

Somerville Climate Forward Update

January 24, 2019

Somerville Climate Forward is Somerville's first climate action plan. This community-based plan is based on data from Somerville's climate baseline studies: the Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2016), Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2017), and Carbon Neutrality Pathways Assessment (2017).

Priority Action Objectives

Somerville Climate Forward's scope is the whole Somerville community, not just City government operations. Our climate action objectives are to:

- Reduce Somerville's contribution to climate change and work towards carbon neutrality by 2050 (mitigation)
- Prepare Somerville for the unavoidable impacts of climate change (adaptation).
- Fairly distribute the opportunities created by climate action and work to alleviate the unequal burdens caused by climate change (equity).

Attached to this memo is a summary of the 13 actions in the plan. For each of these actions, the Somerville Climate Forward includes an implementation plan, performance metrics, equity and cost considerations, and best practices.

Planning process

Somerville Climate Forward was created by community members, City staff, and consultants. Below are highlights of the planning process.

- The planning process began with a community meeting on June 26, 2017.
- Over 75 community members and City staff participated in nine working groups centered on different topics (e.g., buildings, transportation, health). Each of the nine working groups met three times over the planning process.
- The Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change provided project guidance.
- The consultant team was composed of technical experts from Kleinfelder, AECOM, and JSI. The consultant team was responsible for developing the working groups' ideas into actionable strategies using quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as research of leading practices from around the world.

Plan release event

- The plan was officially released at a "Green Carpet" event on November 28, 2018 at Greentown Labs. Approximately 250 people attended.
- The event featured several speakers followed by an open-house format where attendees could talk with working group members and City staff about the contents of the plan, take their photo on the green carpet, learn about technologies being developed at Greentown Labs, and take immediate action, ranging from signing up for 100% renewable electricity through the Somerville Community Choice Electricity program to learning about city biking with the Somerville Bike Committee.

The full plan is now online at www.somervillema.gov/climateforward.

THE PLAN AT A GLANCE

Somerville Climate Forward prioritizes 13 action areas supported by key priority actions that set Somerville on a path to be a resilient, carbon neutral city. Somerville Climate Forward is the framework for how we will collectively take action on climate change in Somerville over the next 5-10 years.

This plan includes policies, programs, and strategies that work to accomplish the following:

- Reduce Somerville's contribution to climate change and work towards carbon neutrality (mitigation).
- Prepare Somerville for the unavoidable impacts of climate change (adaptation).
- Fairly distribute the opportunities created by climate action and work to alleviate the unequal burdens of climate change (equity).

The priority action areas were selected based on their ability to solve a key issue identified by either the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment or the Pathways to Carbon Neutrality Study. Each specific priority action was selected based on the impact it can have, the co-benefits it can provide, the feasibility of implementing it in Somerville, and by asking working groups, technical experts, City staff, and regional partners: what do we need to do to get started addressing this problem? Collectively, the priority actions represent the most important next steps for Somerville to take in order to have the biggest impact on mitigating and preparing for climate change.

Somerville Climate Forward prioritizes **13** action areas supported by **22** key priority actions.

BUILDINGS

1. Net-zero and resilient new buildings standards

1.

Explore the feasibility of a local net-zero energy or net-zero emissions-based performance standard.

Adopt flood and extreme heat resilience standards for new construction.



2. Improved energy performance in existing buildings

2.

Enable a rental energy disclosure requirement through the creation of a rental licensing program.

Continue and expand thermal electrification programs (HeatSmart/CoolSmart).

MOBILITY

3. Equitable low-carbon mobility

3.

Improve bus reliability and trip times.

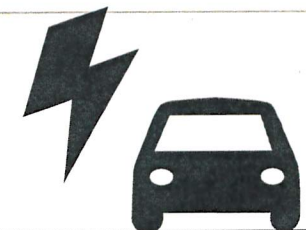
Improve and expand bicycle infrastructure.

Assess parking policy and parking supply to meet low-carbon mobility needs.

4. Rapid transition to electric vehicles

4.

Develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy.



ENVIRONMENT

5. Stormwater management


Update stormwater management policies and develop design guidelines.

Investigate a stormwater enterprise fund to improve stormwater management.

6. Expanded tree canopy

Formalize and implement a modern urban forestry management plan including best practices and resilient species list.

Develop guidance and training for community stewardship of trees.



7. Reduced consumption and waste

Complete a consumption based greenhouse gas inventory and conduct community outreach on climate impacts of consumption.

COMMUNITY

8. Healthy and resilient community


Establish a preparedness education program and an emergency alert system that help protect the community from flooding and extreme heat events.

9. Pathway to 100% renewable energy

Extend the community choice electricity aggregation program and increase share of renewable energy.

10. Culture of climate action


Organize community climate action and preparedness leadership program to educate the public and increase participation in climate programs.



LEADERSHIP

11. City government leading by example

Set progressive net-zero building standards for new municipal buildings and those undergoing major renovation; set renewable electricity standards for all existing and new municipal buildings.



12. State advocacy for carbon neutrality

Advocate for building and energy codes that achieve net-zero energy performance.

Advocate for faster de-carbonization of electricity.

Advocate for more stringent regulation of utility gas leaks.

13. Regional collaboration for coastal resilience

Create a Mystic River Regional Coalition of neighboring municipalities to develop cohesive regional strategy and to push State action.

Assess potential intervention options to address flood risk along Mystic River.