

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 7:00 PM

Select Board Meeting Room, Town House, 22 Monument Square, 2nd Floor

This meeting may also be accessed remotely through the following Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89658925084?pwd=dqCN47QKgw07ZKlda071EnKYbbbIfk.1>

Meeting ID: 896 5892 5084

Passcode: 771884

Dial In Toll-Free: 888 475 4499

Agenda

1. Welcome – comments, announcements, events [7:00]
2. Approval of minutes: Dec 17. and Jan. 5 [7:05]
3. Chair’s update [7:10]
 - a. CAC annual report
 - b. 2026 Annual Town Meeting
4. Deputy Town Manager’s update [7:20]
5. Presentation on proposed municipal solar policy: Charles Parker, Dean Banfield [7:35]
6. [Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#) [8:00]
 - a. Debrief of brainstorming session
 - b. First steps for engaging vendor
 - c. Next steps, roles for committee members
7. Other updates [8:30]
 - a. GSEP/non-pipeline alternatives
 - b. Networked Geothermal
 - c. Schools
8. Public comments [8:45]
9. Adjourn [8:50]

Documents relevant to this meeting will be posted when they become available at

<https://concordma.gov/4043/Meeting-Materials>

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or if you are a person with a disability who requires accommodation, please contact Megan Zammuto, Deputy Town Manager for the Town of Concord at mzammuto@concordma.gov or 978-318-3006. While every attempt will be made to provide reasonable accommodations, requests should be made with as much advance notice as possible.

Climate Action Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes - 12/17/25

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a public meeting of the CAC was held on December 17th 2025 at 7:00 pm in person at the Select Board Meeting Room and via Zoom (hybrid). A recording of this meeting is available on [YouTube](#).

Committee members attending: Brad Dye (BradD, Chair), Brad Hubbard-Nelson (BradHN, Clerk) Fran Cummings, Bob Shatten, Kathryn Hopkins. Absent: , Shelly Karlin, Paul Kirshen
Town Staff: Shannon McAndrew(online). Megan Zammuto, Wendy Rovelli (Select Board liaison)
Community Members: Kim Slack (CMLP Heat Pump Coach), Ken Reeves (online), Linda Nieman (online),

Meeting began at 7:05 pm

1. Welcome – comments and announcements
 - a. Green Home tours - request for CAC sponsorship and call for volunteers
 - i. Kim Slack described the 3rd Annual Green Homes Tour, scheduled for January 31st, this time run by CMLP. They are requesting that CAC co-sponsor the event. Three homes including Wendy and BradHN. Volunteer greeters needed, and induction cooking, and posting flyers. Jan Aceti is going all-out for promotion, including an over street banner. Email kslack@concordma.gov to get more information.
 - ii. Bpb asked whether Solar Hot Water was being promoted. Concord doesn't provide incentives, so there isn't a financial reason to do it compared with SolarPV and Heat Pump Water Heater. Deck houses in Bob's neighborhood were plumbed for Solar Hot Water.
 - iii. Several CAC members will volunteer. Committee voted unanimously to sponsor (BradHN proposed, Bob seconded).
 - b. Sustainable Middlesex meeting last Saturday at Fowler Church in Lexington Highlights:
 - i. Senator Mike Barrett spoke about 'affordability' issues as a distraction from climate commitments. While MA has a high energy costs per unit of energy (one of the highest states), the energy consumed is low compared to most states, and the energy burden per capita and gdp normalized are among the lowest in the country.
 - ii. Mass Community Climate Bank talked about the Energy Saver Home Loan program, which provides very low interest (0.5-2%) loans to income eligible applicants provided they can achieve 20% energy savings. We could work with the affordable housing community to get solar and heat pumps installed in as many of the affordable homes in town as possible. Idea for the CAP.
2. Meetings and minutes
 - a. Approval of Nov. 19th minutes. Approved unanimously with minor grammatical corrections. (Fran proposed, Bob seconded).
 - b. Upcoming meeting and event dates: November/December. BradD had sent them ahead of time. A couple from the list had been added to the CoolerConcord.org website.
3. CAC Chair updates
 - a. State legislation follow-up
 - i. BradD reported on the redraft of the energy affordability bill. He spoke with someone from MAPC. There is not currently a coordinated set of community feedback, but MAPC is working on a sign-on letter that we may see in the near

future. This may come to the Town Manager office. He thought it would be useful for a letter to be sent, since the legislation is likely to be acted on at some point which may be something in between the Gov and Cusack's assembly bill.

- ii. Monday there were a couple dozen mini bills in the state senate. BradD hadn't had time to process what they were but will check into whether any affect us. One was an expansion of the 10 town fossil-free program. Fran did look at them compared to the Elders Climate Action legislative agenda. One from Senator Barrett related to home energy ratings; Fran was thinking perhaps we could suggest an amendment to add a home greenhouse gas rating.
 - b. CAC annual report draft. It looks close to finished, a couple formatting suggestions were made. Committee members should try to have any edits to BradD by the end of next week. Committee votes unanimously (BradHN proposed, Kathryn second) to have BradD finish it with any comments he sees fit to include.
 - i. Next year annual report should score our progress with the climate action plan, particularly if we complete another greenhouse gas inventory. More difficult would be to have biodiversity metrics which would be of interest.
 - c. 2026 Annual Town Meeting. Governance workshop is an [online video](#) about Town Meeting process.
 - i. Possible citizen petition on solar municipal policy, no draft for this meeting but they (Charlie Parker and Dean Banfield) may present to us in Jan or Feb.
 - ii. Kathryn asked if there should be a policy around balcony solar. This would be an issue for CMLP to address. Fran said MassCEC had a video relating to this topic.
 - iii. BradHN Related issue is batteries which fire department doesn't allow in attached garages, which is another technology that a policy could address.
 - d. Megan reported that the CMLP Director would be happy to present to us about specific questions.
4. Deputy Town Manager's update
 - a. A written report was sent (Attachment 1). Megan reported on the application for MVP 2.0. Looking for more equity centered community engagement. Timing aligns well with CAP development so it can align with other work. Concord has no EJ census block now that MCI is gone.
 - b. Attended a fleet electrification ribbon cutting at Minuteman ARC last week. They were very happy with CMLP's responsiveness,
 - c. ESCO update - now working with Power Options energy services firm for governments. We have a gas contractor now who is not Power Options - but we may get out of that contract and join the Power Options program.
 - d. Moving forward on the MVP action grant for SuAsCo watershed. Today was the first municipal focus group with staff from several towns. Issues of capacity across communities, another on Jan 2nd. Outsiders can join by Zoom. Project wide community forum will be in March.
 - e. Concord Podcast is a sustainability podcast - latest one is on the Stormwater Utility. Next one is with Library Director on their sustainability effort. Then a heat pump podcast in time to plug the home tour.
 - f. Meeting with National Grid rep - coordination call, included Fran. They have a team called Future of Heat who were not on the call. Discussed what roles are on the GSEP NPA projects and how CAC can participate. Planning more working sessions. Fran: we should be clear about the outcomes we want, such as helping us engage with customers for electrification. BradHN raised a question about timing with respect to the CAP.
5. Climate Action and Resilience Plan

- a. Shannon update on contract - sent contract to them this week, approved by legal teams..
 - b. The committee decided have an additional brainstorming meeting. BradHN suggested meeting in early January. Shannon will send a poll to schedule. Fran suggests Monday the 5th at lunchtime. Brown bag lunch climate action brainstorming.
 - c. Fran asked about our doing a new GHG inventory. BradHN to send update on where to find inventory files from 2022. The question is whether new data for 2025 or 2024 should be used for the CAP, and when the 2025 data would be available.
 - d. Hope is that Weston & Samson can come at January CAC meeting and that we plan to structure that meeting to have a worthwhile dialog.
 - e. Megan suggested we designate certain members focus on particular topics, BradHN and Fran agree: We should identify areas where individual members add the most value, to be productive.
6. Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP)/non-pipeline alternatives
- a. Proposed GSEP) project on Elsinore St., letter to DPU (Attachment 2)
 - i. Fran send draft comments for the DPU GSEP plan. This connects somewhat with the meeting with Nat Grid. But this is about the DPUs process of GSEP planning. Very specific to pipes, leaks and pipe replacement, and he spent a good deal of effort to better understand the details. Fran's memo emphasizes leaks, which is relevant to us. A little milder than he might want to say. Lot of detail intentionally.
 - ii. Committee approves of the letter. Fran to submit to the DPU (vote unanimous, Bob proposed, BradHN seconded) .
 - iii. Fran thought about whether to send to Select Board and decided not to. Bob suggested having Concord Bridge reporter read the letter and write a piece on it.
 - iv. BradD cautioned that we think about relationship management with National Grid. Fran could send the memo to NG when it is submitted.
 - v. BradD explained there is a rubric for selecting leaks to fix, prioritizing those that endanger buildings. Even major leaks may not be prioritized. Problem is also that new leaks are reported continually.
 - vi. Fran concluded that we don't get enough warning to do a real project to replace a pipe. There is legislation reform proposed which might help to make this more rational. Fran added: gas company had obligation to serve, we may need to deal with certain individual homeowners who want to stay on gas.
 - vii. Ken Reeves had sent around a letter that could go to residents on Elsinore Street but that wasn't moved forward.
 - b. Other updates on activities - none
7. Other Updates
- a. Networked Geothermal
 - i. BradHN reported on a Proposal to MAPC for a 4 MLP community collaboration - which won't be submitted because Concord couldn't commit to leading the effort on top of the CAP update. Hopefully this will take place anyhow within the REPA grant funding with MAPC leading. Megan explained that the summer proposal that was awarded included Concord and Marblehead. In the exploratory effort, MAPC staff would be doing more of the work and may involve a consultant. With updating the CAP the Concord staff was overcommitted to be in a leadership role, but we can support the effort.
 - b. Schools
 - i. BradD asked about the municipal solar policy. Megan reported that a meeting is scheduled for early Jan to discuss the municipal solar policy. Wendy wants to

move it forward, but needs some more feedback on a couple of details relating to building orientation and roof size. Refer to a CAC meeting video from Sep 2024. Postpone further discussion to January meeting we can review any changes.

- c. MCI-Concord redevelopment and new MassDOT rotary proposals
 - i. BradD calls attention to rotary fixes. MassDOT falls into a much larger program of many revisions for Route 2 out to Westminster. New maps use less land use in the MCI area. An earlier proposal called for widening route 2, but the recent proposal doesn't call for this, which is positive.
 - ii. BradHN said we participate in this issue through the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).
 - iii. Current work at MCI focuses on how land should be zoned. Next phase master plan doesn't have a consultant yet.
 - d. Cooler Concord and social media
 - i. Social media happening on CoolerConcord facebook, instagram and MOF Facebook. Two posts a week happening from MassEnergize using [Planable.io](#). Wide range of sustainability related topics. Concord posts are customized for our CMLP incentive programs.
 - ii. Have been meeting regularly with Betsy and Shelly to talk about social media posts and how we can increase reach.
 - iii. What we haven't been doing yet is to share to other pages and would like suggestions on where to do that.
 - iv. New [CoolerConcord.org](#) site is now live, replacing the previous site with one based on Wordpress. Would like feedback from anyone on the site, the actions, ideas for new pages or to make it most useful. Brad and Brad attended a training on the site administration and Betsy and Shelly both added as admins. Mainly to post events and improve content.
 - v. Mailchimp list has 730 subscribers from previous events where they signed up, and imported from the old website. These subscribers will receive email notifications of events, and newsletters when we write them, but can unsubscribe from either or both.
 - vi. Planning to write a newsletter for January to announce the new site, and perhaps monthly through the year.
8. Public comments - none
9. Adjourned at 9:11pm.

Attachments:

- 1. Staff December report
- 2. Draft comment letter for DPU

Climate Action Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes - 1/5/26

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a public meeting of the CAC was held on January 5, 2026 at 12:00 pm in person at the Select Board Meeting Room. The purpose of this meeting was to hold a brainstorming session ahead of the kickoff meeting with Weston and Sampson on the Climate Action and Resilience Plan update.

Committee members attending: Brad Dye (BradD, Facilitator, acting Clerk), Brad Hubbard-Nelson (BradHN, Clerk of the Committee) Fran Cummings, Shelly Karlin, Paul Kirshen (late arrival), Bob Shatten, Kathryn Hopkins.

Town Staff and members of other committees: Megan Zammuto (Deputy Town Manager), Wendy Rovelli (Select Board liaison), Jason Bulger (Director, Concord Municipal Light Plant), Emily Smith (Director of Libraries), Alan Cathcart (Director of Public Works) (late arrival), Eric _____.

Members of the public: Betsy Olsson-Mackowski, Tanya Gailus

Meeting called to order at 12:03 PM with BradD facilitating.

1. Intro and ground rules of the meeting
 - a. Goal of the day is to define our strategic principles before engaging our consultant.
 - b. Planned time contract of 1 hour shall be loosened due to additional attendees, but hoping meeting last no longer than 1:05 or 1:10 PM.
 - c. All attendees asked to participate and agree that no item of conversation shall go longer than 90 seconds; if disagreement or deeper discussion necessary, CAC will return to the topic in a later deliberation.

2. Warmup exercise: 1-up, 1-down
 - a. Participants each wrote 1 “big win”, good idea or something to build upon, and 1 “disappointment”, bad execution or action that was misaligned from town priorities from the current Climate Action and Resilience Plan on a sticky note, presented them to the group, and posted them to a group board. (See appendices ___ to ___).
 - b. The goal of this exercise was to ground thinking and discussion for the rest of the meeting in terms of the current Climate Action and Resilience Plan and the history of town climate efforts.

3. Vision of Success: backcasting exercise
 - a. Participants were asked to engage in a backcasting exercise. The prompt was to envision that 5 years in the future, and that because of their role in the town, they have been asked to give a presentation in a neighboring town on the success of the revised Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Each participant was asked to spend time writing on sticky note(s):
 - i. A 1-word definition of success
 - ii. The key takeaway that speaker would wish to impart in his/her remarks
 - iii. 3-5 things the town did well that led to that success.
 - b. Once most participants were done writing, the ideas were presented, merged into key themes, and briefly discussed. (See appendices ___ to ___).
 - i. Based on this merging of ideas, BradD proposed that the draft priorities for revising the Climate Action and Resilience Plan ought to be

1. That the plan be Pathbreaking, providing an acceleration of town momentum on climate; at the vanguard of municipal climate efforts; and producing continuous progress on a variety of key issues.
 2. That the plan be Pragmatic in its approach, ensuring that priority actions are achievable inside of the human, financial and technological resources available to us; that the measures undertaken enjoy the broad support of the community; and that emission goals are focused, targeted and practical in balancing competing interests of cost, total emissions and implementability.
 3. That the plan encapsulate Sustainability in the fullest sense of the word, both that it encourages the town lives in a more sustainable relationship with our planet, and also that the momentum and success of town actions are durable through time and not just short-term victories on a checklist, and also that we are building public awareness, support and education as we go about our work.
- ii. It was noted that these priorities are not necessarily in perfect harmony; that some tension exists among them, especially thinking about a climate plan that is both enterprising and pragmatic. However, when two priorities conflict, they should be viewed as twin mandates, and that the challenge in deliberation becomes how to resolve the conflict in a way that best advances these priorities.

4. Evaluation: gallery walk

- a. Participants were presented with prepared posters arranged around the room, each one bearing 1 of the 5 climate plan issue areas and action dashboards. Participants were instructed to walk freely about the room for the next 10-12 minutes and consider each issue area. They were prompted to write on the board items that they would like to “keep” or build upon in the next five years, “shift” focus, rethink, fade in priority, or eliminate from the next climate plan, and to express what might be “missing” from the picture. Participants were free to budget their time and focus as they saw fit, focusing on one key interest or issue if it was of particular interest, and feeling free also to say nothing on an issue of low interest or if they had nothing to say; provided, however, that each participant at least for a moment consider each of the 5 areas.
- b. Collectively, participants provided several thoughts on all 15 columns during the deliberation, and were then asked to review the boards to take in each others’ thoughts. (See appendices ___ to ___.)
- c. Returning to their seats, participants were then prompted to begin crystallizing the key themes and pillars of the exercise.

5. Final Analysis

- a. Based on the boards participants filled out during the Warmup, Backcasting, and Evaluation, participants were asked to extract what are our 3 key strategic pillars. Participants did not reach complete consensus, but key points of discussion included:
 - i. The need to be revolutionary, accelerationist, and innovative in addressing emissions in particular and the externalities of climate change as well.
 - ii. The need for practical, cost-conscious, and achievable progress.
 - iii. The need for measurement and efforts that will be sustainable throughout the five year plan period and beyond, building a base for future resilience efforts.

- iv. The needs to invest both in education on how people can live sustainably in a future Concord, and also to invest money in new endeavors, particularly those that will make the town more adaptable to an unknown future.
- v. The need to see the global picture: these issues are interdisciplinary, often have multi-faceted challenges attached to them, require multiple personalities and departments working together, and often stretch beyond the boundaries of the community.

6. Adjournment

- a. BradHN moved and Fran seconded that the CAC adjourn to meet next on January 21, 2026 at 7 PM in the Select Board Meeting Room. Motion carried unanimously and meeting adjourned at 1:08 PM.

The “Does It Work?” Mid-Winter Home Tour

Saturday, January 31 from 1 – 3:30PM

Snow Date: Saturday, February 7 from 1 – 3:30PM



Enjoy a cup of hot mulled cider and great conversations with neighbors!

Bring your questions. Get real answers about 21st-century electric heating, cooling, cooking, and car travel.

- Can a heat pump *really* keep a home warm throughout the winter?
- What's it like to drive an EV on a long trip?
- How does cooking on an induction stove compare to gas?
- Is it worth getting solar panels?

You may leave with new friends. You'll certainly leave with new insights, including a feel for the comfort of a heat pump-heated home in mid-winter.



Register Now!

Via the QR code or at
Concordma.gov/TourRegistration

Visit up to two homes during the Tour.

You can read about each home on the registration webpage before committing.

- Tour a home with a ducted or a ductless heat pump, depending on whether you currently have air ducts or not.
- Get a closeup look at a host's EV and home charging setup.
- See an induction stovetop demo and talk with an experienced user.
- Ask a host about installing and using solar panels to help power a heat pump, EV or other electric needs.
- See a super-efficient heat pump water heater and find out how it performs.

You don't have to make the switch singlehandedly!

CMLP staff will be at each home with information about no-cost coaching services and financial incentives.

Sponsored by the



and the Concord Climate Action Committee

Events/Meeting List

*****REMINDER***** The next CAC meeting is the second Wednesday of February, not the third. **Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 7:00 PM.**

Thursday, Jan 22 12-1:30 PM; virtual event; MA Climate Action Network hosts a talk entitled Sustainability Director: Opportunities and Challenges on municipal sustainability work and how volunteers can get involved. Jillian Wilson-Martin, Sustainability Director for the Town of Natick since 2014, shares insights from her work partnering with departments, residents and businesses. Learn about the value, challenges and opportunities of municipal sustainability work from installing solar canopies and heat pumps to expanding composting programs and developing climate action plans. To register, visit https://www.massclimateaction.org/professional_sustainability_director_opportunities_and_challenges

Saturday, Jan 24 2-3:30 PM; Gardening for Biodiversity with Native Plants, with Amy Meltzer. In this talk, Amy will focus on the current biodiversity crisis; the evolutionary history among native plants, insects, birds and fungi, and how these interdependent relationships among diverse species are necessary for their survival. She will show how growing native plants and using ecological landscape practices can simultaneously reverse biodiversity loss, increase resilience in our landscapes, and slow climate change – all while creating a beautiful garden! This event is fully subscribed. Video will be made available at <https://middlesexconservationdistrict.org/>

Wednesday, Jan 28 7 PM; webinar; MetroWest Climate Solutions, The Lincoln Green Energy Committee and Green Newton will beco-hosting a webinar entitled Make a Plan to Go Green! Avoid Costly Last Minute Replacement Decisions. Edith Buhs, brings a behavioral lens to the energy transition, specializing in making complex building science and electrification concepts and tools accessible and actionable for everyday homeowners. Her hands-on experience includes transforming two century-old, three-family buildings in Boston into high-performing homes on the path to full decarbonization. Along the way, she built her knowledge of building science, energy efficiency and residential decarbonization. She specializes in making these complex topics accessible, helping homeowners make their homes healthier, greener and cozier. To register for this webinar, visit: https://uuma.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hEkLSgxaSrK02s-M_qgjmA#/registration

Wednesday, Jan 28 7-8 PM; the Bedford chapter of Mothers Out Front will be hosting guest participant Liz Antanavica of the Bedford DPW to talk about expanding composting in Bedford, current efforts and incentives. To register, visit: <https://secure.everyaction.com/WHcfsPaTu0qiaaj5vnsU7Q2>

Saturday, Jan 31 10:30-4:00; Fowler Library; wreath composting workday. The last week of January, area residents may drop off their seasonal wreaths at Fowler for them to be composted. Mothers Out Front and other volunteers with wire cutters will help us remove the wire so the greenery can be composted at the Town Compost Site and the forms reused! Want to help? Bring work gloves (and wire cutters if you have them)! It doesn't take long at all to take apart your wreath, and we are happy to show you how. For questions, please call Fowler at 978-318-3350

Saturday, Jan 31 1-3 PM; various locations; The Does It Work Mid-Winter Home Tour. Green home tours at three homes in Concord. To register, visit: <https://concordma.gov/MidWinterHomeTour>

Tuesday, Feb 3 7-8:30 PM; Sudbury Meetinghouse/First Parish of Sudbury, 327 Concord Rd., Sudbury; LWV of Sudbury and Concord-Carlisle, First Parish of Sudbury, Sudbury Meetinghouse, Athina Education, and Sustainable Sudbury, Rep. Gentile and Sen. Eldridge co-host a presentation entitled The Road Ahead: The Impact of Federal Cuts and the State's Response, featuring Director of the Commonwealth's Office of Federal Funds and State Infrastructure Quentin Palfrey. Palfrey will provide an overview of how Massachusetts is responding to the recent, dramatic changes in federal funding, the potential impacts on local governments, non-profits, and others, and what lies ahead.

Wednesday, Feb 4, 8-9 AM; Fowler Library; Winter Walk for Thoreau Families. The Concord Public Library, Mothers Out Front Concord and the Safe Routes to School program invite Thoreau families to bundle up and walk to school. Meet at Fowler at 8 AM to join the group.

Saturday, Feb 28 1-4 PM; Fowler Library, Meeting Room. Seed Packing party. Join us at Fowler as we restock the Concord Seed Lending Library.

Sunday, Mar 15, 2-4 PM: LWVCC hosts a forum for municipal candidates for office.
Location and details still TBA.

Town of Concord Annual Report 2026
Climate Action Committee (CAC)

Fran Cummings
Brad Dye, Chair
Kathryn Hopkins
Brad Hubbard-Nelson, Clerk
Shelly Karlin
Paul Kirshen
Bob Shatten
Wendy Rovelli, Select Board Liaison

The Climate Action Committee (CAC) was established in 2023 to implement policies and practices to achieve the objectives of the Town's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CAP). CAC responsibilities include:

- reporting on progress in greenhouse gas emission reduction and other CAP goals;
- educating the public and businesses about sustainable practices;
- developing customer focused incentives and programs to reduce emissions;
- identifying present and future climate vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies;
- implementing projects and initiatives for encouraging sustainable energy practices; and
- providing input to and adopting revisions to the CAP.

The committee chooses projects which complement the sustainability work of the Deputy Town Manager, CMLP and other Town entities.

With the five-year 2020 CAP coming to the end of its intended life, the CAC spent much of its time evaluating the progress made under the current CAP and preparing to launch an updated five-year plan in 2026. The committee began the process of evaluating the successes and shortcomings of community efforts to address our climate emergency, including the recruitment of volunteers to help in our evaluation, Town staff to inform our research, and identification of missing or out-of-date data that we will require to analyze municipal energy usage. In conjunction with staff, the CAC worked on a successful search to secure a consultant to craft our next CAP. Completing our next CAP will be the focus of our efforts in the coming year.

Progress was made by CAC members and Town staff on several projects which measure Concord's emissions and help to guide the most cost-effective and practical methods for reducing emissions, or achieving a greater measure of climate resilience. These projects include:

- an audit of energy use in municipal buildings to establish updated emission baselines;
- a decarbonization roadmap exercise which is required for the Town to be certified as a Climate Leader under the Green Communities Program;

- identification of a state grant opportunity to build EV chargers for use by the school district, which the district successfully secured;
- successful pursuit of a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant to establish a Regional Climate Collaborative for towns in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord watershed;
- updates to the Sustainability Dashboard which we use to track emission reduction progress; and
- updates to the Cooler Concord website, mailing list and social media presence.

In 2025, CAC was involved in several policy deliberations. During or pursuant to these deliberations, we:

- Expressed our regret for the budget cuts that led to the elimination of the Sustainability Director position. This position had been approved by the 2017 Annual Town Meeting under warrant article 51, which passed by a near-unanimous vote. CAC has worked closely with the Deputy Town Manager and the Management Specialist who have absorbed the responsibilities of the Sustainability Director, and has helped to ensure continuity by recruiting CAC members or other volunteers to help on projects as needed.
- Unanimously endorsed 2025 Annual Town Meeting warrant article 36, a successful citizen petition which sought to ban second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs). This ban requires enabling legislation, which has yet to be enacted by the General Court.
- Sought several improvements to the 2025-26 Select Board goals on effective governance and sustainability, some of which were incorporated.
- Unanimously endorsed the middle school Parent Teacher Group's efforts to establish a link between the new middle school building and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.
- Monitored outcomes from the popular composting pilot program. With the program now suspended, the CAC intends to seek opportunities to take what we have learned into a second-phase experiment in future years.
- Strongly encouraged a more enterprising role for Town policymakers to accelerate our efforts in reducing emissions and preparing and adapting to the future; to let the federal administration know our commitment to fight against shortsighted actions that will hurt people, the environment, and our communities; and to join local, regional, and global networks that are working together to address the climate emergency and push back against dangerous political forces.

One policy which the CAC considered, but did not vote on, is a proposed municipal solar policy which would require rooftop-mounted solar panels be installed in all new-construction government buildings. Given the current inability to install rooftop solar on the new middle school building - a project which has secured overwhelming community support and bonding authorization to build - we shall return to this discussion in 2026.

The CAC formally commented on state and federal policies which intersect with our climate emergency, sending letters to the legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities

and Energy, the Department of Public Utilities, the Executive Office of Energy Resources, the office of the Governor, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

CAC members also engaged with our community by:

- staging Green Home Tours in conjunction with CMLP to highlight opportunities for residential emission reduction and to connect interested residents with Heat Pump Coaches;
- communicating with other town committees on issues of mutual interest;
- tabling at Ag Day;
- attending briefings and events on a wide variety of environmental and transportation issues; and
- staging a successful Sun Day, in conjunction with Mothers Out Front, the First Parish Church and organizers of a national day of action to celebrate the power of clean energy.

The Climate Action Committee believes that we must accelerate our efforts to mitigate global warming and climate change. We encourage ourselves, our town leadership, and our neighbors to do more for our planet in 2026 than we did in 2025.

January 2026

Sustainability Staff Update

1. Community Engagement & Education: Home Electrification and Heat Pumps

“Does It Work?” Mid-Winter Home Tour

Staff supported outreach for the “Does It Work?” Mid-Winter Home Tour, a resident-facing event designed to demystify heat pump performance during cold weather. The tour highlights local homes using air-source heat pumps and provides residents with an opportunity to hear directly from homeowners about comfort, energy use, and real-world performance. **Register for the Mid-Winter Home Tour here:** <https://cmlp.jotform.com/253446079268063>.

Civic Concord Podcast – Heat Pumps and Home Electrification

Last week, staff hosted a special episode of the *Civic Concord* podcast to highlight the Mid-Winter Home Tour and broader opportunities for residents to make the switch to heat pumps. The episode features Ethan Herberman, Heat Pump Coach with the Concord Municipal Light Plant, and covers how the technology works, what affects performance in cold weather, and what homeowners and communities should understand as adoption grows.

The episode is intended for both local and regional audiences interested in practical, real-world experiences with home electrification and decarbonization.

Listen here: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4kmWidgCIL7563W67k2cXY>

2. SuAsCo Climate Collaborative (MVP Action Grant)

Status and Engagement Progress

The SuAsCo Climate Collaborative continues to move into the active engagement phase.

- Four focus groups were held in the last month – two for municipalities and two for community-based organizations.
- A youth focus group is scheduled for the end of January, with assistance from a Concord resident and a Concord-Carlisle High School student to support youth outreach and facilitation.

Summary – Municipal Focus Group #1 (December 17, 2025)

The discussion centered on challenges communities are already facing and where regional collaboration could add the most value.

Flooding and drought emerged as the most common climate hazards across communities, with heat and extreme weather also frequently cited. Participants noted that vulnerability varies by town and population, with seniors, people with disabilities, small businesses, farmers, environmental justice communities, and aquatic ecosystems all identified as particularly at risk.

Aging stormwater infrastructure—especially culverts—was a major theme. Several communities described rising costs tied to updated Stream Crossing Standards, turning projects that once cost hundreds of thousands of dollars into multi-million-dollar efforts. This has pushed many towns into a reactive posture, addressing urgent failures rather than pursuing long-term, proactive planning.

Stormwater utilities and enterprise funds were discussed as an important tool for building sustainable funding. Communities shared a range of experiences, from recently launching utilities and conducting public outreach, to long-standing enterprise funds that now anchor MS4 compliance and multi-year capital planning.

Water supply resilience also featured prominently. Participants highlighted the growing need to diversify water sources and improve drought preparedness. Regional collaboration is already underway, including a joint MassDEP Water Management Act grant application submitted by Acton, Concord, and Littleton to explore shared system capacity during extreme drought.

Capacity constraints were identified as a persistent barrier, with limited staff and technical resources making it difficult to advance climate work alongside other municipal priorities. There was strong interest in shared tools, standardized outreach materials, and regional data platforms—particularly for flood modeling, water quality, and groundwater impacts.

Overall, participants expressed that the Climate Collaborative's greatest value lies in helping communities address shared challenges together—through regional grant applications, shared data, and coordinated engagement—rather than each town working in isolation.

3. Decarbonization Roadmap

Staff received the draft Decarbonization Roadmap at the end of December. The document is currently under internal review. Once this item is finalized, Concord will be on track to achieve Climate Leader designation in Spring 2026.

4. Energy Procurement and ESCO / PowerOptions Coordination

Staff continue to make progress on a phased approach to building decarbonization and energy procurement.

- The Town’s current natural gas supply contract has been reviewed.
- Staff are working to align the conclusion of that partnership with the start of a new contract through **PowerOptions**, which offers a “building decarbonization as a service” model.
- A meeting is scheduled with School Administration next week to discuss priority facilities and coordination opportunities, given the significant energy use and decarbonization potential within school buildings.

This approach supports a building-by-building strategy rather than a single, comprehensive ESCO project, allowing the Town to sequence investments based on readiness, funding opportunities, and operational needs.

Article Text

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following bylaw requiring integrated solar rooftop systems on all newly constructed Town buildings:

Solar Rooftop Bylaw

All new public buildings constructed by the Town shall include rooftop solar in their design and construction. The intent is to pursue a strategy of single, integrated bids for the design, and construction of new buildings, which minimize duplicative efforts by multiple town departments. As such, these systems are built-out at time of initial constructions, as opposed to separate, post-construction implementation.

- Applies to electrified buildings which can support a solar capacity of 7500kW or greater.
- Includes both Concord Public Schools (CPS) and town-government buildings.
- Systems shall be 'behind-the-meter' and will not directly involve the Concord Municipal Light Plant, except as required by CMLP policy.
- To the extent possible, consistent with financial objectives, these rooftop systems should be designed to blend seamlessly with the building's architecture, serving as both functional and aesthetic elements of the exterior.
- The Select Board shall include a reference to this bylaw in the charge to all future Town Building Committees (School and Town Buildings)
- Exceptions to this bylaw may be granted by the Town of Concord Select Board.

Article Descriptive Text

This policy implements a recommendation from the Solar Implementation Task Force 2024 final report that all new Town and School buildings include rooftop solar as an integral component of the building design and panels are included in the primary construction bidding process. Using new municipal rooftops helps Concord achieve its sustainability goal of up to 20MW of solar generation on Town owned property. It will reduce operating costs and is consistent with Concord's aim of minimizing the carbon footprint of public buildings. Financial payback without any subsidies is expected to be 6-8 years based on current construction costs and CMLP rate structure.

Solar Rooftop Bylaw Proposal

Climate Action Committee

Dean Banfield

Jan 21, 2026

Studies and Goals for Solar

- 2010 CMLP targeted 25MW of solar by 2030
- 2011 Solar Siting Report goal 22MW
- 2021 Climate Action Plan – 2030 goal 20MW
- 2024 Solar Task Force Report
 - 14MW max potential (4MW of which unlikely)

Efforts to Date

- 2010 48kW array, Willard School
- 2014 1.7MW former landfill
- 2017 5.6MW former WR Grace property
- 2026 Landfill expansion and upgrade
 - 1.7 -> 4.2MW (adds 2.5MW)
- 2026 CMS array designed @1.2MW

Solar Task Force Findings -2024

- Limit CMLP solar to cost neutral projects
 - 4 ground mount sites identified
- Canopies and CMLP-managed rooftops, not cost effective and/or overly complex to manage
- ‘Behind the meter’ systems are cost effective
- **Report recommends integrated design and bidding of rooftop solar on new public buildings**

Benefits from Rooftop Solar

- Equity – in our backyard
- Local renewable energy eases NE grid stress
- Reduced operating cost (lower electric bills)
- Aligned with Town goals for minimal carbon footprint public infrastructure

Implications

- Clear guidance for future building committees
 - Integrated design
 - Unified bid/construction responsibility
- Single entity responsible for maintenance
 - Town or School as designated responsible party
- Payback period likely 6-8yrs without subsidy
- Capital upcharge @ 1-1.5% for typical school

Warrant Article

- Codifies as a bylaw recommendation to include solar on all new Town buildings
- Provides lower limit and exemption for unelectrified storage structures
- Provides appeal/waiver process via Select Board action

Questions / Discussion

To: Climate Action Committee

CC: Megan Zammuto, Deputy Town Manager, Climate Action Committee Liaisons

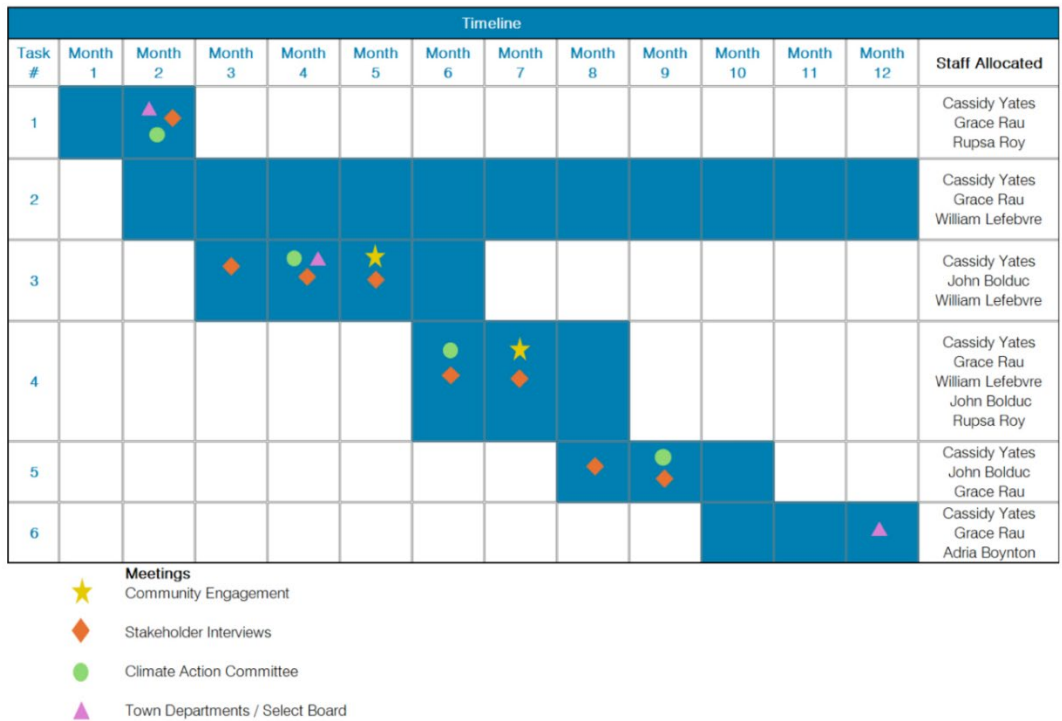
From: Shannon McAndrew, Management Specialist

Date: January 21, 2026

Subject: Climate Action and Resilience Plan Update with Weston and Sampson – Project Update

Project Timeline – *Standing Review Item*

The timeline graphic illustrates the anticipated 12-month project schedule, organized by task and showing when key engagement activities are expected to occur.



- Blue bars indicate active work periods for each major task.
- Icons identify points of engagement, including:
 - Climate Action Committee meetings
 - Community engagement workshops
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Meetings with Town departments and the Select Board

Task 1 Review: Progress Assessment and Initial Planning

1.1: Review 2020 Climate Action and Resilience Plan and Other Related Documents/Plans

- SharePoint Folder with the 2020 CARP and other related documents/plans was shared with Weston and Sampson for their team to review.
- They are intending to have this review nearly complete by our next internal check-in meeting.

1.2: Develop a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Kick-Off with the Climate Action Committee

- The proposal includes two in-person and two virtual meetings with the Climate Action Committee over the course of the project.
- The first Climate Action Committee meeting with Weston & Sampson has been confirmed for Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 7:00 PM.
- **Action Item for the Committee:** Please put together a one-paragraph bio of yourself, highlighting your background, expertise, and interests in the sustainability field. The Weston and Sampson Project Managers would like to review in advance of the meeting. **Due to Shannon at smcandrew@concordma.gov by Friday, February 6, 2026.**
 - This is intended to help Weston & Sampson to help identify opportunities for topic-specific participation from Committee members aligned with the project timeline.

Broader Community Engagement

- Weston and Sampson will prepare a draft Community Engagement plan for approval prior to beginning broader engagement.
- As reflected in the timeline, the proposal includes two in-person and two virtual community workshops:
 - First workshop: Tentatively scheduled for May 2026
 - Second workshop: Was tentatively scheduled for July 2026, but we flagged that community engagement in the summertime in Concord is challenging. Closer to, we will consider if it makes more sense to bump this up to June or to push until September.
- Thinking about Committee members' greater participation in broader engagement:
 - Intermedium engagement with the community directly
 - Participation at workshops, such as running small group activities/tabling
- Stakeholder interviews will be held throughout the main duration of the project.