



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

October 6, 2023

Green Communities

Janet completed the final report for the 2021 Green Communities competitive grant projects and submitted it to DOER on September 29. DOER will review the report and project photos before approving final disbursement of grant funds.

Janet and Marybeth continue to work towards applying for a Green Communities \$500,000 building decarbonization grant in spring 2024 to support the Warren Recreation Building renovations. Marybeth contacted Tom Croteau, Wellesley's National Grid representative that assists with Mass Save incentives, to start the process of getting a scoping level audit for the Warren Recreation building. The scoping study is needed to determine if any further weatherization is needed before or as part of the planned HVAC renovations to be eligible for the grant.

Governance and General Outreach

- The November 2023 Special Town Meeting will be in-person at the Wellesley Middle School November 6th and 7th. The Special Town Meeting Warrant can be found at the following link: https://www.wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36714/STM-Warrant-Nov-2023_signedstamped-913
- CAP Dashboard: Janet is working on the action status tables to send out for review by several CAC members and Town staff, and other sources.
- Marybeth, working with Mike Thompson, continues to develop the Climate Action – Be part of it! Webpages. Martha Collins provided valuable feedback on the Green Your Mobility page.
- Marybeth revised and submitted the CAC's Annual Report
- See work on Site Plan Review, Design Guidelines Handbook, embodied carbon, and Zero Emissions First Fleet Policy, below

Gas Transition

From Lise Olney

Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative

Upcoming meeting on **Thursday, October 5, 11 am to 12:30 pm**, via Zoom. Please register [HERE](#).

Main topic will be **gas leak repair** with Professor Nathan Phillips of Boston University and Bob Ackley of Gas Safety Inc.:

- What gas leak repair methods are currently in use in our cities and towns and how effective are they?
- What more advanced methods of repair could be used?
- What are the barriers to putting more effective methods in place?
- What can we do to promote the adoption of these methods?

The meeting will also include:

- An update on key gas-related legislation
- How to plan a “gas leaks safari” in your town - like [this one](#) in Arlington
- A report from Newton resident Peter Barrer on an [interactive website](#) he and others created with information on the city’s gas infrastructure system, including gas leaks, dig safe points, GSEP funding plans, grants of location, pressure stations, and more.

Gas Transitions Allies

GTA's current priorities:

- **Legislative Advocacy** – Continuing to advocate for gas transition related bills in the state legislature and to seek support from municipal officials, including
 - H.3204/S.2105, The Future of Clean Heat
 - H.3137/SD. 2603, Empowering Municipal Voices
 - H. H.873/S.2092, MATH: Making Methane Accounting Truthful Helps
- **Mass Save Reform** – Working with the Building Electrification Accelerator and Elders Climate Action to advance goals for Mass Save Reform.
- **Gas system expansion** – Recently discussed Enbridge Project Maple – “open season” for expansion of the gas distribution system in the Northeast, with projected construction of additional pipelines on existing right-of-ways. Enbridge Project Maple description [HERE](#). WBUR article [HERE](#).

Waste

From Marybeth:

Welcome to Wellesley Working Group

Ellen Korpi began leading a Welcome to Wellesley Working Group that meets weekly to plan outreach to new residents. The group drafted a welcome letter. Ellen and Jamie Manzolini met with three Wellesley merchants (Demian Wendrow, Rick Cram, and Adrienne Davis-Brody), to discuss integrating coupons and other merchant offerings in the welcome package. These three merchants will invite other Wellesley Square and Linden Square merchants to participate.

Chamber of Commerce Environmental Working Group

Sue, Marybeth, and Mary Gard attended the Chamber of Commerce Environmental Working Group meeting on September 21. The Chamber will establish a working group to develop and coordinate restaurant waste reduction outreach across Wellesley, Newton, Needham, and Watertown. Jamie

Manzolini and Sue Morris volunteered to serve on this working group. Marybeth informed Lenny of the working group and will keep him posted.

Wellesley Green Schools meeting – waste and other Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) topics

From Sue Morris:

Wellesley Green Schools (WGS) had a meeting on September 21 that was well attended including Matt Delaney from Whitsons, Catherine Mirick from School Committee, Lisa Moore from NRC, Marybeth Martello, Sue Morris, Phyllis Theermann, Michelle Foster, Katie Sullivan from WMS PTO, and many other WPS green team representatives. There was good discussion on multiple topics.

- There are Green Team Reps at all WPS except for Bates and WHS. WGS is actively recruiting reps for those schools.
- WGS is working with Catherine Mirick & Sharon Gray to incorporate more sustainability into the WPS Strategic Plan
- Catherine Mirick gave an update on the new Hunnewell and Hardy Schools.
 - MLP and Schools we have an RFP for solar on the schools which would also include the library and DPW building
 - This Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) which is a lease of roof space
 - Not enough space on roofs to make the buildings fully net zero but will help reduce energy use and make us have local energy generation
 - Battery storage areas are in the plans but batteries not yet. Need to determine latest technology for battery storage
- H/H Sustainability features/occupant training
 - Hunnewell- how can students see/understand/learn about this "green" building
 - Schools are working with FMD to educate on occupancy behavior
 - Catherine to look into seeing if a portion of the native /low maintenance planting area can be for the PTO so kids can get involved/plant seeds
 - Lisa Moore from NRC offered help with educational module
 - There will be an open house during Wellesley Wonderful Weekend in May 2024 for students and families to learn about and discuss features of net zero ready schools
- Transportation
 - Safe Routes to Schools - all schools are partners can access them for bike rodeos, walk to school support, etc.
 - Oct 4 is International Walk to School Day. We discussed thanking ALL bus riders (yellow bus and small van riders) as well as walkers for making a difference.
 - School Committee is working to make the bus free in next 4 years - decreasing approximately \$100/year
 - Discussed getting monitors on the bus would help some parents say yes to having their students on the bus
 - Route 1 bus stops and the Catch Connect service available for anyone 12 and older (was free; now small fee)
 - WGS is planning another idling awareness campaign event this fall.
- Waste Diversion Updates
 - WGS is planning a Choose to Reuse campaign focusing on avoiding use of single use disposable plastics
 - WMS - potentially \$30k is budgeted for 6&7th grade food waste pick up. Specifics aren't clear and the contract is not signed. Currently the food waste program that was rolled out last Spring to 6th graders is not up and running due to CERO contract not being signed and custodial pushback. Jonathan Rabinowitz is hoping to get that back running asap. Also, there is currently a stipend for the WMS Compost Club

- WGS will be organizing a Halloween Costume Swap- borrow, create, source from RDF Take and Leave, FB Buy Nothing Wellesley/ Wellesley Give and Take, Shoppers Corner, Sprague costume sale
- Hunnewell/Hardy Waste Diversion Discussion
 - Catherine to ask about what are the stumbling blocks on getting composting in place for opening (with David L)
 - Need to work with Adam at the Health Dept
 - WGS believes there is value in starting composting when the buildings open or in the following fall when its students are redistricted and there are more people in the building
 - Hunnewell will have recycling and liquid dump out stations
- All Schools
 - Hoping Matt Delaney can look into recyclable trays (vs compostable) so the town can take them/make money off of them. Previously he could not source some that were strong enough but new options exist
 - Need alternative to plastic flatware & plastic serving containers
 - Inconsistent information from EL Harvey as to what is recyclable and what is not so need to get accurate information
 - Would like to include compost/food waste/recycling and more sustainability into curriculum
 - A Sprague custodian recommended that classroom recycling education be refreshed
 - WGS believes sorting food waste is one way students at a young age can DO SOMETHING about climate change and this fits in with the district's social and emotional learning objectives and is empowering to them
 - Marybeth proposed a School Recycling Coordinator staff position and identified two potential funding sources to support this half-time position via the Department of Public Works or via a shared position with the Town of Natick. Sue and Marybeth had a preliminary conversation about a potential position with Catherine Mirick and Lisa Moore on September 29. Catherine is scheduling a meeting with School Superintendent, David Lussier, and other school administrators.
- Links to WGS website at <https://www.sustainablewellesley.com/> for:
 - PTO Partnership Guide/SMART Guide
https://www.sustainablewellesley.com/uploads/1/2/3/5/123581254/wgs_smarteventguide_oct2022.pdf
 - Anti-idling Tent Card
https://www.sustainablewellesley.com/uploads/1/2/3/5/123581254/no_idling_tent_card_allschools.docx.pdf
 - Food Donation one pager

<https://www.sustainablewellesley.com/food-waste-diversion.html>

Buildings

From Fred Bunger

Buildings Working Group (BWG) update

B1 Regulatory:

- Sent comments to Planning Department Design Review Board [Design Guidelines Handbook](#)
- Identified changes to Site Plan Review process [Site Plan Approval Official Development Prospectus](#) forms to include fuel usage, energy modeling, emissions, and other sustainability elements could be added. Next steps are to edit application document and share with Meghan and ZBA staff for feedback before proposing to ZBA.
- CAC members submitted comments on Design Guidelines Handbook. Janet and Marybeth are in the process of reviewing these comments.

B3 Municipal Action

- Mary Gard, Janet, and Marybeth attended two MCAN embodied carbon training sessions (9/21 and 9/28)
- Fred offered to do heat load analysis calculation for all WHA buildings still if data is provided.
- FMD is close to finishing its online public portal to share municipal energy use by building.
- Marybeth reached out to Tom Croteau to determine if National Grid/Mass Save would support a scoping level audit or technical analysis of the police station.

B4 Residential Action

- Energy Coach program development continues (see MLP updates below)

B5 Commercial/Institutional

- BETR Roundtable took place on September 13th at 11 am. Managers from several large buildings and college campuses in Wellesley attended to learn about the benefits of Building Automation Systems. Allen Hebert presented on the system used in Wellesley municipal buildings and a case study demonstrating how it can be used to more quickly diagnose HVAC issues to prevent energy loss. Representatives from Johnson Controls, Automated Logic, and Viking Controls shared information about the systems and services they offer. Janet also presented the 2022 Building Energy Tracking and Reporting results for participating buildings.
- Janet invited an additional 14 medium-sized (10,000-20,000 sq ft) building owners/managers to participate in the BETR program.

EEAC 3 year update of MassSave

Mary Gard and Fred prepared written testimony stressing changes in Mass Save incentives especially relevant for older homes in Wellesley.

DOE Better Buildings Home Energy Score

Fred and Mary attended webinar on Home Energy Score which is a required basis for IRA rebates. Home Energy Score for existing buildings rates buildings on a 1-10 score with 1 = buildings using more than 8% of all rated buildings and 10 = buildings using less energy than 90% of rated buildings. The score requires a certified rater to take 50 measurements in the home, similar to HERS rating for new homes. An on-line tool is available. Several cities (Portland, OR, Ft.Collins, CO, and Ann Arbor, MI, require Home Energy Score on real estate listings.

BEA Quarterly Meeting

Building Electrification Accelerator (BEA) meeting held on 9/28 was mostly devoted to towns' progress reporting. Sarah Ross presented on Undaunted K-12 encouraging zero energy and solar equipped schools to the MSBA. HEET spoke on their grant for networked geothermal demonstration projects A

breakout group discussed how to get medium and high-income homeowners to take the time to take action to electrify.

From Marybeth

Lise Olney and Marybeth drafted text about Wellesley's climate goals and sustainable buildings to be included in a letter to President Spinelli of Babson. At a recent breakfast meeting, Lise spoke with President Spinelli about Babson's building projects. The letter will provide follow-up to this conversation.

On September 29 Catherine Mirick, Sue Morris, Lisa Moore, and Marybeth met to discuss strategies for addressing sustainability in relation to the Hunnewell School opening (see more details below in section on Wellesley Green Schools). Marybeth also discussed this topic in a meeting with Sharon Gray and Stephanie Hawkinson,

Lise Olney, Meghan Jop, Dave Cohen, and Marybeth are considering a HEET/MassCEC Request for Applications (RFA) for a grant program to fund networked geothermal feasibility studies. See RFA highlights below.

Highlights from RFA

- Grant amount = \$50,000 to fund 10 projects (can cover staff time, consultants, community engagement, and admin expenses)
- 40% to environmental justice communities
- Funding may not cover full cost of FS. Applicants encouraged to provide matching funds or seek other grants.
- Schedule
 - October 13 Deadline to request application and/or technical assistance from HEET
 - October Informational webinar (date TBD)
 - November 1 Optional application pre-review—submit to kickstartmass@heet.org
 - December 1 Final applications due
 - January 30, 2024 Grants awarded
 - March 1, 2024 Begin feasibility studies
 - End of 2024 Feasibility studies must be completed

Application Elements (see RFA for a lot more detail)

- Applicant info
- Budget
- Community Demographics
- Building Typology and Zoning Map
- Utility Information
- Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge
- Geothermal Site(s) Identification (optional)

Additional Info from HEET

HEET hosted an informational webinar in July that provided a comprehensive overview of networked geothermal and addressed stakeholder questions about the grant program. If you were unable to attend, please review the [recording](#) and [slide deck](#) ahead of attending the office hour. If you have specific questions or requests regarding your community, please send them to kickstartmass@heet.org.

The grant application and other resources are all available at <https://heet.org/kickstart-mass>.

Mobility

From Colette AuFranc via Meghan Jop:

1. **MWRTA**
 - a. **Funding** - MWRTA secured significant additional funding through the recent state budget process and this “Fair Share Funding” brings MWRTA more on a par with its peer RTAs (MWRTA was the lowest reimbursement of its peer RTAs with one exception). Without this correction the MWRTA would have faced a significant fiscal cliff in two years and would have needed to consider significant service reductions. MWRTA has struggled to hire drivers and is paying well below market rate, which is hurting recruitment and retention. Additional funding will help correct pay disparities, extend service hours and days and allow capital funding grants to be focused on capital etc.
 - b. **Route 1 bus**
 - i. New schedule starts Sept 25th with a slightly adjusted schedule based on the first month’s experience and a clearly identified out and back stop at Cross Street. Ridership exceeded MWRTA’s initial goals for the period despite this being in the summer slow period. This is [great news](#). Colette did take a ride on the Route 1 from Natick Mall to Wellesley at Cross Street – the service was excellent. We need updated infrastructure at the stops (new time tables) and this is in process. Thank you to WPD/DPW for the new bus stop at Cross Street.
 - c. **Babson and Wellesley College**
 - i. Wellesley College – 7.27.23 Jim Nee, Administrator of MWRTA and Colette met with Marianne Cooley, Board Secretary of Wellesley College and SB member in Needham, and Peter Eastment, director of transportation and faculty housing among others to share information on MWRTA services and transportation in general. The meeting was very productive in terms of sharing what transportation is available - not just the Catch Connect but Route 1, ADA services, hospital shuttle services, MBTA clock face schedule weekdays and weekends, upcoming schedule changes to MBTA, ADA goals in Wellesley stations and our work on shared use paths and walking and biking/SMP initiatives. We talked about connections between Wellesley and Needham
 - ii. Babson College – 8.22.23 Jim and Colette met with several administrators at Babson to discuss Route 1 enhancements, the Bus stop at Babson Campus, how to load up Catch Cards and the return of students and the interaction with Catch Connect and the need for public private partnership on this kind of transportation. MWRTA has installed a bus stop and signage on the Babson Campus since our meeting.
 - d. **Needham SB** just had a [discussion on transportation](#) connections at their last meeting. At the meeting consultants (Via) discussed how to improve fixed route bus connections

and institute Micro Transit. Needham is part of the MBTA and is not serviced by an RTA. To implement these public transportation enhancements would require operating budget and capital infusions of up to \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 annually, even with grant funding.

- e. **Newton and recent changes to NewMo** – Newtons Micro Transit service. Newton was initially able to provide low cost, extensive service because of generous state and federal grants. Altogether, the cost of NewMo in Fiscal Year 2023 was \$1.2 million which included only \$275,000 of City funds. This translated to approximately \$51 per vehicle per hour and Newton was operating 10 vehicles. Grant funding was not ongoing. On Sept. 5, Newton reverted to providing service just to its core residents using the ongoing City funding of \$275,000 and a few remaining grants or mitigation funds. Newton will be providing rides only to older adults, individuals with disabilities, lower income residents, and a limited number of students with high needs in select NPS programs.

We have included items e and f above as it really highlights how financially effective it is for Wellesley to be part of the MWRTA. Our transportation assessment from the Cherry Sheet is our contribution toward the cost of services provided by MWRTA.

2. MBTA

- a. New Schedule starts September – will have more frequent trains in peak periods and later night service. This is a continuation of the T's move toward Regional Rail vs Commuter Rail. This is [great news](#).
- b. ADA update – the MBTA accessibility group have secured a design contractor to begin pulling together designs for the freestanding mini highs at Wellesley Sq. and selected other high priority stations. There are still a number of things to work through with the FTA front so no guarantees on the proposed approach, but this is still good progress.
- c. Some great questions were raised at Advisory's most recent discussions of MBTA communities regarding Transit Oriented Development in the current hybrid work environment.
- d. Following up on resident requests for some maintenance work at Wellesley Square, DPW has scheduled some minor stair maintenance and yellow safety striping on the stairs from Crest Road and Railroad Ave to the platform. Also following up on a resident request MBTA has installed very simple platform numbers at Wellesley Square.

3. MPO

- a. At-Large town election – at the request of transportation director Bob King, Wellesley is happy to re-nominate Brookline for this position.
- b. In early August we received a low-cost improvements study from MassDOT that was conducted for intersection improvements at Weston/Linden. This was discussed at the MPO meeting on August 17. Colette attended. Several MPO members commented all positively - specifically the aspects of the study that featured multimodal and housing connections. It was noted this would be a good candidate for complete streets funding. One member asked if the recent developments would contribute funding. Colette thanked the MPO for the study and noted it fitted in very well with strong demand from residents for improved bike amenities along Weston Road and it fits in with our sustainable mobility plan. MWRTA Administrator, Jim Nee, was on the call and given the recent route 1 bus route redesign, suggested we consider bus accommodations. Eric Bourassa noted the MPO does have some grant funding that may be available.

4. Trails

- a. The Sudbury Path was established as a major east-west network trail in 2005. Trails, through Denny Nackoney, contacted the Needham Conservation Commission some years ago about putting in a marked crossing on Great Plain Ave (GPA) but terrain, wetlands, and guardrails and line of sight make this challenging. Meghan has worked with Needham DPW to make progress on a safe trail crossing. Needham's trail maps show the trail going through Olin's paved sidewalks onto GPA and crossing nearby Olin – going up GPA and past Mary Chilton to the Wellesley trail. The maps that Wellesley has and the signage onsite doesn't match what Needham has and has the crossing near Mary Chilton. This includes a stone monument installed in 2018, so it would require more than moving a few signs. Needham DPW walked both sections and with all the signage on the trail behind Olin College it does make sense to have people cross near Mary Chilton. Needham has concerns about traffic speeds on this section and is looking into it. Traffic calming measures and/or speed restrictions would need to be reviewed and funding is required for that. More to come on this.
- b. MAPC is having its annual trail summit on October 26th focused on regional trail development and connecting Framingham trails to adjacent communities. The MAPC is convening a new "Regional Trails Creative Placemaking Strategy Workshop" to be held on October 13th. Colette has been working with NRC Chair and staff for their attendance at the placemaking event.

5. SRTS/Bike Ped

- a. With more and more press coverage of e-bike safety and bike/ped safety in general we continue to receive inquiries on what we are doing about bike/ped safety. The SRTS program aims to ensure bike/ped safety is part of the school curriculum and we continue to work on moving that forward. The Rules of the Ride event has been very successful and we are working to institutionalize that as an annual event for middle schoolers. Colette reached out to Wellesley Rec about looking for a new adult bike group class through the Rec Department - essentially to replace the excellent Out Spoke'n program run by Bob and Lee several years ago.
- b. Thanks to Wellesley DPW for repairing sidewalks, upgrading ADA ramps and building selected new sections of sidewalks as part of the Complete Streets initiative. This is [great news](#).
- c. Maggie Burke at SRTS has signed up each elementary school for iWalk on October 12th. We will ask Stephanie Hawkinson to do the usual announcements. The focus this year will be to build strong walk/bike/roll culture at Hunnewell as it reopens. Catherine is working with Hunnewell PTO, Central Council, Wellesley Green Schools etc to make sure we have plenty of parent engagement. Catherine to talk with WPS leadership about an arrival-dismissal audit at Hunnewell. Stephanie sent an excellent back to school news and announcement asking for attention to safety for student bikers and walkers.

6. MAPC/MWRC

- a. MAPCs I-90 corridor plan grant request has been funded at \$150,000 by EEA. It will be a two-year grant, ending on June 30th, 2025. MAPC is working on the contracting now and following up with Ashland and Weston to see if they want to join the project.

7. Other

- a. Walnut Street reconstruction is ongoing. Stephanie Hawkinson released a news and report highlighting the work and will follow up with a video highlighting the wonderful mobility enhancements as part of this project including the shared use path, bike friendly curbs wherever possible and the trails connections.

- b. Marybeth Martello and her summer intern have put together a mobility flyer for ease of reference. Colette has reviewed this and it has been sent to COA for review. Would be interested in any feedback from the Mobility Committee. The next step is to send out to all PTOs through central council and Dr Lussier's office, and to share internally to all social workers, Health Department, Library, Police, Fire and Stephanie Hawkinson as a resource for town departments to share with residents as questions about transportation arise etc.
- c. EV update
 - i. LT Showstead and the EV working group have revised charging structure for public EV chargers to be based on KW and not hours. Rate approved by SB is now 25c per KWH.
 - ii. Lisa Wolf at the MLP has requested that ENE create an interactive map of town chargers to reside on our website, as well as on the police site, and possibly the town's site if there's a logical place for it.
 - iii. Eric Bourassa of MAPC sat on the Commonwealth's EV Infrastructure Coordinating Council. An initial assessment dated August 11th is linked [here](#). The report outlines how the state can support EV growth. *"This initial assessment represents a compilation of our findings to date, including recommendations and areas of further research. Our work does not end with this report; rather, it is just beginning. As directed by the statute, our task now is to continue fleshing out plans based on recommendations offered in this assessment."*
 - iv. [Interesting article](#) re Cambridge's approval of EV charging across sidewalks. It will be interesting to see how this develops.

Wellesley MLP Sustainability Initiatives

From MLP Sustainability Manager Lisa Wolf:

Sustainability Metrics

[Link to Sustainability Metrics spreadsheet \(no new additions\)](#)

EV Working Group Update

Marybeth gathered additional input from the EV Working Group and Meghan re: the Zero Emissions First Fleet Policy. Marybeth also gathered information from the Town of Concord about lessons learned re: implementation of their EV First Policy.

Energy Coach Program Development

Launch date is set for the week of November 13. In preparation, lead Wellesley coaches are shadowing experienced HeatSmart Alliance coaches for mentoring. For the Wellesley program, new coaches will expect to have a mentor for their initial client meetings.

The first coach orientation session is planned for October 6, to build community and excitement, to set expectations, review procedures and policies, and introduce available resources.

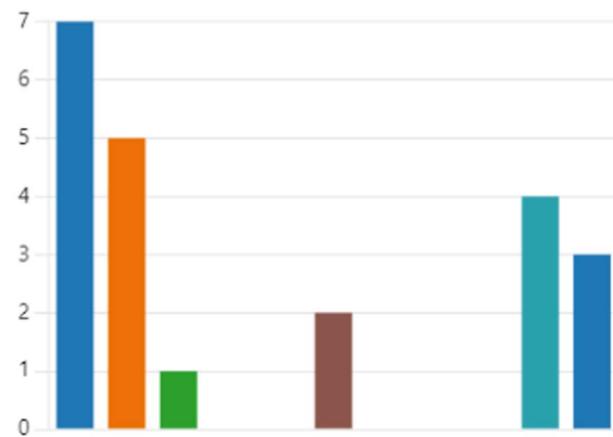
Decarbonization Audit

CET completed their survey of decarbonization audit recipients to help evaluate the impact of the program. They performed a phone survey of each audit recipient to see what steps they have taken or plan to take to decarbonize their homes since receiving the audit. Final results:

- 20 customers contacted (out of 25 audit customers); 16 respondents
- 12 participants have already installed upgrades of some kind
- all but two participants said they are planning to install additional upgrades in the next 12 months

A breakdown of upgrades by category is below:

Heat pump	7
Weatherization (insulation, air s...	5
Furnace, boiler, or other HVAC	1
Lighting	0
Solar PV or battery storage	0
Electrical panel upgrade	2
EV chargers and/or new EV	0
Efficient appliances (clothes was...	0
Yard equipment	0
No upgrades installed at this time	4
Other	3



The symbiosis between the Energy Coach Program and CET audits will open up opportunities for exchanges between the auditor and Coach to follow up with potential coaching clients.

Solar Incentive

ENE administers a solar incentive program for a number of their members, and we hope to engage their services for this new WMLP program. It's expected that ENE will determine the Location Marginal Price (which will determine the net metering rate), will enroll customers, track and report solar production, and manage the customer's RECs. The incentive will be paid from WECARE funds and will be available to residential and small and large commercial customers who pay into WECARE.

A promotional flyer and marketing strategy is being developed.