

**2025 Annual Town Meeting
Article 10
Climate Action Program Initiatives
Frequently Asked Questions**



1. What does this article accomplish?

The proposed Climate Action Program Initiatives article would appropriate \$250,000 from Free Cash to support climate initiatives, to be spent under the direction of the Town Manager. These funds would be used to enable the Town to implement the Climate Action Roadmap by serving as a source of matching funds for grant opportunities.

2. What are the priority match opportunities for FY26?

The priority matching grant opportunities for FY26 include an emphasis on state grants for flood mitigation and energy improvements. The proposed warrant article language does not include reference to a particular project. Because the use of funds from this warrant article is dependent on outside funding from grants, there are some inherent uncertainties. If a grant is not awarded and the options for pursuing another similar style grant for a particular project are not available to the Town, the Town would not be able to use these proposed funds if limited to a single project. The warrant article as written enables the Town to pursue grant funding for an alternative project as needed if aligned with the Climate Action Roadmap. The identified priority matching grant opportunities for FY26 support public health and safety, infrastructure, and local resiliency. Please see Appendix A for the identified priority matching grant opportunities for FY26.

3. What are the typical match requirements for grants?

The majority of the grant programs that the Town would like to pursue require a match component, often ranging from 10-40% of the total project cost. If these funds were appropriated, it would enable the Town to be in a more competitive position for grant applications which require this match. The ability to support projects with outside funding would be advantageous to the Town at a time when federal funding is uncertain. The Town has been able to secure match funding to date for the projects that they were successfully awarded. However, as the Town aspires to apply for larger grant awards which will require larger match amounts, this may become an issue in the future and prevent the Town from being able to pursue those outside funding sources. Please see Appendix B for example grants and match requirements.

4. What is the typical timing for grant applicants and awards?

The timing for grant applications is often quick, with typically a month from the Request for Responses (RFR) or Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to the application deadline and award announcements often made within a five-month timeframe. Being able to confirm that a match has already been identified in a grant application will give the Town an advantage in the application review process. Please see Appendix B for example grants and deadlines.

5. What would be the process for evaluating potential matching grant opportunities?

Funds from the proposed article would be spent under the direction of the Town Manager. The following sequential steps would occur:

- a. The Sustainability Manager will identify grant opportunities the Town may be eligible for by surveying prospects at regular, frequent intervals. Identified grants must align with Climate Action Roadmap, Town priorities, and grant agency census block criteria requirements.
- b. The Sustainability Manager will discuss a potential grant opportunity with relevant Division or Department leads to confirm alignment of goals and feasibility for project completion.
- c. The Sustainability Manager will present the potential grant proposal to the Director of the Department of Public Works to confirm alignment of goals and feasibility for project completion.
- d. The Sustainability Manager will present the potential grant proposal to the Climate Action Committee to confirm alignment with the Climate Action Roadmap.
- e. The Sustainability Manager will present the potential grant proposal to the Town Manager for final approval.

6. Are there other examples of this funding approach in other Massachusetts communities?

There are several examples of Massachusetts municipalities that have established similar funding models to support grant matching opportunities. The following are a sample of communities that have established similar models.

Municipality	Fund	Funding Amount	Description
Town of Amherst	Sustainability Projects	\$250,000	Appropriates from cash capital for sustainability projects to enable the Sustainability Director to be opportunistic in leveraging grant funds. Projects have included regional bike infrastructure, engineering for solar installations, energy efficiency and carbon reduction project implementation for buildings and vehicles, and farm and community garden materials.
Town of Lexington	1) Sustainable Capital Projects	\$65,000	Appropriates cash for electric vehicle charging equipment and infrastructure, the study, design, and construction of rooftop solar or solar canopies, including battery storage, and other projects identified by the Sustainability and Resilience Officer to move the Town towards achieving its sustainability goals and enable the Town to act more quickly on

			sustainability-related project opportunities that arise.
Town of Lexington	2) Sustainability Operating Budget	\$60,000	Appropriates free cash for energy tracking projects, building decarbonization projects, and seed funding or innovation projects identified by the Sustainability and Resilience Officer which support Town sustainability goals.
Town of Rockport	Master Climate Resiliency Account	\$100,000	Appropriates free cash to improve the agility of the Town in committing funds for evaluative studies, grants, and smaller projects. Funds must be used for climate resilience related projects. Past projects have included grant matches to Massachusetts CZM and EEA grant programs, filling a funding gap on a revetment project, and conducting a solar feasibility study for the DPW facility.

Appendix A. Town of Needham Identified Priority Grant Matching Opportunities for FY26

1. Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant
 - Timing: Submitted request in April 2025
 - Planned request: \$380,000
 - Match required: 10%
 - Anticipated match: \$38,000
 - Project: Hydrologic and hydraulic flood modeling of the subwatershed for Linden Street, Linden Street flood mitigation and stormwater best management practices including subsurface storage and infiltration at High Rock Middle School and naturalization and widening of swales along a neighboring Town drainage easement
 - Potential Town return on investment: Every \$1 the Town contributes towards the grant project could leverage \$10 of state funding
2. Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management Coastal Habitat and Water Quality Grant
 - Timing: Planned request expected for June 2025
 - Planned request: \$350,000
 - Match required: 25%
 - Anticipated match: \$87,500
 - Project: Alder Brook neighborhood flood mitigation and stormwater best management practices to include the DeFazio parking lot regarding and bioretention basin installation
 - Potential Town return on investment: Every \$1 the Town contributes towards the grant project could leverage \$4 of state funding
3. Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Assistance Grant
 - Timing: Planned request expected for June 2025
 - Planned request: \$50,000
 - Match required: 25%
 - Anticipated match: \$12,500
 - Project: Assessment of local regulations to enhance climate resiliency, including a focus on the reduction of impervious cover and implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) practices to mitigate stormwater-related flooding
 - Potential Town return on investment: Every \$1 the Town contributes towards the grant project could leverage \$4 of state funding
4. Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Climate Leader Communities Accelerator Grant
 - Timing: Planned request expected for August 2025
 - Planned request: \$1,000,000

- Match required: 10%
 - Anticipated match: \$100,000
 - Project: Jack Cogswell Building solar installation
 - Potential Town return on investment: Every \$1 the Town contributes towards the grant project could leverage \$10 of state funding
5. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Electric Vehicle Incentive Program Workplace & Fleet Charging Grant Program
- Timing: Planned request expected for September 2025
 - Planned request: \$53,750
 - Match required: 40%
 - Anticipated match: \$21,500
 - Project: Installation of two fleet exclusive Level 2 electric vehicle chargers at the Center at the Heights
 - Potential Town return on investment: Every \$1 the Town contributes towards the grant project could leverage \$2.50 of state funding

Appendix B. Town of Needham Eligible Sustainability Related Funding Opportunities

Source of Funding	Number of Applicants and Awards	Category	RFR Announced*	Proposals Due*	Award Announcement*	Date for Project Completion	Match Required	Timing for Match Identification	Potential Funding Award
Federal Congressional Earmark; EPA Clean Water SRF	N/A	Flood mitigation	February	March	December-March following year	All funds must be appropriated within 12 months after enactment	Yes; 20% minimum	Commitment to match if awarded required in proposal	FY24 awards ranged from \$700,000-\$4,642,000
State Building Decarbonization Grant	FY24: 4 applications, 2 awards	Energy	March	May	August	36 months from date of award	Yes; 25%	Identification of secured match required in proposal	Maximum of \$500,000
State Climate Leader Communities Accelerator Grant	N/A (new program)	Energy	November	August; February (NOI due 3 months prior)	N/A (new program)	End of third fiscal year	Yes; 10% of total project cost	Description of degree to which match funding has been secured required in proposal	Maximum of \$1,000,000
State Coastal Habitat and Water Quality Grant	N/A	Stormwater treatment; flood mitigation	May	June	August	End of fiscal year	Yes; 25% minimum	Commitment to match if awarded required in proposal	Design projects \$50,000-\$175,000; Implementation projects \$100,000-\$850,000
State Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program Grant	FY22: 81 applications, 54 awards	Electric vehicle chargers	Rolling	Rolling	Approximately 30 days from proposal submittal	6 months from award to make charging station operational	Yes; 40% minimum	Identification of secured match required in proposal	Maximum of \$50,000 per street address for hardware and installation costs
State Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant	FY24: 112 applications, 79 awards	Flood mitigation	March	May	September	End of first or second fiscal year	Yes; 10% minimum	Identification of secured match (approval and/or appropriation) required in proposal	Maximum of \$3,000,000
State Planning Assistance Grant	N/A	Stormwater reduction; flood mitigation	June	July	September	End of fiscal year	Yes; 25% minimum	Identification of secured match required in proposal	Maximum of \$50,000 per proposal

**Please note that grant timing is approximate and included for this document based on schedules from prior years.*