Somerville Climate Forward

Community & Economic Development Working Group Meeting #2

December 7, 2017

Attendees
- Holly Jacobson
- Ian Adelman
- Clayton Scoble
- Nick Schonberger, City of Somerville
- Patrick Gladstone
- Larry Yu
- Oliver Sellers-Garcia, City of Somerville

Solutions the group is most interested in seeing implemented:

- Green workforce development
- Co-op business model
- Transit and bicycle oriented transportation
- Organizing/ culture of action
    - Preparedness groups
    - Green business program

Individual Feedback on specific solutions

- Patrick: separated bike lanes—thinks he would do more biking if there were more separated and safer biking facilities. Move biking to some of the smaller roads. Will help get more people biking. Businesses will thrive if there are more biking facilities.
    - Clayton: really need to think about biking and EV charging—there is a lot of competition for the charging stations. City might not be able to provide free power forever, but we need to be prepared for much greater adoption.
    - Larry: there are equity issues related to EVs. There are also people who can't get around by bike. We still need to think about trains and busses because they do support a lot of people. Bus scheduling is key.
- Holly: Green workforce development is a good example of a solution that has more of a focus on equity rather than the faster energy and transportation solutions. Workforce development is only successful if there is a pipeline to jobs. What does the City have agency to do? City can set policies for hiring locally.

- o Nick: City is working with Regional Employment Board and SCC to help get Somerville residents culinary jobs at the new casino. This could be a model. [Try to connect this with the workforce development plan that OSPCD is doing right now—Mt. Auburn Associates.]
  - o Jobs that support the industries that support other solutions: green jobs. Stable, good jobs makes communities more resilient.
- Ian: preparedness organizing. Can we support people to door knock on particular climate issues (e.g., blizzard, power outage)? People need to have a plan. Important to check in on neighbors. We can set up a system and test it during certain conditions (e.g., 12 inches of snow)—test these during challenging times, not catastrophes. Pick one issue to focus and build a narrow preparedness campaign first, e.g., people without A/C and have a health issue or are underserved. Have people trained and prepared to do door knocking. How do you identify volunteers (not just identify the populations that would be served)? Focus on people in one block—get to know your neighbors. Pay people to be rapid response coordinators.
- Clayton: efforts geared toward young people. Older people are harder to reach. Need to think about reaching seniors in their patterns—transportation, consumption, etc.
- Larry: How can we make Somerville the place to open a sustainable business—not just green tech? This should be the place that people think about when they're moving. Special economic zone: building targets are set higher, even if they are not legally required. Attract businesses that want to be in greener buildings.
  - o Certification program, similar to Somerville Local First but with a much higher bar. Don't make it just about the business—it also needs to apply to the building they are in. City can incentivize businesses to participate. But there will also be requirements, e.g., report energy usage, sign up for 100% renewable energy. Benchmark participants to national or state averages—show how much better businesses in these programs are. This can be part of an overall marketing campaign. Could attract financing.
- Nick: Green roofs. Important to mitigate stormwater runoff that then turns into flooding commercial districts and leads to very expensive infrastructure. City subsidizes the cost of the large Target parking lot. Could we put green space on top of Target?
  - o Holly: we need to have a stormwater fee.
- Nick: coop businesses, or equitable jobs. Restaurants that pay back of the house employees as much as servers (e.g., Juliet). How can the City be more supportive of coops? Banks are looking for one person to take out the loan—not a coop.
  - o Ian: profit-driven companies are not good for the economy. Coops are inherently better for the environment. Challenges that a coop faces in terms of opening and raising money are the same as every other type of business. Could the City become an equity investor? When coops have to make a difficult decision, they do it together so it's a better decision.
  - o Holly: coops might be able to deal better with business interruption because low-wage people aren't isolated and/or hit really hard when there are disasters.
  - o Patrick: are emissions from coops different from other types of businesses?

Discussion

- Equity/point-of-lease disclosure
    - Do efficiencies for rental disclosure justify higher rents? Can the net cost actually end up being lower?
    - The disclosure can help people make decisions on what they can afford. What might be a better use of the disclosure is having the energy costs qualify the tenant for a program or the landlord for a requirement.
    - Pay-as-you-save model: helps people who don't have good credit. Utility pays for the efficiency, and the savings eventually pay off. This would help us understand the payoff.
    - Unintended consequence: bad disclosure could push tenants to just pay and hide the cost.
    - Dollar amount is a more valuable than a score as an equitable decision making tool. The question is how you get the data.
- Is the autonomous vehicle vision just going to make us even more entrenched in car culture? Could this lead to zero occupancy vehicles? Don't envision roadways for that.