



Draft Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) Update Actions for Public Review
Clean Energy Future Committee
September 2025

Net Zero Buildings (NZZ)

ID	Action	Brief Description
NZB 1: Decarbonize Arlington Homes and Businesses		
NZB 1.1	Expand Electrify Arlington campaign	The Electrify Arlington campaign provides information and expert coaching to Arlington residents and businesses interested in converting heating and other end-uses from fossil fuels, like natural gas and heating oil, to electricity. This action would sustain and expand these ongoing efforts with continued focus on equity.
NZB 1.2	Pursue neighborhood-scale electrification to support natural gas system decommissioning	The Town will support and pursue strategies to identify streets and neighborhoods where it is possible to convert multiple buildings from natural gas to electricity, in order to increase the pace of decarbonization, and to begin the process of decommissioning the natural gas distribution network. This requires additional planning, outreach and coordination beyond the current approach that is focused on individual properties.
NZB 1.3	Enforce and secure the future of Arlington's Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw	Arlington is currently participating in a state-enabled pilot program that limits the use of new fossil fuel infrastructure for most new construction and major renovations. As a core element of achieving our decarbonization goals, we want to ensure that this program is successful and can continue.
NZB 1.4	Support increased energy efficiency of rental properties	Renters face barriers to implementing energy efficiency upgrades that homeowners do not. This action item will explore ways to make rental properties more energy efficient and affordable, including policy solutions such as energy cost disclosures or performance standards.
NZB 1.5	Establish an embodied carbon reduction initiative for residential and commercial construction	Embodied carbon refers to the greenhouse gas emissions from the entire lifecycle of building materials, including extraction, manufacturing, transportation, construction, and disposal. It represents a significant portion of a building's overall carbon emissions even before the building is occupied. This action item would create a campaign to educate developers, contractors, and homeowners about embodied carbon and consider policy changes or other actions to address the issue.
NZB 1.6	Increase tree planting on private property	Trees can reduce building energy consumption. This action will support the Tree Committee's expansion of the Town's tree-planting program, prioritizing locations in heat islands and environmental justice neighborhoods.

ID	Action	Brief Description
NZB 2: Update Town Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures		
NZB 2.1	Ensure Town bylaws fully support net zero development and renovations	The Town has already enacted several bylaws that support achievement of our net-zero goals. This action item would explore what additional bylaw updates may be needed to address remaining gaps and challenges, including for emerging issues such as embodied carbon.
NZB 2.2	Require assessment of energy efficiency improvements at point of property sale and tenant turnover	The Town will evaluate whether there are suitable "trigger points," such as the sale of a property or tenant turnover, when certain actions can, or should, be taken to improve the energy efficiency of homes and businesses, including energy cost disclosures and conducting MassSave energy assessments.
NZB 2.3	Reduce barriers to energy improvements for historic properties	While continuing to recognize the value of historic preservation, the Town will clarify the available pathways and take action to further reduce barriers to energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy deployment for buildings on the Town's Historic Structures Inventory.
NZB 2.4	Support development and preservation of dense, mixed-use, affordable, transit-oriented housing	Achieving the 2050 net-zero GHG goal is inherently aligned with broader efforts to support affordable housing, greater density of housing, and the ability to live car-free in Arlington. The Town will explore and support additional efforts to introduce and enable affordable, dense, residential, mixed-use, and transit-oriented housing in Arlington.
NZB 2.5	Incorporate GHG reduction into Town procurement and contracting processes	The Town procures a wide range of products and services as part of its operations, all of which have some level of impact on the environment. This action item will establish clear policies and procedures for considering GHG and embodied carbon impacts within Town contracts for products and services.
NZB 3: Efficient Operation and Decarbonization of Town Facilities		
NZB 3.1	Secure funding to decarbonize municipal buildings	In 2024, Arlington developed a Decarbonization Roadmap for Town buildings. This action item will develop a strategy for funding that plan.
NZB 3.2	Adopt embodied carbon and materials reuse policies for Town construction and renovation projects	Embodied carbon represents the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the total lifecycle of materials (e.g., steel, concrete) used in buildings and infrastructure (e.g., roadways, sidewalks). The Town will develop policies to reduce the amount of embodied carbon in Town construction projects and increase material reuse as part of those projects.
NZB 3.3	Pursue innovative clean energy solutions for Town facilities	As the Town pursues GHG reductions for its facilities, it will continue to explore the viability and use of innovative solutions, such as networked ground source heat pumps, battery energy storage, and novel energy efficiency measures like heat recovery from wastewater. This may include projects that include both Town-owned and privately-owned properties.

Zero Emissions Mobility (ZEM)

ID	Action	Brief Description
ZEM 1: Decarbonize Private Vehicles		
ZEM 1.1	Expand access to public electric vehicle (EV) charging.	The Town will build upon current efforts to expand access to public EV charging, which is important for supporting EV ownership, especially for residents who are unable to charge at home.
ZEM 1.2	Enhance EV education and resources offered through Electrify Arlington campaign	As interest in EVs grows, the Town will support that growth by including more resources, coaching, and events for EVs via the Electrify Arlington campaign.
ZEM 1.3	Advocate for smart charging options and EV-specific utility rates	Smart (i.e., managed) charging reduces the cost of electricity used in EVs while deferring or avoiding the need for new electricity grid infrastructure investments to support widespread EV adoption, thus benefitting all electricity customers. Current options within Massachusetts are limited; as a leading community, Arlington can lend its voice to increasing the availability of managed charging programs and EV-specific electricity rates that encourage smart EV charging.
ZEM 2: Decarbonize Town Fleet Vehicles		
ZEM 2.1	Enforce the Town's Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) First policy for municipal fleet vehicles	The Town adopted a ZEV First policy as part of its designation as a Climate Leader Community in 2025. This action item will ensure that this policy prioritizing zero-emissions vehicles is enforced and updated as needed, as vehicle options and availability improve.
ZEM 2.2	Implement municipal fleet EV charging plan	To support the Town's ZEV First policy, the Town will continue to expand the availability of municipal EV charging infrastructure. The Town's Fleet Electrification Roadmap, adopted in 2024, contains charging station site assessments and serves as a starting point.
ZEM 2.3	Electrify Arlington's school bus fleet	Electrifying Arlington's school bus fleet poses some unique challenges centered around siting a charging depot. This action will provide focus to develop a solution to enable the Town to pursue full electrification of the school bus fleet.
ZEM 2.4	Pilot new EV options and charging technologies	Currently, the availability of EVs for certain uses, such as emergency vehicles and heavy-duty vehicles, is limited. The Town will continue to be on the forefront of EV adoption by piloting new vehicles and pursuing advanced options for charging vehicles, including "vehicle-to-grid" solutions that enable vehicle batteries to serve as grid resources by exporting power to the grid.

ID	Action	Brief Description
ZEM 3: Support Alternatives to Personal Vehicles		
ZEM 3.1	Fully implement the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation plan	The Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan is a 20-year strategy to ensure that residents, workers, business owners, and visitors are provided a safe, reliable, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities. The Town will continue to implement the Connect Arlington Plan, revisiting plan priorities and/or completing a plan update as needed.
ZEM 3.2	Increase Planning staff time for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian planning	The Town's Senior Transportation Planner spends a significant portion of time managing consultants who scope, design, and complete roadway improvement projects. The Town should consider creating a dedicated Transportation Engineer position within the Town's Engineering Department to manage more of this work, enabling the Transportation Planner to focus more on transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.
ZEM 3.3	Change parking policies to promote alternatives to personal vehicle use	The Town will continue to refine its approach to parking using data-driven policy tools. The Town will consider strategies such as parking maximums and practical transportation demand management requirements for new developments.
ZEM 3.4	Support safe use of e-bikes, e-scooters, and other micromobility solutions	Micromobility solutions are important alternatives to personal vehicle use. As the use of electric bicycles and scooters, in particular, has proliferated, there is a need to develop and implement measures that ensure their safe use.
ZEM 3.5	Increase car sharing, prioritizing low-cost and zero-emission vehicle options	The Town will expand existing car sharing offerings to support reduced reliance on privately owned, single-occupancy vehicles. New partnerships should prioritize affordable options near multifamily and affordable housing and look to successful EV car sharing models in other communities.

Clean Energy Supply (CES)

ID	Action	Brief Description
CES 1: Decarbonize Energy Supplies		
CES 1.1	Maintain default electricity supply in Arlington Community Electricity (ACE) program at 100%	Arlington was the first community in Massachusetts to increase the renewable energy content of the default product in its community electricity aggregation program to 100%. This action item will seek to maintain this level while providing price stability and cost savings to residents and businesses in the ACE program.
CES 1.2	Leverage ACE program to enhance equity and support clean energy innovation	As a key element of our net-zero action plan, we will continue to look for ways to ensure that the ACE program is meeting the needs of all residents and businesses by maintaining affordable options, ensuring that customers eligible for bill discounts are receiving them. We will also explore how we can use ACE to support innovative products such as community solar.
CES 1.3	Transition municipal electricity supply to 100% renewable by 2030	Continue to explore options for achieving 100% clean energy supplies by 2030 for municipal electricity use, including additional onsite solar projects and pursuing virtual power purchase agreements that provide direct access to renewable energy projects while providing price stability.
CES 2: Reduce Electricity Costs and Increase Grid Reliability and Resilience		
CES 2.1	Increase use of battery storage and energy management technologies at Town facilities	The use of onsite batteries and other demand management tools can increase the flexibility of the Town's energy consumption, which in turn can help lower costs. Batteries can also enhance resilience by providing power during outages.
CES 2.2	Increase community participation in existing utility energy management programs	Utility demand management programs, such as Connected Solutions, are designed to leverage a range of customer-sited technologies, such as batteries and smart thermostats, to reduce electricity usage during times of high market prices or grid stress. This in turn lowers costs for both participating and non-participating customers. This may also help lower electricity procurement costs in the ACE program.
CES 2.3	Pursue innovative pricing and energy management options via ACE	With Eversource's planned deployment of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), there will be new opportunities to offer more sophisticated electricity pricing options via ACE. This could further enhance the ability of customers to reduce demand in response to price signals, with can lower costs for both participating and non-participating customers.

Cross-Cutting Themes

ID	Action	Brief Description
CCT 1: Community Education and Engagement		
CCT 1.1	Cultivate youth engagement with sustainability concepts, initiatives, and careers	Arlington's youth have a particularly important stake in a net-zero future. In this task we will cultivate youth engagement with climate change mitigation activities, supporting educational and career opportunities, and involve them in implementing Arlington's Net Zero Action Plan.
CCT 1.2	Provide training and education for residents, staff, and real estate developers to maximize impact of net zero policies	There are a number of both requirements and optional pathways for residents and businesses to reduce emissions. Helping them, and the ecosystem of developers, real-estate professionals, construction contractors, and Town staff understand them is key to maximizing their impact in support of our new-zero goals.
CCT 1.3	Track and communicate progress toward net zero goals	Develop a plan and process for communicating progress on the NZAP and for receiving periodic feedback from the community on how the NZAP is impacting their lives.
CCT 2: State and Regional Advocacy		
CCT 2.1	Advocate at the state level to support our net-zero goals	The Town has already begun to take on a more active role in advocating for changes to building energy codes and other state laws and regulations that support our net-zero goals. The Town will continue to look for opportunities to effectuate change at the state level with respect to the built environment, vehicles and public transit, and clean energy supplies, whether at the Legislature, the Department of Energy Resources, the Department of Public Utilities, the MBTA, and other venues.
CCT 2.2	Engage with utilities and the DPU on integrated energy planning	Integrated energy planning (i.e., coordinated natural gas and electric utility system planning) is an emerging best practice that can support various efforts within our net-zero action plan, but it faces a range of regulatory hurdles. As a leading community on climate change mitigation, Arlington has an opportunity to help move this important planning paradigm forward by engaging with the relevant state entities and other aligned stakeholders.