

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE CLIMATE COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 | 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway & VIRTUAL ([ZOOM LINK](#))

AGENDA

6:05 PM Welcome & Approval of Minutes (Committee Chair – Mallorie Barber) –
Approved

6:07 PM Director’s Update (Nikhil Nadkarni)

- Kendra White – New climate resiliency planner for the city
 - o Going to be looking into the Cambridge plan
 - o Coming from working in Australia (Australia Red Cross), but originally from New England
 - o Previous work in heat and fire-related disasters
- Louisa Stephens – Decarbonization Intern
 - o Will be helping to support the Climate Committee
- Julie Wormser – New Chief of Climate beginning on October 1
- Development of ARPA funds – Green Equipment for Small Businesses and Nonprofits Program
 - o Increasing engagement and seeing a lot of interest in the program
 - o Use federal funding to support any electrification/efficiency measure that does not include fossil fuels
 - o Stacking incentives
- White House Press Release on large DOE grant funding received with specific mention of actions being taken in Cambridge and Boston
 - o Grant distribution proposal with DOE - \$10 million goes to technical assistance to building owners (BUIDO, etc.)
 - o Direct funding to Boston/Cambridge to fund capacity building for implementation and enforcement (\$3 million each)
 - o Workforce development funding
- *Committee expressed questions about how these programs are being advertised and how businesses eligible for funding are being identified and engaged*
- Health and Environment Committee will be holding hearing on BUIDO on October 8

6:25 PM Announcement of New Committee Officers (Nikhil Nadkarni)

- New member recruitment process:
 - o We want to ensure that Committee engages a wide span of different communities throughout the City.
 - o City’s community engagement team will support the recruitment efforts within different communities
 - o Applications through October with full application review process

- New members would begin in January 2025
- *Committee had questions about the outreach efforts and the extent to which the Committee should be involved.*
 - Youth representatives – contacts at CLS may be a beneficial group to reach out to

6:30 PM Committee Member Solicitation Process Overview (Office of Sustainability Staff)

- *Committee Plan to remain with interim Officers until new cohort of Committee members are arriving. Other Committee members will chip in with increased responsibilities when necessary.*

6:32 PM Net Zero Transportation Plan Update and Discussion:

The Committee will meet with Stephanie Groll to begin discussing the City's upcoming Net Zero Transportation Plan and to offer recommendations.

- Purpose: *Align around the Climate Committee's opinions and recommendations regarding the city's approach to eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.*
- Outcome: *Summarize discussion for inclusion in the annual letter. The Committee's position and insights will directly inform the final Net Zero Transportation Plan.*
- Process:
 1. *City staff will present an update on the Net Zero Transportation Plan.*
 2. *The Committee will hold a facilitated discussion in reaction to the plan.*
 3. *The Committee will use the discussion to identify major themes and to agree upon next steps.*
- Purpose of project – plan for eliminating GHG in Cambridge while also creating a better, more equitable transportation system
- Extensive community engagement throughout the Cambridge community around the Transportation Plan process
- Large theme – “Don’t punish me for owning and using a car, make it easier for me not to.”
- Need more reliable public transportation; more accessible pedestrian areas that are safe and well-maintained; healthy aging options; more affordable electric vehicles and better understanding of funding support
- Also need for affordable housing to make public transit a more viable option
- Cars also impact independence – fear of losing parking spots; inability to plan visits due to lack of parking options; heavy traffic; particulate matter is harmful
- Private vehicles cause vast majority of transportation emissions in Cambridge
- Many of the trips being taken in private transportation are very short and offer good opportunities to switch to public transit (given necessary changes).

- Advancing 7 categories for possible transportation actions: Active transportation; buses and shuttles; city planning; reducing car ownership; electric vehicles; reducing car trips; community engagement
 - o Some of the actions do relate to parking and charging, but parking is not its own category
- Buses and Shuttles – planning is more difficult because the City has limited control over MBTA operations; the City is able to improve street design so buses obtain signal priority, cue jumps, bus lanes, etc.
 - o Also – working to improve door-to-door service for seniors in the Community.
- *Committee expressed concerns about trade-offs – bus lanes have increased traffic congestion in the City, which may impact car emissions in those areas. Are these trade-offs being incorporated into the analysis? The City Representative said she would check.*
- Reducing car trips has a number of options – primarily through applying the Parking and Demand Management Ordinance to More People.
- Consider a Greater Boston congestion/emission pricing scheme – this conversation is underway at the State and regional levels.
- Change – people who own private driveways can put in a charge station and have neighbors pay. This is legal, but it has not been done as of yet.
- *Committee expressed interest in collaborating on expanding retrofits for EV charging.*
- *Committee inquired about EV car sharing opportunities around the City, particularly around affordable housing sites.*
- *Committee suggested supporting EV mechanic program at trade schools and making it known that repair shops are readily available in the region.*
- *Committee asked if the City was looking for ways to get chargers on the street quickly.*

7:45 PM Net Zero Action Plan Letter Planning Discussion (Chair)

The Committee will discuss its approach for writing a letter to the City Council regarding the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP). This approach will include the creation of a sub-committee, milestone deadlines, and any additional actions deemed necessary by the Committee. The NZAP letter subcommittee will receive the Annual Update report to begin reviewing.

- The Net Zero Action Plan Letter will be provided to the City Manager and have the Committee’s reactions to the NZAP update.
- Next month, we will have an interim report from the City, with the full report available in November. We plan to sign off on our Letter in December.
- City is finalizing Fiscal Year ’24 updates and will provide.
- *Committee wants to know how we can best review the Council’s changes over the past year to see if any of last years’ suggestions were implemented.*
- *Committee chose subcommittee members; subcommittee will provide initial thoughts for Letter directions at the next meeting.*

7:55 PM Public Comment and Member Updates

7:57 PM Adjournment

