

Massachusetts Solar Canopy Working Group

Friday, April 25, 2025 | 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Via Teams and in person at 100 Cambridge Street, Boston

Working Group Members Present:

- Cobi Frongillo, Deputy Director, Renewable & Alternative Energy, DOER
- Matthew Snell, Nutter¹
- Sonia Patano, SVP, Property Management, GID
- Kevin Brousseau, Secretary-Treasurer, Massachusetts AFL-CIO
- Amy Boyd Rabin, VP, Policy & Regulatory Affairs, ELM
- Gregory Beeman, President, Associated Builders and Contractors of Massachusetts
- Brian Rice, Director, Customer Solar Programs, Eversource Energy
- Mike Ossing, Chair, Energy and Environment Policy Committee, MMA
- Jessica Robertson, Director, Policy and Business Development, New England, New Leaf

Working Group Members Absent:

- Heather Takle, President & CEO, PowerOptions

Additional Attendees and Presenters:

- Lesley Maddalena, DOER
- Robbie Raymond, Sunwealth

Cobi Frongillo, Lesley Maddalena, and Jessica Robertson attended in person. All other meeting attendees participated remotely.

Agenda and Minutes

1) Call to Order

Chair Cobi Frongillo called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., welcomed attendees, and introduced the meeting agenda.

2) Presentation: Innovative Solar Canopy Projects

Chair Frongillo presented a slide deck highlighting examples of innovative solar canopy projects in Massachusetts and beyond. The presentation included a breakdown of SMART-approved canopy projects by type, as well as case studies featured in the National League of Cities' *Innovative Approaches to Dual-Purpose Solar* report.

¹ Acting as Nutter's designee in place of Matthew Connolly

National examples included:

- *Public Transit Shading*: University of Wisconsin–Madison installed solar panels on 20 campus bus shelters, and Pensacola, FL created “solar trees” in public spaces for shade and visibility.
- *Municipal Parking Lots*: San Antonio, TX deployed solar canopy systems over nearly 500 parking spots, including police station installations that help keep fleet vehicles cool.
- *Building-Integrated Shading*: Sunnyvale, CA’s City Hall canopy provides dual-purpose shading for sidewalks and building windows using bifacial panels that capture reflected light.
- *Canal and Water Infrastructure*: A canal-based solar project on tribal lands in Arizona aims to reduce water evaporation while producing energy.
- *EV Microgrid Carports*: A feasibility study on microgrid carports found that hybrid solar-storage EV charging stations can deliver both environmental and social benefits.
- *Rapid-Deploy Systems*: Paired Power’s “PairTree” model offers a pre-configured canopy solution installable in a single workday with minimal labor, featuring low maintenance and no moving parts.

During Q&A, members discussed potential local applications, including canopies over inactive lots and private roads. Jessica Robertson noted dual-use possibilities in agricultural areas. Frongillo pointed to examples where idle space—like parked trailers—could support canopy deployment.

3) Group Brainstorming Exercise: SWOT Analysis

Members participated in a structured SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the solar canopy landscape in Massachusetts.

Strengths included robust state incentives, in-state expertise, the LISSP process, the absence of a size-to-load limit, and co-benefits like resilience, decarbonization, cost savings, and shade. Members also cited the ability to pair canopies with EV charging, and zoning precedents like 40A Section 3 (Dover Amendment).

Weaknesses centered on project delays from permitting and interconnection, high costs for engineering and construction, declining SMART 2.0 incentives, and limited viability of storage. Zoning variability, buffer requirements, and affordability concerns were also raised.

Opportunities included upcoming programs like SMART 3.0 and grid modernization planning (ESMP/LTSPP), as well as ACP funding, new grant programs, and innovative canopy models. Public storytelling and streamlined permitting processes were emphasized as critical enablers.

Threats included federal incentive changes (ITC/PTC), SMART reassessments, steel supply constraints, longer lead times, increased public-sector regulation, and political polarization. Loss of institutional funding and rising interest rates were also identified.

4) Sunwealth Presentation

Robbie Raymond (Sunwealth) outlined key permitting barriers facing solar canopy projects. He pointed to delays stemming from non-ministerial permits, inconsistent local inspection practices, and special permit requirements from zoning boards. He noted that standalone systems are sometimes subject to unnecessary rapid-shutdown retrofits, increasing costs and project timelines.

Sunwealth recommended the creation of a standardized permit application template for canopy systems and improved alignment between developers and regulators to streamline development.

5) Discussion and Next Steps

Members discussed the group's ultimate goals and deliverables. Frongillo referenced the 2023 EVICC model and DOER's Near-Term Rate Working Group as possible templates. More guidance will be shared in future meetings.

DOER reminded members to confirm receipt of Conflict of Interest Law materials and complete the required acknowledgment and training.

6) Adjournment

Chair Frongillo adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

Documents and Exhibits Presented at the Meeting

- [DOER Innovative Project Slides](#)