

Massachusetts Is Going Net Zero

April 2026 Update

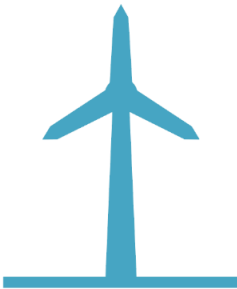
NET ZERO READY - 66.1 Million GSF



**ENERGY
EFFICIENCY**



**MINIMIZE
FOSSIL FUEL**



**ON + OFFSITE
RENEWABLE ENERGY**

NET ZERO - 21.7 Million GSF

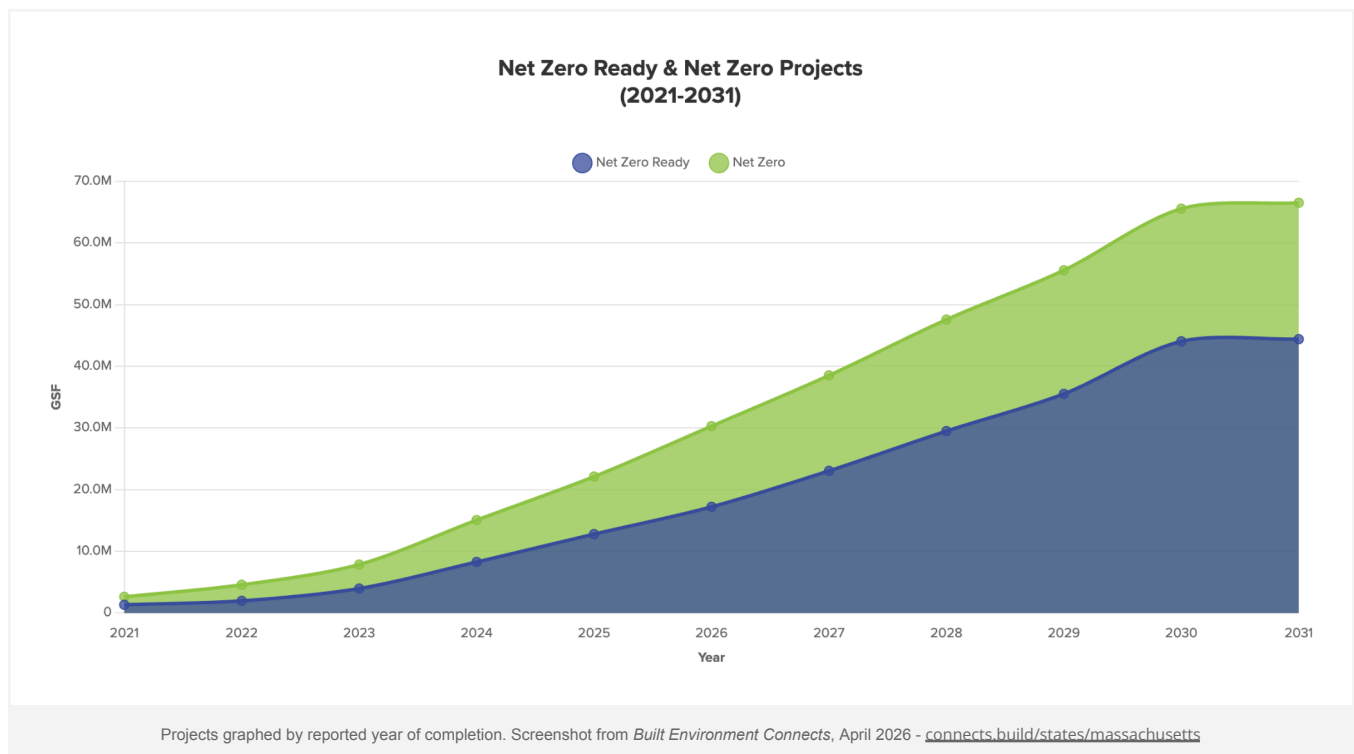


**BUILT ENVIRONMENT
CONNECTS**

High-performance buildings are well underway

Massachusetts is going Net Zero. Hundreds of Net Zero and Net Zero Ready buildings are documented on Built Environment Connects, and more are coming online every day.

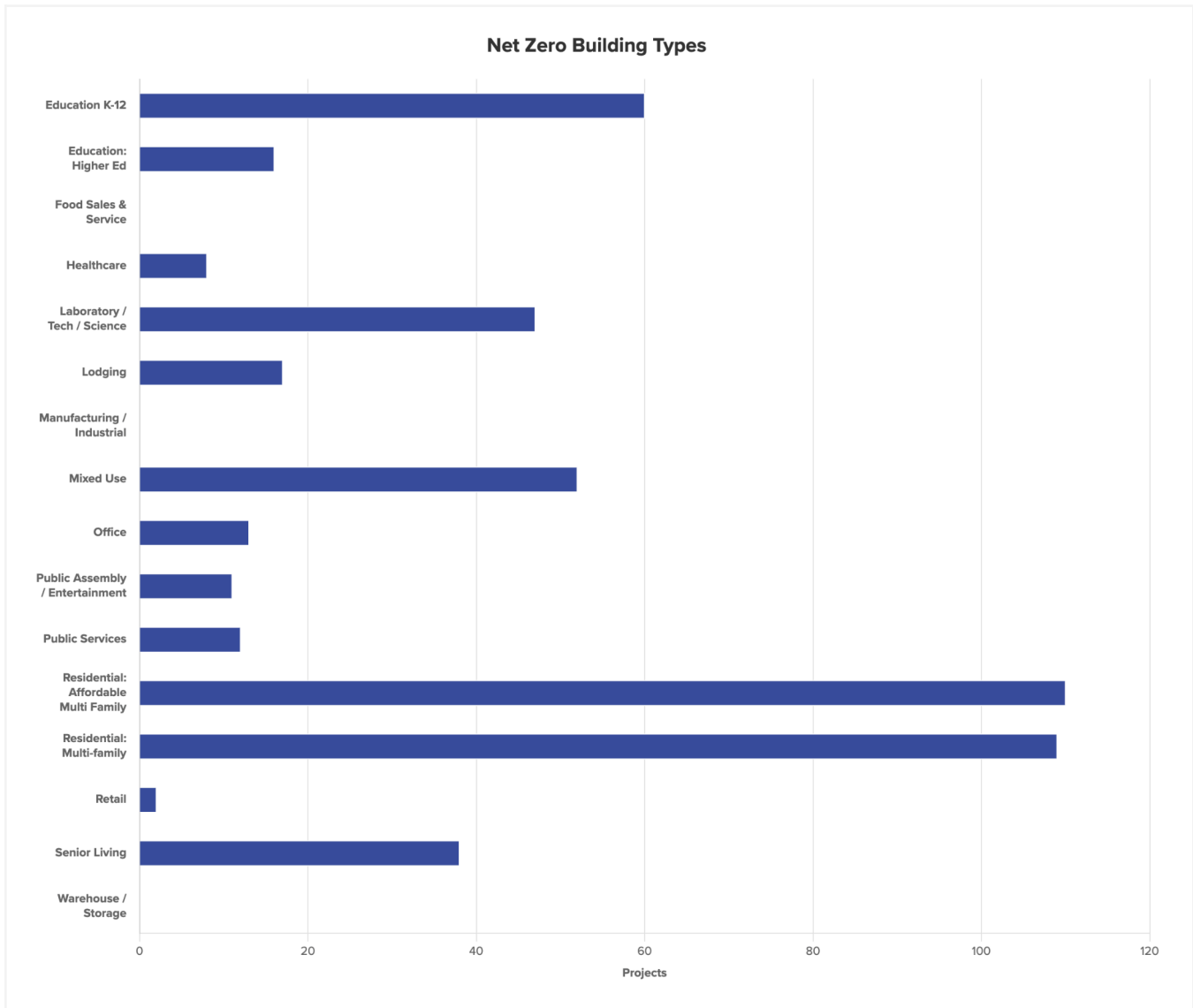
Net Zero buildings are all-electric and produce and/or procure renewable energy to cover their operational emissions. Net Zero Ready buildings are electrified and efficient enough to run on renewable energy as soon as sources become available.



What Building Types Are Achieving Net Zero Ready?

Many Types!

From multifamily housing and K-12 schools to labs and healthcare, projects across a wide range of industries are achieving high-performance building standards, proof that achieving Net Zero is possible across project types.



Screenshot from *Built Environment Connects*, April 2026 - connects.build/states/massachusetts

FEAR: Net Zero multi-family and affordable housing will not be feasible as it is too cost prohibitive.

REALITY: Multi-family and affordable projects are leading the way for Net Zero development in Massachusetts. It is clear that these projects are not just possible; they are the leading building typology in *Connects*.

FEAR: Laboratory, technology, and life science buildings will be too technically challenging to achieve.

REALITY: Lab/tech/science represents one of the top project types documented in *Connects*. Through making these projects, high-performance building professionals have shown they have the knowledge and technology to make it possible.

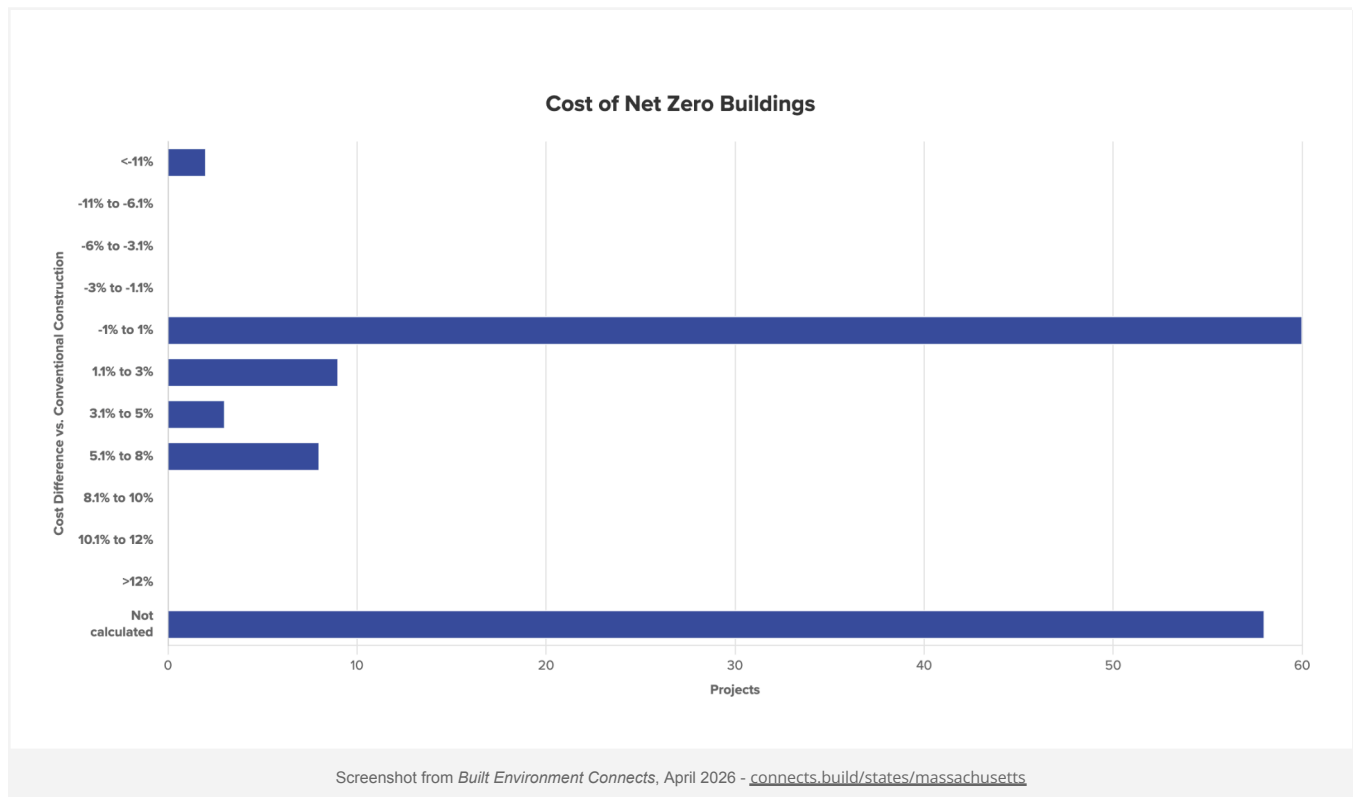
How Much Does It Cost To Build Net Zero Ready?

Not Much!

Of the projects that reported cost data, many Net Zero and Net Zero Ready buildings have less than a 1% construction cost premium compared to conventional buildings. High-performing buildings also significantly reduce operating costs, which can offset any upfront premiums in a matter of years.

The majority of this data was shared before the adoption of the current Massachusetts Energy Code. In municipalities that have adopted the current Stretch and Specialized Energy Codes, in general Net Zero Ready is the new conventional building here in Massachusetts, effectively eliminating the existence of a cost premium.

In 2024 we added an option, “We didn’t calculate the cost premium.” Of the projects that did not calculate cost, over half said Net Zero was necessitated by code or client preference.



FEAR: Net Zero is expensive.

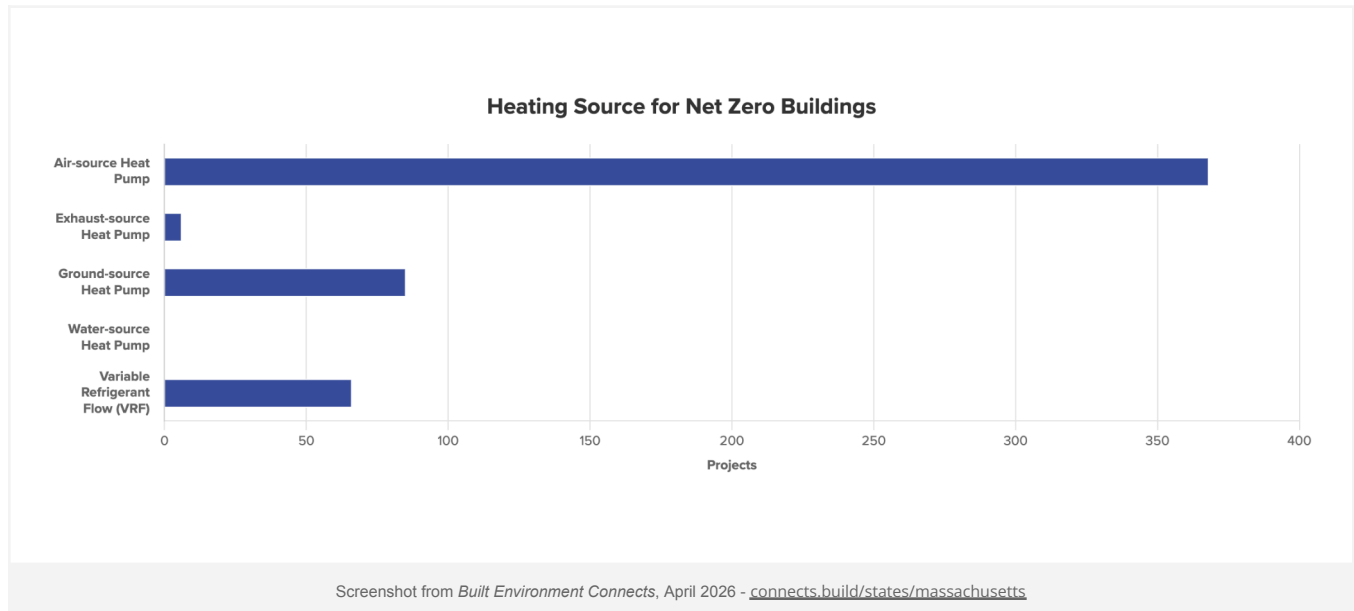
REALITY: Of project profiles reporting on cost data, Net Zero buildings often carry little to no added construction cost and significantly reduce operating cost. Therefore, Net Zero buildings typically have lower total cost of ownership than conventional buildings. When construction is financed via loans or bonds, the operating savings more than offset the loan payment premiums. This results in positive cash-flow from day one of operations.

Cost data often includes incentives from the utilities and the government. There are significant incentives through Mass Save®, Federal Tax Credits, the Mass Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and more.

How Are Buildings Using Electricity For Heating?

Heat Pumps!

All Net Zero and Net Zero Ready projects employ heat pumps to electrify their heating and cooling operations. There are many options available to design teams, made easy by low overall energy demand in ultra-efficient projects.



FEAR: Net Zero buildings must be 100% electric with no exceptions.

REALITY: Net Zero standards promote electrification and allow flexibility for fossil fuel use where appropriate. For example, the [Massachusetts Fossil Fuel-Free Demonstration Program](#) includes exemptions for lab buildings, healthcare facilities, and large domestic hot water systems.

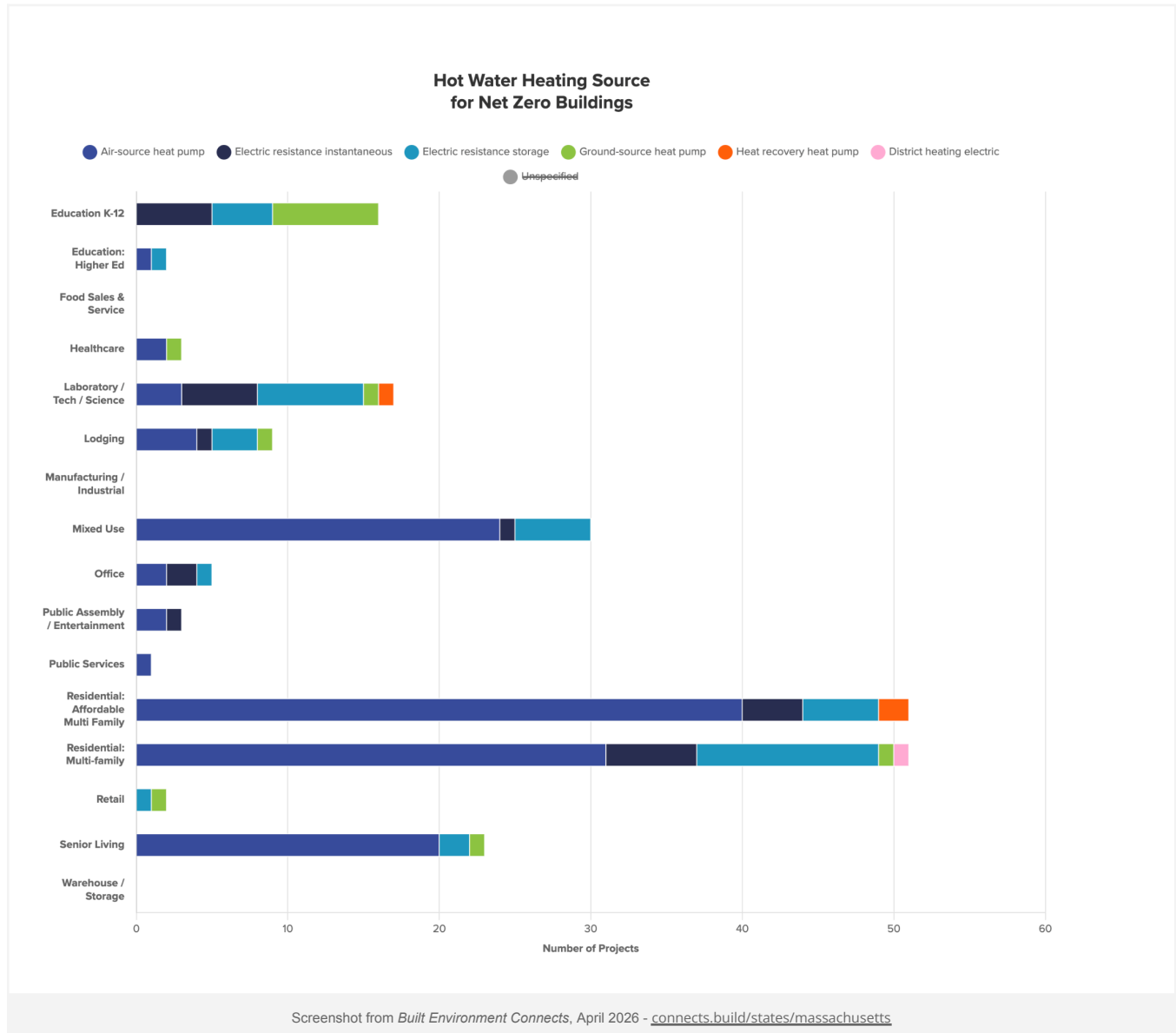
FEAR: The electric grid can't support electric buildings.

REALITY: New Net Zero buildings often have lower peak electric demand than their peers. The Built Environment Plus 2019 report, [Zero Energy Buildings in Massachusetts: Saving Money from the Start](#), found that the peak electric demand for all-electric buildings was lower for existing building renovations, new office buildings, K-12 schools, and mixed-use buildings. Only the residential buildings had higher peak electrical loads. However, single and small multi-family residential buildings are able to cover most or even all of their electrical demand with on-site solar, and thus reducing overall peak demand on the grid.

Are Buildings Using Electricity For Domestic Hot Water?

Yes, Many!

Many projects use electrified domestic hot water systems, deploying a range of strategies with proven performance across multifamily, education K-12, and lab projects, just to name a few.



FEAR: Electrification of domestic hot water is not possible for some high-energy building types, such as labs and healthcare.

REALITY: Electrification of domestic hot water is possible for high-energy building types of all types. In fact, many laboratories and healthcare facilities in *Connects* reported relying on all-electric domestic hot water.

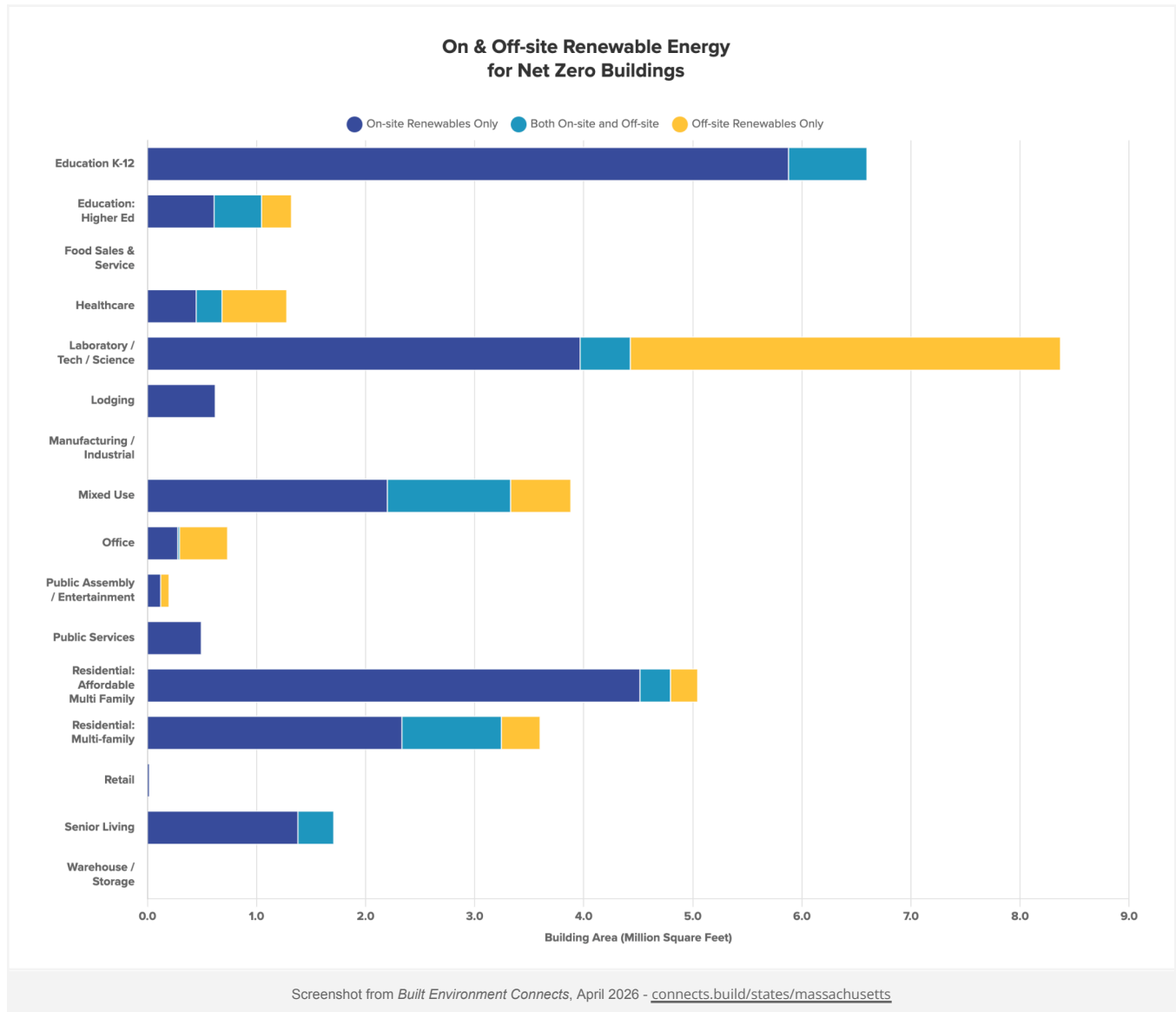
FEAR: Electrification of domestic hot water is not possible for multi-family buildings.

REALITY: Electrification of domestic hot water is possible for multi-family buildings. As of 2026, 60% of Gross Square Footage (GSF) of all multi-family buildings reported are electrifying domestic hot water. This includes 7.8M GSF of affordable housing.

How Are Buildings Achieving Net Zero?

On-Site And Off-Site Renewable Energy!

There are many procurement methods for renewable energy, which can greatly reduce operating costs and strain on the grid. This is happening across project types, powering buildings of all sizes.



FEAR: Net Zero buildings must produce all energy on-site.

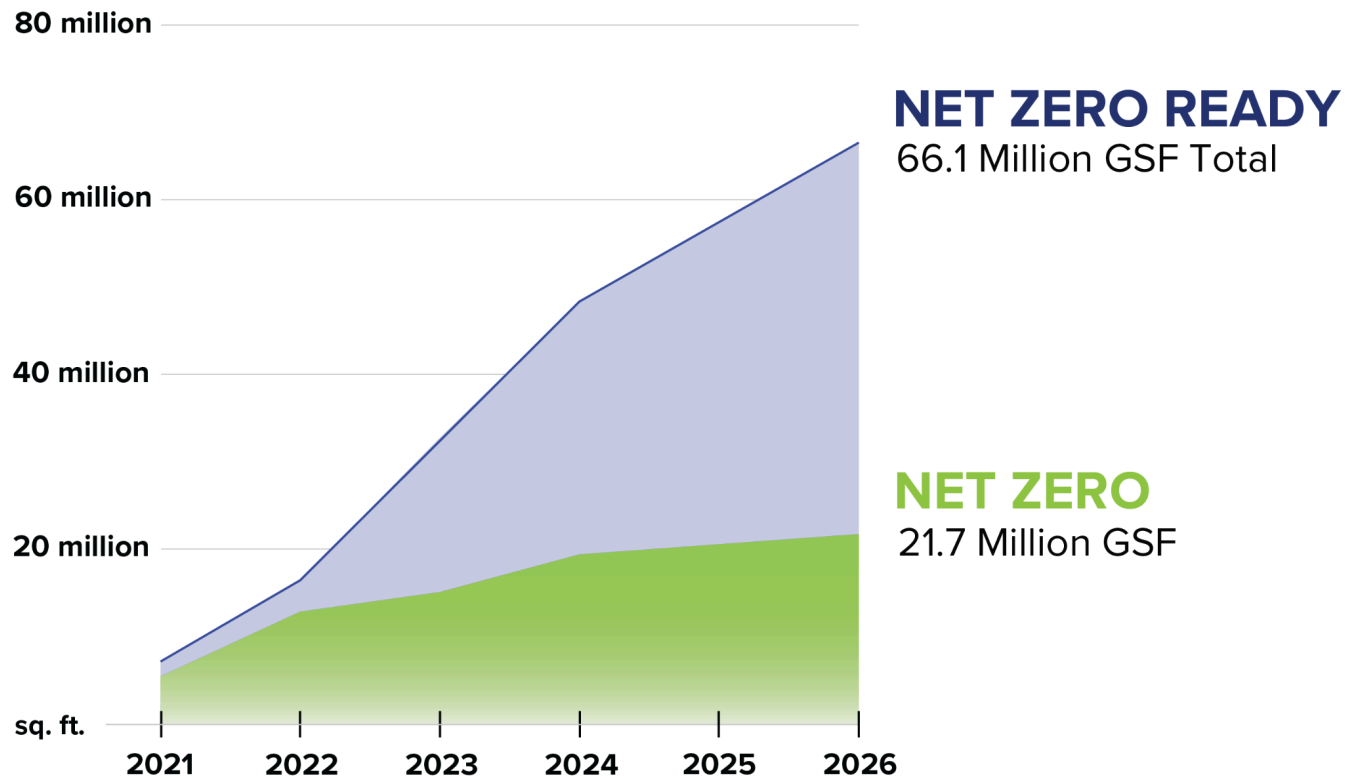
REALITY: Net Zero buildings can procure renewable energy from off-site. Around half of the Net Zero buildings that provided renewable energy data use off-site renewable energy or a combination of off-site and on-site renewable energy.

FEAR: Renewable electricity costs more than grid electricity.

REALITY: There are many procurement methods for renewable energy. Some marginally increase cost. Others cost less, such as: power purchase agreements and virtual power purchase agreements.

Change is Happening in Massachusetts

Year over year data collection progress as of April 2026



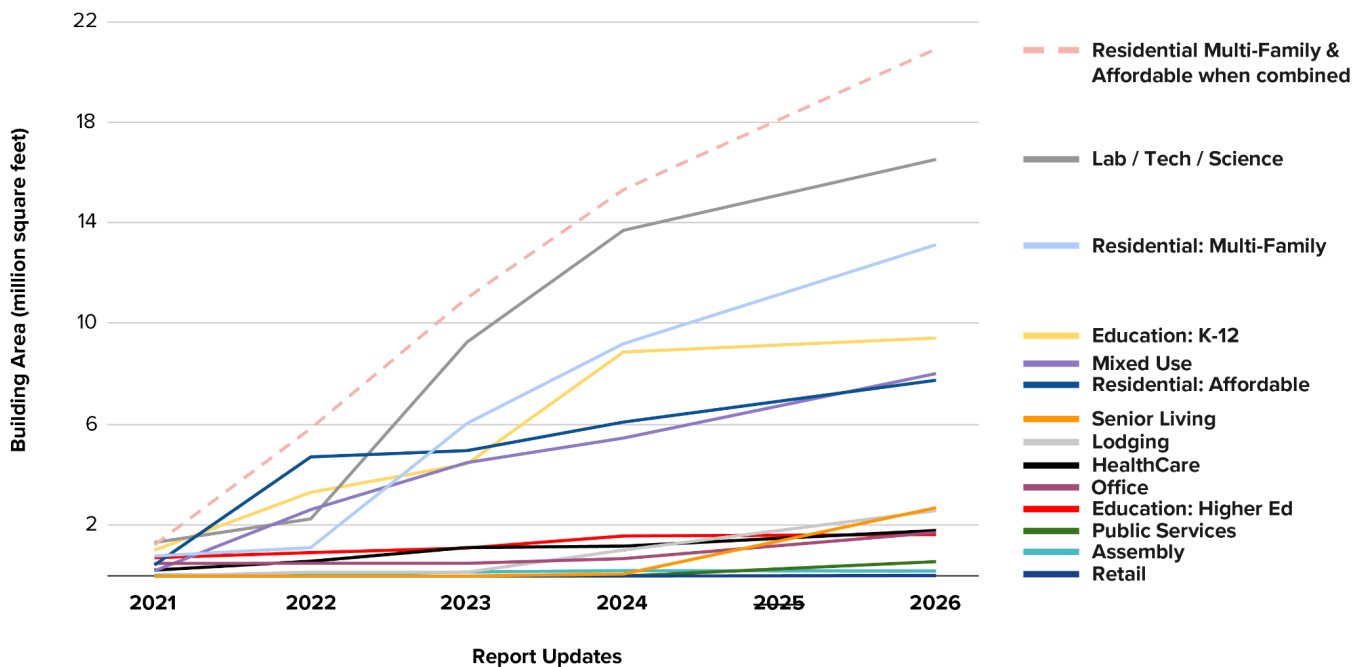
Since 2021, [Built Environment Plus](#) has been actively asking the Massachusetts building community for data on what's happening around Net Zero buildings.

The intent of this report and the Massachusetts State Page in *Connects* is to provide data for municipalities considering adopting the opt-in Specialized Code, or implementing fossil-fuel legislation or building performance regulations. Built Environment Plus hopes other states will find the data useful as they consider their own initiatives. It is also a resource to share between professionals on how they are achieving Net Zero projects.

To date, *Connects* includes 500+ Net Zero and Net Zero Ready projects across Massachusetts. The continued success of cataloguing Net Zero building data relies on the cooperation and commitment of Massachusetts building professionals to update existing project profiles and continue to add new project profiles to [Built Environment Connects](#).

The Bottom Line

Building Type Data Collection by Total GSF



1. **The Net Zero and Net Zero Ready building stock exceeds 66.1 million GSF, across 500+ projects, and is growing at a constant rate in the Commonwealth today.**
2. **Of the 19.3 million GSF with reported cost data, 71% reported <1% construction cost premium to achieve Net Zero Ready.**
3. **Multi-family and affordable housing's combined 20.9 million GSF are leading the way for Net Zero development in Massachusetts, employing heat pumps and on-site renewables to reach their Net Zero targets. Lab / Tech / Science grew by 20% since 2024 up to 16.5 million GSF, making up the majority of the found Net Zero Ready space.**
4. **Affordable Housing makes up 37% of all multi-family residential Net Zero and Net Zero Ready square footage.**
5. **All projects rely on heat pumps as the primary source of heat. The majority of building types utilize air-source heat pumps, with the exception of K-12 which more often use ground-source heat pumps. Net Zero buildings produce renewable energy on-site and/or procure off-site renewable energy to offset any fossil fuel consumption on a net annual basis.**
6. **Since 2024, nearly twice as many projects have reported being all-electric for domestic hot water, totaling 39.7 million GSF.**

The Companies Leading Net Zero Progress

The top 50 companies in *Connects* with a project in Massachusetts, ranked by number of linked project profiles.

50+ Projects

1. Petersen Engineering
2. New Ecology, Inc.

40+ Projects

3. BR+A

30+ Projects

4. ICON Architecture
5. Building Evolution Corporation
6. Thornton Tomasetti
7. RDH Building Science Inc.
8. Steven Winter Associates
9. Linnean Solutions

20+ Projects

10. The Green Engineer
11. BLW Engineers
12. Soden Sustainability Consulting
13. DiMella Shaffer
14. Arrowstreet
15. Sustainable Comfort, Inc.

10+ Projects

16. R.W. Sullivan Engineering
17. Davis Square Architects, Inc.
18. WSP
19. enviENERGY Studio
20. Consigli Construction Co., Inc
21. Utile
22. Vanderweil Engineers

23. SGA

24. DellBrook | JKS

25. Elkus Manfredi Architects

26. Suffolk Construction

27. SMMA

28. The Architectural Team

29. West Work

5+ Projects

30. CambridgeSeven

31. NEI General Contracting

32. GGD Consulting Engineering, Inc.

33. PCA, Inc.

34. CLEAResult

35. Studio G Architects

36. Cosentini Architects

37. Stantec

38. CUBE 3

39. Perkins & Will

40. Payette

41. Passive to Positive

42. Dore + Whittier

43. CBT Architects

44. Arup

45. Khalsa Design, Inc

46. Bald Hill Builders

47. Zade Engineering

48. VAV International Inc.

49. DiNisco Design

50. HMFH Architects

About Built Environment Connects and Project Data

[Built Environment Plus](#) (BE+), with support from the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#) (MassCEC) created [Built Environment Connects](#), a national discovery tool linking high-performance building professionals, companies, and real project experience in one place. The data from the 2024 report was migrated to *Connects*, and this 2026 update is fully utilizing the growing project data there. People can find more information on Net Zero and Net Zero Ready projects, and the professionals and companies making them, at [connects.build](#).

To be listed as **Net Zero Ready** buildings must be:

- Located In Massachusetts
- Commercial or large residential
 - If residential, it should be over 15,000 GSF or include over 15 units.
- Ultra energy efficient
 - The project meets or exceeds an established net zero ready standard (e.g. MA Stretch Code, Passive House) or is ultra energy efficient as defined by a percent reduction from the ASHRAE 90.1 baseline according to one of the following: Passive House, MA Stretch Energy Code, 2010: 25% below App G baseline EUI, 2013: 18% below App G baseline EUI, 2016: 5% below App G PEI, 2019: 0% below App G PEI, 2022: 0% below App G PEI
 - Note: to maintain consistency for all buildings, the metrics utilized are based on site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) or site Performance Energy Index (PEI), not cost or carbon. Both on-site and off-site renewable energy must be excluded from these metrics. To confirm compliance with PEI, follow the formulas in the Performance Rating Method in Section 4 of ASHRAE 90.1-2016, 2019 or 2022, replacing all energy cost metrics with site energy metrics. The Building Performance Factor (BPF) remains unchanged.
- All-electric during normal operation
 - All-electric for building heating operation means that electricity is used for heating during “normal operation” when systems are operating as intended and ambient temperature is above the ASHRAE 99% design condition. (Special use buildings such as health care facilities and laboratories are given more leeway and may be included if the building relies primarily on heat pumps for building heating and through efficiency and electrification achieve ≥90% fossil fuel reduction vs. the ASHRAE 90.1 baseline.)

To be listed as **Net Zero**, buildings must meet the Net Zero Ready criteria and:

- Offset ≥100% of the building energy with on-site and/or off-site renewable energy, on a cumulative annual basis.



Built Environment Plus is a member-based non-profit driving sustainable and regenerative design, construction and operations of the built environment. We do this by providing green building education, building community, engaging in advocacy, research and tool development, celebrating success, and by fostering leadership opportunities for sustainable building practitioners.

For questions, please reach out to connects@builtenvironmentplus.org

For history of this report visit builtenvironmentplus.org/road-to-net-zero/