



Net Zero Action Plan Newsletter



Summer 2018

A twice per year update on the City of Cambridge's progress toward the Net Zero Action Plan, which sets a pathway to enable Cambridge to become a carbon-neutral community by 2050.

Recent Accomplishments

Net Zero Annual Report

The Community Development Department is committed to reporting annually on progress towards implementation of the Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) for buildings. Fiscal Year 2017 (July 2016-June 2017) is the second year of NZAP implementation. FY17 included actions in all five categories of the Plan: 1 - Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings, 2 - Net Zero New Construction, 3- Energy Supply, 4 - Local Carbon Fund, and 5 - Engagement and Capacity Building. Key accomplishments included the launch of the *Multi-Family Energy Efficiency Pilot program*, completion of the *Low Carbon Energy Supply Strategy study*, and initial investigation of the feasibility of a Local Carbon Fund. The report gives a status update of each action and summarizes quantitative indicators that can serve as baselines for measuring future progress. For the full report, click [HERE](#).



Clean Energy Transition

The City of Cambridge engaged a Danish consulting firm to undertake a Low Carbon Energy Supply Study in support of the City's commitment to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 (Action 3.1). The purpose of the study was to determine current and future energy demand, assess the potential for renewable energy generation in Cambridge, develop technical scenarios for renewable energy delivery systems, and evaluate the risks, benefits, and feasibility of each scenario along with discussion of potential implementation pathways. Key conclusions include the need to pair residential electrification with district energy infrastructure in dense areas of the City to enable efficient and flexible energy supply and the importance of regional collaboration for implementation. To read the report, click [HERE](#)

Offsetting Emissions Locally

Beginning in FY17 and continuing through FY18, a consultant team has assisted the City in studying the design and feasibility of a potential Local Carbon Offset Fund (Action 4). The Fund could create flexibility for buildings to meet their Net Zero targets by giving credit for investment in GHG reductions in other locations in and near Cambridge. It could also provide a voluntary vehicle for local institutions to help advance their GHG reduction goals, while bringing local benefits such as increased comfort and better air quality and health for residents and employees whose buildings are improved through the Fund. The study is anticipated to wrap up in June with a report of key conclusions and next steps.



Tracking Building Energy Use

The City engaged a consultant to research "beyond benchmarking" requirements in other communities, analyze the BEUDO dataset for potential building categories and performance thresholds, and consider the potential energy and cost savings that could result from efficiency improvements. Building off of the conclusions from that *research*, CDD and the consultant team recently began a stakeholder process including owners of a variety of BEUDO-reporting buildings to work towards the design of potential new requirements. The stakeholder meetings are focused on determining (a) potential performance-based thresholds such as energy use intensity or Energy Star Score as a basis for requirements; (b) required actions, which could include energy audits, retrocommissioning, and continuous improvement; and (c) program design considerations including exemptions and administration. The City will use the outcome of these meetings to propose potential amendments to the BEUDO ordinance. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about BEUDO.

Looking Forward

Improving Building Energy Efficiency

In FY19, Net Zero efforts will include identifying a voluntary program structure that can help advance energy retrofits and savings for BEUDO buildings. Expanding on the model of the *Multi-Family Energy Efficiency Pilot*, the program will seek to leverage state energy efficiency resources and incentives to better serve the Cambridge building community. If you are interested in being part of this process, please reach out to Seth Federspiel, Net Zero Energy Planner, at sfederspiel@cambridgema.gov.

Lowering Laboratory Energy Use

Led by the Cambridge Compact for a Sustainable Future, the Net Zero Lab Working group is investigating potential best practices and standards to increase energy savings in laboratories. In FY19, the Working Group plans to use the results of benchmarking studies and expert input to pilot new energy-saving strategies. To join the working group, contact John Bolduc, Environmental Planner, at jbolduc@cambridgema.gov.

Incentivizing New Building Efficiency

In concert with the *Envision Cambridge* citywide planning process, the City is considering how development incentives such as increased floor area and height could lead to more net zero buildings in Cambridge. Incentives will be balanced to enable achievement of multiple community goals.

Enabling More Solar Development

To help achieve the Net Zero Action Plan goal of installing 160 MW of solar in Cambridge by 2040, the City will study what solar installation requirements for new buildings and major renovations in Cambridge might include. This work will leverage the *recent requirements passed by California*.

Additional Resources

[Sustainability Dashboard](#)

The Sustainability Dashboard tracks the City's progress toward sustainability goals. See the Cambridge Energy Alliance for energy saving tips and programs.

For more information about the Cambridge Net Zero Action Plan, please contact: Seth Federspiel, Net Zero Energy Planner, sfederspiel@cambridgema.gov, 617-349-4674

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