Use Less and Green the Rest: Newton's Climate Action Plan for 2026-2030

Zoning and Planning Committee
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Agenda

- Progress and Update: CAP 1.0
- Process in Developing Newton's CAP 2.0
- Brief Overview of CAP 2.0

Progress and Update: CAP 1.0

Timeline of Past Progress

Most solar arrays on municipal property in the state

2010 — Green Community Designation

2015 — Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Plan

2017 — Newton Leads 2040: A Transportation Strategy for Newton released

2018 — Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

First Newton Power Choice Contract

2019 — First CAP adopted
Citizens CAP completed

Hazard Mitigation Plan updated

2021 — Open Space and Recreation Plan

2023 — Specialized code adopted

2024 — Village Center Overlay District zoning amendment passed

2024 — Electrification ordinance adopted

2025 — BERDO signed into law

Walk, Roll and Bike Network Plan published

ONGOING — CAP update

Progress since CAP 1.0: Strategy Examples

- City sustainability implementation team established
- Continued work with partners to drive action
- City Energy Coach (now Climate Action Coordinator) hired
- Specialized code adopted
- New all-electric schools and municipal buildings
- BERDO adopted and implementation underway*
  - BERDO Administrator hired
- Fossil Fuel-Free Ordinance adopted*

* = not even in CAP 1.0!

Progress since CAP 1.0: Some Numbers

- ~1,500 heat pumps installed from 2019-2025
- ~20.8 MW of solar on 1,422 residential and commercial projects
- ~6.5% battery electric vehicles registered in Newton (3,769)
  - ~20.2% battery electric + hybrids (1,820)
- ~ 8% (3,160) residents participating in Black Earth composting
- ~ 7,778 tons of recycling diverted from trash in FY24
- ~ 1.1% reduction in waste tonnage from FY23 to FY24
- 600-1,000 street trees planted annually
- Hazard Mitigation Plan nearly completed; Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 process underway

CAP 1.0 Implementation Challenges

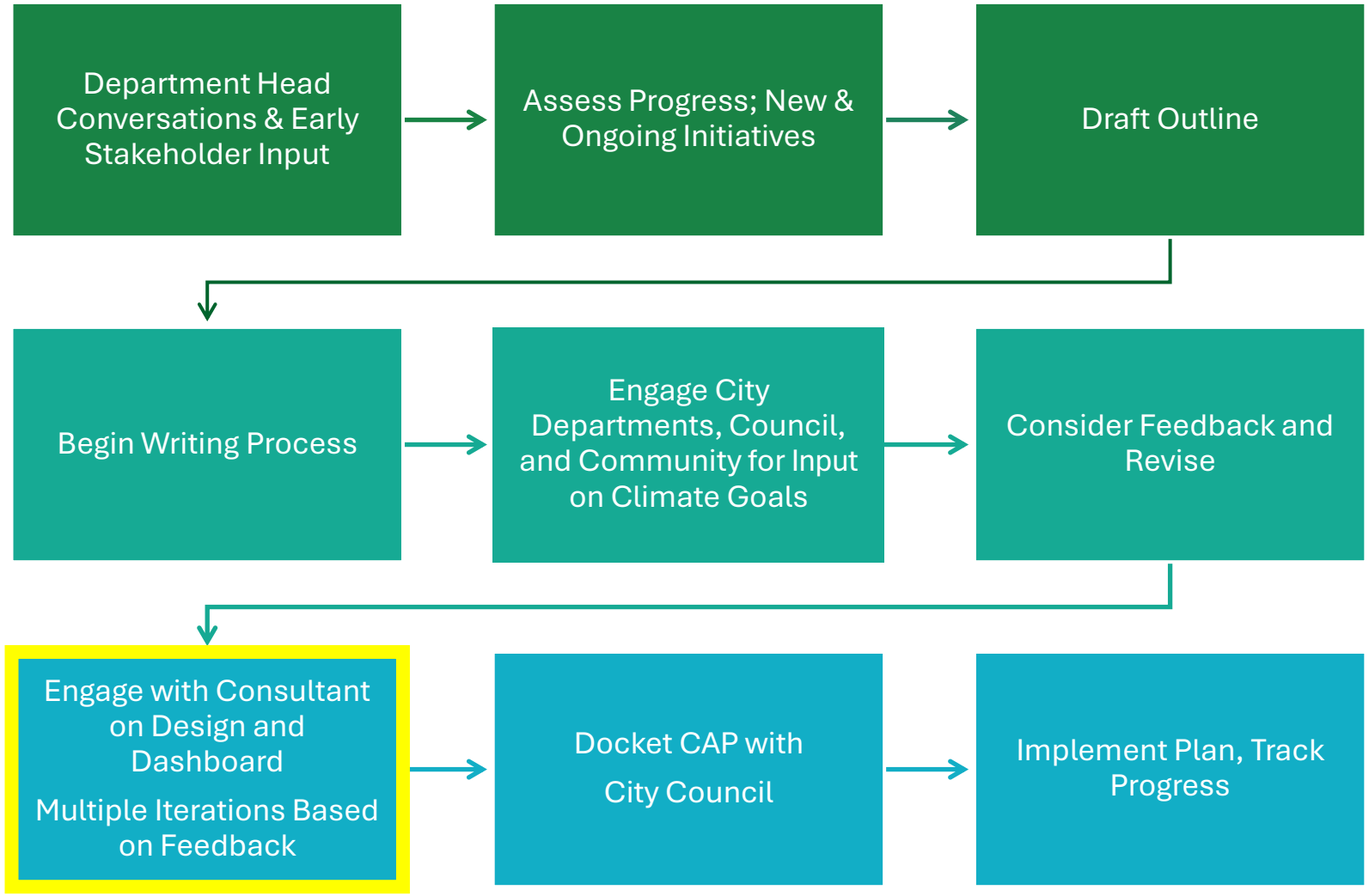
- Vehicle Miles Traveled have increased
- Residential electrification is a challenge (but moving along due to the Energy Coach program, Community First Partnership, Fossil Fuel-Free new construction and major renovations)
- Newton Power Choice: new challenges

Barriers to Progress

- Role of the federal and state government
- Limited City leverage
- Limited City budget and resources
- Costs of electrification
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Need for a cultural shift

Process in Developing CAP 2.0

Updating the Climate Action Plan



Engagement Process in Detail

- Ongoing conversations with City departments
  - Health and Human Services; Planning and Development; Inspectional Services; Public Buildings; Public Works; Parks, Recreation, and Culture; Public Schools, and Fire
- Engaged with community at various events since spring
  - Earth Day, Village Days, Sustainability Café, Climate Preparedness Week at the library, GreenEXPO, Pumpkin Smash
  - 3-week comment period
  - Nov. 3rd public presentation and listening session
- Iterative review of all feedback and ongoing revisions to draft Plan
- Developing a public dashboard & consistent data/metrics
  - Renewed focus on getting and sharing data, and holistically assessing progress

Overview of CAP 2.0

CAP 2.0: Our Overarching Goals

- **What?**
  - **Carbon neutrality** by 2050
  - Increased **resilience** for the City of Newton
- **Why?**
  - Mitigate climate change
  - Protect and prepare our community for the effects of extreme weather
  - Climate action = health benefits, opportunity for financial savings, and greater resilience

Milestones for 2030

- **Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan**
  - 2050 Net-Zero Commitment
  - 2030 goals
    - 50% emission reduction compared to 1990 baseline
    - 500,000 heat pumps installed
    - 900,000 EVs on the road
    - 8,360 MW of solar photovoltaics
- **What could that mean for Newton (1.2% of MA households)?**
  - 6,000 heat pumps *(now ~1500)*
  - 10,800 EVs on the road *(now ~3800)*
  - 100 MW of solar *(now ~20.8)*

Newton's Climate Action Plan (2026-2030)

Building on the City's first ever 2020-2025 City of Newton Climate Action Plan, this updated Plan **reaffirms our goal of using less, greening the rest, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050**.

The Plan identifies the City's key climate actions, focusing on our most effective ways to prevent, adapt to, and recover from the impacts of climate change. Strategies are organized into the following areas: Buildings and Energy, Transportation and Mobility, Consumption and Disposal, and Resilience: Health and Natural Resources.

Read Full Climate Action Plan

Sign up for Newton's Climate News

Email Newsletter

Link to Archive

Mitigation Chapters of CAP 2.0: An Overview

- **Buildings and Energy**
  - Decarbonize City buildings, support residential electrification, implement building codes and standards (ex. BERDO), become a Climate Leader Community
- **Transportation and Mobility**
  - Install additional EV charging stations, prioritize infrastructure for sustainable transportation, reduce car dependency, adopt a zero-emissions-first vehicle purchasing policy
- **Consumption and Disposal**
  - Educate community about reuse/waste reduction, improve City/NPS recycling and compost collection, implement an environmentally preferred purchasing policy

Resilience: Health and Natural Resources

- Improve City MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) maintenance operations, including **annual catch basin cleaning** and street sweeping programs
- Plant additional **trees** on City property, prioritizing the selection of native species and species that will adapt to a changing climate
- Utilize parks, open spaces, and public buildings projects to install or expand **green infrastructure** and water quality features and plant climate-adapted native species
- Measure and continue efforts to reduce Newton residents' **vulnerability to extreme heat** and other climate-related hazards
- Update the Comprehensive **Emergency Management** Plan (CEMP), Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), and start the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0 process
- Provide additional **public education** about steps to take in the event of extreme weather, flooding, and power outages

New Chapter: What You Can Do

Buildings: Mass Save audit, electrify, solarize

Transportation: Walk, bike, and take public transportation more; use an EV

Consumption: Food recommendations, buy less, minimize waste

Resilience: Prepare your home for extreme weather; plant biodiverse landscapes and natives; strengthen community resilience

We've Heard...

- Detailed goals, metrics, and actors for every strategy
- Assessment of CAP 1.0
- Policy goals
  - BERDO for small buildings
  - Electric school buses
  - Establish a Biodiversity Working Group
  - Explore opportunities for reducing light pollution from commercial enterprises
  - City-provided composting
  - Consider adopting a more comprehensive Pay-As-you-Throw curbside trash program
- Climate progress and strategies for our team (and the City more broadly) do not end with the CAP. Some ideas, both in and not in the CAP, require further exploration, commitment, and implementation.

Thank you!

Review the draft CAP2.0 here

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