



City of Newton, Massachusetts
Climate and Sustainability Team



Date: October 7, 2022

To: Councilor Alicia Bowman; Councilor Deb Crossley, Zoning and Planning Committee Chair

From: Ann Berwick, Co-Director of Climate and Sustainability; Bill Ferguson, Co-Director of Climate and Sustainability; Liora Silkes, Energy Coach; Jennifer Steel, Chief Environmental Planner; Ellen Menounos, Assistant Environmental Planner

RE: Climate Action Plan Goals and Tracking

One of the questions asked at the Sept. 19 Climate Action Plan update presentation was about data, looking for a sense of how much progress we’ve made toward our interim goals and our ultimate goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The short answer to our progress on climate goals is that while we have a lot of accomplishments to be proud of, there is an enormous amount of work for the entire Newton community to do in the next 28 years in order to reach the goal of carbon neutrality.

There are many efforts that the original CAP and therefore the 2021 metrics table did not address. For example, the 2021 list of metrics does not address our municipal building improvement projects and solar installation projects; transportation infrastructure other than EV chargers; our legislative efforts; consumption and disposal; embodied carbon; or the groundwork we are laying to support and educate residents and business owners in taking climate actions. There is a great deal to say in those regards, e.g., the electrification of municipal buildings, newMo, drafting of and support for a bill to require electrification of all new construction statewide, a climate newsletter, the 4 Our Future Project, the microgrant program with Village Bank, etc. Data and metrics are crucial, they certainly do not give the whole picture.

By the Numbers

When drafting the CAP, NCCE (and others) put a great deal of effort into developing a list of metrics to help illustrate progress on some of the key action items. In the 2021 CAP status report we reported on those “original” metrics and a few additional metrics. The table below shows all the 2021 status report metrics with data current as of December 2021.

Metric	Occurrences 2021	MOU 2021 Goal	2025 Milestone	2050 Goal
B. Clean energy				
1. Default or standard level of MA Class 1 RECs under NPC	80%	N/A	100%	100%
2. # of small-scale solar installations in Newton	155	No goal set	No goal set	No goal set
3. # of large-scale solar installations in Newton	8	No goal set	No goal set	No goal set
C. Transportation				
4. % (and #) of vehicles registered in Newton that are EVs	3.8%	N/A	10%	100%
5. # of EV charging stations available to the public in Newton	Not updated yet	No goal set	No goal set	No goal set
6. # (and % reduction) of vehicle miles traveled	No data yet	N/A	5%	20%
D. New Construction and Major (“Gut”) Renovations				



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7.	Average HERS rating in Newton (compared to requirement of 55)	Not updated yet	N/A	No goal set	No goal set
8.	# per year new housing units that are heat pump electric-heated	27	N/A	100%	100%
9.	% per year of commercial/retail buildings heated using all-electric	No data yet	N/A	100%	100%
10.	# of Mass Save RNC* project participations (low rise 1-4 units)	103	75	~100	No goal yet
11.	# of Mass Save RNC* project participants (renovations/additions)	20	15	~50	No goal yet
E. Existing Residential Buildings					
12.	# of Mass Save energy assessments per year	1029+	2135	4000	TBD
13.	# of insulation installations per year	483	640	800	all homes
14.	# of heat pump installations per year (received Mass Save rebate)	259	62	450	all homes
E. Existing Commercial Buildings					
15.	# of Mass Save energy assessments	No data yet	175	225	N/A
16.	# of Mass Save project implementations	85	95	N/A	N/A

The Value of Data

The table indicates the value of having a summary of climate action progress that includes clear quantitative information to spread the word on progress, measure our successes, and illustrate the long distance we have yet go.

Next Steps on Data and Tracking

The Climate & Sustainability Team is working to determine what tracking and reporting would be most beneficial and most readily maintained. Some of our considerations:

- Where/when we get data:** Some of the data in the 2021 metrics chart are always at our fingertips, ready to be updated as often as we'd like to do some analysis. Other statistics require coordinating with other sources that share data with us only on a quarterly or even yearly schedule or require more in-depth analysis. We are working on a tracking and reporting system that can be updated on a schedule that is synchronized with the receipt of data.
- Dealing with change:** The projects our team prioritizes have shifted dramatically since the CAP was published at the end of 2019. The political, economic, and technological landscapes are changing at an ever-accelerating pace.
- Levels of granularity:** Some of the projects we work on have very specific, relatively short-term goals. Other projects are much larger and broader, with varied goals and interim objectives. We are working to develop a tracking and reporting system that acknowledges the differences in the types of projects we work on.



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4. **Staff time:** City staff are stretched thin. We fully recognize the importance of collecting, analyzing, illustrating, and distributing information. We try to balance these activities with CAP implementation activities.
5. Ideally, we will create a simple, nearly “plug-and-play” outline that can, with relative ease, be populated with current data and clearly illustrate and quantify our efforts and our progress towards GHG reduction goals.

We welcome your input and suggestions as we work to develop these critical tracking tools.