

## Memorandum

**To:** School Committee  
**From:** Alexandra Vecchio, DPW Sustainability & Natural Resources Division Director  
**Date:** December 16, 2025  
**Re:** Climate Leaders Program Application  
**CC:** Erin Chute, DPW Commissioner  
Kevin Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of DPW Operations & Highway and Sanitation Director  
Charles Carey, Town Administrator  
Shelly Dein, DPW Sustainability & Natural Resources Division Deputy Director  
Bella Wong, Superintendent of Schools

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**The Town of Brookline's Department of Public Works (DPW) Sustainability & Natural Resources Division respectfully requests that the School Committee vote to approve and adopt the following materials to fulfill the requirements of the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Climate Leader Communities program: 1) A Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap, and 2) A Fleet Management, Electrification, and Vehicle Replacement Policy.** Certification as a Climate Leader Community for CY2026 will enable the Town access to significant grant funding opportunities and access to technical resources and support.

Brookline recently reaffirmed its commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. In pursuit of the Town's goal, the Sustainability and Natural Resources Division strongly recommends applying to DOER's Climate Leader Communities Program. Certified Climate Leader Communities have access to tools, resources, and up to \$1.15M in grant funding to support energy efficiency measures, heating and cooling projects, energy management services, and local energy generation on municipally owned property such as rooftop solar installation. Access to this grant funding is critical for Brookline to implement the goals, strategies and actions outlined in the 2025 Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, and achieve its local climate mitigation goals.

The Climate Leaders Program requirements include:

1. Be a "Green Community" in good standing
2. Establish/Maintain a local committee to advise, coordinate, and/or lead clean energy and climate activities
3. Demonstrate a Municipal Decarbonization Commitment
4. Adopt the Specialized Stretch Energy Code
5. Develop a Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap
6. Adopt a Zero-Emission-Vehicle First Policy

Brookline already meets the first four requirements and staff have worked to complete the remaining two application requirements with input from the Zero Emissions Advisory Board and Building Department: a Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap and a Zero-Emission-Vehicle First Policy. These items are attached to this memo for the School Committee's review.

### Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap

The attached Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap outlines strategies to eliminate GHG emissions from Brookline's municipal buildings and vehicle fleet by 2050. This guiding document was produced in collaboration



with the consultant PowerOptions. Per the DOER's guidelines, twenty-two public buildings were formally analyzed in this roadmap, along with several strategies to decarbonize Brookline's facilities, including energy efficiency, electrification, and on-site solar photovoltaics. The roadmap also analyzes 360 vehicles in Brookline's fleet to match each existing internal combustion engine vehicle with the best candidates for battery electric vehicles. **The Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap is intended for planning purposes only, and does not attempt to identify costs or funding sources.** To determine the feasibility of executing this roadmap and the associated costs, a technical assessment will be required. To maintain Climate Leader Communities certification status, the Town will need to update the roadmap every three years.

On November 19, 2025, the Zero Emissions Advisory Board (ZEAB) unanimously voted to recommend the Select Board/ School Committee approve the Decarbonization Roadmap, and submit it as part of the Climate Leaders Communities application.

#### Zero-Emission-Vehicle First Policy

The Climate Leaders Program requires that municipalities adopt a policy that prioritizes the acquisition of zero-emission vehicles over vehicles powered primarily by internal combustion engines utilizing fossil fuels. The Town's existing Fleet Management, Electrification, and Vehicle Replacement Policy has been modified to fulfill the requirements of a Zero-Emission-Vehicle First Policy, as specified by DOER. The proposed policy changes have been shared and reviewed with all Department Heads, including the DPW Highway, Sanitation and Fleet Maintenance Director, School Superintendent, Building Commissioner, Police Chief, and Fire Chief. As the Town is currently prioritizing the acquisition of zero-emission vehicles wherever practicable, the proposed policy modifications are not anticipated to significantly impact current operations.

#### Recommendation

**The DPW Sustainability & Natural Resources Division respectfully requests that the School Committee vote to approve and adopt the Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap, and Fleet Management, Electrification, and Vehicle Replacement Policy.** If adopted by both the Select Board and School Committee prior to December 31, 2025, the Town will be eligible to apply for certification as a Climate Leader Community for CY2026.