

Metro West Climate Equity Project

CLIMATE CONVERSATION SURVEY – QUALITATIVE DATA
MEMORANDUM

Prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council
JUNE 2022

Contents

Introduction.....	3
What climate actions would you most like to see in your city or town over the next five years?	4
Making it easier to get around without a car	4
"Better public transportation to reduce use of cars."	5
"More walkability and pedestrian/bike friendly streets and maintenance."	5
"Protect habitats & environment and TREES!" (Expanding tree cover and green spaces).....	7
"No more building. Preserve the land we have"	8
"Increase the number of native plants and pollinator gardens."	9
"Addition of trees and green spaces and water to cool off is essential"	9
"Reduce hot islands in metro areas"	10
"Reduce waste via composting, recycling and repurposing."	10
"Fomento de la cultura del reciclaje"[Promotion of a culture of recycling].....	11
"Expand composting"	11
"Ban plastic products and encourage people to use reusable things."	12
"Increase recycling knowledge and awareness"	12
"Green building practices, reducing fossil fuel reliance and use, town/region-based programs to improve household energy efficiency."	12
Reduce energy use in homes and other buildings.....	13
Increasing the use of renewable energy	13
"Install solar panels wherever possible"	14
"AFFORDABLE programs to reduce energy use in homes and other types of buildings"	14
"Switch municipal fleet to EVs and add hundreds more chargers in the city"	15
"Increased climate education and awareness."	16
"Increasing access to plant-based foods is really important, and having it be accessible to everyone."	17
"All of the above - five years is too long".....	18
Helping residents and community groups prepare for emergencies.....	18
We recognize that climate change is one of several issues affecting our communities. What are some other priorities for you or your family that you want to see addressed in your community?.....	20
Clean Energy/Environmentalism.....	20
Open Space.....	20
Taxes	20
Public Transit	20
Traffic.....	20
Infrastructure	21
What, if any, climate change impacts have you experienced already? Is there a specific climate-related event that comes to mind for you or that you feel increased your awareness of climate change?	22

Extreme Weather Conditions.....	22
Shifting Weather Patterns.....	22
Health.....	23
Food Supply.....	23
Water Quality.....	23
Don't Agree.....	23

Introduction

The towns of Ashland and Natick and the City of Framingham have partnered on a project focused on the intersection of climate change and equity. The Metro West Climate Equity Project aims to reduce the social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities that affect Environmental Justice communities across the three municipalities and to build local resilience to climate change.

The project has three objectives:

- Learn from and build lasting relationships with Metro West Environmental Justice communities that will facilitate long-term engagement on climate change resilience issues
- Update local plans and direct funding to reflect Environmental Justice priorities
- Increase staff’s knowledge of climate equity and improve their capacity to support and engage **Environmental Justice populations**¹ through training

Support for this project comes from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, which “provides support for Massachusetts cities and towns to begin the process of planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects.”²

This memorandum presents the qualitative data collected by the Climate Conversation Survey, organized first by Survey Question (e.g. What climate actions would you most like to see in your city or town over the next five years?) and then by theme (e.g. Open Space). In certain cases where many responses on a given theme were identified, data was further organized into subtheme.

The document is meant to organize the rich feedback the Metro West Climate Equity Project Team received from open-answer questions on the Climate Conversations survey. It will serve as a reference for discussions with residents and will inform the action planning phase of this project.

¹ Throughout the memo, terms defined in the glossary will be bolded.

² To learn more about the MVP program visit: <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

What climate actions would you most like to see in your city or town over the next five years?

Making it easier to get around without a car

This was a provided example action; many respondents reiterated their general support. Other themes in this category of action included calling for **better public transportation, encouraging more walking and biking**, as well as calling for **specific infrastructure improvements**.

Some examples of general calls for reducing the use of cars include:

- “Making it easier to get around without a car. Uber, etc. is not the answer. It's still a car!”
- “All of the above to get off of fossil fuels. We need safe bike lanes and more public transit.”
- “Increasing reliability, and encouraging use of public transportation/bicycling/walking to reduce cars in cities (de-emphasize ALL cars including electric as they still require massive amounts of resources, and produce waste).”
- “making it easier to get around without a car (expanding public transit and fixing/ adding sidewalks and bike lanes)”
- “Take advantage of the current high gasoline prices to coax more people to use public transit, and to give up their cars.”
- “Lobby state leadership to get them to invest in the MBTA, bike lanes, and other infrastructure to combat climate change. Includes increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy to pay for these things.”

A few people mentioned the need to improve traffic:

- “controlar una el trafico en el downtown y la ciudad de tram” [control a traffic in downtown and the train station]
- Reduce pollution from cars. Traffic management would help.
- Congested traffic mitigation by keeping utility, trash, and school transportation vehicles off the roads during peak commuter times.

Some other suggestions, related to transportation that didn't not come up frequently:

- “bicicletas de alugar” [rental bikes]
- “Value of reducing use of fossil fuels. No idling law enforcement. Less kids to school driving.”
- transitX (mini monorail) on major roads.
- Better trash system. Sometimes old trash gets left behind on the sidewalks

One resident shared their frustration with the transportation systems' status quo and not feeling heard on these issues:

“The suggestion which we as community members give are moot. Because local govt runs on ideology not on consensus of the governed.

The car owners are demonized yet public transport in metrowest is non-existent even for people living near route 9. And even if some irregular service exists it is filled with mentally ill or straight dangerous people. Women certainly can't take public transport anywhere in metrowest without seriously risking personal safety and dignity.

There aren't even safe biking lanes, the monstrous in-traffic lanes don't count as any mistake there is certain death.

Taxing car owners doesn't actually help people walk or bike or take public transport. Give them safe options. Traffic is soul crushing no one wants to get stuck in a car for hours to either run errands or get to work but literally any other option is deadly and often with great certainty.

This comment certainly is going to get thrashed! The most impact on environment and health of people would be to get rid of single house zoning!! Have lots and lots of mixed development with walk-ability as the main goal, decrease the parking requirements for such developments."

"Better public transportation to reduce use of cars."

Many called for better public transportation, whether better meant more reliable, more affordable, more convenient, or if it meant having more options varied. Some example quotes:

- "More public transportation - less use of personal vehicles"
- "Facilidades de rutas de transporte publico mas accesible" [Facilities for more accessible public transport routes]
- "Better mass transportation, expanding tree cover, helping people prep for emergencies. All are very nice to have and are not just needed to "combat climate change""
- "I would like to see all of the listed examples implemented. If I had to choose, my top priorities would be expanding green spaces and making it easier to get around without a car. We really need a lot of communities working together in order to make public transportation better."
- "Have a real transit system so that driving isn't always the best choice for getting around town"
- "Better public transportation, especially in under-served neighborhoods."
- "More public transportation closer to where people live"
- "Increasing public transportation options and making it affordable and convenient"

A subset of respondents specified commuter rail, an example, "Improving the Commuter lines into Boston to be affordable and reliable."

Another subset specified bus improvements:

- "Improving MWRTA so that people can actually use it to get to work and home"
- "Expansion of public transportation, bike lanes, walking/bike paths, etc. so people can easily get around without cars in a timely manner (e.g. frequent enough public transit so that taking a bus from place to place is fairly easy and does not require long waits or long rides [compared to using a car]). Also, bus shelters at all or at least many more bus stops so people can sit down and have some protection from weather (precipitation/sun/wind)."
- "We have limited bus service in the area, and it is very difficult to get around town without a car."

One respondent felt that their community had good bus service, but utilization was lacking. Reasons not specified:

- "Vast majority of residents have huge gas-guzzling vehicles and I live on Main St. and have actually counted the number who are the sole person in their vehicle... There is a neighborhood bus but very very few residents utilize it, or ever would - and service routes are very good and on-time."

"More walkability and pedestrian/bike friendly streets and maintenance."

Many people made suggestions for making it easier to walk or bike. A frequent theme was the need for dedicated walking and biking infrastructure that made users feel safer:

- "Better sidewalks and landscaping for walking in all neighborhoods, REAL bike lanes (with barriers from cars),"

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- "ruos a calcados mais estruturados"
- "There are many streets that have no crosswalks and not enough sidewalks, making it unsafe to walk to certain places"
- "Better bike lanes with barriers"
- "Use of greenhouse gases for transportation would be greatly reduced if there is more opportunity for conventional or e-biking, as well as safe, walkable streets."
- "Increase budget to improve bike lanes."
- "Well paved bike lanes on major own roads with upright light reflective separators between the lanes and the road for increased safety."
- "Expand the rail trail and make more biking trails accessible. Bike lanes everywhere. Look at what boulder Colorado does. You can get anywhere in the city on a bike and the bike trails are not on the roads. Much safer that way."

A subset suggested supportive land use was part of the solution:

- "Ways to avoid using a car: bike lanes, walking paths, sidewalks, shops within walking distance"
- "Improve pedestrian and bicycle routes, support denser residential development near public transportation, support/encourage infrastructure and amenities for working at home"
- "City planning to make it more accessible by alternative transportation (walking/biking)"

One respondent noted the importance of a network of bike infrastructure, "Increasing the options to get around without a car- currently in Ashland many bike trails are disconnected and roads are too narrow to feel safe"

Specific Improvements

Several respondents suggested specific changes to the transportation system. Most of these came from Framingham residents and many specifically mentioned the need for safer walking and biking infrastructure along and across Route 9.

- Add more sidewalks so people can walk/ride bikes more like on Belknap Rd., Grove St. (especially where the Bruce Freeman Trail will be constructed), northern part of Edgell Rd. where the Framingham Animal Hospital is, etc...
- "Comprehensive transportation plan to move around without the need of a car (key stops such as supermarkets, train stations, Framingham State University, hospitals, and malls)"
- More frequent/accessible farmers' market and public transit to Framingham or other nearby farms (perhaps summers and weekends).
- "explore possibility of pedestrian only areas of downtown"
- "Build a TRAFFIC PROTECTED walking path and bicycle lane along both sides of Rt 9. From the apartment complexes around adjacent Foss reservoir to the Natick Mall or Wellesley. Add additional pedestrian crossing bridges over Rt 9."
- making bicycle commuting safe through dedicated bike lanes with physical separation from traffic, safe pedestrian access to the big apartment buildings on Rt. 9
- Better bike lanes throughout Framingham and especially to cross route 9.
- "Love the recent addition of bike paths - would like to see more. Keep working to improve traffic patterns at intersections... Would love to see more "green" development (expand and pave Farm Pond-side walking trail - connect sidewalk from Dudley/Mt. Wayte Ave to Lakeside Ave.boat launch to create a full walking/biking route. Clean up trash pond-side & in parking lots. Add another Dudley St. crossing & flasher from Cushing to Farm Pond."
- One respondent from Natick requested "Better sidewalk connectivity (looking at Oak street...)"

- “More frequent/accessible farmers' market and public transit to Framingham or other nearby farms (perhaps summers and weekends).”

One Framingham respondent provided detailed thoughts on the need for pedestrian and bike paths:

"There needs to be easier pedestrian access from Downtown Framingham to Cushing Park. It would be great if we could actually use that patch of land that goes across the lake, it would make access easier and would make the journey to the park more relaxing, beautiful and nature immersive.

I also feel very strongly that there need to be more pedestrian and bike paths throughout Framingham and Natick. This includes Natick mall. I think it is so wasteful that I live just a 20 minute bike ride away from Natick mall, but because there are no bike paths or pedestrian / bike bridges over Worcester road, I have to get in my car and drive just to go to Wegmans. There are a few things that could help with this:

- Grocery store availability in downtown Framingham. We wouldn't have to drive to Wegmans if there were grocery stores within walking distance. There is a Seabra foods and it does have great produce, however it is limited in other healthy things like fish and chicken availability. We need something like a Wegmans or Target downtown or funding to help Seabra have a wide selection of fresh meat, produce and fish available.

-Pedestrian/bike bridges over Worcester road. There really should be one of these every few hundred yards along Worcester road to help pedestrians get across. This is one of our main commerce centers in the Natick/Framingham area, it makes no sense that we restrict bikers and pedestrians from accessing the entirety of shopping options at Shoppers World, Sherwood Plaza, Natick Mall and more. Pedestrian bridges could hugely cut down on the carbon emissions produced by driving back and forth to, for example, Walmart just to pick up something small when I could easily have walked or biked there."

“Protect habitats & environment and TREES!” (Expanding tree cover and green spaces)

Many survey respondents called for the increase or maintenance of the tree cover (“Plantar mais árvores , evitar desmatamento !”), less frequently mentioned but still popular among respondents, was calling for an expansion of green spaces (“more green space available to more people”). Some examples of the call for more tree cover and green spaces below:

- “Keep the trees!!! So many neighbors are having their trees cut down“
- "Expanding tree cover and green spaces - a lot of building in Ashland has happened without regard for the trees.”
- “Rain gardens, especially by public buildings and helping residents create their own/create a neighborhood wide garden. More green infrastructure in general, in tandem with gray infrastructure when necessary. Converting floodplains to public parks when possible (the former lumber yard near Framingham High School would be a possible candidate - right now as an abandoned parking lot it radiates heat in the summer and is a source of water runoff).”
- “Expanding tree cover, especially in parts of town that are considered lower income - this will help with energy prices AND home values!”
- “Add trees in good locations (not below electrical wires)”
- “Expand number of tree for carbon absorption”
- “Expanding tree coverage and green spaces for shade and natural flood control”
- “Expanding trees / green space (replanting trees, grass, protecting park space, consider planting green space on tops of flat roofed spaces).”
- “stop cutting down established trees and forests.”

A respondent, for whom climate action was not a priority, shared a request: “Stop over-reacting to the manufactured “threat”. Planting trees is always nice.”

Only one respondent commented on park programming, “Porques de animais separados dos parques de criancos. possibilidade de acesso a filtros de agua potavel nos parques.” [Why separate animals from children's parks? possibility of access to drinking water filters in the parks]

A few mentioned the importance of education and community awareness:

- “Bringing awareness to kids in school about what they can do to help: plant trees – recycle.”
- “Crear una clase para consientilar los jovenes y las familias acerca de los beneficios que sue pueden recibir cuando hay mas siembra de arboles, y conservar las areas verdes.” [create a class to educate young people and families about the benefits they can receive when there is more planting of trees, and conserving green areas.]”
- “Community plant-a-tree events”

“No more building. Preserve the land we have”

A frequent theme in the *expanding tree cover and green spaces* category of actions was concern about the impact of development on green spaces, several participants called for restrictions or moratoriums on building where it would replace trees, green space, or farmland:

- “Slow down development, instead create more protected parks and nature preserves. Create more green spaces in the developed areas to reduce heat and absorb co2. That will increase the value of the city as well.”
- “Plant more trees. Prevent developers from cutting trees.”
- “Push against multifamily housing and dense population housing. Push for higher setbacks and more greenspace. Keep suburbs green spread out and suburban do not push for city standards.”
- “Set limit/stop allowing housing development, especially buildings on what is left of conservation and green land where trees are being removed.”
- “Decrease the amount of trees and construction that is taking away from our ecosystem. Too many unaffordable houses are being made and it’s causing a lot of animals to lose their homes. The amount of road kill has increase significantly over the past few years and even some wild animals are being spotted that usually remain hidden.”
- “Stop developers from clear-cutting land. Increase conservation land. Moratorium on new developments. We are in a crisis and this needs to be addressed.”
- “Moratorium on building in the farm land.”

“Instituting restrictions on the cutting of trees on residential and commercial properties in favor of hardscape or pavement”

Connected to the theme of limiting building and preserving green spaces, a handful of respondents proposed policy action that would regulate the removal of trees by property owners or developers:

- “Expanding tree cover and green spaces. So many trees are cut down in Framingham and not replaced. We need more trees in more places. Any tree that is cut down, regardless of the reason, should be replaced by another tree that is natural to our environment and suitable to its location”
- “Regulate homeowners taking down healthy trees. Especially builders who buy properties and take down trees. There should be laws that a mature tree needs approval to remove for a legitimate reason.”
- “Make it so you have to plant replacement trees for one's cut down.”
- “That developers not clear cut the trees on land that they build on. I believe the town of Shrewsbury will not let builders cut down a tree if it’s over a certain circumference.”

One participant also suggested the municipality “offer tax incentives or other benefits” to those who plant trees.

“Increase the number of native plants and pollinator gardens.”

Several respondents called for encouraging use of indigenous plants in landscaping and limiting the use gardening chemicals, example quotes below:

- “Planting of local plants and local edibles (fruit trees/berries/pollinator supporting local flowers) on public land including the rail trail in Natick/framingham.”
- “Expanding tree cover and green spaces, but only ones that include native & non-invasive plants and fruiting (non-pollinating) trees.”
- “Working with local retailers like Lowe's or Home Depot to not sell bee damaging pesticides”
- “Incentivize planting trees and native plants, as well as reduction of pesticide use”
- “Green spaces and canopies. Carbon tax. Native planting encouraged and tree, compost, rain barrels... stop town spraying pesticides. Stop mosquito spraying but town. Maximize trees on the common.”
- “A masterplan for ecological management of the larger parks so they have fewer big stretches of turfgrass and more plantings of native trees, understory shrubs, and meadow-type collections of plants.”
- “A shift away from lawns and towards native plants to increase backyard biodiversity.”
- “More emphasis on green living (like city-wide composting, encouraging people to replace lawns with sustainable plants like clover, and encouraging people to plant food gardens - maybe offer community gardens for those without land?).”

“manteniendo los cuerpos de agua del pueblo limpios” [keeping the town's water bodies clean]

Related to the protection of trees and other natural environments, a few respondents also suggested actions for maintenance of municipal blue spaces:

- “Run-off and watershed management to prevent nutriment loading. Active remedial dredging and improvements to improve W.Q. NOW!”
- “Protect the waters in the ponds/lakes better. The waters get diseased as soon as the heat spikes.”
- “Increased protections and buffers for remaining wet land spaces.
- “More trees, lakes and ponds cleaned up from summer bacteria”

“Addition of trees and green spaces and water to cool off is essential”

Connecting themes around protecting green and blue spaces, were calls for environments with cooling benefits. Although there were only a few of these calls to action, these respondents were very passionate about the issue and several made the connection to the value of these spaces to vulnerable populations (immigrants, families with children, residents of dense environments).

- “More shaded park land for people looking for respite from the heat.”
- “Espacios verdes para sombra”
- “Remove the ducks that defecate in the water so immigrants that live around me have a place where they can cool off on a Sunday.”
- “More shaded park land for people looking for respite from the heat. Framingham just took away a large, popular area for local families by putting in the dog park. Where will we cool off this year without driving (and causing more warming) or turning up our ACs (and causing more warming)? Cushing Park has many shaded areas, but it is unsafe for families due to the large number off off-leash dogs in the middle shaded grassy area.”

- “More conservation of open space and mitigation of heat especially in dense parts of Framingham (pocket parks, more tree plantings, access to splash pads or other free places to cool down; also expanded hours at library and other community buildings for cooling down). The pond is usually closed because of high bacteria or because they can’t hire enough lifeguards. children have died because there were no lifeguards at the pond!! We need to teach immigrants how to swim; many of them don’t know how to swim!!”
- “Addressing summer water quality in the ponds in the city (if no one can safely get in the water during the hottest weeks of the summer that is a problem - people need to put less fertilizer on their lawns and we need buffers of vegetation around the ponds to filter runoff; Boston is experimenting with floating artificial islands of plants in the Charles),

Specific Improvements

Several respondents indicated locations that would like to see increased greenery in, such as the Town Forest (“Expand tree cover (enlarge Town Forest) and greenspaces”), municipally owned properties (“More greenery on public land”), “increasing opportunities for community gardens/resources for home gardens,” as well as several specific locations in Framingham, listed below:

- “Increasing tree cover and green spaces is so important. Driving down Central st. From Natick to Framingham, you can tell where the city lines are because there are far fewer trees and green spaces in Framingham. The psychological and physiological benefits of green spaces and trees have been proven. They also help the environment which is extremely important. We need more parks, more trees, and more green spaces in Framingham. There needs to be easier pedestrian access from Downtown Framingham to Cushing Park. It would be great if we could actually use that patch of land that goes across the lake, it would make access easier and would make the journey to the park more relaxing, beautiful and nature immersive.”
- “More Tree Cover and green spaces, particularly along RT9 and in 01702 (particularly east side)”
- “Investing in green space and planting more trees in south Framingham.”

“Reduce hot islands in metro areas”

Several respondents mentioned the critical role green and blue spaces play in keeping cool, these are listed in the section on **“Addition of trees and green spaces and water to cool off is essential.”** Other examples of respondents asking for cooling are listed below:

- “Install wind turbines, solar panels wherever possible. Paint building roofs white, any streets that need repaving, could be white.”
- “Solar canopies in public parking lots and encourage businesses to build. This not only produces energy, it also shades cars so that people will not have to use as much gas for AC on hot days. Ground source heat pumps and solar panels in new construction when feasible, also now new gas line connections.”
- “Medidas que sirven vidas. como proteger a los ambulantes de la calle con mas ropa para el frio o para los calores extremos.” [measures to protect lives. How to protect street vendors with more clothing for the cold or for extreme heat.]”

“Reduce waste via composting, recycling and repurposing.”

Reducing waste was not a provided example category of action but remained very popular among respondents. Many provided voiced their support for “actual recycling initiatives that don’t end up in the ocean.” As well as **expanding composting, banning single-use plastic, and increasing recycling knowledge.**

A few people suggested ideas or raised questions around repurposing new types of items:

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- “With increase interest in electric cars, where are the batteries being disposed at the cars’ end of life? Can they be repurposed?”
- “Help people find ways to donate gently used items (clothes, furniture, etc.) to those in need to avoid filling landfills with useful items.”
- “I would like to see my city... reduce the sale of new textiles by limiting department stores and implementing second hand stores, and possibly try and give some sort of rewards system for limiting trash.”
- “Have a swap station.”
- “Have textile only recycling bins. There are none in Ashland so most undonatable textiles go in the trash.”

“Fomento de la cultura del reciclaje”[Promotion of a culture of recycling]

Many respondents voiced their desire for actions that would increase participation in existing recycling programs:

- ‘Provide better outreach and education on proper recycling, require residents to recycle, and levy fines for improper recycling. ‘
- “Condominio y comercio en Fra, no tienes o sau libertador a contenedores dedicador al reciclable y es necesario.” [Condominiums and businesses in Framingham do not have containers dedicated to recyclables and it is necessary.]
- “lixearas publicos separao o reciclavel.” [separate public garbage bins for recyclables]
- “Better recycling program (better classified).”

A subset suggested expansions to the current recycling program:

- “Also more recycle trash receptacles at parks for people to throw away recycle plastics bottles and cans. Also once a year drop off at the recycle center to drop off all old computes cables, cell phones etc. for free.”
- “Expand Mt Wayte recycling center and Yard Waste hours. Expand annual electronic recycling to include a weekday.”
- “Expanded and easier recycling especially for items like batteries and electronics which have metals that can be reused, and large items that are sometimes dumped (especially tires, which when dumped collect water and can be a source of mosquitos).“

“Expand composting”

There were many calls for composting, but this section’s title exemplifies most of these responses, direct, without details. A few specified the desire to see a “city-wide,” “public,” or “city compost” program and one requested that the municipality “start offering residents the option to compost along with rubbish and recycling.” Yet, most did not include specifics around how they would like their city/town to act in this area. Examples of responses that did, listed below:

- “Establishing a compost processing facility for the metrowest to serve its residents and businesses for the health of the soil, an integral condition for a well functioning ecosystem.”
- “Mandate curbside composting (if not composting on site).”
- “Reduce landfill usage especially with food waste. I know there is a composting program but not a lot of people have signed up - because it costs money and they don't see the benefit to themselves or the town. I think the program should be restarted as a pilot program and give people in all neighborhoods free access and build up interest. The town would save \$ and landfill waste would be lowered...We moved to town 2.5 years ago - I don't recall a robust welcome packet from the

town with info and opportunities to participate in climate friendly actions - this would also be a great place to 'advertise' about composting and Black Earth program.”

“Ban plastic products and encourage people to use reusable things.”

Many respondents called for a reduction or ban of single-use plastics (“Waste reduction in banning all single use plastics.”), without specifics.

A subset called for phasing out plastic bags at stores (“cutting out one-use plastic...stop using one use bags at stores (bring your own bag)”) and supporting businesses in reducing “wasteful packaging.” Similarly, “holding businesses accountable for their contribution to the global trash problem and climate change.”

Other local action included education, programs, policies, and their municipality leading by example:

- “Local Gov needs to acknowledge the urgency, it's not enough when everything is pretty and the parks are clean. We need to invest in all these things that are mentioned above and also educate a lot in a positive way from all levels, schools, government, faith based org. The person should not feel like a victim (more taxes) we need to make it positive to invest into new green technologies reduce the amount of single use items. People participation!”
- “Public events hosted by Natick need to stop using single use plastic!”
- “Transition away from using plastic trash bags to a bin system”
- “Banning single use plastic water bottles.”

“Increase recycling knowledge and awareness”

Increasing knowledge and awareness was a sub-theme that ran across the different categories of waste reduction:

- “Make more people aware of the impact of waste and how to be less wasteful.”
- “Increase recycling knowledge and awareness. Increase recycling efforts - add more recycle barrels around town/city like Natick does. Teach people to take ear straps off of masks before disposing them.”
- “All of the things mentioned here. I think community engagement and information is also important- reasons why we need to reduce consumption and focus on renewable and make these things easier. It feels like I want to do all the right things but they are SO hard - to access, keep track of, etc on top of a culture of consumption and capitalism. I don't know Manu great specifics on best climate change practices, particularly because it feels like everything I try to do ends up wrong or so hard it's counter productive. So maybe also something on that - education on best practices which efforts actually make a difference. Food waste reduction seems big. Efforts to change at a larger level also- so engagement with other towns and cities and companies.”

“Green building practices, reducing fossil fuel reliance and use, town/region-based programs to improve household energy efficiency.”

Many people repeated the provided example actions of **reduce energy use in homes and other buildings** and **Increasing the use of renewable energy**. Examples of some broad supportive action:

- “encouraging renewable energy and buying renewable energy.”
- “Energy efficient building codes.”
- “Programs to reduce energy use in municipal buildings.”
- “All government buildings should be net 0 Carbon emissions.”
- “All new construction should be energy efficient.”
- “Reduce energy use and encourage the development of housing that is energy-efficient and environmentally responsible.”

More specific suggestions are included in the subtheme sections below, with **installing solar panels wherever possible** and **affordable programs** broken out into their own sections.

Reduce energy use in homes and other buildings

Version of “increased accessibility to alternative sources of heating” was a common more specific suggestion, from calls to lead “heat source conversion” for existing buildings to the suggestion to “create heating/cooling centers using heat pumps.”

A subset mentioned the need for support around weatherizing buildings:

- “make buildings and homes more efficiently temperature controlled to avoid high heating and cooling bills.”
- “programs to reduce energy use in homes - apartment buildings, like tax credits for replacing old, inefficient window sets with new ones that don't leak, and heating and hot-water systems.”

Several respondents requested information and support around navigating current state and local programs:

- “Resources for reducing energy use & getting more efficient appliances, heating, etc.”
- “Central location for information about rebates or state/local programs for energy efficiency in homes.”
- “Helping residents get off of oil/natural gas & convert to heat pumps (more info and help please - the rebate program is a mess).”

Increasing the use of renewable energy

Although solar was, by far, the most frequently mentioned source of renewable energy, a few people offered broad support for wind and geothermal installations as well. One respondent provided specific renewable energy actions; “Greater use of solar power by town...consider installing low head hydropower generation if the South Natick Dam is retained, consider installing wind turbines on some hills with open space in Town, Town Forest and other locations around town.”

Two respondents called for “a home-rule petition to ban natural gas installations” and “no new gas line connections.”

Increased participation in a community power aggregation program with renewable option was also mentioned by a few respondents, or “make 100% renewable electricity the default plan.”

“Create incentives for businesses that works with alternative energy to set up home base in the area and make it easier for them to operate. Become a hub where these businesses. These are growing industries. If they and other businesses that support that business here, we will see an amazing outcome in the years to come.”

Clean (but not renewable) sources of energy

Among respondents for whom climate action was “not a priority,” nuclear energy was a popular power alternative:

- “We could use a nuclear power plant nearby. These so-called climate alarmists seem to have no interest in this the greenest energy production method of all. That tells me how phony they are.”
- “Support nuclear power and say no to anything that increases taxes or regulation. Make power company put all powerlines underground.”

A small subset were also interested in switching from oil to gas, or to “stop focusing on elimination of gas and oil but rather focus on making them cleaner,” examples:

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- “There is no gas access on my street and I live in a house there’s oil heat. I want to change to propane gas. But there is not propane on my street. So I think the most important is to have it. So it would be great for the ambient quality.”
- “Many streets do not have access to gas lines and are forced to use oil for heating.”

“Install solar panels wherever possible”

Many respondents mentioned solar energy, it was by far the most frequent theme within those who mentioned Clean Energy. Many offered general support of this renewable energy source, e.g. “More solar use!”

Many people mentioned specific locations they would like to see more solar arrays. Publicly owned buildings and all parking lots were by far the most frequently noted sites, examples below:

- “More solar panels on government buildings.”
- “Increase use of solar and other renewables in municipal buildings.”
- “Install solar panels over the school parking lots, public libraries, etc. They create shade to keep cars cool in the warm weather, and they produce power.”
- Solar canopies in public parking lots and encourage businesses to build. This not only produces energy, it also shades cars so that people will not have to use as much gas for AC on hot days. Ground source heat pumps and solar panels in new construction when feasible, also no new gas line connections.

Many mentioned community solar projects in the list of actions they’d like to see, examples below:

- “Working out a community solar program using the roofs of suitable commercial buildings to reduce utility cost to Framingham residents”
- “Open solar farms to offset costs to all town residents. “
- “Expanding solar panel access for all (distributed electrical network)”
- “paneles solares organizados por la ciudad donde vive. [solar panels organized by the city where you live.]”
- “Community aggregation for sustainable energy. neighborhood grids...solar power sharing or geo sharing.”

A few echoed one respondent’s call for “mandatory solar on all new builds” or another suggestion of “mandating solar panels on top of flat buildings like parking garages, school buildings, shopping centers, etc.”

Several asked for help accessing solar installation programs or vetting the existing installers, examples:

- “Help getting alternative energy into my home - I feel like all the ads I get for solar are scams, I’m really not sure how to find a company I can trust!”
- “Making solar energy more affordable and clearer. Most salesman are unclear and it feels like a scam.”

“AFFORDABLE programs to reduce energy use in homes and other types of buildings”

Cost was a consideration for many respondents interested in renewables or reducing energy use. Some example comments below:

- “Helping residents, especially lower income residents and renters/landlords, access programs for reducing energy use and switching away from fossil fuels in homes.”
- “Give solar panels to low-income housing.”

- “Create partnerships to offer free solar installation to low-income residents.”
- “AFFORDABLE programs to reduce energy use in homes and other types of buildings. AFFORDABLE programs to increase the use of electric vehicles and renewable energy. Affordable for the average person”
- “The options to make most of the community to convert to green and reduction in energy consumption. Looking into more alternative sources including maybe wind turbines that can be used around the reservoir to power batteries that the town can use for electricity as well as maybe cheaper options for town residents for solar panel installation.”
- “Paneles solares para residentes, acceso a autos electricos y energia a bajos costos [solar panels for residents, access to electric cars and low-cost energy]”
- “Offer real support for reducing cost of solar panels roof and batteries installation. Current programs are still too expensive”
- “Help to reduce energy use, better insulation like more affordable price for windows, doors.”
- “Subsidize updates to older homes to make their heating/cooling more efficient (not just a small discount, a robust program that really defrays the cost).”
- “Installing solar on all new buildings, opting in to renewable energy town-wide, incentives and programs to upgrade homes to be efficient and electric powered.”
- “Tax incentives for alternative energy systems such as solar panels.”

“Switch municipal fleet to EVs and add hundreds more chargers in the city”

Many people repeated the provided example action of *increasing the use of electric vehicles*.

There was broad support for electrifying the city’s vehicle fleet, with more specific suggestions of electrifying the police vehicles and school buses. Regionally, respondents were interested in electric MWRTA buses and shuttles. Example quotes:

- “Convert town vehicles and school buses to electric, more electric vehicle charging stations”
- “Electric car charging stations, electric school buses, solar and wind power for public buildings”
- “Switch municipal fleet to EVs and add hundreds more chargers in the city”
- “New city vehicles should be electric including police vehicles.”
- “Increase use of EVs and renewable energy, electrify & add more MWRTA shuttles (especially to commuter rail) and make the stops more visible.”
- “Town fleet should 100% be electric - including police and fire.”
- “Increasing use of electric/hybrid vehicles like buses or government vehicles
- “Electric vehicles for town employees, increased availability of charging stations for electric vehicles.”
- “Electric town buses”

Many respondents called for infrastructures that would make “the town friendly for more electric vehicles,” such as more charging infrastructure, charging spaces, and providing charging opportunities for renters and people living in large buildings. Example quotes:

- “Promote use of electric vehicles with more charging stations and FEV parking downtown.
- “I am especially focused on renewable energy and use of electric vehicles, installing more public access charging stations.”
- “I live in an apartment. I'd be interested in getting an electric vehicle but I have no place to charge it. The nearest charging station is a mile away and it only has two, fairly slow, connections. Is there any way to create more charging stations with quicker connections?”
- “Put electric car charging ports in apartments and condos”

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- “EV charging to encourage the switch to EVs”
- “Increasing the viability of electric vehicles with the availability of charging stations ”

Several respondents suggested financial incentives for purchasing and charging EVs, examples:

- “Increased use of electric vehicles, programs to reduce cost of running a plug in hybrid vehicle”
- “Introduce an incentive for buying an electric vehicle, given the town’s transportation emissions”
- “Financial incentives for purchasing electric vehicles (ie lower excise taxes, rebates, etc).”
- “Increase the use of electric cars, without increasing the cost of electricity.”
- “Partnerships with local auto dealerships to promote adoption of EVs and EV infrastructure (such as deals for in-home EV charging station installations).”

A few respondents shared concerns around increasing electric vehicles:

- “Green space is great, but forcing electric vehicle on people is not a solution.”
- “Eliminate electric vehicles, they are bad for the environment.”
- “Increasing renewable and clean energy, but not necessarily electric vehicles unless it can be proven that these vehicles are charged with electricity from clean sources.”

“Increased climate education and awareness.”

Many respondents called for education on or initiatives to increase awareness of climate change causes and what individuals can do to reduce their impact. Examples of this broad call for education and awareness, listed below:

- “Education on best practices and which efforts actually make a difference”
- “Programs to educate citizens of the dire situations.”
- “Make more people aware of the impact of waste and how to be less wasteful.”
- “educar a la poblacion sobre al cambio climatico y las causas y crear organizaciones que enseñen como podemos ayudar, como reciclando, disminuir el uso de carros, disminuir el consumo de carnes.” [educate the public about climate change and its causes and create organizations that teach how we can help, such as recycling, reducing the use of cars, reducing meat consumption.]”
- “Community education events”
- “The towns should start classes about how to take care of the planet because it’s very hard to teach adults behavior”
- “Conscientização sobre o assunto [Awareness on the subject]”
- “All of the things mentioned here. I think community engagement and information is also important- reasons why we need to reduce consumption and focus on renewable and make these things easier. It feels like I want to do all the right things but they are SO hard - to access, keep track of, etc on top of a culture of consumption and capitalism. I don’t know many great specifics on best climate change practices, particularly because it feels like everything I try to do ends up wrong or so hard it’s counter productive. So maybe also something on that - education on best practices which efforts actually make a difference. Food waste reduction seems big. Efforts to change at a larger level also- so engagement with other towns and cities and companies.”

Topic specific calls for awareness and education are highlighted in protect habitats & environment and TREES! and increasing access to plant-based food.

Several respondents specifically spoke about the need for school curriculum to promote youth awareness of climate change. Examples below:

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- “Crear una clase para consientilar los jovenes y las familias acerca de los beneficios que sue pueden recibir cuando hay mas siembra de arboles, y conservar las areas verdes. [create a class to educate young people and families about the benefits they can receive when there is more planting of trees, and conserving green areas.]”
- “Find the cause the most contributor to climate change and plan events accordingly to build awareness among the community. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of their actions. Try to target the youth population who can bring awareness to their families and their neighboring community.”
- “School curriculum including how to combat climate change and why we have this problem.”

Respondents called for greater understanding and awareness of the municipal and state programs, as well. Several related quotes are highlighted in **increase recycling knowledge** and **green building practices, reducing energy use...**, other examples below:

- “Inform people about the programs that our community offers.”
- “We moved to town 2.5 years ago - I don't recall a robust welcome packet from the town with info and opportunities to participate in climate friendly actions - this would also be a great place to 'advertise' about composting and Black Earth program.”
- “Educate people on what is available for them in case of any climate-change related emergencies.”
- “Increased community spaces for extreme weather safe places, awareness programs to community members.”

Other respondents spoke the importance of trusted institutions and community organizations, examples:

- “Spreading the word with facts from reliable institutions about climate change, promoting organizations that can help individuals make a difference by joining.”
- “Organization that speak Portuguese for the Brazilian Portuguese speaker in Framingham to educate and show resources for the community.”
- “We need to invest in all these things that are mentioned above and also educate a lot in a positive way from all levels, schools, government, faith based org. The person should not feel like a victim (more taxes) we need to make it positive to invest into new green technologies reduce the amount of single use items. People participation !”

“Increasing access to plant-based foods is really important, and having it be accessible to everyone.”

Several respondents suggested action related to increased plant-based diets and local food production.

Most focused on “promoting vegetarian options,” some example quotes below:

- “Promoting vegetarian options”
- “More vegan restaurants and healthy food options.”
- “Increasing access to plant-based foods is really important, and having it be accessible to everyone. Animal agriculture is extremely harmful to the environment, and also causes a loss of biodiversity which further exacerbates climate change.”
- “I am stunned to see the item you included "increasing access to plant-based food". Thanks for including it! The problem is, though, that we need to EDUCATE THE PUBLIC about why this is important to mitigate climate change. This education needs to start in the public schools. Stop serving carcinogenic deli meats and other meats and processed foods. Government, including

local government, needs to play a very active role in educating everyone about the need for massive dietary changes. That, I'm afraid, has not happened at all."

- "Plant based education. Attract vegan restaurants."
- "aumentar el acceso a alimentos saludables se origen vegetal." [increase access to healthy plant-based foods]

A few respondents focused on the affordability and accessibility of food, examples:

- "Increasing access to food in general, plant based is great but ideally we want to make sure everyone has healthy food for either a reasonable or no price."
- "Affordable sustainable food sources."
- "Cheaper plant based foods, cheaper food in general."
- "Increasing access to plant-based foods (in a way that's accessible to poor people, not just vegan bakeries and smoothie bars but sliding-scale grocery stores and pantries)"

Several suggested "more local food production in CSAs, community gardens, and home gardens," example quotes:

- "Access to organic and sustainable farms and foods. "
- "Federal government needs to stop subsidizing wheat corn, soy. Glyphosate needs to be illegal. Encourage and incentivize small organic farms. Tax breaks for organic, biodynamic farms."
- "Increasing access to local and healthy food."
- "Community garden allotments so people can grow more food."
- "Helping residents create their own/create a neighborhood wide garden."
- "Encourage every resident, church & school to grow plant foods."
- "Increase access to organic fresh produce. This should be subsidize. Not the crap foods that are now, that ruin our planet."

"All of the above - five years is too long"

- "I think we should be prepared. I think this because if we wait to long then the issues will overlap, then becoming harder to work through."
- "All of the things above. Local Gov needs to acknowledge the urgency, it's not enough when everything is pretty and the parks are clean. We need to invest in all these things that are mentioned above and also educate a lot in a positive way from all levels, schools, government, faith based org. The person should not feel like a victim (more taxes) we need to make it positive to invest into new green technologies reduce the amount of single use items. People participation!"
- "All of the above, but the action needs to be accelerated and much, much quicker to put into action. Addressing the climate crisis at the local level requires a multi-prong approach: improve public transport, switch to wind and solar for public buildings and mandates for new developments/homes, growing food locally at the neighbourhood-level needs to be scaled up. Public events hosted by Natick need to stop using single use plastic! A shift away from lawns and towards native plants to increase backyard biodiversity. There is a lot of room for improvement."

Helping residents and community groups prepare for emergencies

Many respondents said they would like their city/town to support emergency preparedness but didn't offer specifics, most just echoed the example action language.

- "Educate people on what is available for them in case of any climate-change related emergencies."

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- “Helping residents and community groups prepare for emergencies”

We recognize that climate change is one of several issues affecting our communities. What are some other priorities for you or your family that you want to see addressed in your community?

Clean Energy/Environmentalism

- Need fir clean and reliable public transportation using clean energy
Overall awareness of trash on the street, in our woods, in the waterways
Limiting retail stores from selling products packaged in plastic. It's everywhere and it's killing us.
- solar on municipal buildings, more charging stations for e cars.
education kids and adults on reducing carbon footprint. Increase on house insulation.
- More solar in on municipal buildings, more electric vehicles on municipal cars. More support with solar for private houses, more support for banning harmful items linke single use plastic especially styrofoam
- Munciple electric vehicles
- Larger investments in clean energy, banning single use plastic water containers

Open Space

- I live near the Johnson school and don't know what the town plans to do with that property when the school closes. I am really hoping they don't turn it into a housing development or business use, but instead prioritize keeping it as a public green space with shady areas to cool off, perhaps wiht a water feature, like a fountain, playing fields, etc.
- More conservation of and access to open spaces (both in terms of some open space being near where people live and for all people to feel comfortable accessing it).
- More designated open space & conservation land. Not allowing developers/builders to create high density developments. Preserve the environment, rather than let builders ruin the our natural environment.
- Increase of natural community areas for example parks & trails near homes in the heart of the city

Taxes

- TAXES TOO HIGH ALREADY
- Rising residential real estate taxes forcing long-term Natick homeowners to move.
- Better prioritization of how our towns tax dollars are being budgeted and total transparency and accountability by each town department to demonstrate how the previous year's budget was spent.
- Lower tax burden.

Public Transit

- Expanding the Catch Connect system run by MWRTA to 7days a week would be a marvelous upgrade to the available public transportation in this area.
- Access to reliable public transportation.
- Infrastructure, this covers lack of proper public transportation and outdated infrastructure (better hospitals, better roads, extending the T to reach Framingham. There should be a University station

Traffic

- Focus on reducing vehicular traffic and traffic jams via modifying overall infrastructure, enforce vehicular idling ordinances

Metro West Climate Equity Memorandum

- Noise pollution has become unbearable in south framingham with the constant flow of traffic through the city beginning at 4:30am and continuing until midnight and later on weekends.
- Bad traffic congestion, Concord St and 135

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure, notably the dreadful condition of many (most!) roads in town.
- I am actually quite happy here in Ashland except for the quality of our streets and the rain water run off system which causes routine erosion of my property.
- better maintained roads

What, if any, climate change impacts have you experienced already? Is there a specific climate-related event that comes to mind for you or that you feel increased your awareness of climate change?

Extreme Weather Conditions

- My body not able to adjust to a 20-30 degree drop in temperature from one day to the next. Having to find space to keep fall/winter clothes near reach where years ago, I used to rotate clothing based on season.
- Some insect species seem to have disappeared while tick populations are soaring. Native wildflowers are growing increasingly rare. Extremes of hot and cold temperatures. Poison ivy is going wild. Native insect species disappearing, especially moths and butterflies.
- downed trees causing power outages. more high winds in all seasons
- Tornado com queda de árvores no meu quintal
- The constant news of droughts, fires, floods and storms. The most personal to me was a "1,000-year flood" in my hometown in Iowa about a decade ago, followed a few years ago by a freak 100mph wind (called a "derecho") which ruined crops, took off roofs, downed power lines and blew down 80% of the trees in the city.
- The increase in 90+ days, and the fact they are starting in early June and even May! that really scares me.
- hurricanes; my mom was living in Puerto Rico when hurricane Maria hit. we didn't hear from her for about a week. she had lost power for about a month. it was pretty bad. also we have had some milder winters as I've gotten older, I grew up in Massachusetts. It is much different from what I remember as a child
- Water shortages and curfews are a very sobering reminder that climate change has acute impacts on our daily lives. Running out of water is a terrifying prospect.
- Uno amigo que vivia en el mismo edificio que yo ture la casa inundado un el ultimo invierno por cuento de la cantidad de nieve

Shifting Weather Patterns

- My memory of being able to build snow forts out of snow blocks as a child with my parents, and not being able to build a snow fort with my step son who is 7 because There has not been accumulation enough to make a fort.
- I'm a big gardener and it seems like there is less rain. Also, don't know if it is related, but am seeing different types of wildlife in our neighborhood.
- Not enough cold days anymore, and less snow to go skiing. Spring comes to early and summer lasts too long.
- My company does outdoor construction so in the past we couldn't work over the traditional winter months. The past 3-4 years we've been able to work almost all winter just interrupted by individual snow storms for the day instead of long periods of freezing Temps and unshovelable snow and ice.
- Cambios en la vegetación por la temperatura, y por consiguiente en los humanos.
- dias quentes no invierno e verao muito curto me faz observar as mudancas com a medida que os anos passam

Health

- My spouse has environmental allergies and asthma and I have heat-exacerbated eczema, so we have installed minisplit heat pumps to replace our window units, reduce the amount of dust and pollen in our home, and have a cool enough nighttime temperature to allow sleep.
- Over many years I have watched more and more trees in my yard die more quickly than usual. I use to run a lot and be involved in athletics and the air quality in my eyes has decreased. All around me I see many different species of plants and trees getting more decay and infestation of bugs eating them.
- Anxiety planning for my kids future
- I cannot remember pollen seasons like we've had the past few years. My poor kiddo is miserable. I have to believe we've done something to mess with the natural balance.
- Extreme heat, in a home not designed for it, with a medical condition triggered by heat, has been very difficult to deal with.
- The inability to frolic in the woods in fear of getting Lyme disease. My kids, husband, and dog have all been bitten and or had Lyme already. Extreme hot temperatures are noticeable when we camp, we no longer bring hats, gloves and boots to wear by the fire (like we did 17 years ago) it's now too hot to nap in tents and many trees are dying.
- Summer 2021 - Most humid summer I remember in my lifetime. I walked very early in the morning to avoid any age related problems I might encounter otherwise.
- Qualquer mudança climática me afeta, sofro de asma e bronquite
- Altas temperaturas que ma han afectado la respiracion y sentir soñolencia. cambios de teperatura que afectan por no estar preparado.
- Debido a los caubros del clima, caliente o muy frio. la piel de uno de mis hijos ha recicionado negativamente.

Food Supply

- Certain foods have been impacted and are more scarce/expensive. Maple syrup being one local example.
- Los sabores de las frutas y vegetales son diferentes este año. Estan como resecos y sin sabor. [Fruit and vegetable flavors are different this year. They are dry and tasteless.]
- Shorter maple syrup season, shorter winter sports season, needing more water on garden because of hot days, more air conditioning in schools and homes(and therefore energy usage)

Water Quality

- Water quality degradation and cyanobacteria outbreaks closing our swimming areas. Toxic build up harming all living things
- Lake Cochituate unusable in summer months due to blue green algae and town water contamination
- More occurrences of blue-green algae in water due to warmer water Temps. Also, more tornado warnings.
- lagos muy bajos de agua y contaminados

Don't Agree

- All these choices have been going on my entire life - 70 years - and are not due to climate change, just ordinary events. Fewer power outages now, Eversource is better at keeping trees trimmed, faster response, good communication, upgrades to the infrastructure.
- All of these are normal events and reflect weather patterns well within the historical norm. Also: Please refer to your "weather is not climate" talking points. Please stop peddling hysterical fear.