

# Somerville Climate Forward

## Community and Economic Development Working Group

### Meeting #1

August 31, 2017

#### Attendees

- Patrick Gladstone
- Emily Hedeman, City Staff
- Nick Schonberger, City Staff
- Holly Jacobson
- Larry Yu
- Ian Adelman
- Clayton Scoble
- Cara Giaimo
- Oliver Sellers-Garcia, City Staff

#### Review and Revise Draft Vision

- Does equity need to be a part of this definition? This is an economy that works for everyone.
- Capitalism is not a sustainable economy. Can we think of new economy frameworks?
- Look at MacArthur Foundation research on circular economy?
- People who invest in the City need to follow our priorities – but we don't want to think of our community and economy as being "insiders" and "outsiders"
- What are the City's high-level economic development goals?
  - Preparing Somerville residents for the jobs of tomorrow
  - Supporting small and existing businesses
  - Bringing in new businesses
- Need a census of jobs and business in Somerville—City is working on this right now.
- The Economic Development Division has data on employment sectors, skills, etc.
- Need to retrain Somerville residents who are in climate unfriendly jobs
- Have we done a census "vulnerable populations"? We have that information as part of the vulnerability assessment. This could be linked to people who are most economically at risk.
- Vision statement: Somerville has a sustainable economic that is "accessible to all"

#### Idea Brainstorm

- Need to assess ideas against what is the financial feasibility for different types of people in Somerville. For example, not everyone can buy rooftop solar.

- Different business models—can we have more coops? Are they more sustainable, resilient, or able to take climate action? (City is currently putting information together on coop business models.)
- Can there be more unionization? How would this relate to climate action?
- How do people who work on their own fit in?
- Do a lot of businesses in Somerville have business interruption insurance?
- Are a lot of businesses in Somerville thinking about how climate will affect their business? Most are probably not. Partners Healthcare, for example, is.
- Can we get lower insurance rates for local businesses?
- Special outreach program for businesses to get them thinking more about climate change.
- Ordinances against open doors in the summer.
- Strategies to have businesses use reusable containers
- Encourage bike delivery versus car delivery
- Reuse unwanted food
- Training for renewable energy jobs
- Small businesses need to plan for today's outages, that helps them prepare for climate change
- Business owner/landlord issue is just as prevalent as residential renter/landlord
- Special outreach to businesses for rooftop solar
- How do we support small businesses/startups (like the ones that come out of Greentown when they need to grow? Everyone is looking for 10-30K sf spaces, and there aren't a lot on the market right now.
- Food businesses have a hard time with hot days with trash outside—this is going to be a more common problem.
- Green business program
  - If you put up solar panels, you get XYZ (trash service, composting)
  - Sourcing inputs from Somerville
  - Incentivize their customers or employees to use non fossil fuel transportation
  - Offering reusable bags
- Can the storefront improvement program be used to advance sustainability goals.
  - Includes windows—any more building envelope measures?
  - There was a pilot in to do exterior vestibules in East Somerville
  - Could we integrate more forward-looking ideas like façade solar?
- Encourage businesses to form their own groups around greening themselves
  - Even something like the Green Ribbon Commission
- Green procurement policy—how the city interacts with local businesses
- Need to think about the impact of the Wynn Casino's impact—infrastructure and economy
- Energy storage—use it to reduce capacity charges. More businesses need to know about it.
  
- We've focused a lot on businesses today, let's think about workers a lot next time.
- Need to think bigger picture Somerville economic development—how do we meet the City's goals in a sustainable manner?
- Would be good to know a little bit more about what's already underway.

- Could we use a slack group? Or one of the university education platforms to communicate?

#### **Additional Ideas shared after the meeting**

- **Advocate for the Green Line extension.** Along with advocacy, Somerville may look for additional ways to encourage its construction, such as putting funding towards stations. While also fitting under the transportation category, the Green Line would play a role in attracting new businesses (encouraging development along the new line), while simultaneously reducing emissions from vehicle use to those development areas and in Somerville overall.
- **Pursuing net zero in Somerville’s “enhance” and “transform” zones (from SomerVision).** In SomerVision, the City has identified certain enhancement (along the future Green Line) and transformation zones, which are already flagged for near-term investment. The City could prioritize these sites for piloting net zero districts—that is, developing the infrastructure necessary to encourage new development to be carbon neutral. Systems could include district-scale purple pipe water systems and microgrids with distributed energy sources, monitored through smart sewerage and smart metering systems. These secondary systems would increase district resilience in climate hazards, and make energy production and distribution more efficient with a path towards decarbonizing the network. They could also act as a draw for businesses interested in plugging into advanced sustainable urban systems, and will continue to build value over time.
- **Expanding co-op business models and creating a solidarity economy.** Co-op models for home or retail space ownership may help existing businesses stay in an area despite development and rising property prices. They also may be an avenue for advancing new economic models—such as a solidarity economy—that use social and environmental parameters as part of the bottom line. The Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland (<http://www.evgo.com/>) is an interesting precedent that could be encouraged in Somerville.
- **Advancing green job training.** A critical component to successful job training is having a supply of green job opportunities to make the training worthwhile. [Youthbuild Boston](#) offers a precedent for creating an effective pipeline between construction job training and jobs; this model could be replicated in specifically green construction trades. Some of the Kendall Square biotech firms (such as [Biogen’s Community Lab](#)) also offer an interesting model for introducing training to students at a young age. By coupling job training programs with the growth of specific green businesses / manufacturing (e.g., those coming out of Greentown Labs) in Somerville, green job training is likely to have more success.
- **Advocate for state-wide clean energy policy.**
- **Power municipal power.** What would it take for Somerville to move to municipal power?
- **Partner with Partners.** Partners Healthcare wants to be more active in the Somerville community around sustainability.
- **Insure small business.** Develop a group flood insurance program for Somerville SMEs, particularly those that rent in flood zones.
- **Identify Greentown adjacencies.** Work with Greentown Labs to identify adjacent sectors (e.g., lithium battery recycling) and job skills (e.g., wind turbine mechanic) that would be complementary to its members’ work but not necessarily candidates to be resident. Incentivize businesses to form in those adjacencies, and to provide skills trainings.

- **Plan a rapid flood response.** Develop a public-private rapid response plan that activates and coordinates public and local private resources should a flood emergency occur in identified zones.
- **Close the loop.** Identify businesses or sectors with a volume of single-stream waste (e.g., breweries and spent grain). Seek ways to convert that waste into an industrial input by co-locating or locating nearby (e.g., bioreactor turning spent grain into renewable energy).
- **Pilot high-albedo roadways.** Use different shades in different Wards to reinforce community identity.
- **Buy back oil.** Help residential property owners convert heating from oil to gas with an oil buyback program. (No questions asked, just like a gun buyback.)
- **Make it equitable.** Ensure that all solutions offered in all working group areas are carefully assessed for social equity.
- Participatory budgeting
- Create buy your building program for longtime commercial tenants.
- Encourage local procurement within the city and major institutions.
- Incentives for HVAC replacement in commercial buildings.
- Develop a community driven economic plan. Many cities around the world have done just this by bringing in community members, organizations, businesses and city staff to map out the local economy and come up with measures to shift it towards a new economy. See Barcelona's plan here: [http://base.socioeco.org/docs/impetusplan-sse-eng\\_web.pdf](http://base.socioeco.org/docs/impetusplan-sse-eng_web.pdf)
- Fossil fuel to biofuel to fuel free - The fuel oil delivery and furnace repair industry will not exist in a sustainable Somerville economy, but, with help, the businesses can make a just transition to a sustainable energy supply and service business. The first step would be to shift from fossil fuel to biofuel. Using the current assets and expertise fuel oil businesses could become the collectors of waste vegetable oil and then process it into bio fuel and deliver to their same customer network who have had their furnaces re-configured to burn bio fuel. Then, the companies can be choose decide which emerging technology they want to retrain for—home solar, geothermal, solar hot water, etc. As their biofuel clients diminish, they will be positioned to expand into the latest home energy industry.
- Create areas that prioritize the location of businesses that primarily serve the local area in zoning. This has been done in Palm Beach, Florida and other places: <https://ilsr.org/rule/neighborhood-serving-zones/2209-2/>
- Leverage the City's banking power by choosing a local bank that wants to partner with the City to invest in local businesses that are meeting sustainability goals.
- Create a community land trust to secure long-term affordability by removing the land speculation from the property value and putting deed restrictions on the resale of the home. This same tool could be used for commercial property with addition deed restrictions related to environmental sustainability—could require zero food waste, net zero energy, etc.