



Framingham
State University

McAuliffe Center Selected to Participate in an Urban Heat Mapping Project Organized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Urban Heat Island (UHI) Heat Mapping Campaign Will Cover 100 Square miles, including Framingham, Natick, Ashland and Holliston

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For Immediate Release

FRAMINGHAM – With the increasing regularity of extreme weather and climate-related hazards across MetroWest, the City of Framingham and Towns of Natick, Ashland, and Holliston have identified extreme heat and higher temperatures as a top hazard to vulnerable residents in their communities.

Framingham State University’s Christa McAuliffe Center for Integrated Science Learning will be working over the next year to help these communities better understand the hazard of extreme heat thanks to its successful application to be part of the 2023 National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) [Urban Heat Island Mapping Campaign](#). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has provided funding to [Climate Adaptation Planning and Analytics \(CAPA\)](#) Strategies to support campaigns for communities in 2023.

The McAuliffe Center’s proposal is one of just 18 selected in 14 states across the country and in one international city.

Data collection around a 100-square-mile area in MetroWest will take place this Summer using mobile and stationary sensors. That data will then be used to create urban heat island (UHI) maps and potentially identify overlaps among UHIs and disadvantaged demographics in Framingham and MetroWest communities.

“This is a great opportunity to increase awareness of Urban Heat Islands in Framingham and MetroWest,” says Dr. Irene Porro, director of the McAuliffe Center. “We will be able to share evidence of the overlap between health, social and UHI issues to help generate policy recommendations to promote long-term, equitable solutions.”

The McAuliffe Center is partnering with local cities and towns on the effort and to recruit volunteers who will join high school summer interns to collect data this summer. The final product of the community science field campaigns is a set of high-resolution air temperature and humidity data, and a

report by CAPA Strategies that provides a detailed analysis of distribution of heat in the morning, afternoon and evening. Interactive, high resolution web maps of the modeled air temperature and heat index are also provided. The Center has committed \$15,000 in cost-sharing to support the project.

Individuals interested in volunteering for the Heat Watch Campaign are encouraged to join our Community Science Team by registering at <https://cm-center.org/2023hwc>.

Now in its seventh year, the NOAA Urban Heat Island (UHI) mapping campaign addresses [extreme heat](#), the number one weather-related cause of death in the U.S. for the last three decades. [Urban heat islands](#) — areas with few trees and more pavement that absorbs heat — can be up to 20 degrees fahrenheit hotter than nearby neighborhoods with more trees, grass and less black asphalt.

“The burden of heat is not shared equally in our urban areas,” said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad. “Gathering this type of environmental intelligence helps communities measure their hottest places so they can develop strategies to reduce the dangerous effects of heat. Community by community, we’re working to create a climate-ready nation that is resilient in a changing world.”

Heat Watch Campaign – Framingham & MetroWest Leadership Team

Irene Porro, Director, Christa McAuliffe Center at Framingham State University – Project Lead
Shawn Luz, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Framingham
Samantha Riley, Sustainability Project Manager for the Town of Ashland
Jillian Wilson-Martin, Director of Sustainability for the Town of Natick
Matt Zettek, Sustainability Coordinator for the Town of Holliston

Partner Communities:

