

Climate & Environment Working Group Draft Recommendations

Climate & Environment Goals

- **Climate Change Preparedness:** Protect the lives and livelihoods of Cambridge community members, particularly those who are at greater risk of climate change and environmental impacts.
- **Community Engagement:** Meaningfully engage and share the benefits of strengthening the City’s climate and environment initiatives with the entire Cambridge community (residents, institutions, and businesses).
- **Environmental Protection:** Preserve and enhance Cambridge’s natural environment, including the preservation of open space, habitats and vegetation and the reduction of air, light, noise, and toxic pollution.
- **Climate Action:** Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050
- **Water Quality and Management:** Maintain sustainable water resources by taking action to reduce water usage, manage stormwater runoff, and improve the quality of surface water and groundwater.
- **Waste Management:** Minimize waste generation and eliminate landfill waste.

Climate & Environment Strategies & Actions

Strategy: Establish a technical foundation for preparedness and resilience

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Assess Cambridge’s climate risks and vulnerabilities	High	Existing	

Strategy: Develop preparedness and resilience plans at the neighborhood and citywide levels

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Develop a citywide preparedness and resilience plan	High	Existing	

Leverage new communication technologies to alert residents and workers, by geography, of risks in the event of an emergency (e.g. text message)	High	New	Capital funding required.
Specifically serve low-income/high-vulnerability individuals and public housing residents with targeted preparedness and outreach programs (CCPR)	High	New	
Develop neighborhood disaster preparedness plans in conjunction with neighborhood organizations, service providers, public housing residents and other vulnerable populations			Operating funding required.

Strategy: Manage flooding and hazards in local water bodies in partnership with neighboring municipalities

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Participate in Arlington Belmont and Cambridge (ABC) Flooding Board	Medium	Existing	

Strategy: Incorporate design strategies and best practices that reduce climate change impacts as part of public and private projects.

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Upgrade City infrastructure	High	Existing	
Perform design review of private development projects	High	Existing	
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Establish a cool roof requirement for new construction in <u>all</u> zoning districts	High	New	
Study regulatory barriers and identify potential leverage points and sources of incentives for adaptive retrofits for existing buildings (utility placement, floodable ground floors, etc.).an ordinance.	Medium	New	

Strategy: Educate the community about climate change vulnerabilities which can be mitigated by private property owners

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Conduct outreach campaigns about property-level flood vulnerability and mitigation strategies	High	Existing	
Work with neighborhood groups, especially those that offer services, to develop disaster preparedness plans	High	New	

Strategy: Meaningfully engage the entire Cambridge community (residents, institutions, and businesses) in strengthening the City’s climate and environment initiatives

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Establish a Climate Protection Action Committee	High	Existing	
Establish a Bicycle Committee	High	Existing	
Establish a Pedestrian Committee	High	Existing	
Establish a Recycling Advisory Committee	High	Existing	
Establish a Public Planting Committee	High	Existing	

Strategy: Communicate the City’s climate and environment initiatives to the community

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Connect home and business owners with information on existing incentive programs, and financing for, energy upgrades to their building through the Cambridge Energy Alliance program	High	Existing	
Implement a food waste education program in public schools	Medium	Existing	

Establish a coordinated outreach and engagement approach regarding environmental programs and issues	High	New	
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Strategy: Expand the city’s tree canopy and promote native plantings and biodiversity

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Implement recommendations from the Urban Forest Master Plan	High	New	
Promote and improve the quality and diversity of public planting	Medium	Existing	
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Develop an Urban Forest Master Plan that establishes tree canopy expansion and tree planting goals by neighborhood	High	Existing	

Strategy: Preserve and expand green and open spaces, and enhance access to parks

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Implement the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan	High	Existing	
Implement the Charles River Basin Master Plan	High	Existing	
Implement the Alewife Reservation Master Plan	High	Existing	
Implement the Open Space and Recreation Seven-Year Action Plan	High	Existing	
Long-term actions (10-15 years)			
Purchase additional land reserved to be used as open space and prioritize locations that improve open space connectivity	Medium	New	Capital funding required

Strategy: Reduce air, light, and noise pollution

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Combat light trespassing, light pollution, and energy waste	Medium	Existing	
Ensure that new development and infrastructure projects undergo a review to ensure they do not result in noise pollution that could interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life in Cambridge	Medium	Existing	

Strategy: Reduce Building Energy Consumption

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Implement the Net Zero Action Plan	High	Existing	
Regularly update the Climate Action Plan	High	Existing	
Require buildings to report energy use	High	Existing	
Require new, larger buildings to meet green buildings standards	High	Existing	
Streamline existing efforts to expand access to energy-efficiency funding and technical assistance, including supporting expanded use of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) to finance retrofits.	High	Expanded	
Offer a density bonus incentive through zoning for net zero projects	High	New	

Strategy: Reduce transportation energy consumption

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing actions			
Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)	High	Existing	Also a Mobility action
Promote a shift to electric/clean emissions vehicles	High	Existing	Also a Mobility action
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Develop a zero-emissions transportation plan, addressing both mode shift and zero emissions vehicles	High	New	Also a Mobility action

Strategy: Transition away from fossil fuels

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing			
Implement the recommendations of the Low Carbon Energy Supply Strategy	High	Existing	
Implement the Cambridge Community Electricity Aggregation program	High	Existing	
Advocate with state for a stronger Renewable Portfolio Standard and more stringent cap levels for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative	Medium	Existing	
Near-term actions (<5 years)			
Address regulatory barriers to energy storage by participating in statewide working groups to develop safety and performance codes and standards for energy storage systems, adopting safety and performance codes and standards as they develop for safe deployment of energy storage, and establishing demonstration projects for safety of energy storage systems.	High	New	
Establish a solar or green roof requirement for new construction	High	New	

Install high-visibility EV charging stations at publicly accessible locations	High	New	
Require EV charging infrastructure in new buildings	High	New	
Medium-term actions (5-10 years)			
Procure 100% of municipal electricity from renewable sources	High	New	Operating funding required.

Strategy: Manage stormwater with public investment in stormwater infrastructure and maintenance

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing			
Implement the Stormwater Management Plan	High	Existing	
Separate the combined sewer system into storm and sanitary systems	High	Existing	
Mandate stormwater management for private developments	High	Existing	
Partner with private property owners to go beyond stormwater management requirements	Medium	Existing	
Implement the Surface Water Protection Plan	High	Existing	
Restore watersheds	High	Existing	
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Incorporate green infrastructure into city sidewalk and street reconstruction projects as conditions and space allow	High	Existing	

Strategy: Reduce potable water usage

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing			
Require buildings to report water use	High	Existing	
Conduct water conservation outreach	High	Existing	
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Study Cambridge's greywater supply assets and non-potable demand	High	New	

Strategy: Reduce landfilled waste and divert recyclable and organic waste

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing			
Add recycling bins around city in places where there are only waste bins	Medium	Expanded	
Prohibit polystyrene food service containers	Medium	Existing	
Encourage recycling via single stream	High	Existing	
Provide free residential curbside organics collection citywide	High	Existing	
Maximize recycling rates across all sectors by stepping up enforcement and education	High	Expanded	
Near-term actions (< 5 years)			
Require new developments to submit a waste management plan to ensure adequate space for recycling/organics infrastructure	High	New	
Study the feasibility of different programs to incentivize trash reduction that does not have a disparate impact on low-income communities	Medium	New	
Medium-term actions (5-10 years)			
Mandate and enforce residential and commercial food waste diversion	Medium	New	
Long-term actions (>10 years)			
Develop commercial waste zones with reporting requirements	Medium	New	Capital funding required.

Strategy: Remediate Hazardous Waste

Actions	Priority	Status	Notes
Ongoing			
Monitor hazardous waste reporting and remediation	Medium	Existing	

Actions considered but not recommended for implementation

Actions	Notes
Work with major institutions and employers to have each commit to GHG emissions reductions via the Community Compact.	The Compact has a 3-year workplan developed jointly by members. All are working to reduce GHG emissions and many have specific targets
Renovate and expand the DPW facility as a Resource Recovery Center	DPW is exploring other opportunities for waste exchange, given the uncertainties regarding the long-term location of the DPW facility
Administer an annual bird count with community volunteers	Better implemented by an environmental nonprofit
Institute competitions in which participants bid to test new building technologies in Cambridge municipal buildings.	Concern about introducing untested, new building technologies in city facilities
Provide reusable shopping bags, water bottles, mugs, etc. in exchange for a pledge to use them.	City distributes shopping bags, water bottles, etc. at outreach event. Adding a pledge is expected to have very low impact.
Study the feasibility of implementing a stormwater fee, where property owners are charged based on impervious surface area and collected revenue is directed to green infrastructure (stormwater utility)	Anticipated revenues are not matched with regulatory and administrative burden of creating fee structure
Quantify carbon sequestration potential of the City's tree canopy / ground cover	Canopy sequestration potential is already being assessed, but not possible to include ground cover
Ban pesticide sales through passage of an ordinance.	The control of pesticide sales is more appropriately handled on a state level. A Cambridge ordinance would impact the few small hardware stores, but would do little to change the overall use of pesticides.
Develop a native plantings ordinance, requiring a portion of private open space groundcover to be reserved for native plantings.	Native tree species and recommended species that will thrive in changing environmental conditions will be evaluated as part of the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

Develop an action plan to enhance habitat for local fauna on public and private properties in Cambridge	This is already a management priority for the Fresh Pond Reservation, and the applicability in other more developed areas of the city are unknown.
Institute consumer-facing food waste reduction campaigns, including ugly produce, small plates, trayless dining, food waste app	The city already does extensive outreach and education around waste reduction.