

**Warrant Article for Acton 2022 Town Meeting
By the Acton Climate Coalition**

**Mobilizing Acton's Climate Action Plan:
A Better Future Starting Now**

Whereas, Acton residents expressed their determination to address climate change by declaring a Climate Emergency at Town Meeting in 2020, which declaration calls on “Town government and staff, and all Acton civic groups, businesses, and residents to commit to a climate mobilization effort, with appropriate support from the state and federal governments, to bring net Town-wide carbon emissions to zero as quickly as possible, with a target date of 2030”;

Whereas, the 2021 Massachusetts law, “An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy,” emphasizes significant greenhouse gas reductions across all sectors, increased renewable energy in the electrical grid by 2030, and actions to address environmental injustices;

Whereas, the use of fossil fuels — such as oil, natural gas, propane, and coal — has created a “Code Red” for humanity, according to U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres in his comments on the [August 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#). “The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk.” [IPCC's Climate Change 2022 report](#) warns: “Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”

Whereas, the challenge of achieving Acton's 2030 net zero goal means addressing Acton's largest sources of carbon emissions — electricity generation,

transportation, and fossil fuel technologies in buildings — and preserving and increasing the carbon-holding capacity of our soils, trees, and plants;

Whereas, although Acton has made significant emissions progress related to electricity generation via the Acton Power Choice program, our town’s goal requires more: we must, in the near term, bring town-wide electricity use to 100% renewably sourced energy;

Whereas, although Acton has started to transition the municipal fleet to hybrid and electric vehicles, has added electric vehicle charging stations to some municipal properties, and has initiated several public transportation programs, our town’s goal requires more: we must plan and lead on a town-wide transition away from internal combustion vehicles;

Whereas, although Acton 2021 Town Meeting approved the warrant article, “Building with Clean Energy” — which would require all new construction and major rehab projects to use fossil fuel-free infrastructure, and awaits state legislative action — as a first step in decarbonizing this sector, our town’s goal requires more: we must electrify all of Acton’s buildings;

Whereas, although Acton has protected many open space parcels (which conserve our natural environment and its ability to sequester carbon, support biodiversity, and safeguard water and soil resources), in the face of ongoing development pressures and climate disruption, our town’s goal requires more: we must plan for and execute protection of more open space, ambitious land-use reforms that optimize opportunities for carbon sequestration, and nature-based solutions to maximize resilience;

Whereas, Acton Town government has demonstrated robust leadership in advancing carbon-free, equitable local projects such as the new, net zero Boardwalk Campus (housing the Douglas and Gates schools, and the Carol Huebner Early Childhood education program); the fossil fuel-free Fire Station #4 in North Acton; and the proposed all-electric Affordable Housing project at

362-364 Main Street; and is poised to meet the challenge of retrofitting existing Town buildings;

Whereas, Acton is addressing the challenge of the climate emergency and our 2030 goal through concrete strategies in its *Town of Acton Climate Action Plan Blueprint: The Road to Net Zero by 2030* and ongoing climate planning;

Be It Therefore Resolved, that the town of Acton supports a climate mobilization by implementing the Climate Action Plan strategies quickly and comprehensively;

Be It Further Resolved, that the Town will seek the diverse funding sources that will be required — for example, new and emerging state and federal grants and incentives, other state and federal resources, foundation and other nonprofit support, and public-private partnerships — to prioritize non-local funding before using substantial new municipal resources;

Be It Further Resolved, that the costs of implementing the Climate Action Plan will not unfairly burden those who are economically or socially disadvantaged, and that the benefits of a realized, thriving, and sustainable future accrue to all;

Be It Further Resolved, that the Town will promote to residents (including those living in multi-unit buildings), landlords, businesses, and institutions the financial benefits of the many existing and upcoming state and federal programs and supports, including MassSave subsidies for household weatherization costs, and the Weatherization Assistance Program of the U.S. Department of Energy;

Be It Further Resolved, that the Town will build on and amplify existing collaborations, such as those with EnergizeActon.org, MassSave, Abode Energy Management, All In Energy, Eversource, and National Grid, in order to educate residents about, and support them in, the transition off of fossil fuels, including the financial incentives and long-term benefits;

Be It Further Resolved, that the Select Board will set and revise as necessary annual goals consistent with the Climate Action Plan targets, and that these Town-wide goals include greenhouse gas emissions reductions, solar installations, broad electric vehicle adoption, enhanced, equitable, and affordable transportation options, electrification of privately owned and municipal buildings (such as the retrofit of the Public Safety Facility), resilience initiatives (such as flood mitigation, tree planting, and others), and other key climate mobilization goals;

Be it further resolved, that Town Meeting members call on people and organizations, within Acton and beyond, to act together in this unprecedented moment for humanity to advance progress toward a robust, carbon-free, equitable economy and the many ensuing benefits for health, quality of life, and a functional environment — “a better future starting now.”

.