

October 24, 2022 Special Town Meeting
Article 7: Appropriate for Needham Climate Action Planning
Frequently Asked Questions

The Select Board voted to establish a Climate Action Plan Committee (CAPC) to create a plan that meets or exceeds the State's climate mitigation and resilience goals. The October 25, 2021 Special Town Meeting adopted a resolution asking the Board to consider several climate change initiatives. This funding will help the volunteer committee complete its work.

What will the consultant do?

The consultant will provide Needham with technical expertise to:

- Assist the CAPC in authoring the CAP.
- Provide a clear and transparent method for prioritizing the Town's Climate Action Plan (CAP) based upon greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction potential, cost to the Town and its constituents, and the level of implementation effort.
- Ensure that the plan meets best practices for ensuring equity.
- Conduct a deeper GHG emissions inventory with a reduction assessment and cost-benefit analysis (particularly on GHG emissions, public health, economic, and equity dimensions) for actions proposed for the next 5 to 10 years.
- Evaluate projected emissions for the Town of Needham to include status quo scenarios and scenarios that implement proposed actions from the CAP.
- Create graphics and charts to illustrate emission reduction targets, and a CAP executive summary.
- Recommend a clear methodology for regularly evaluating and updating the plan.
- Complete implementation templates detailing steps, timing, financing, barriers, equity considerations, resilience, co-benefits, and indicators of success for the highest priority actions.
- Identify state, federal and/or private funding sources that would help the Town, residents, and the business community implement the actions identified in the CAP.

How will the consultant help the CAPC?

While outreach and research are primarily being accomplished by community working groups, the consultant will help prioritize community ideas into a concrete, feasible CAP. They will provide an outside perspective and ensure that a cross-section of Needham voices is heard. The consultant will help compile information into an actionable Climate Action Plan, using their knowledge and experience of how similar communities have approached and succeeded with their plans.

What are the deliverables? The consultant will help the CAPC develop and prioritize action items, and generate a methodology for evaluating and updating the CAP. They will also be responsible for creating graphs and charts illustrating emission reduction targets, as well as provide implementation templates for CAP recommendations.

Why are the funds needed now?

The funds are needed now as CAPC working groups are commencing action this month. Hiring a consultant to coincide with the conclusion of CAPC research will ensure that CAP development does not lose momentum and that working group findings are consolidated for use by the Town to guide important improvements.

If funding is approved, the CAPC anticipates completion of the CAP by mid-2023, which would allow the Town to pursue targeted funding opportunities through Federal, State, and private sources.

How was the cost estimate derived?

The CAPC researched scopes in similar communities that have contracted with consultants. Wellesley and Acton both hired consultants for similar scopes – \$55,000 is in line with their costs. CAPC members also consulted professionals in the field regarding the cost of this work.

Additional information is available at <https://needhamma.gov/5255/October-2022-Fall-Town-Meeting>.

The Select Board recommends adoption of Article 7.