Local Clean Energy Checklist

This checklist is intended to help you understand how much your town has already done on clean energy and climate change, so you can target your next steps. Check a box if your town has done an action, or is well on its way to completing it.

You should be able to sit down with someone from your town/city government and fill this out.

Energy efficiency
- ❏ Completed energy audits in municipal buildings to identify energy-saving opportunities
- ❏ Implemented energy efficiency upgrades in municipal buildings:
  - ❏ Installing LED or high-efficiency fluorescent interior lights
  - ❏ Installing occupancy sensors to automatically turn lights on and off as needed
  - ❏ Installing new, high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment
  - ❏ Installing an energy management system
  - ❏ Weatherizing the building (for example, by installing additional insulation or high-performance windows)
  - ❏ Instituting a program to encourage building occupants to reduce energy use by modifying their behavior, such as turning off equipment when not in use
- ❏ Converted streetlights to LED fixtures
- ❏ Created a local outreach program to help connect residents and businesses with energy efficiency audits and upgrades
  - ❏ Mass Save program outreach for homes
  - ❏ Mass Save for businesses and institutions

Town Workings
- ❏ Established a committee to focus on energy, climate, and/or environmental issues
  - ❏ Local, volunteer-led
  - ❏ Municipal government-level committee
- ❏ Applied for Green Communities status under the Mass. Dept. of Energy Resources
- ❏ Received Green Communities status
- ❏ Applied for grants for energy upgrades from the Green Communities program
- ❏ Received Green Communities grants
- ❏ Completed a greenhouse gas inventory
- ❏ Created a climate action plan
  - ❏ If so, has it been updated in the last 5 years?
- ❏ Hired an energy manager or sustainability manager
  - ❏ If not, is there another staff person who is responsible for implementing clean energy and energy efficiency improvements?

Clean energy

- ❏ Community choice aggregation passed (also known as "municipal aggregation")
    - ❏ With at least 5 percent additional Class I renewable energy?
- ❏ Community choice aggregation implemented
- ❏ Municipal operations' electricity from clean source
- ❏ Participated in MassCEC's Solarize Mass program
    - ❏ If not: have you created a similar program to connect residents and businesses with solar installations?
- ❏ New buildings required to be "solar-ready"
- ❏ Solar installed on school buildings
- ❏ Solar installed on capped landfill
- ❏ Solar installed on town buildings
- ❏ Solar installed on town parking lots (e.g., solar canopies)
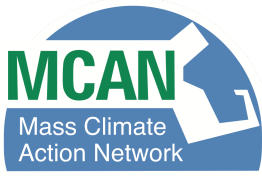- ❏ Wind turbines installed or wind energy purchased

Transportation

- ❏ Adopted a Complete Streets policy, requiring streets to be designed with the needs of all users in mind (including cyclists and pedestrians)
- ❏ Installed bike lanes
    - ❏ Are they being updated?
- ❏ No idling by-law in place
- ❏ Street planning like traffic calming patterns and roundabouts being implemented
- ❏ Permeable paving for parking lots, etc
- ❏ Installed electric vehicle charging stations that are open for the public to use
- ❏ Purchased electric vehicles for town fleet
- ❏ Purchased electric transit buses or school buses

Other Sustainable Actions

- ❏ Created a bulk purchasing and outreach program for renewable heating technologies (e.g., solar hot water, air source heat pumps)
- ❏ Composting programs
- ❏ Recycling for hard to recycle items such as styrofoam, lids, etc
- ❏ Tree plantings

Adaptation

- ❏ Adaptation plan for increased heat waves, stronger storms
- ❏ If coastal, sea level rise adaptation plan

Town Category

Next, count up the TOTAL number of checkmarks on your sheet.

1-7) If you have checked 7 items or less, your town is just starting down the path to sustainability. We would put you in the category of a "beginner" town. This is exciting, because it means you have LOTS of things you can do to make things better! However, it also means you will probably need to do some education of people in your town, including town staff. But don't worry, we have materials to help you do this.

8-15) If you checked 8-15 items, your town is on it's way to becoming a clean energy powerhouse. We would put you in the category of an "intermediate" town. The great news is that means you can still pick some low hanging fruit and do some fairly simple things that make a big difference. It also means there is a general level of knowledge about climate and clean energy issues, and it is probably a priority for people in town.

16-33) If you checked more than 10 items, you are a very active and sustainable community. We would put you in the category of an "advanced" town. This means you have done a lot, which is wonderful, but it also means the stuff that is left is harder to do. The great news is that being advanced means your town is pretty knowledgeable about climate change and committed to making the changes to become a truly sustainable town, and you get to be on the cutting edge of towns in MA making strong commitments to solutions.

Now you are ready to get started!

First, please email us and let us know how your town stacks up on the checklist. masspowerforward@toxicsaction.org or info@massclimateaction.net

Next, see our list of policy and project recommendations for each tier (beginner, intermediate, advanced). We have narrowed this down to the top things that you can do as a town to cut pollution and make your town into a clean energy powerhouse.

Then, check out our fact sheets for each of the policy and project options. This is just a little bit about the type of policy or project, and some info on how you can get it done. This will help your team make a decision about what to start with.

A reminder: it might be tempting to go for the big guns, even if you are in a beginner town. We don't recommend that - we want you to WIN in your first campaign (and second, and third).

Mass Power Forward is doing webinars on each of these tiers of policy and project recommendations, to help you get started in your town. We are also building a database of experts, developers, and state resources that can help you. Let's be in touch and thank you for all the work that you do!

Specific policy recommendations

Beginner towns

1. Do a **greenhouse gas inventory** to identify the largest sources of global warming pollution in the community. Create a basic climate action plan for the town. (short-term)
2. Conduct an **energy efficiency audit** of all municipal buildings, including schools, and complete all energy efficiency upgrades with a payback period of 10 years or less. Additionally, convert streetlights to LED fixtures. (medium-term)
3. Join the Commonwealth's **Green Communities** Program, which provides funding for local clean energy and energy efficiency projects. (long-term)
4. Adopt a **Complete Streets policy**, requiring roads to be designed in a way that is safe and accessible for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

Intermediate towns

1. Pass **community choice aggregation** (which allows the municipality to choose a default source of electricity for residents and businesses), with at least 5 percent additional Class 1 Renewable Energy Credits beyond what the state requires.
2. Advance municipal policies that **promote solar power** in public and private development through "solar-ready" requirements on new construction, renewable energy development on public buildings and community-wide solar challenges such as the Solarize Massachusetts program.
3. Increase access for all to **electric vehicles** through town purchases of electric buses, increasing the percentage of electric vehicles in town fleets, and installing electric vehicle charging stations that are open for the public to use.

Advanced towns

1. Create an **energy efficiency program** with a strong emphasis on serving renters and low-income families.
2. Create a **net zero plan**, setting out a roadmap to achieve zero emissions for buildings and transportation.
3. For communities with existing climate action plans, update the local climate action plan to incorporate **environmental justice and equity principles**.
4. Create a community outreach and bulk purchasing program to increase the adoption of **renewable heating technologies**, such as solar thermal, geothermal, and air source heat pumps.