

# Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

## CPAC BULLETIN

### November 2015

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**MEETING:** The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for November 12, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway. The meeting will focus on the committee's work plan for 2016, the Green Line Extension, and other committee business. The agenda for the meeting will be posted on the [Community Development Department website](#).

#### EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Sustainatopia** – November 15-18, Boston Hyatt Regency. This is a mega-conference and festival on social, financial, and environmental sustainability and impact. Registrations fees apply. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Small Business Emergency Preparedness** – November 17, 9:00-10:00 am, NGIN Workplace, 201 Broadway, Cambridge. This will be a seminar presented by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in partnership with the Community Development Department. The seminar will cover a range of emergencies including climate-related events and will focus on both preparing in advance and how to recover quickly. For more information, contact Pardis Saffari, [psaffari@cambridgema.gov](mailto:psaffari@cambridgema.gov), 617-349-4654.
- **Health Risks of Climate Change Workshop** – November 16, 6:00 to 8:30 pm, MIT Building 56, Room 154. The MIT Science Impact Collaborative, led by Professor Lawrence Susskind, is working with the City of Cambridge on enhancing public understanding of the health risks associated with climate change. Participants will engage in a role play simulation followed by a facilitated discussion of the climate related risks described in the Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. The research team will use the sessions to identify the kinds of arguments that carry weight with different stakeholder groups regarding the steps the City should take to manage health risks likely to be caused by climate change. Dinner will be provided. To register, [please click here](#). The November 16<sup>th</sup> workshop is generally intended for the environmental community. Another workshop will be held for the faith community on November 18, 6:00 to 8:30 pm, MIT Building E25, Room 117. Individuals interested in this session should [register by clicking here](#). Another session will be held for the business community at time to be announced.
- **Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment** – December 3, 6:15-8:30 pm, Cambridge Public Library Lecture Hall, 449 Broadway. This public meeting will provide an update on the climate change vulnerability assessment, including presentation of results from modeling of storm surge risks associated with sea level rise.
- **ACCO Climate Fundamentals Academy** – January 7-8, 2016. The Association of Climate Change Officers will present a two day academy on climate science, methods for identifying climate hazards and conducting vulnerability assessments, leveraging climate data and tools, and other topics. The academy instructors are drawn from academia, government agencies, and consultant firms. This academy was rescheduled from an earlier date. For more information and to register, [click here](#).
- **Local Solutions Conference** – April 4-6, 2016, Baltimore. This is the [Eastern Regional Climate Preparedness Conference](#) hosted by Antioch University and the EPA. Details will be forthcoming.
- **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

- **Cambridge Joins Mayor's Compact** – Cambridge has joined the [Compact of Mayors](#), which is an initiative launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, Michael Bloomberg. The Compact requires participating cities to take substantive steps to demonstrate action on climate change and show that cities are global climate leaders. The Compact of Mayors has also been joined by Medford, Somerville, and Boston. Many city leaders are attending the UN's Conference on Climate Change in Paris that starts on November 30 to push for strong action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **MIT Climate Plan** – The senior officers of MIT released the Institute's Plan for Action on Climate Change on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The plan grew out of the year long Climate Change Conversation held by the MIT community during the last academic year. The senior officers recognized the 2 degree celsius increase threshold as one to be avoided to prevent grave damage to societies and natural systems. Highlights of the plan include providing \$5 million to seed new research through its Environmental Solutions Initiative; collaborating with a diverse group of companies to launch eight Low-Carbon Energy Centers to enable \$300 million in new energy research over 5 years; developing an environment and sustainability degree option; provide new short courses and executive seminars for leaders in industry and government; create a web portal to provide accurate and timely information on climate change; expand the Climate CoLab crowdsourcing platform; use the campus a test bed for ideas; aim to reduce campus GHG emissions by 32% by 2030; enact "carbon shadow pricing"; deploy an open data platform for campus energy use; and eliminate the use of fuel oil in campus power generation by 2019. MIT's senior officers chose not to pursue divestment of holdings in fossil fuel companies.
- **Sustainable Commuting Increases** – [Moving Forward: Journey to Work Trends in the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts](#) analyzes data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey over the period 2006 to 2010. The report looks at commuting patterns among the total Cambridge workforce regardless of residence; the labor force represented by Cambridge residents no matter where they work; and the resident labor force who are those who live and work in the city. The report finds that among all three labor groups, a declining proportion is choosing to drive to work alone, mirroring an increasing reliance on sustainable modes of transportation. Also, the reduced reliance on single

occupancy vehicle use extends to many demographic subgroups in all three segments of workers. The report was produced by the Community Development Department.

- **Biogen Signs White House Climate Pledge** – Cambridge-based Biogen was one of 81 companies that signed the [American Business Act on Climate Pledge](#) organized by the White House. By signing the pledge, the companies voice their support for a strong outcome at the Paris climate summit; demonstrate an ongoing commitment to climate action with specific steps; and set an example for their peers.
- **Mapdwell Selected as Finalist for Sustania - Mapdwell** has been selected as the IT finalist for the [Sustania 2015 Award](#). Mapdwell is a platform that provides the most accurate tool to analyze rooftops for solar photovoltaic energy. The tool, which is based on methodologies developed by the MIT Sustainable Design Lab, was first piloted in Cambridge. It has since spread across to other American cities as well as to Chile. The Award Ceremony, hosted by former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, takes place in Paris on December 6<sup>th</sup> during the Paris Climate Summit. Mapdwell will present a keynote talk at the event. A Sustania committee will select a single winner of the "Sustainable Solution of the Year", so keep your fingers crossed. But fans of Mapdwell can help the solar tool win the Community Award by voting via Facebook. [Mapdwell is currently running second!](#) Voting closes on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, so [please vote soon by clicking here](#).
- **MassDOT Report** – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has released its report on the vulnerabilities of the Central Artery to sea level rise and storm surges and adaptation options. The report is titled *MassDOT-FHWA Pilot Project Report: Climate Change and Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessments and Adaptation Options for the Central Artery* and can be found by going to the [webpage here](#). The Central Artery vulnerability assessment is based on the Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model (BHFRM) that was developed using the Advanced Circulation (ADCIRC) model and SWAN model. The BHFRM produces maps of flood probabilities and depths taking into account many factors including sea level rise, wave action, tidal cycles, storm direction, and surge. The report focuses on the Central Artery and includes the lower Charles River. Flood probabilities and depths are shown for eastern Cambridge. The City collaborated with MassDOT on the model and extended it to Cambridge for the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. The extension of the model covers the Mystic River and Alewife Brook. The results from this modeling effort will be discussed at the December 3<sup>rd</sup> public meeting listed above.
- **Cambridge Science Festival 2016 Call for Entries** - Make the 10th anniversary festival special with your creative entries and exciting research. Whether it's a demonstration, contest, workshop, performance or a crazy new idea, they would love to hear from you and learn about your proposal. The festival runs for 10 days & nights and welcomes all ages and backgrounds, so enter your proposal before December 4<sup>th</sup> by going to the [2016 Cambridge Science Festival website](#).
- **Three-Year EE Plans** – The three year energy efficiency plans for the investor-owned utilities in Massachusetts have been finalized for consideration by the Department of Public Utilities. The plans are developed by the joint energy efficiency program administrators and the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council. It's estimated that the plans will reduce forecasted electric sales by 2.93% and forecasted gas sales by 1.24% and deliver \$8 billion in benefits. [\[NEEP, 10/26/15\]](#)
- **Harvard Global Institute** – The Harvard Global Institute awarded a \$3.75 million grant for a new, multidisciplinary, collaborative project to investigate climate change, energy security, and sustainable development in China. The research will include a focus on China's efforts to design and implement a cap-and-trade system for carbon dioxide. Other efforts will link economics, engineering, atmospheric science, and environmental health in national policy assessments and also track urban transportation, air quality, and associated risks to human health in a case city, Chengdu. [\[Harvard Gazette, 10/15/15\]](#)
- **UN Sustainable Development Goals** – The United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The agenda is composed of 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at wiping out poverty, fighting inequality, and tackling climate change over the next 15 years.

- **ACEEE Still Rates Mass. #1 in Efficiency** – The [American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy](#) rated Massachusetts as the number one state for energy efficiency for the fifth year in a row. ACEEE ranks states by utility programs, transportation, building energy codes, combined heat and power, state initiatives, and appliance standards.
- **Massive Energy Storage Not Needed for Greener Grid** – According to a recent analysis by Harvard researchers published in the journal Energy & Environmental Science, it is not a pre-requisite that massive amounts of energy storage be available to significantly increase the deployment of wind and solar power. The study found that wind and solar power could be increased ten-fold without additional energy storage. The finding is premised on being able to dispatch other zero-carbon generation sources such as hydro, nuclear, and biomass and also making strategic use of gas turbines. The study authors note that it would be better to have more and better energy storage, but that the lack of storage should not hold back deploying more renewables. [[Harvard Gazette, 9/23/15](#)]

## RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Will Boston Sink or Swim** – This was the title of an interesting panel presentation and discussion at the Boston Athenaeum in September. It includes talks about climate change and hurricanes by Kerry Emanuel of MIT and an approach on resilience planning by Alan Berger of the MIT Center for Advanced Urbanism. [The event video is archived here.](#)
- **Fitch Rating Warns on Sea Level Rise** – FitchRatings, one of the main public finance credit rating agencies, warns that sea level rise threatens the long term financial health of communities. The white paper is titled [Sea Level Rise May Pose Challenges for Some US Local Governments.](#)
- **Solar + Storage in Multifamily Housing** - <http://www.cleaneogroup.org/ceg-resources/resource/resilience-for-free-how-solar-storage-could-protect-multifamily-affordable-housing-from-power-outages-at-little-or-no-net-cost#.Vijm2E-FPcu>
- **High-Performance Buildings & Property Value Lender Guide** – [Recognition of Energy Costs and Energy Performance in Real Property Valuation](#) is a new report from the Institute for Market Transformation and the Appraisal Institute on the relationship between lenders and appraisers and how green features fit into components of value to affect premiums, collateral risks, and overall market value of high performance buildings.
- **Local Climate Change** – [Climate Change is Coming to a Place Near You](#) is an interesting blog post on Real Climate about the complexity in translating global climate change to the local level.
- **Science Based Targets** – CDP, which works with thousands of business and cities on sustainability reporting is working with the World Resources Institute and the World Wildlife Fund on an initiative to encourage [Science Based Targets](#) for greenhouse gas emissions. The idea is to align GHG reduction targets with climate science, or in other words to account for the global carbon budget that remains to avoid going beyond a 2 degrees Celsius increase. Tools and supporting campaigns are available.
- **Temperature Extremes** – An [article in Environmental Health Perspectives](#) discusses the complicated relationship between temperature and human health, noting that more deaths occur due to cold than heat.
- **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.