



Committee Members

Mary Knittle, Chair
Evelyn Herwitz, Vice Chair
Patricia Austin
Ted Conna
Nathan Fournier
Mary Leovich
Deirdra Murphy

Contacting the Committee

Department of Sustainability and Resilience
Address: 455 Main Street, Room 108,
Worcester, MA 01608 (by appointment)
Email: GreenWorcester@worcesterma.gov
Website:
www.WorcesterMA.gov/GreenWorcester

Department of Sustainability and Resilience

Our Mission:

To implement the ambitious and urgent goals of the Green Worcester Sustainability and Resilience Strategic Plan (GWP), a roadmap for making Worcester the greenest mid-size city in the country.

Our Staff:

John Odell, *Chief*
Jessica Davis, *Project Manager*
Robert DeFosse, *Energy Services Manager*
Sarah Mount, *Energy Analyst*
Nick Pagan, *Senior Environmental Analyst*
Luba Zhaurova, *Director of Projects*

Accessibility:

The GWAC is committed to ensuring that its public meetings are accessible to all. Should you require interpretation, auxiliary aids, services, translations, written materials in other formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, please contact the DSR a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Translations:

Hay disponibles servicios de interpretación y otras adaptaciones con solicitud previa.
Avisanos por
greenworcester@worcesterma.gov

CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Green Worcester Advisory Committee

Monday, July 31, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

Location: Levi Lincoln Room, City Hall

Vice Chair Herwitz called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

Present

Mary Knittle, Chair (online)
Evelyn Herwitz, Vice Chair
Ted Conna
Nate Fournier (online)
Deirdra Murphy
Patricia Austin

Absent

Mary Leovich

Staff

John Odell
Jessica Davis

1. **Welcome.** Vice Chair Herwitz facilitated the meeting and read the meeting rules.
2. **Approval of Minutes – June 26, 2023** (Attachment A)
3. The committee unanimously approved the June 26, 2023 minutes.
4. **DSR Updates** (15 minutes)
 - a. Specialized Stretch Code event, August 2, 5:30pm (Attachment B)
 - i. Mr. Odell shared an overview of the event planned for August 2 and he encouraged people to attend to learn more about the code. He explained the event will include a comparison of the current (recently updated July 1, 2023) Stretch Code and the proposed Opt-In Specialized Stretch Code that the city is

considering adopting including the costs and benefits.

- ii. A member of the public, Paul Popinchalk, commented that he strongly recommended that the Green Worcester Advisory Committee (GWAC) endorse the Specialized Stretch Code. He said that this Specialized Code will bring new buildings closer to net-zero. He added that for all electric heating, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) modeled the scenarios, and the Specialized Stretch Code was the low-cost option. Mr. Popinchalk stated that there are thousands of triple-deckers in Worcester that need to be upgraded to be more energy efficient and that all buildings going forward need to be as efficient as possible.
- iii. Member Conna asked about the application of the codes to major renovations. Mr. Odell explained that there is no difference between the two codes. Additions or renovations that are greater than 1000 square feet or double the size of the structure are included in the Stretch Code. He said that the Specialized Code has more stringent requirements in terms of increasing air tightness, insulation levels and more. There is no dollar value trigger for the codes; it is regarding square footage. Under the current Stretch Code, it is not required to make buildings electric ready, whereas the Specialized Stretch Code does require it if you are using a fossil fuel for heating. (Editor's note: the Specialized Stretch Code only applies to new construction, not renovations.)
- iv. Vice Chair Herwitz asked when the Specialized Stretch Code recommendation will go in front of the City Council for vote. Mr. Odell said it will be in the not-too-distant future.
- v. Vice Chair Herwitz asked for Mr. Odell's response to the article in the Telegram and Gazette regarding the codes on July 17 (Attachment C). Mr. Odell said that the article was accurate except that there are models from the DOER showing that the costs of building to the Stretch Code using electricity for HVAC and hot water will be less than using fossil fuels such as natural gas.
- vi. Member Conna asked if the requirement for building structures to be electric ready applies to replacing natural gas only or also other fossil fuels such as oil. Mr. Odell replied that it applies to replacing all fossil fuels. Member Conna asked what electric ready means and if solar panels will be required. Mr. Odell replied that electric ready means there needs to be conduit present and the electric capacity available to handle converting from fossil fuel powered HVAC equipment to all electric in the future. There are three different paths that a developer can follow to meet the code and some include solar as a requirement.
- vii. Chair Knittle asked Mr. Odell what other city departments are participating in presentation on the Stretch Code. Mr. Odell replied that he will be doing the presentation at the Wednesday event but that multiple departments including Inspectional Services, Economic Development, and Health and Human Services have met to discuss this topic. Chair Knittle asked if the city is considering any codes that will impact current housing stock (not new construction) and Mr. Odell replied that the city not pursuing that right now because that would be a separate effort.

viii. Member Conna made a motion to recommend the city adopting the Specialized Stretch Code. The committee voted unanimously to pass the motion.

b. Community Engagement:

i. Flood Watch promotion: seeking volunteers

1. Ms. Davis provided an overview of the Flood Watch Community Science Project and encouraged people to participate. She explained that the City is working on a Stormwater System and Green Infrastructure Master Plan. which will help the City prioritize citywide drainage infrastructure improvements funded in part by Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) Action Grant. Now, DSR is looking for volunteers to gather on the ground data on flooding to ensure the consultant's flooding model is accurate.
2. Member Conna asked if there was an easy upload portal option to simplify the process to allow for the instance where someone may come across flooding and not having watched the training or registered, could they upload their photos someplace. Mr. Odell replied that people need to register and watch the training so they can sign off on the waiver and collect the data accurately with their geolocation. Member Conna suggested making the process simpler to gather more information and then it being sorted afterwards.

ii. Mobility Action Plan survey & events

1. Mr. Odell reported that DSR is collaborating with the Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM) to develop a Mobility Master Plan for the city. It will serve as a roadmap for DTM, similar to how the Green Worcester Plan guides DSR's work. The planning process offers many opportunities for the public to provide their input including through a short online survey and there are events that the public can attend to provide input in person as well. The draft plan is expected to be public this winter.

c. Staff:

i. Mr. Odell shared an update on hiring for staff for the DSR.

1. Zero Waste Coordinator: the new Zero waste Coordinator will begin in the position at the end of August.
2. Energy Advocates: candidates have been selected and are going through the HR hiring process now.
3. Admin Assistant posted (Attachment D): this position has been posted online.
4. Lakes & Ponds Coordinator: Jacqueline Burmeister has moved to a new position in DPW so the coordinator position will be posted online soon. Nick Pagan will be the interim coordinator until someone else is hired to fill the position.
 - a. Member Conna said he was sad that Ms. Burmeister wouldn't be in her position at Lakes and Ponds anymore but asked if she would be able to work on

sustainability related projects in DPW which would results in our message spreading further. Mr. Odell replied yes to Member Conna's question.

d. Green Worcester Annual Report (Attachment E)

- i. Mr. Odell shared a draft of one section of the first Green Worcester Annual Report. The format of the report is that each section will include a short overview of the topic, a snapshot of how DSR is doing on the major actions and a more detailed narrative on the projects and their status.
- ii. Vice Chair Herwitz asked if the forestry related grants can be included or not because it is an Annual Report for 2022. Mr. Odell replied that those grants will be included in the next annual report.
- iii. Mr. Odell explained that the report draft got delayed due to various reasons. One was time constraints with other projects taking priority. Another was that DSR initially wanted to use the reporting feature that is part of the Green Worcester dashboard but that didn't pan out the as expected. Therefore, DSR decided to pivoted to this new format.
- iv. Vice Chair Herwitz suggested that the report should cover to the end of the fiscal year rather than the calendar year to be able to include more content. Mr. Odell explained that the goal is to have the future reports coming out each winter and that subsequent reports will be completed more quickly because the 2022 report will serve as a template for future ones. Vice Chair suggested doing a two year report to enable covering more content and sticking with the calendar year timeline.
- v. Member Conna didn't think it should cover two years. He liked the idea of covering a calendar year because the information will be current and could be useful to release it right as budget season is beginning. He asked if the dashboard could produce quarterly reports that is simpler and readily available to people. Mr. Odell replied that DSR will look to see if that is a possibility and if the dashboard is capable of that.
- vi. Mr. Odell said that DSR would consider these suggestions and bring an updated draft to the next meeting.

5. Standing Items

a. Community Outreach

- i. Member Austin described an event that she helped organize at Tatnuck Brook Watershed Association in June with the Lakes and Ponds Program, Clark University and Worcester State. It was a hands-on STEM event with 55 fifth graders from Columbus Park School on the shore of Coes Reservoir. The students participated in water quality tests from the reservoir and pulled fish out of the water to identify species. The kids walked from Columbus Park. Member Austin asked if it would be helpful if she wrote a summary of the event for DSR to use. Mr. Odell replied that it would be helpful for reporting.

- ii. Member Murphy shared that Seven Hills is organizing a tree planting challenge that she hopes can line up with the city's tree initiatives.
- b. Community Feedback
 - i. Member Conna brought up the topic of trees taken down on Newton Ave North. He explained that residents sometimes get upset when they don't understand why trees that look healthy get cut down. He spoke with some city officials to get a clearer idea of the problem. Often the hardscapes, such as sidewalks, are close to trees and fixing those areas can cause damage to the trees. Mature trees often have some defects for varying reasons and can therefore be deemed hazardous by the city. When road work happens, the city cuts down those hazardous trees so they don't need to go back to that same location years later as that would be an efficient use of city funds. One solution, in neighborhoods where there is sufficient space, is wider green strip for trees, but some people may not want the sidewalk closer to their yards. Also, when the city is redoing streets and sidewalks, the city needs to plan in advance to make more space for trees. There needs to be agreement on proper process for public involvement. Also, there needs to be staging so not all the trees are maturing at once.
 - ii. Vice Chair Herwitz asked if the department head of the new Department of Transportation and Mobility could be a guest speaker at the next GWAC meeting enabling the GWAC members to ask questions about Green Streets. Mr. Odell replied that DTM will speak at one of the upcoming meetings depending on their schedule.
 - iii. Media
 - 1. Member Conna wrote an article for Worcester Magazine/[Telegram & Gazette Article](#) (Attachment F), *"To succeed in the future, an urban forest plan must take root in the present"* published June 29, 2023. Vice Chair Herwitz thanked Member Conna for writing that article.
 - 2. *Telegram & Gazette* (Attachment G): *Letters to the Editor, July 23, 2023*. Vice Chair Herwitz thanked Paul Popincalk and others for submitting a Letter to the Editor in support of the City adopting the Specialized Stretch Code.
- c. Upcoming Events (not DSR organized)
 - i. Member Conna shared that Solar Fest was postponed due to flooding in Vermont and will be rescheduled, possibly in the fall.
 - ii. Member Conna asked if there was another Specialized Stretch Code event on August 8. Mr. Odell confirmed and stated that you need to be a Chamber of Commerce member to attend. He explained that the August 2 event will be an overview of the code and Chamber event is more dedicated to developers and will do a deeper dive on the topic.

Adjournment: The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:50pm.

Attachments

Attachment A: June 26, 2023 GWAC Minutes

Attachment B: Specialized Stretch Code event social media post

Attachment C: Telegram & Gazette Article 7/15/23 “Specialized 'stretch code' for energy efficiency in buildings worries local developers” by Henry Schwan

Attachment D: DSR Staff Assistant Job Ad

Attachment E: Green Worcester Annual Report draft

Attachment F: Telegram & Gazette Article “To succeed in the future, an urban forest plan must take root in the present” June 29, 2023 written by Ted Conna

Attachment G: Telegram & Gazette: Letters to the Editor

2023 Upcoming Meetings

Green Worcester Advisory Committee meetings begin on Mondays at 5:30pm.

<i>September 18</i>	<i>Meeting Room A*</i>
<i>October 16</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>
<i>November 27</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>

**Meeting Room A is located at 50 Manny Familia Way.*



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Jacquelyn Burmeister, *Lakes & Ponds Program Coordinator*
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CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Green Worcester Advisory Committee

Monday, June 26, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Meeting Room A, Officer Manny Familia Way

Attendance

Present

Mary Knittle, Chair
Evelyn Herwitz, Vice Chair
Ted Conna (Online)
Nate Fournier
Mary Leovich (Online)
Deirdra Murphy (Online)

Absent

Patricia Austin

Staff

John Odell
Sarah Mount

Chair Knittle called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm.

1. Welcome

2. Approval of Minutes – May 15, 2023

i. The committee unanimously approved the minutes with Vice Chair Herwitz's correction of Ms. Jacquelyn Burmeister's name and Chair Knittle's correction that the energy summit held on 5/12 was held by the Worcester Business Journal, not the Chamber of Commerce.

3. New Business

a. *Presentation by Grace Sliwoski, Regional Environmental Council (REC) Director of Programs (30 minutes) (Attachment A)*

i. Vice Chair Herwitz thanked Ms. Sliwoski for her work and commended her choice to focus on food systems.

ii. Ms. Sliwoski commented that she sees a large tie between sustainability and food systems, especially through the planting of fruit and nut trees.

iii. Chair Knittle thanked Ms. Sliwoski and the REC for their impactful work.

iv. Member Murphy commented that the REC is beneficial on so many levels. They provide good nutritious food and help residents understand plants and learn how to grow gardens. This work is key to understanding how important the Earth and its resources are.

- v. Member Fournier commended the REC on their regional work and how well they've been able to create a fruitful collaboration between municipal, private, and non-profit sectors.
- vi. Ms. Sliwoski noted that it is all about networks and working together.

4. DSR Updates (15 minutes)

i. Grants:

i. Submitted the Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant Proposal with Other Departments and Community Stakeholders (6/2/2023)

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR successfully submitted the Urban Forestry Grant. The grant was for \$23 million and involved a variety of different measures including: planting trees on publicly and privately owned property; maintaining the existing tree canopy in the city's federally defined environmental justice areas; establishing a tree nursery; and creating an arborist training and outreach program with our schools and community partners. The department expects to hear back about the grant at the end of the summer.
2. Vice Chair Herwitz commended DSR on their herculean effort and stated, "that everyone at DSR deserves our thanks."
3. Mr. Odell noted that it was a team effort supported by Luba Zhaurova, Jessie Davis, and Sarah Mount as well as a significant number of community partners.
4. Member Conna asked if there is an update on the status on the Urban Forest Master Plan. Mr. Odell stated that he did not have an update.

ii. Policy:

i. Update on the Specialized Stretch Code timeline

1. Mr. Odell explained that DSR plans to bring a specialized stretch code memo to the city council next month. Mr. Odell described the Specialized Stretch Code as an "essentially net-zero building code" that cities in MA are allowed to opt-in to. It is different from the regular stretch code which is already in effect in Worcester for residential builders and will take effect for commercial builders on 7/1/2023. The specialized stretch code is roughly a 20% bump up from the current code. It provides a significant incentive to create buildings that are ready for electrification while not eliminating other fuel hookups. He noted that there are many incentives currently available to help with the additional costs of electrifying buildings and that research has shown that the upfront cost of electrifying buildings is only marginally higher in smaller buildings and electrifying is actually cheaper in multi-family buildings. There are also significant savings in emissions. Mr. Odell stated that DSR will create a memo for the city council's July 18th meeting recommending that the council adopt the specialized stretch code. He noted that there may be debate on whether to implement the code on January 1, 2024, or July 1, 2024.
2. Chair Knittle asked if the new code only pertains to new buildings or if it also pertains to renovations and rehabs. Mr. Odell responded that it would apply to new buildings and to significant additions. The specifics are described by DOER. In general, a renovation of less than 50% of a home will not trigger the specialized stretch code.

iii. Community Engagement:

i. Energy Advocates Position Posting (Attachment B)

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR is looking to hire two part-time temporary Energy Advocate positions. The Energy Advocates walk residents through the Mass Save program and will help people who do not traditionally take advantage of the Mass Save program. He furthered that the advocates may determine that a resident may not be eligible for Mass

Save but may be able to direct low-income residents to the WCAC's programs. Priority review is set to close in mid-July, but the posting will be open until filled. The positions are expected to be 15-19 hours a week and will be funded for eighteen (18) months.

2. Chair Knittle added that this field currently has a lot of demand, and this work experience is extremely valuable. She also stated that programs like Mass Save are for everyone – homeowners and tenants in every situation.

ii. *Flood Watch promotion: seeking volunteers*

1. Mr. Odell stated that DSR is looking for volunteers for their flood watch program. Volunteers will go out during and right after rainstorms and look for areas of the city that are flooded. As the climate changes, rain events have gotten more severe and they will continue to get more severe over time. These events can have serious flooding impacts especially in low-lying areas. The program goal is to track where these flood events occur so that the city can plan for grey and green infrastructure improvements in those areas. He finished by saying that if you are interested in this volunteer program, you should go to DSR's website (www.worcesterma.gov/sustainability-resilience) to sign up.

iii. *Update on the Green Worcester Annual Report*

1. Mr. Odell relayed that DSR hopes to have a preliminary draft by the next meeting and a final report for the early fall.

iv. Lakes & Ponds Program

i. *Indian Lake Alum Dosing Station Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (6/16/2023) (Attachment C)*

1. Mr. Odell praised the recent ribbon cutting ceremony for the alum dosing station. He thanked Councilor Mero-Carlson for attending, speaking, and ceremoniously starting the dosing station. He also thanked Jacquelyn Burmeister, Nick Pagan, and Emily Maynard for their work.

5. Standing Items

i. Community Outreach

- i. Mr. Mount asked the committee to think of speakers they would like to hear from in the future. Member Conna mentioned that he would like to hear from other departments that work on sustainability, like the Department of Transportation and Mobility.
- ii. Vice Chair Herwitz relayed she will highlight the Green Worcester Plan and Dashboard at her upcoming meeting with the Briarwood Community
- iii. Chair Knittle agreed that the Dashboard has a great wealth of information in it.

ii. Community Feedback

- i. Mr. Odell highlighted a Telegram & Gazette article about the Forestry grant on 6/7 and another article talking about Green Streets on 5/16.
- ii. Chair Knittle mentioned an effort to bring more cooling centers to the city. Mr. Odell noted that Health and Human Services is playing point on creating cooling centers in the near term, but DSR's work of planting trees and installing energy efficient heat pumps in community centers will eventually help the effort.

iii. Media

a. *Telegram & Gazette Article, 5/16/23 "Worcester to get first 'green' street. Here's what it means" (Attachment D)*

- i. Member Conna asked what the likelihood is of approaching this level of greenness with every other street project. Mr. Odell responded that the city's long-term goal is that every street that

gets a significant upgrade – like with Endicott and Bigelow- would become a “Green Street” to the best of our ability. The Endicott-Bigelow Project is a collaboration between three different departments, DSR, the Department of Transportations and Mobility (DTM) and the Department of Economic Development. DTM is using this a learning experience and showcase, but the goal is to have this be a showcase that gets copied for other streets in the city.

- iv. *Other*
 - i. Member Leovich commended the committee and employees at DSR for being so energized about the environment.
- v. *Upcoming Events (not DSR organized)*
 - i. Mr. Odell detailed a heat pump webinar on June 27, 2023, that helped people get and compare quotes for different heat pump systems. The webinar was recorded and will be available at abodeem.com.
 - ii. Member Murphy noted that MIT’s Climate interactive is having a virtual in-roads workshop on June 29.
 - iii. Member Conna mentioned the annual SolarFest in Vermont. You can find out more at Solarfest.org.
 - iv. Member Conna mentioned the annual Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Conference online on July 24 during the week and hybrid during the weekend at Worcester State University. Member Fournier also recommended the NOFA conference. He stated that there should be many great speakers and it should highlight a lot of great work happening in the region. More information is available at Nofamass.org.

The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:34pm.

Attachments

Attachment A: REC Slides

Attachment B: Energy Advocate Job description

Attachment C: Indian Lake Alum Dosing Station Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Spectrum1 Article

Attachment D: Telegram & Gazette Article, 5/16/23 “Worcester to get first 'green' street. Here's what it means”

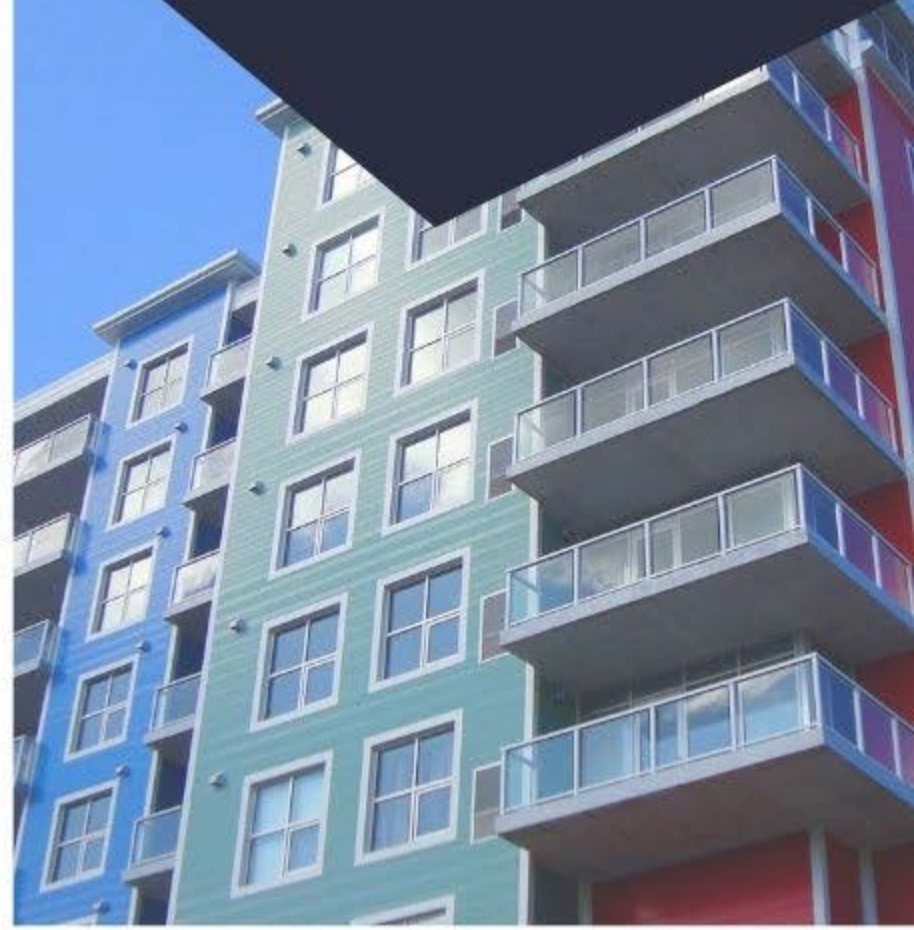
2023 Upcoming Meetings

Green Worcester Advisory Committee meetings begin on Mondays at 5:30pm:

<i>July 31</i>	<i>Levi Lincoln</i>
<i>September 18</i>	<i>Meeting Room A*</i>
<i>October 16</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>
<i>November 27</i>	<i>Esther Howland</i>

**Meeting Room A is located at 50 Manny Familia Way*

PUBLIC MEETING INVITATION



JOIN US FOR AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED HIGH EFFICIENCY BUILDING ENERGY CODE

*Building resilience in
Worcester through
sustainable design & the
MA Specialized Stretch
Code*

Wed., August 2, 2023
5:30pm
Levi Lincoln Room
City Hall - 455 Main St.
or online



**GREEN
WORCESTER**



STATE

Specialized 'stretch code' for energy efficiency in buildings worries local developers



Henry Schwan

Telegram & Gazette

Published 5:00 a.m. ET July 15, 2023 | Updated 1:24 p.m. ET July 18, 2023

Editor's note: The specialized stretch code does not pertain to major rehabilitations, as an earlier version of this story reported.

WORCESTER – A new building code could land in Worcester, potentially driving up costs for developers. The result could be a drag on the number of projects in the city, both residential and commercial.

It's called the specialized stretch code, and city officials are expected to ask the City Council to adopt it. That was supposed to happen Tuesday, but John Odell, the city's chief sustainability officer, said late Friday afternoon that the public presentation will occur later this month.

The state's specialized stretch code is an opt-in. That means a city or town can adopt it by a vote of a city council or select board. So far 18 communities have adopted the code, including Boston and Cambridge, but none in Central Massachusetts.

It's anticipated the Worcester City Council won't vote right away after Odell's department makes its pitch, as the request will likely require a council subcommittee review, followed by a public hearing.

What is the code?

It's essentially a stricter set of regulations that build upon the state's existing codes for making buildings more energy-efficient. If approved, it would apply to new construction of both residential and commercial properties.

A linchpin of the new specialized stretch code is enhanced electrification of buildings. Electrification to replace fossil-fuel heating and cooling systems with more energy-efficient heat pumps and other technologies is one strategy to meet a state law that requires Massachusetts to achieve net zero carbon emissions statewide by 2050.

Buildings major contributor to climate change

Roughly one-third of carbon emissions in Massachusetts emanate from the state's 2 million existing buildings, according to the Massachusetts Climate Action Network. In Worcester, 65% of the city emissions come from all buildings, said Odell.

Odell acknowledged some pushback to the specialized stretch code could come from developers.

“Any time you change things, there is going to be some pushback, which is understandable,” said Odell. “Changing systems can be a challenge, but we think there's a lot of support in the community for this.”

Don't count Brian Allen among them.

Allen is the founder and owner of WorcesterMulti, a buyer and seller of owner-occupied and investment properties since 1999. As Allen sees it, developers should decide if they want to electrify their buildings, not the City Council.

“The choice should be made by the person whose expenditure is their own personal money,” said Allen. “I don't think the city should impose rules on people. Imposing rules limits choice and the number of potential developers.”

Developer Charles “Chip” Norton, owner of the Mercantile Center, where the Telegram and Gazette leases office space, noted upfront electrification costs must result in cost savings on the back end to make it work.

“If the savings payback is reasonable on these sort of things, then it's important to do. It comes down to the financial impacts,” said Norton.

Added costs, but also more benefits

Added expenses could reach up to 3% of the total project cost on a developer's first project, said Odell. However, Odell noted that once developers learn how to incorporate the new

specialized stretch code into subsequent projects, then they'll likely see cost savings that outstrip any additional upfront costs.

The state Department of Energy Resources said there will be significant cuts in emissions and considerable cost savings for developers:

The prior stretch and specialized stretch codes will cut 500,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, along with \$21 billion in operations and construction cost savings over the life of the buildings.

Mass Save rebates and federal tax credits for different building sizes will more than cover added costs for all electric buildings. The Department of Energy Resources estimates approximately \$600 million in Mass Save incentives for new construction over the next decade. That amount includes projects that fall under the state's base energy code and in communities that adopted the stretch code and the specialized stretch code. Worcester adopted the stretch code in 2010.

As Odell sees it, the top benefits of the specialized stretch code include:

Less air flow in and out of buildings that makes heating and cooling more energy-efficient

Air-source and ground-source heat pumps will drastically cut carbon emissions

Better insulated walls will contribute to greater heating and cooling efficiency

Allen doesn't argue that improved technologies to achieve more energy-efficient buildings will win out in the end. But he doesn't want to see the city telling developers how to construct their buildings. Instead, he supports a carbon tax that punishes building owners who pollute the environment.

If the City Council does opt-in to the specialized stretch code, Allen sees property owners passing their extra costs to renters, driving up what is already a overheated rental market.

Don't forget about enforcement

Enforcement is another issue. It's one thing to adopt a code, it's another to enforce it.

Odell noted more city fire safety and inspectional services staff will likely be needed to ensure developers and property owners adhere to the new code, if the city adopts it.

He didn't have a dollar amount for how much more enforcement could cost, but it wouldn't be paid by city taxes. State and federal grants could be a source, said Odell.

Details of specialized stretch code

The details can get in the weeds, but the big picture is an emphasis on heating, cooling and other systems that run on electricity, not fossil fuels.

Some of the specifics include:

- Buildings using fossil fuels must be prewired for full conversion to electric and install on-site solar where feasible.
- Prewiring is required for electric vehicle charging stations, including a minimum of 20% of new spaces and one space per home in one- and two-family homes.

Odell sees many advantages if Worcester takes on the specialized stretch code, including greater energy efficiency that is good for the environment, and cost savings for developers that will make their buildings better for their balance sheets in the long run.

"All the plusses we think outweigh the smaller negatives," he said.

Contact Henry Schwan at henry.schwan@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter: @henrytelegram.

JOB DETAILS

The City of Worcester is an EEO/AA Employer. Preference is given to Worcester residents.

If you wish to apply for this position, the deadline is **Friday, August 11, 2023**. Please note the following application options for this position:

- **Applicants are Encouraged to Apply Online**
- By Mailing to the Department of Human Resources, ATTN: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, 455 Main Street, Room 109, Worcester, MA 01608
(If applying via US Mail, **please include** a completed Application Questionnaire & VSID)

Title

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Department/Division

Sustainability and Resilience

Apply Start Date

07/21/2023

Apply End Date

08/11/2023

Type

Full Time

Hours

40 Per Week

Wage

\$25.83 - \$31.18 Per Hour

Description

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE
CITY OF WORCESTER**

The City of Worcester seeks qualified applicants for the position of **Administrative Assistant, Gr. 6** for the Sustainability and Resilience Department. Under the direction of the Chief of the Department of Sustainability & Resilience, the Administrative Assistant, Gr. 6 is responsible for providing a wide range of administrative duties related to the overall function of the department. This position will create, process, and manage purchase order requisitions and change orders, process and track invoices and payments, process department payroll, assist with records management, manage office supply, provide office administrative support, and

provide customer service via walk-in, phone, and email. This is an excellent opportunity for candidates interested in working in a professional and collaborative office setting, with the ability to meaningfully contribute to the City of Worcester's sustainability and resilience efforts.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Knowledge of the principles, practices and objectives of record keeping operations, customer service and office management
- Strong organizational, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Able to deal with a wide range of constituents in a friendly, positive manner
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite & Adobe Acrobat
- Familiarity with Computerized Accounting Systems
- Basic math skills
- Self-directed and able to complete projects with limited supervision
- Must be able to work as part of a team and independently
- Considerable knowledge of modern office practices, procedures, and equipment
- Ability to learn an organizational functions, procedures, and intergovernmental relationships
- Ability to quickly learn new software and data management tools

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Associates degree in business, accounting, public administration, communications, or other related discipline; OR;
 - o an equivalent combination of education, training and three (3) years of experience that provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job
- Proficient with computers, Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Office Suite
- Experience with payroll, accounting/bookkeeping, or related activities
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Experience with customer service in an office setting

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Two (2) years of experience with customer service in an office setting
- Two (2) years of administrative experience in an office setting
- Two (2) years of experience with Accounts payable
- One (1) year of experience working with the Workday Platform or similar
- One (1) year of experience working with large datasets / databases

SALARY RANGE: \$25.83 - \$31.18 hourly, full-time, with an excellent benefits package.

To apply, please visit: www.worcesterma.gov/employment or send resume and cover letter to: City of Worcester, 455 Main Street, Room 109, Worcester, MA 01608. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED, applications received prior to or on FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2023 will receive preference. Preference is given to Worcester residents. The City of Worcester is an equal opportunity,**

affirmative action employer. Women, minorities, people with disabilities and protected veterans are encouraged to apply. Direct inquiries to: City Hall, Human Resources, Room 109, 508-799-1030, HR@worcesterma.gov.

Green Worcester Plan Annual Report

2022



**GREEN
WORCESTER**
COMMUNITY | RESILIENCE | SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction



The Green Worcester Plan (GWP) Annual Report covers calendar year 2022. Each section of this report contains an overview of the progress on the GWP goals in chapters 3-12, a chart displaying the status on particular goals*, and a "Looking Forward" section to explain what we will work on in 2023 and beyond.

To read the full GWP and for additional information go to:
WorcesterMA.gov/DSR.

*Status bars are a visual representation to quickly see the status of a goal. The dark green is the percentage completed in 2022.

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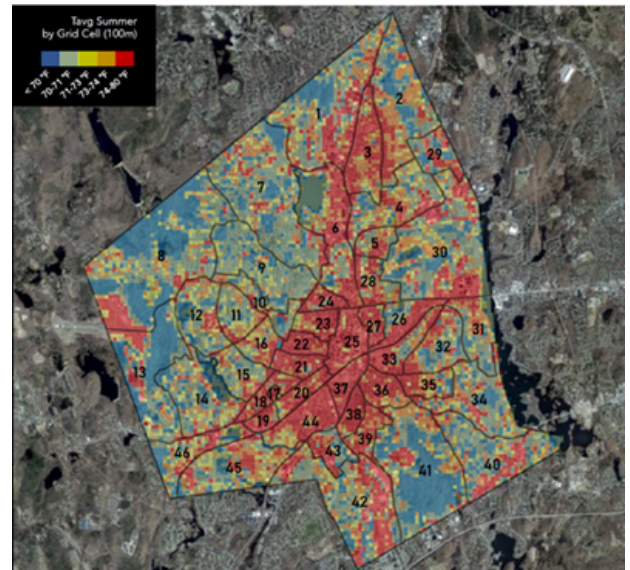
Chapter 11: Climate Change Resilience

Green Worcester Plan Goal

Make the city and its population resilient to climate change impacts, such as extreme storms, flooding, and more.

Our climate resiliency efforts began in 2019 when the City developed a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP). The plan identified three critical hazards that will be exacerbated by climate change: extreme heat, urban flooding, and winter/ice storms. Our MVP plan guides the City's strategic actions to build equitable climate resilience. According to the Massachusetts framework, approximately 92% of Worcester's population is designated as an "environmental justice" community. Therefore, this GWP goal is a high priority for us.

Our first resiliency project, completed in 2021, was a raingarden at the Senior Center to infiltrate water and reduce the heat island effect in a heavily urbanized area. In 2022, we completed a city-wide extreme heat study that will help us target resilience solutions where they are needed most. We also began working on a multi-year project to develop a Drainage and Green Infrastructure Master Plan to reduce flooding and heat islands throughout the City.



Related Chapters

- Ch. 4: Connected Green and Blue Spaces with Healthy Natural Systems
- Ch. 7: One Water

Goal	Status	GWP Related Strategy
Conduct a city-wide urban heat assessment	Urban Heat Risk Assessment completed in winter 2022. <div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the tree canopy Give priority to green infrastructure options to mitigate urban heat island impacts and flooding
Develop a Drainage and Green Infrastructure Master Plan	Awarded a \$1.2 million MVP Action Grant with project kickoff in Fall 2022. Anticipated completion in June 2024. <div style="width: 30%; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give priority to green infrastructure options to mitigate urban heat island impacts and flooding Invest in improved management and maintenance of the stormwater system to mitigate flooding
Develop an Urban Forestry Master Plan	In progress, expected completion by end of 2023. <div style="width: 60%; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the tree canopy Give priority to green infrastructure options to mitigate urban heat island impacts and flooding
Plant 35,000 trees by 2050 (goal determined in Heat Risk Assessment)	Trees planted: 225 Trees removed: 204 Net increase: 21 <div style="width: 10%; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the tree canopy Give priority to green infrastructure options to mitigate urban heat island impacts and flooding

Urban Heat

Some areas of the city can be 15°F to 20° degrees warmer than others due to the large swaths of pavement, dense buildings, and few shaded areas. [1] As the climate changes, Worcester's summers are expected to continue to get hotter and hotter. The areas most impacted by the heat island effect will suffer much more than those areas with full green canopies, built infrastructure with air conditioning, or other cooling features such as spray parks.

The 2022 Heat Risk Assessment identified the most heat-vulnerable parts of the City by simulating hourly near-surface air temperature over a recent summer and found that the hottest and most heat vulnerable areas are in the city center and in outer-lying census tracts. Using spatial analysis, the assessment showed that planting trees to shade impervious surfaces can significantly decrease the urban heat island effect. An increase in tract-level tree canopies up to 50% for any tract exhibiting less than 50% canopy cover under current conditions largely mitigates the city's urban heat island and yields cooling up to 12°F. To achieve this level of cooling, the city would need to increase the total tree canopy in Worcester by 35,000 trees, prioritizing plantings in areas with little tree cover.

In addition to completing the Heat Risk Assessment, the city is also tackling urban heat by hosting cooling centers and installing spray parks, focusing our cooling efforts on environmental justice communities and our newfound heat vulnerable communities to make every neighborhood in our city safe and livable.

[1] <https://www.heat.gov/pages/urban-heat-islands>

Urban Flooding

Urban flooding in Worcester is due to more frequent and intense rainstorms combined with older drainage systems and large amounts of impervious surfaces. It is estimated that forty percent of Worcester residents are already affected by flooding, and based on conservative flooding projections, we expect by 2070 that number will rise to fifty percent. To help combat the ever-growing pressure of urban flooding, the city is creating a Drainage and Green Infrastructure Master Plan to help us prioritize citywide stormwater infrastructure improvements.

The plan's goals are to develop a comprehensive understanding of our municipal drainage system as it is now; to identify vulnerable areas using an infrastructure and social resilience framework; to prioritize actions that advance flooding resiliency; and ultimately create a plan not with drainage systems designed storms now – but for storms of the future. This project also includes a community engagement effort, with volunteers collecting flooding data to assist in the consultant's model.

Looking Forward

In 2023, we will continue to work on the Drainage and Green Infrastructure Master Plan with an estimated completion date of June 2024. We have applied for various forestry related grants to enable us to expand the tree canopy and build green infrastructure projects (utilizing the data from both the Urban Heat Risk Assessment and the Drainage and Green Infrastructure Master Plan). The Department of Public Works and Parks will complete the city's first Urban Forestry Master Plan in 2023, a goal set forth in the Green Worcester Plan that will serve as a roadmap to proactively manage and grow the City's street trees. Planting more trees (and protecting existing ones) is one of the most effective actions we can take to help reduce climate change impacts.

COLUMNS | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

To succeed in the future, an urban forest plan must take root in the present

Ted D. Conna Special to Worcester Magazine

Published 9:39 a.m. ET June 29, 2023

The world is run mainly by people whose years are mostly behind them. I'm all for experience and wisdom, but imagine how powerless younger people must feel, with 50, 60 or more years of climate change ahead of them, in a world run by people who will not have to endure the worst of it. If we care about leaving a livable planet for our children, we need to start taking a much longer view of the future in the decisions and actions we take today.

These are hard choices to make, and yes, our day-to-day lives are complicated and challenging enough. But we have all heard about the catastrophic climate crisis that awaits us, soon, if we don't change.

There is no better example of this than the decisions we make about trees and forests, which take the better part of a human lifespan to mature. The trees we will need to make the future more livable need to be planted and protected today. Trees absorb pollution, including the carbon that is beginning to bake our planet, and cool the air by shading hard surfaces and by the evaporation of water from their leaves. Trees control erosion and stormwater runoff. Trees save energy, by shielding our homes from the winter winds and the summer sun. Trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife, and they add beauty to our streets and neighborhoods, and value to our property. Fruit and nut trees feed us, and sustainably managed forests provide renewable natural building materials.

More: 7,000 trees: Worcester hopes to throw shade with backing from feds

More: Work continues after Asian longhorned beetle destroyed thousands of Worcester trees

A healthy urban forest is essential to a sustainable city. Worcester is already blessed with significant tree cover, but according to a Heat Risk Assessment Study recently completed for the city's Department of Sustainability and Resilience, we need to increase our tree canopy by about one third in order to protect against the extreme heat that climate change is expected to deliver in the next few decades. The study calls for adding 30,000 to 35,000 trees to our urban

forest over the next 15 to 20 years — about the same scale as the Asian long-horned beetle reforestation planting. That means we need to begin adding about 2,000 trees per year. The need is greatest in the densely built commercial corridors and older, lower-income neighborhoods where trees are sparse and people are most vulnerable to extreme heat. The trees we plant today will be literally saving lives when they mature.

Worcester is now preparing its first Urban Forest Master Plan. The draft plan focuses almost entirely on street trees, because that's what the city has detailed information about. The draft plan is a good, fine-grained treatment of current street tree conditions and what is needed to improve upon the status quo. I agree that Worcester's Forestry Division needs more funding, staff, and resources to do the job we ask of them, and I would support giving them more than the draft plan asks for. But important as they are, street trees are only a small fraction of the total urban forest. Worcester needs a plan with a much broader and bolder vision for *all* our trees.

In the past four years, the city removed just a few more trees than it planted, for a tiny net loss. What we need is a big, sustained net gain. Yes, we should at least have a no-net-loss policy for private development projects and city street and sidewalk work. But there should also be a long-term plan for a net gain of about 2,000 trees per year citywide. And of the 30,000-plus additional trees the Heat Study calls for, we'd be lucky if even 15-20% of them could be street trees due to physical constraints on where they can be planted. That means we need to think outside the traditional street tree box.

The draft plan barely addresses park trees, other public land, or private land, although a park tree inventory is underway. But we need to think creatively about how we can grow more trees everywhere. There may be fields or lawns on park, school, or private land that could be allowed to grow in with trees — and trees do plant themselves, for free. Some of these sites could also be planted as small orchards, providing a new local food source as well as tree cover.

We need new tree-planting standards and requirements for developments and parking lots, and we need to ensure that new and existing street and sidewalk work *always* includes preserving and planting trees. The recent work on Francis J. McGrath Boulevard was a huge missed opportunity — we spent a small fortune replacing a wasteland of asphalt with more of the same, with a new pedestrian thoroughfare but not a single new tree.

And we need to try harder to preserve the trees we've got, because mature trees provide a lot more current environmental benefits than the small ones that replace them. We should do everything possible to avoid the removal of mature trees that often happens when the city is

replacing sidewalks. There should always be a public hearing, with robust outreach, before a healthy public shade tree is cut down, as required by state law since 1913, according to state law. And we should strengthen tree protection measures for both public and private trees — for example, a Providence, Rhode Island ordinance protects its large mature trees no matter where they are growing.

Worcester has not invested heavily in its urban forest since the largely grant-funded Asian long-horned beetle reforestation effort of the 2010s. But we have a huge new opportunity with a USDA Forest Service grant program funded by the Inflation Reduction Act. A successful grant application could fund a lot of tree planting over the next five years in the environmental justice neighborhoods that need it most. It could also lay the groundwork for the city to do the planning and outreach it will take to sustain the long-term expansion of our urban forest.

As the saying goes, the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, and the second-best time is now.

Now is doable, and it's time. Now.

Ted D. Conna is a longtime environmental activist. He was the first Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Council and now represents District 4 on the Green Worcester Advisory Committee, promoting the full implementation of the city's award-winning Green Worcester Plan. His viewpoint expressed here is consistent with the Green Worcester Plan.

LETTERS | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Letters to the Editor

Telegram & Gazette

Published 5:03 a.m. ET July 23, 2023

'Stretch code' would save costs, energy

A recent article suggested that a proposal to adopt the new “specialized stretch code,” an important tool in meeting the state’s decarbonization goals, was being delayed over developers’ concerns about costs.

We must put this issue in perspective. The state and city have made commitments to address our ever-worsening climate crisis. Building codes exist to ensure builders employ best practices. High-efficiency heat pumps are the lowest-emission choice for heat. Under the stretch code, builders utilizing combustion heating instead may face additional costs to offset emissions and ensure readiness for future electrification, but the code provides other pathways that reduce rather than raise costs.

All-electric buildings have further advantages. Heat pumps have the lowest life-cycle cost for energy systems, according to the Department of Environmental Resources. Burning fossil fuels indoors is associated with respiratory disease and other health risks – particularly for environmental justice communities.

The article also flagged a potential need for more inspection workers, but the content of the building code does not affect the number of inspectors required; the number of buildings does. We do not hear objections to development on grounds that more buildings would require more inspectors.

City Hall’s interest in adopting the stretch code is a sign that Worcester is serious about pursuing its emission reduction commitments and recognizes the moral responsibility we have to each other and to future generations.

Paul Popinchalk, 350 Central Mass

Gaylen Moore, Mothers Out Front Worcester

Mara Pentlarge, Worcester Congregations for Climate and Environmental Justice

Kwaku Asare, RENEW

Worcester

Solar farms next brownfields?

Senator Warren and Representative McGovern proudly announce EPA awards \$13.7 million of our taxpayers' money for brownfield cleanups in Massachusetts. These companies created great wealth for their owners yet disappear and leave their irresponsible pollution for us to clean up.

Now we are creating solar farms containing toxic metals with a limited lifespan. If we think "someone" will just recycle and replace them, we are sorely mistaken.

Nothing is sustainable in our capitalistic world unless there is a profit to be made. This is especially true in our struggling recycling industries. Currently there are no profitable ways to recycle solar panels. In 20 years, we will find out if we develop that technology or if these solar farms are the taxpayer's new brownfields.

How do corporations get away with this?

Keith LaRose

Warren

Who are the real enemies?

Mr. Mariano (7/14) says that "we have met the enemy and he is us." I disagree.

The enemies are the fossil fuel industry, the NRA and the politicians they own. A majority of the country wants action on climate. Polls confirm that most favor better gun control. But our legislators can't oppose their donors, so nothing happens.

And the hate? It's right out of the authoritarian playbook, now required reading for many of our right-wing political figures: Make people think the enemy is the other, within the country – blacks, gays, immigrants. Divide and conquer.

If our elected leaders are not doing what we want – we need to elect someone else.

Susan Donaldson

Northampton

Myths on Trump - and a fact

Donald J. Trump was the best president ever. Myth. He put three judges on the Supreme Court and the country is better off for it. Myth. The USA became a better place to live during his reign. Myth. He had nothing to do with trying to overturn the 2020 election and the Jan. 6 insurrection. Myth. Overall, he is more popular now than he ever was. Myth. He's got a big mouth, and after the 2024 election he will still be around. Fact!

Scott Vottiero

Millbury