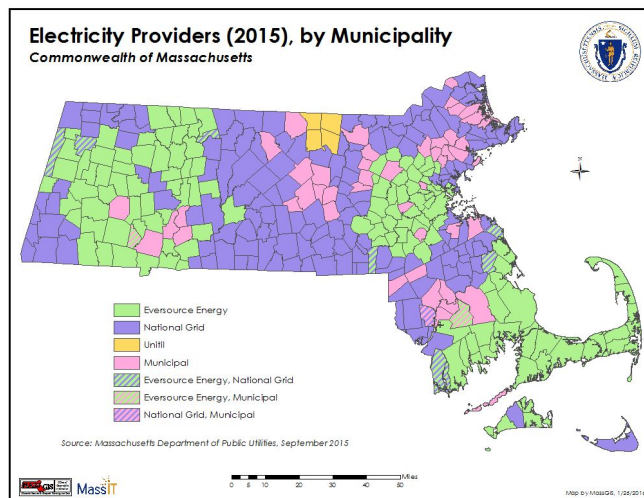


Municipal Light Plant Town

Municipal light plants (or Munis) are locally owned utilities. If you get your bill from “_____ Power and Light”, you probably live in a muni! 52 towns in Massachusetts are served by one of the 41 municipal light plants. Residents of Muni towns make up 13% of all energy customers in the state. Rather than getting electricity via Eversource or National Grid, which are Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs), these towns have their own light plants.



What's different about Municipal Light Plants?

Utilities like Eversource and National Grid don't own electricity generation, they only distribute it. Munis, on the other hand, can actually own power generation and have more control over deciding where and how to get the electricity they supply to their local customers.

The great thing about Munis is that since they are owned and run by the town, the local community can help determine what their

energy mix looks like (i.e., more green energy). Each Muni has a different mix of where they get their electricity. Ownership options range from owning a solar farm in their town, to partially owning fossil or nuclear electricity-generating plants with other investors. Munis can also enter into long-term contracts for electricity, which allows Munis to better support renewable energy projects.

How can a Municipal Light Plant go green?

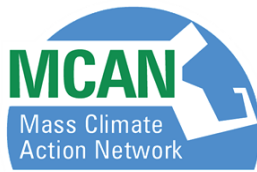
There are different ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through your electricity supply. This can range from reducing demand through energy efficiency to increasing the amount of renewable energy being made and used.

How Munis Can Increase Renewables:

- Buy regionally produced clean energy (via Renewable Energy Certificates, RECs)
- Increase clean energy generation in town (on houses, town buildings, capped landfills)
- Own or partly own more clean energy nearby (such as the Berkshire wind project)
- Provide more local storage through batteries or flywheel systems

How Munis Can Reduce Demand:

- Run energy efficiency programs for homes, businesses, and town facilities
- Conduct solar programs to encourage panels on roofs of homes and businesses
- Have “time of use” rates to even out the load by discouraging use in peak hours



What are some options for assistance to MLPs in going green?

Joining the Renewable Energy Trust (RET), which is a fund that light plants can opt into.

Cost: Extra \$0.0005 per kWh for every hour sold in town

Benefits: Allows your Muni to become a green community, Eligible for RET grants, Contracts, Loans, Equity investments, Energy production credits, Bill credits, Rebates to customers

<http://www.masscec.com/municipal-lighting-plant-communities>

Joining MMWEC.

Cost: depends on ownership and size of customer base

Benefits: Streamlined power procurement and finance ownership, Assistance applying for federal grants, Battery storage, Community solar, Resiliency, Microgrids, Energy efficiency programs available http://www.mmwec.org/What_We_Do.html

Becoming a Green Community

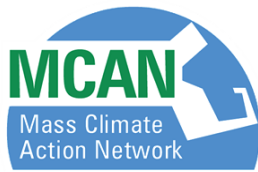
Because the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities grant program is funded in part by investor owned utilities, Munis are not eligible for the grant program because they don't pay into it. However, if even just one customer in your town is an IOU customer, the entire town can then become a Green Community. See our [fact sheet](#) for becoming a green community to learn more about meeting the requirements.

What are the steps to clean up your light plant?

1. Identify green champions on your light board, select board, or city council
2. Decide on what kind of team is right for your town or city and who should be on it, ex: task force of green advocates and experts in the town, created by the select board
3. Team researches greenhouse gas reduction goals and identifies strategies and priorities to get there (if your town does not have a detailed greenhouse gas inventory, you will need to conduct one)
4. Pass a warrant article or city bylaw forming a task force or otherwise requiring a detailed plan for the light plant to reach those goals
5. Identify initiatives if needed to join (MMWEC, RET, Green Communities) and grants to apply for (ACES, DOER, DOE)
6. Have the task force issue a report to town decision makers on top strategies, a timeline, and how to measure progress towards goals

Is the electricity your Muni is selling you truly renewable?

In the energy market in Massachusetts, anyone who owns Class 1 renewable electricity generation (e.g., a solar or wind project) can sell the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) their project creates to the big utilities who are required to buy and retire them in order to meet their Renewable Portfolio Standard requirements. That's because the RPS requires the big utilities to sell a certain percentage of clean electricity each year, and owning a REC means you own -- and can claim -- the green electricity associated with it.



That has worked really well for the big utilities, but not so well for many Munis. Here's why: Because Munis are non-profits, they can't take advantage of certain federal tax credits for new solar and wind projects. And because Munis are not part of the RPS, they aren't required to "turn-in" RECs each year like the big utilities. As a result, many Munis sell their RECs as a way to help finance renewable projects.

The problem is that when a Muni sells its RECs it can no longer claim that the electricity associated with it is "clean" or "zero emissions" or "green." Only the owner of the REC can say that! But many Munis have been making this claim (because they own the solar or wind project), telling their customers that they are providing a certain percentage of "fossil-fuel free" or "carbon free" electricity. It may sound innocent, but this is a huge problem that hurts renewable development across New England because it amounts to double counting (the Muni and someone else are both claiming the same hour of clean electricity as their own); it is also misleading to Muni customers, who think their town's electricity supply is cleaner than it actually is.

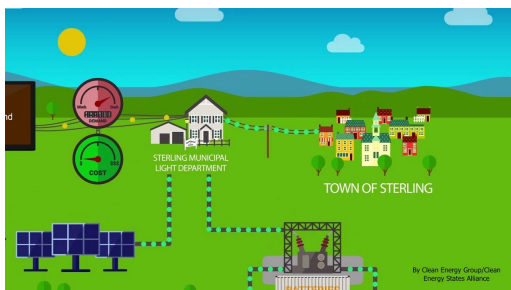
Success Stories

Concord

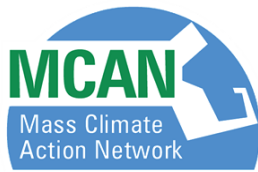
Concord's electricity supply will be 100% carbon-free by 2021, achieved initially by retiring RECs with the goal of a transition to more in-town renewables and carbon-free power purchase agreements. This initiative was accomplished by residents and the town select board's formation of a task force focused on organizing efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions town wide. Constituent pressure, town meeting votes, and the task force recommendations resulted in a town commitment to reducing its GHG emissions with a data driven plan. By de-carbonizing their electricity supply, the town hopes to encourage electrification of vehicles and space heating resulting in less fossil fuel consumption and increased use of the town's Municipal Light Plant.

Sterling

Sterling's Light Plant was the first utility in Massachusetts to implement an energy storage facility, which went online in 2016. Sterling connected its new 2-megawatt batteries to their already existing 2.4 megawatt solar array. Energy storage



eases problems with large energy loads during peak demand times which reduces demand, as well as powers the town's emergency services in the event of a grid outage. The project was funded in large part by a Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) grant as well as the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Electricity (DOE-OE), and Sandia National Laboratories.



West Boylston

"West Boylston made a commitment to clean energy and energy efficiency because our customers made it clear locally what they wanted," says Jonathan Fitch, Light Plant Manager.

West Boylston started a community owned solar project on its capped landfill, owns or participates in three New England wind projects, and funds programs for energy efficiency and encourages solar panels on personal homes. The town's light board members are active community members who look for options to add new renewable energy sources to their energy supply. They heard their customers asking about energy efficiency and rebate programs so the light board took advantage of its membership in MMWEC to fund and provide incentives to residents. West Boylston has used tactics for reducing demand and increasing renewables.

Hingham

Hingham's electricity will be 100% carbon free for the years 2017 and 2018. They achieved this once green energy champion Roger Freeman was elected to the light board and was able to influence key decisions and policies on renewable energy. Roger says, "The action by HMLP to go 100% carbon free is a perfect example of the adage to Think Globally and Act Locally. Our small victory is a part of a larger movement to a carbon free energy system and evidence that we can make a difference. MCAN played an important role catalyzing change by convening activists from different MLP communities and creating a forum for us to collaborate and inspire one another."

The Hingham light board was originally skeptical about going 100%, so activists organized a public event with their light board advocate, and two experts as speakers. They then mobilized grassroots partner organizations in the area to contact the other light board members before a decisive meeting. The decision was swayed by their green light board member and the ability to appeal to the values of fighting climate change for future generations. Hingham was able to change their energy mix so quickly by retiring current RECs and purchasing New England RECs to cover the remaining percentage of the energy. More details [here](#).

Local Control for Local Clean Energy! If you live in a light plant town you can take action now and speak to the decision makers in your utility directly. Because muni light plants are owned by towns, they are run by elected officials, who answer only to the voters, and not to Wall Street. Munis are all about local control.