



CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE

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Climate Action Committee Project Updates

May 9, 2025

Green Communities

Marybeth Martello and Janet Mosley attended the Friday, May 2 ceremony with state officials announcing the Climate Leader Community certification for Wellesley and 18 other cities and towns across Massachusetts. As a Climate Leader Community, Wellesley will be eligible for over \$1 million in technical assistance and implementation grants towards emissions reduction projects.

See the linked [press release from the Governor's office](#), the [Town's News Flash](#), and the [Swellesley Report article](#).

Marybeth, Janet, and Chris Chan from the Municipal Light Plant met with Green Communities representatives on April 17 to discuss the possibility of Climate Leader Community grant funds for solar installations on the Hardy and Hunnewell Schools.

Outreach

- HomeWorks Energy (HWE) continues to schedule home energy assessments through door-to-door canvassing. HomeWorks mailed postcards advertising assessment service and the Town's Climate Action Be part of it! campaign to all residents in early April.
 - Marybeth repeatedly relayed the CAC's frustration with lack of access to resident contact info. HomeWorks notes legal and technical challenges to providing this access but promises answers on May 8.
 - Below are recent stats:
 - Approximately 9.7% of residents contacted via door-to-door canvassing sign up for home energy assessments. This is almost twice the conversion rate that HomeWorks sees in other communities.
 - 479 home energy assessments scheduled
 - 399 home energy assessments completed
 - 112 weatherization projects completed
 - 13 heat pump projects completed (Wellesley encourages residents to obtain at least three quotes from heat pump installers)

- Marybeth and Janet met with David Wood, Chris Chan, and Tess Ruderman of the Municipal Light Plant on April 15 to discuss collaboration and topics of mutual interest including planning for future grant opportunities, the EV2X program, the Energy Transition and Climate Resilience Working Group, MLP newsletter, heat pump webinar, Wellesley Wonderful Weekend, etc.). They met again on May 5 to further discuss options for solar PV on Hunnewell and Hardy schools.
- Susan Zelenko designed a beautiful Earth Month poster and worked with a team, including Lisa Gieger, to position these posters at key locations across town.
- Marybeth met with Brandon Schmitt and Leigh Meunier on April 18 to provide input re: household climate action for an April 22 Charles River Flood Map workshop.
- Marybeth met with a panel to coordinate talks for the American Public Works Association meeting in June.
- Marybeth started a leadership training course offered through Wellesley's Human Resources Department.
- On April 27 Marybeth attended a Denton Road block party. The party celebrated the recent planting of trees provided by NRC. Engagement with Denton Road neighbors focuses on building community and encouraging climate action. Marybeth created a survey on household climate action shared with neighbors. She will continue to engage with these residents in the coming months. Several neighbors are experienced with weatherization, heat pumps, EV ownership, and sustainable landscaping and happy to share their experience with their friends.
- On April 30 Marybeth, Mary Gard, Phyllis Theermann, and Lise Olney attended the MassEnergize Conference at Bentley College. The keynote address by Melissa Hoffer, plenary session panel, and breakout sessions touched on many topics relevant to Wellesley.
- On April 30 Sustainable Wellesley hosted an excellent speaker, Dr. Lindsey Burghardt, Pediatrician and Chief Science Officer at Harvard's Center for the Developing Child, to discuss how a warming climate affects asthma, allergies, mosquito and tick-borne illnesses, anxiety, and nutrition. The event was well attended and Climate Action co-sponsored.
- Marybeth and Janet met with Wellesley College student, Moe Kaung to discuss potential projects for her summer internship with Wellesley Climate Action. Moe will begin her internship mid-May
- Marybeth booked the Library for June 12 and made a preliminary flyer and plans for hosting a [Climate Café](#) in the Commons from 4 to 7 pm.

Mobility

State FY26 Budget

House of Representatives

The House of Representatives finished their [FY26 budget](#) debate on Wednesday, April 29th. The budget appropriates roughly \$62 billion for the fiscal year beginning on July 1st.

Transportation funding in the House budget aligned somewhat with the Governor's House 1 budget and unfortunately, did not increase funding for Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs), which are level funded for the next year unless the Senate increases funding for them.

The House also aligned with the Governor on the contract assistance to the MBTA at \$673 million. Finally, the Governor proposed transferring \$765 million in Fair Share revenue to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) to borrow against as part of her 10 year, \$8 billion transportation financing package. This House budget transfers \$500 million to the CTF. [For a comparison please click here.](#)

Senate

We anticipate that the Senate Ways and Means Committee will release their recommendations for the FY26 budget. We will be paying particularly close attention to the proposed funding levels for RTAs (as a reminder, our ask is \$258 million for RTAs in FY26). Both the Governor and the House level-funded the RTAs at \$204 million. Depending on what the Senate budget proposes, we may be asking senators to file amendments. Stay tuned! Emails to senators might be needed to support these amendments.

FY25 Supplemental Budget

The Senate has released its version of the [FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget](#). This appropriates funds from the Fair Share amendment that have been collected but not spent over the past 2 fiscal years. Unlike the House and the Governor who proposed spending the majority of the funds on the MBTA, the Senate takes a more balanced approach, allocating spending between roads, bridges, regional transportation, microtransit and the MBTA. [For a comparison of the three budget proposals click here.](#) The Senate will most likely debate and vote on this bill on Thursday, May 8th.

EV2X

Marybeth and Janet, DPW, MLP, and Sheila Page attended a meeting on April 7 with Mobility House to learn more about the MassCEC EV-to-Grid demonstration project, which provides free level 3 bi-directional chargers in exchange for data collection over the course of 2026. Janet and Marybeth met with DPW and MLP separately in April and jointly on May 5 to determine next steps for the application process.

Mode Shift Challenge

Sheila Page organized a raffle to encourage residents to try other forms of transportation. Residents can qualify to enter the raffle for the grand prize of \$200 if they submit a picture of themselves riding on the MBTA Commuter Rail, MWRTA Route 1 Bus, MWRTA Catch Connect, and walking or riding a bike on a Town trail between May 1 and June 16.

More details here: <https://www.sustainablewellesley.com/news/get-out-of-your-car-try-something-new-you-could-win-200>

Town EV Charging Infrastructure Policy

Martha provided a draft public-facing electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) policy document. The goal is to communicate the Town's approach to placing public EV charging infrastructure to the public

Buildings

Building Working Group

The Building Working Group (BWG) met on April 15 and 29 and discussed projects that are working their way through the Planning process, potential updates to the Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines, the Wellesley Public School AC projects, and plans for a Sustainable Development Guideline for residential and commercial projects.

Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines (MSBG)

Marybeth and Janet met with Facilities Management Director Joe McDonough and Design and Construction Manager Stephen Gagosian to discuss potential updates to the MSBG, such as guidelines for material selection to build healthier buildings with lower embodied carbon. The next step is to meet with Hunnewell and Hardy architect SMMA to determine what material selection considerations were included in those buildings.

Hardy and Hunnewell Solar/Climate Leaders

Marybeth and Janet had several conversations with Town staff and DOER to discuss potential solar configurations for Hardy and Hunnewell and potential Climate Leader funding for these projects.

Wellesley Public Schools AC Supplemental Study

Marybeth will attend a working group meeting to discuss Wellesley Public School AC on May 13.

Massachusetts Large Building Energy Reporting (LBER) Program

Janet a DOER webinar on May 6 providing more information on what public entities should do to comply with the new [Large Building Energy Reporting \(LBER\) program](#). Janet also fielded several emails from building managers in Wellesley to help them with program compliance.

Building Electrification Accelerator Retrofits Working Group

Mary Gard and Fred Bunger attended the May 1 Working Group meeting. A highlight was Lori Kenschafft from Arlington speaking about the town's successful Request for Information for heat pump installers.

Mass Save

Mass Save submitted its revised 3-year plan for 2025-2027 to the state on April 30. The plan was revised to accommodate a \$500 million reduction in budget ordered by the Department of Public Utilities to help pay for a reduction in customers' gas and electric utility bills in March and April 2025.

Waste Reduction

Skip the Stuff

Article 35, known as the Skip the Stuff article passed Town Meeting by a 153/16 vote on April 14.

See the Swellesley summary here: <https://theswellesleyreport.com/2025/04/wellesley-annual-town-meeting-night-5-tax-breaks-skip-the-stuff-legal-notices-affordable-housing/>

Wellesley Public Schools

Waste Reduction Coordinators Amber Keller and Amanda Crowley continue to work with Wellesley Public Schools to reduce food waste. They hope to start a pilot program at Bates Elementary collecting unopened packages of food for donation in the coming weeks.

Amber Keller was involved in RFP development and interviews of food service vendors for Wellesley Public Schools next three-year contract. The new contract was awarded to Chartwells.

Olin College Project

Olin students presented preliminary findings from analysis for commercial, residential, school waste management practices, and will follow-up with a written report. Dave Cohen, Jamie Manzolini, Jeff Azano-Brown, Marybeth, and Janet attended the presentation.

Wellesley Wonderful Weekend Picnic Waste Diversion

Janet, Amber, and Amanda continue to work with Carl Nelson of the Celebrations Committee and RDF to recruit volunteers to help sort waste at four waste diversion stations at the Sunday, May 18 picnic and fireworks event.

Gas Transition

From Lise Olney:

MA Department of Public Utilities Orders Changes to the Gas System Enhancement Plan to Reduce Ratepayer Money Spent on Pipeline Replacement

Excerpt from Gas Transition Allies Press release:

Gas Transition Allies applauds the Healey Administration for working to protect consumers from mounting costs of the Gas System Enhancement Program

The order issued by the Department of Public Utilities balances ensuring energy affordability for ratepayers with meeting the Commonwealth's mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while continuing to prioritize the safety of the gas pipeline system.

BOSTON – Yesterday the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities issued an order directing gas companies to make significant changes to the Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP) to control rising energy costs for ratepayers and to commence an orderly transition over many years to clean renewable energy to heat our homes and businesses.

The GSEP program was created in 2014 to give gas companies accelerated cost-recovery for replacing leak-prone gas pipes outside the regular utility rate cases. While well-intentioned at the time, the delivery costs charged to ratepayers by the biggest companies since 2014 have escalated dramatically. Annual spending on GSEP has been increasing by 15% to 20% per year over the last decade, pushed up by large scale capital spending on GSEP and non-GSEP projects, reaching almost \$1 billion last year. If left unchecked, total costs for GSEP could mount to almost \$42 billion through the end of the century.

Responding to legislative mandates enacted over the last six years, the DPU order addresses these problems. (1) It lowers the cap on expenditures that gas companies are allowed to charge ratepayers for accelerated cost recovery. (2) It provides incentives to encourage gas companies to use non-emitting, non-gas pipeline alternatives, to avoid further investment in fossil fuel infrastructure. (3) It eliminates incentives for gas companies to spend more on GSEP projects than amounts approved by the DPU. (4) It requires gas companies to adopt a rigorous risk prioritization process for replacing or retiring leak-prone pipes that pose safety hazards. (5) It encourages gas companies to avoid unnecessary investment in potential stranded assets by prioritizing advanced leak repair technology...See the rest of the press release here:

<https://www.garansitionallies.org/healey>

Other news articles regarding this Order:

- [Mass. orders utilities to spend less ratepayer money on natural gas pipelines.](#) WBUR.
- [Why your gas bill's delivery charge should go down soon in Massachusetts.](#) WGBH.
- [DPU squeezing utilities on gas pipe replacement front.](#) WWLP (State House News Service)

Multi-Town Gas Leaks Initiative

Recap of February 5 meeting

[Recording here](#). Chat and slides in CAC Meeting Materials folder.

Legislative update:

- Summary of gas-related provisions in the 2024 climate law by **Mark Dyen** (of 350Mass & Gas Transition Allies)
- Discussion **Garrett Casey**, Policy Director & Counsel, Office of Senator Cynthia Creem, on two new gas-related bills proposed by Sen. Creem in the new 2025-26 legislative session: [S2249](#) (formerly SD1924): *An Act relative to a Tactical Transition to Affordable, Clean Thermal Energy* and [S2248](#) (formerly SD1476): *An Act relative to municipal voices in gas utility work*.

Engaging the Department of Public Utilities: David Morgan (Arlington Environmental Planner) and Peter Barrer (Newton advocate) talked about their recent advocacy efforts with the DPU, including how Newton City Councilors and residents are advocating for electrification on some streets as an alternative to proposed gas pipe replacement.

Agenda for May 20 Meeting – register [here](#)

Our May meeting is a collaboration with the [Building Electrification Accelerator](#). Our goal is to provide an update on networked geothermal initiatives, and on neighborhood electrification policy and advocacy, along with a brief legislative update. Here is the agenda:

- Update on HEET KickStart Mass initiative - Funded by Mass CEC, this HEET initiative aims to accelerate the development of networked geothermal projects in Massachusetts. We'll discuss key takeaways from the KickStart communities and an update on the Framingham networked geothermal pilot expansion.
- Neighborhood electrification – Steps for municipalities and advocates to explore alternatives to pipe replacement projects:
 - Update on Newton model developed by advocates and city councilors, including the economic analysis of electrification vs. pipe replacement and their requests to the Department of Public Utilities
 - Mothers Out Front/350 Mass campaign to educate municipal officials and others about neighborhood electrification, its viability, and the need to change GSEP spending on gas pipeline replacements
- Legislative update – Key takeaways from Sen. Creem's Committee on Climate Change and Global Warming hearing on April 1, "Federal Climate Retrenchment and Its Impact on the Commonwealth." And updates on our three priority bills:
 - [S2249/HD3405](#): An Act relative to a Tactical Transition to Affordable, Clean Thermal Energy
 - [S2298/H3446](#): An Act relative to municipal voices in gas utility work
 - [S533/H1013](#): An Act establishing the Municipal Reforestation Program

Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (MLP) Sustainability Initiatives

From Chris Chan:

- Launched new EV comparison tool called [WattPlan](#)
- 3 new energy coaches completed training and being integrated into the program
- Met with FMD's engineering team to provide guidance on incorporating solar (and storage) in the new RDF administration building
- Sustainable program table in the MLP garage for Wellesley Wonderful Weekend