



Climate Leadership through Net Zero Planning: A Dialogue with Cities & Towns

MEET THE PANELISTS



Austin Blackmon | *Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space*
CITY OF **BOSTON**

Austin Blackmon is the City of Boston's Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space (EEOS), where he leads the Environment, Parks and Recreation, and Inspectional Services departments. Since joining the Walsh Administration, Chief Blackmon spearheads the implementation of Boston's updated 2014 Climate Action Plan and works to keep Boston a national leader in energy policy. A native of the Great Lakes region, Chief Blackmon has spent over 11 years in New England, is a graduate of Harvard College and holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

Climate Leadership Highlight: Boston, along with other US cities, has agreed to follow the Paris Agreement and concurrently is one of 14 participating cities in the Metro Mayors Coalition committed to achieve Net Zero/Carbon-Free status as a region by 2050. Boston has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Boston's climate leadership manifests in several of their city-wide plans such as the Climate Action Plan, Climate Ready Boston, Greenovate City of Boston, Renew Boston, and Go Boston 2030.



Susanne Rasmussen | *Director, Environmental and Transportation Planning Division*
CITY OF **CAMBRIDGE**

Susanne Rasmussen is Director of the Environmental and Transportation Planning Division in the Cambridge Community Development Department. She is responsible for climate change mitigation and resiliency planning including engaging residents and business in this effort. She oversees the development of new energy and transportation policies and implementation of programs and projects in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, multi-modal infrastructure, and transportation demand management. Ms. Rasmussen has a master's degree in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's in Civil Engineering and Planning from the University of Aalborg in Denmark.

Climate Leadership Highlight: In 2015, The City of Cambridge released a 25 year plan to reach net zero across all their buildings, old and new. Community members realized that if the city wanted to reach its goal of decreasing emissions, new stricter regulations would be needed for their rapid new construction. Community engagement led to the creation of the Getting to Net Zero Action Plan. The Action Plan commits the City to reaching net zero energy in all buildings by 2030.



Gilda Gussin | Energy Committee Member

TOWN OF CONCORD

Gilda Gussin, M.Ed, has developed proven behavior change programs in health care and managed the implementation of successful practices nationwide. For the past four years, she has applied these skills to sustainable behavior, increasing residential efficiency and use of renewables. She co-developed the Cooler Concord Fair.

Climate Leadership Highlight: In an effort to engage a group that is often tough to reach, busy parents, Concord's energy committee worked closely with the schools to deliver a popular, fun and productive Cooler Concord Fair. Using a carbon points estimator, residents at the fair committed to 450 actions that will reduce emissions by 700,000 pounds annually. Community-based social marketing strategies propelled a thousand parents and children to participate, generating a momentum that we are continuing to grow in the home and in the classroom. A lot of what we developed with thousands of hours of volunteer time can be leveraged for other communities.



Oliver Sellers-Garcia | Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Environment

CITY OF SOMERVILLE

Oliver Sellers-Garcia is the Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) in Somerville, Massachusetts. OSE is responsible for sustainability of municipal operations, as well as policy, programs, and long-range planning for the community. He leads initiatives on climate change mitigation and adaptation, resource conservation, and environmental protection in Somerville. Prior to joining the City of Somerville, Mr. Sellers-Garcia worked as a consultant, helping clients around the country and the world integrate sustainability and climate change into physical and organizational planning. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban Studies from Columbia University and a Master's in City Planning from MIT, and he is a resident of the Union Square.

Climate Leadership Highlight: Somerville, located in the inner core of the Boston urban area, is the densest city in New England and in 2014 became the first city in Massachusetts to set a community-wide 2050 carbon neutrality target. After extensive work on accounting and modeling greenhouse gas emissions and climate change vulnerabilities, Somerville is now developing a community-based climate change mitigation/adaptation plan called Somerville Climate Forward.



Anne Harris | Energy and Climate Committee Co-Chair

TOWN OF WAYLAND

Anne Harris has co-chaired the Town of Wayland's Energy and Climate Committee since its creation in 2009, when her concern about climate change compelled her to volunteer. She has led Low-Carbon Diet workshops and assisted on two Solarize campaigns. Ms. Harris graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a BS in Civil Engineering and has worked in engineering, higher education and the green energy industry.

Climate Leadership Highlight: The Committee's accomplishments, along with critical municipal support, include receiving the Green Communities grant and designation in 2011 and two subsequent grants, a seven building ESCO and 4 solar installations. Currently underway are a resiliency project at our emergency shelter and an LED streetlight conversion.