

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Wellesley and Babson College Collaborate on Climate Challenges

April 10, 2023 (Wellesley, MA) - Are you interested in getting involved in climate research and action within Wellesley? Do you want to share your thoughts and questions regarding heat pumps and food waste? A collaboration between three Town of Wellesley departments and Babson College Master's students addresses two sustainability challenges highlighted in Wellesley's [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#): supporting the installation of heat pumps in Wellesley homes and increasing participation in the Recycling and Disposal Facility's (RDF's) food waste drop-off program.

Make a difference by contributing to research that will benefit our Town!

Sign up for an interview [here](#) by April 14 and share your heat pump experience with us.

Take a survey [here](#) by April 20 to tell us how you dispose of household food waste.

Stay tuned for updates on this project via digital media and at community venues throughout the town.

Questions? Email ClimateAction@wellesleyma.gov.

Background

Babson students, working with Professor Miguel Rivera-Santos, formed two consulting teams. The first team assists the [Wellesley Municipal Light Plant \(MLP\)](#) and [Climate Action Office](#) in **developing a strategy to improve the heat pump customer journey** for residents. Electrifying residential heating with heat pumps is critical to achieving the Town of Wellesley's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, as buildings contribute approximately 55% of town-wide emissions, with the majority coming from natural gas and fuel oil. To achieve net zero emissions, we need to maximize energy efficiency, minimize energy use, and electrify building heating and appliances. Replacing old fossil fuel heating systems and air conditioners with heat pumps greatly improves efficiency and allows us to meet more of our energy demand with renewable sources such as solar and wind. Babson's consulting team will map the typical heat pump customer journey, identify stumbling blocks, and suggest ways to improve the process.

The second Babson team works with the [Department of Public Works \(DPW\)](#) and Climate Action Office to **develop a strategy to increase the number of residents who regularly separate their food waste and drop it off at the Town's RDF**. Food waste in the trash stream unnecessarily raises the Town's waste disposal costs. Diverting food waste to more productive endpoints saves tax payer dollars and reduces food waste's harmful effects. Babson's consulting team will investigate what motivates and deters residents from participating in the food waste drop-off

program, what has worked in other communities, and how Wellesley can raise awareness of this RDF program and food waste's detrimental effects.

Food waste is costly, depletes resources, and harms the environment. Americans waste approximately 119 billion pounds of food every year. This wasted food reflects about 130 billion meals and more than \$408 billion (Feedingamerica.org). Food waste is the largest landfill waste stream and emits greenhouse gases (USDA.GOV) equivalent to emissions from 42 coal power plants. Wasted food also reflects wasted resources such as land, water, fertilizers, and energy. Water and energy wasted annually could power more than 50 million homes for a year.

For more information, please contact Marybeth Martello, the Town of Wellesley's Sustainability Director, at mmartello@wellesleyma.gov.

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