MIT Campus Climate Action Forum
February 12, 2021

Ideas Appendix

As you explore this document, you will notice that some submitted ideas have asterisks and links. This is to note that these suggested ideas are in the planning, active, or completed stage. The links bring readers to more information about the program that aligns with the highlighted idea.

Advocacy and Policy

Ideas relative to the lobbying and policy advocacy power of MIT leadership and the greater MIT community.

- Better communicate how we work with Cambridge, Boston, and universities in the area.
- Reach out to the community with education and mobilize MIT alums to talk to policy makers about climate change.*
- [Leverage MIT's leadership and influence for federal policy](#).*
- Engage a stronger policy voice that might be facilitated through class projects with a public sector focus and/or through the creation of programs at various MIT centers.
- Amplify the MIT voice and influence globally.*

Awareness, Outreach, and Visible Markers

Ideas focused on greater awareness of climate action plan progress through better outreach, communication, or physical displays.

- Create an on-campus display of CAP progress.
- Create visuals to communicate energy use and impact, for example displaying energy being used in a particular building, what systems are using the most, and what can be done by the occupants that produced that.
- [The status on reaching the goals should be shared widely, and be visible. Having that would motivate students](#).*
- Enable greater access to climate action research and science.
- More transparency on how MIT aligns with the Paris Agreement goals.
- Create a "Climate Clock" for the MIT campus and project it onto the surface of a building, along the lines of a similar installation in New York City; the clock is a combination of art, information, and activism
- We need some big "thing" on campus that is a physical manifestation of our culture. MIT.nano shows us we do high tech nano research. Need that physical place for climate. Cover the dome in solar panels. Doesn't even need to produce electricity. Culture change. Symbols are important.

Behavioral changes

Focus on driving individuals behavioral changes.

- Can we leverage measurement of individual behavioral shifts to accelerate change (our/other) campus culture?
- [Work to better understanding and facilitate behavioral change](#).*

- [Engage faculty doing research directly on sustainability, as well as behavior change](#).*
- Let people engage more directly in our buildings and campus environment.

Building Level
Ideas relative to efficiency, design, and construction of campus buildings.
- Need to make sure sustainability and energy efficiency bubble to the top of the expectations for buildings.
- [Put together sustainability standards for construction](#).*

Data
Focus on use, access, and communication of data relative to the goals of the climate action plan, future and present.
- Make data available on MIT's sustainability policies and their impact.
- [Need to interpret data for others. Not enough just to show](#).*
- Make our datapool.mit.edu information publicly available to increase transparency and accountability for the Climate Action Plan.

Emissions and Carbon Neutrality
Focus on MIT's emissions reductions goals, accounting of, and pathways to reach goals.
- The new Climate Action Plan could have new GHG emissions goals that, keeping in line with the latest science, makes a commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- Make much more ambitious GHG emissions reductions goals, 32% is much too low.
- Framing our reductions in terms of offsets doesn't make space for opportunities for concrete GHG emissions through our regular activities. We need more concrete goals for reductions here.
- Want MIT carbon neutral by 2030. Make the goal 100%, then close the gap.
- MIT carbon goals, if made significant progress, then why are goals more aggressive? Can we revise them? Can we look to other universities that have more aggressive?

Environmental justice
Ideas relative to involving environmental justice as a key tenet of the future climate action plan.
- MIT's policies should reflect awareness of social/environmental justice. For example, understanding that the majority of our plastics are not being recycled, but rather dumped in Malaysia.
- What are the environmental justice implications of the PPA and similar projects?
- Consider following the DEI strategic plan process to create the next CAP: Undergraduate Association students and faculty meet every week with the Institute Community and Equizity Officer to draft docs shared widely—energized and open.

Incentivization
Ideas around MIT's use of budget to spur innovation and electrification on campus.
- MIT should seek partnerships with community (Cambridge, Boston Metro, other Institutions) to potentially create efficiencies of scale in funding initiatives and/or potentially fund MIT initiatives.*
- Create a fund where Departments can apply for supplement to fund difference for equipment/vehicle purchased going electric (or more environmentally friendly).

- [Climate] initiatives require money! Broader engagement on campus would help build advocates to encourage leadership to invest in/prioritize sustainability.

Investment/Divestment/Retirement
Ideas related to MIT's investment practices.
- Divestment is essential especially from fossil fuel companies and those that support anti-climate lobbies.
- Divest from fossil fuel companies and companies in general that dispute anthropogenic climate change until they make big strides towards transferring their business to a renewable energy one and/or making amends for their misinformation campaigns.
- MIT retirement investment represents a tremendous financial lever. Could MIT work with Fidelity to decarbonize the retirement funds offered to MIT faculty and staff? Or possibly find a way to develop a financial product that would allow MIT faculty and staff to invest directly in MIT sustainability initiatives, and be repaid from associated savings?
- Consider MIT's role as an investor in fossil fuel companies that makes space for pushing them toward sustainability; maybe full divestment is not the only solution? Make sure we are at the table.
- Develop a climate investment strategy that is clear, accessible and intentional about MIT's investments.
- Adopt a standard for how MIT invests and how MIT accepts research funding and from whom (i.e., oil companies?).
- Distance MIT from organizations that are causing great harm.

Miscellaneous
Ideas that don't easily fit into any other category or may fit into several.
- Expanding on the SA+P climate action plan. There is interest around expanding this work to other schools and departments.
- Leverage some of the stories of MITIMCO's projects—how these projects are demonstrating leadership and expressing MIT values.
- Partnership with university organizations and buildings, groups, and FSILGs to become more sustainable.
- Align MIT's work with UN SDGs.*

Power Purchase Agreement
Ideas related to MIT's PPA.
- Encouraged by the solar farm initiative. MIT should strive to be an example to other institutions. Leverage influence at MIT and among other institutes.
- Don't count the PPA/NC solar project in the 32% of emissions reductions achieved.

Scope 3
Focus on indirect emissions coming from a number of sources further categorized below.
- We need to focus more on Scope 3 in general. *
- Address Scope 3 emissions from lab and campus waste; invest in green labs.*
- Improve lab ventilation.*
- Work to curb vehicle idling on campus from contractors and MIT vehicles.
- Looking at Media Lab technology with wearables for personal comfort, for instance; and for tracking our off-campus footprint?

Scope 3: Food

- Establish more community gardens.
- [Sustainably sourced food, plant-based food zero waste residential campus](#).*
- A program is set up to work with our Dining Services that evaluates the current climate impact of food purchased, evaluate options or alternative food options that have a lower impact, implement a program to make changes in on-campus dining.
- With the Employee Resources area—MyLife Services—prepare a nutrition program for the campus community to increase awareness of their diet choices on GHG emissions, prepare materials to help the community to understand the alternatives and even encourage cooking competitions around the campus where people use more sustainable foods.
- [Source more of MIT's food and other materials from local places](#).*
- Encourage the MIT Community to start making diet changes that support GHG reduction.*
- Providing better alternative foods for those who want to engage in more sustainable eating practices.
- [Excited by initiatives on reducing waste stream; should also be considering making better food service choices based, not just on the carbon footprint of the food product, but also the packaging](#).*

Scope 3: Transportation/ Remote Work

- Reduction on buildings is more in the background. Transportation is more visible, tackle that.
- Would be curious to know what impact the current work-from-home operations have had on MIT's carbon footprint (e.g., energy use, transportation, waste production). Could any savings realized by MIT be used to support faculty and staff who have born the cost (energy use, printing, office furniture, etc.) of working at home?
- Switching to transportation for work travel—encourage use of public transportation as opposed to driving/cars

Shift to Renewables
Ideas relative to renewable sources of energy either on campus or beyond.

- Study how we can incorporate renewables into the campus itself.
- Charles River is a natural resource —we need in stream turbines to generate multi megawatts.
- Capture wind via small urban wind turbines on top of buildings to generate multi megawatt.
- Every building that can should have solar.
- Windows can be energy generating.
- MIT should use 50% of its current endowment to purchase several blocks of the offshore wind farms now finally receiving permits.
- There needs to be a comprehensive effort to implement a comprehensive energy efficiency program, and the addition of renewable energy at scale on campus including solar on rooftops, parking lots and windows, and urban scale wind turbines.

Student Engagement
Focus on involving students with development and execution of climate plan and objectives.

- We should focus on spreading awareness of what MIT is already doing, and how to get students involved.
- Engage students in this type of planning—the earlier the better. The engagement can help them begin adapting behaviors earlier.
- MIT students care deeply about sustainability and making a difference; they can be engaged to assist in creating apps, crunching data, completing surveys, collecting and analyzing data, and establishing policies for MIT to change.*
- Create more venues for student engagement with the public sector.
- Engage all students in taking campus-level climate action.
- One way to engage students around this could be to put out a call for grand ideas over the next 20 years.
- Work to build a network and connections between students and alumni who want to address climate change.
- Consider students getting involved with a focus on student buildings.
- Better partnership with leadership and student organizations.

Waste and Procurement
Focus on steps MIT can take with regards to reducing waste and the overall carbon footprint from items MIT purchases and consumes on campus

- Reducing overall consumption will act as a multiplier to make our existing policies and initiatives (e.g., reducing lab waste) even more effective.
- Should work with vendors to be reducing/improving lifecycle impact of packaging. Can MIT look at influencing regulatory environment determining packaging requirements? Possibly partnering with state or city to balance requirements for food safety with lifecycle impact (composability)?
- Increased investment in environmental health and safety practices and specifically Green Labs.
- Campus has a waste problem— how can we situate labor, motivating structures for behavior change, to fix this problem?
- Show grad students how to get rid of their waste. One of the biggest sources of carbon is waste produced by labs. Great more glove recycling program and green lab programs on campus broadly. How to waste stream work through the lab?
- Mandate no single-use plastic campus-wide (except for PPE).
- MIT should be moving more strongly toward policies that regulate consumptions inclusive of product life cycle (whole impacts).*