value of Community Solar](#).

- **San Francisco SLR Action Plan** – San Francisco has issued a [Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#).
- **Berkeley Resilience Strategy** – Berkeley, CA has issued its first [Resilience Strategy](#).
- **Zika Virus Mosquito Range** – The Centers for Disease Control has revised its estimated range for mosquito species that can transmit the Zika virus in the U.S. [[Associated Press, 3/30/16](#)]
- **NREL Rooftop Solar PV Potential Study** – The [National Renewable Energy Lab](#) has doubled its estimate for the potential for rooftop solar in the US, indicating that nearly 40% of electricity in the U.S. could come from rooftop PV systems.
- **Limiting Global Warming to 2°C** – The challenge of limiting global warming to two degrees celsius is very difficult given energy demand and supply trends according to a couple of recent studies described in this [Washington Post article](#).
- **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!
- **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.

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.