



Tha Chhan
Executive Director

Board of Commissioners
Mony Var, Chairperson
Rodney Elliott, Vice Chairperson
Philip L. Shea
Joannie Bernes
Matt Marr

March 28, 2024

Mr. Marc Draisén
Executive Director
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
60 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Mr. Draisén,

We write to offer our support for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Grant application submitted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in partnership with the Boston and Chelsea Housing Authorities. The Greater Boston Affordable Housing Decarbonization Accelerator (AHDA) proposed by this coalition application supports the Lowell Housing Authority's efforts to decarbonize our housing portfolio and deliver energy and health benefits to our tenants. The AHDA will also strengthen key pathways for accelerating building decarbonization and serving environmental justice communities to meet the Commonwealth's 2050 climate goals.

This letter of commitment serves as our letter of intent to execute a memorandum of agreement with MAPC and the Housing Authorities of Boston and Chelsea by no later than July 1, 2024, to demonstrate our commitment to serving as part of this coalition and executing the work if awarded.

Decarbonizing existing buildings is critical to achieving Massachusetts's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. While using net zero and Passive House standards is more common in new affordable multifamily construction projects, most residential buildings that will exist in 2050 are already constructed. This includes hundreds of thousands of units of affordable housing, which are among the most inefficient and carbon-emitting buildings in the Commonwealth and house populations least able to afford or make retrofits. Our shared goal in public housing is to provide healthy, modern, and safe housing with building improvements and new construction. The Lowell Housing Authority has become not just a housing provider, but also a full social service agency designed to provide stability and create opportunities for residents to achieve self-sufficiency. Reducing our carbon footprint and energy efficiency fit our model as a responsible public housing provider.

The Lowell Housing Authority's participation in the AHDA coalition application is critical to meeting our goals to decarbonize our housing portfolio. We are committed to pursuing the decarbonization retrofits of our properties as described in the application, including working with non-profit partners to engage our affected residents, and implementing Good Jobs principles in procuring decarbonization services. If awarded, we are prepared to execute the retrofits as quickly as possible to begin delivering emissions reductions and energy and health benefits to our residents. We also look forward to sharing our experiences and lessons learned through the retrofit process in the community of practice and implementing insights gleaned from other affordable housing owners.

Our decarbonization efforts are not a new initiative. In 2014, we contracted an exclusive 76-acre/7.4MW net metering credit photovoltaic site, later, and among other authority-wide weatherization projects, installed a solar hot water system supporting 30% of the domestic hot water for a 169 unit development, an electrification initiative at a 28-unit apartment complex, this year, Lowell was honored to be selected as the first community in National Grid territory to participate in a networked geothermal pilot. A partnership with the City of Lowell, University of Massachusetts-Lowell and National Grid for a neighborhood networked geothermal pilot project, which includes an electrification project for an LHA 12-unit apartment building, and plans for a new affordable housing development of up to 118 units in Lowell's Acre neighborhood, for which we are initiating a networked geothermal feasibility study funded by a competitive HEET Kickstart Massachusetts grant that just kicked off March 27, 2024. Clearly, the LHA is an early participant in the decarbonization area, and enthusiastic about our prospects under this AHDA prospect.

The Lowell Housing Authority is committed to ensure that the energy transition is a just and equitable one that serves the most vulnerable populations in our community, rather than creating higher energy burdens. The proposed project area includes Minority, Income, and English isolated environmental justice populations.

The regionalized approach of the AHDA will support stakeholders in affordable housing across the Greater Boston region in developing and implementing plans for reducing GHG emissions and other harmful air pollutants in the buildings and populations where investment is most critically needed. Our coalition's application is critical to advancing decarbonization in affordable housing, and we ask that the review committee give their application full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tha Chhan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tha Chhan, Executive Director
Lowell Housing Authority