

## Writing a Net Zero Plan

### What is Net Zero?

A Net Zero municipality produces zero net carbon pollution, the pollution that causes climate change. This means the community gets as much electricity from renewable sources as it uses. Getting to net zero usually comes from a combination of energy efficiency improvements, local clean energy production, and purchasing of renewable energy.

### Why would a town want to be Net Zero?

MA made a commitment in state law (the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008) to cut our climate change-causing pollution 80% by 2050. Cleaning up our energy supply and using less electricity in our buildings is key, and cities and towns are taking action.

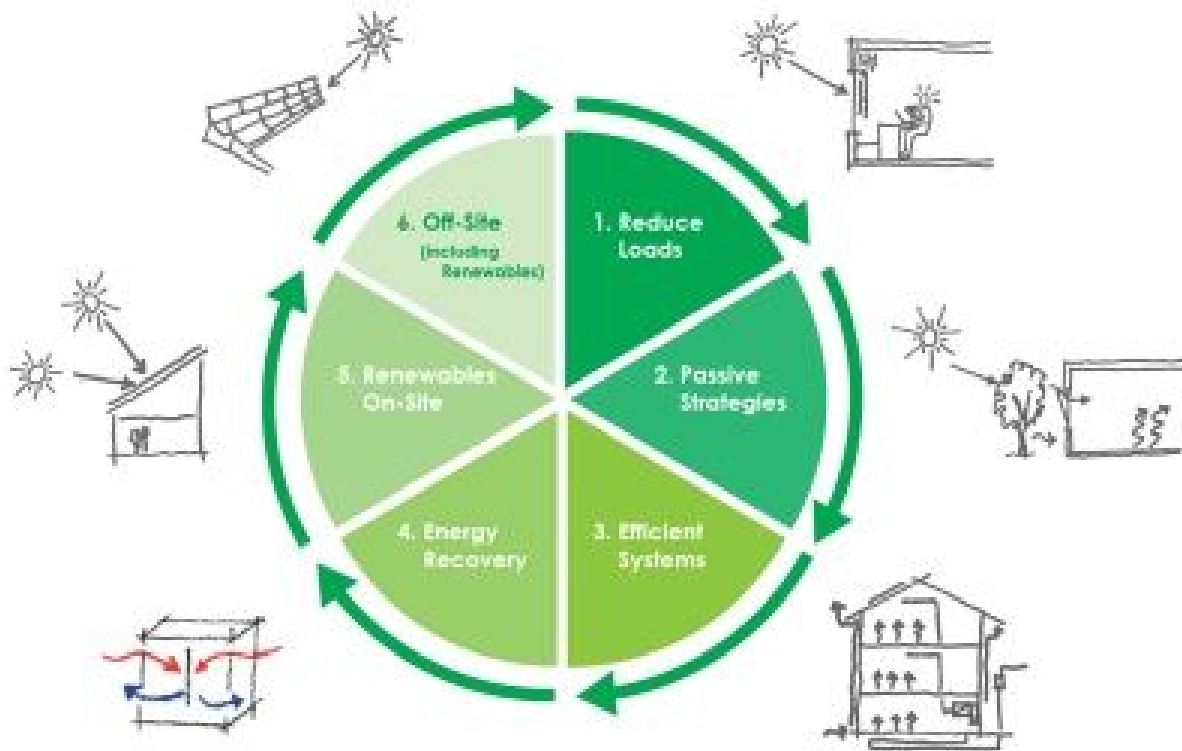
### What is the process for a town to get to Net Zero?

1. Create a Net Zero Team of advocates
  - Talk to people, groups, or businesses in town who you know will support going net zero
  - Talk to supportive town officials and see if you can find a champion who will help shepherd this through the process
2. Introduce an initiative at town meeting or to city or town council
3. Create a Net Zero Task Force that includes town officials, advocates, and stakeholders
4. Conduct education and outreach on Net Zero to all stakeholders, including climate and neighborhood groups, business and industry
5. Do a greenhouse gas inventory for the town if one hasn't been done already
6. Adopt Net Zero goals for the town
  - Construct all new municipal buildings, such as schools, to be Net Zero
  - Enact financing programs for new Net Zero commercial buildings
  - Streamline permitting processes for energy efficiency and solar projects
7. Conduct public forum and meetings with stakeholders

### What is a Net Zero plan?

A Net Zero Plan is a long term roadmap for steps a city or town will take to reach net zero. It gives a timeline with short and long term goals, and priority actions. The plan should be created based on visioning and input from the community and all stakeholders.

## 6 Steps to Net Zero



Source: Arup

### What actions should you consider including in a Net Zero plan?

- Figure out how you can reduce emissions based on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Set targets and come up with strategies for improving energy efficiency in existing buildings
- Identify targets and strategies for Net Zero new construction
- Create incentives and identify financing for energy efficiency (including deep retrofits) and net zero new construction
- Develop and enact local ordinances and zoning favorable for producing renewable energy, such as for rooftop solar ready and for ground mounted solar
- Identify ways to buy additional green power, such as through Community Choice Aggregation
- Set goals and develop strategies for reducing emissions from vehicle use
- Look into setting up a local carbon fund
- Come up with strategies for long-term community and stakeholder engagement
- Develop strategies to measure and verify emissions reductions.

## Success Stories



### Cambridge

Cambridge has been a leader in going net zero, having started the process in 2013. A net zero team filed a citizen's zoning petition requiring that all new buildings be net zero. According to Quinten Zondervan, the main goal of doing this was to get the public's attention, to start considering a net zero goal for the city. From that point

forward, the team conducted outreach to businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders, and then put a representative net zero task force together. Working groups were set up to focus on:

- Engagement and behavior change
- Incentives and financing tools
- Regulation and planning approaches
- Energy supply and offsets

The proposed actions to meet the net zero objective are categorized into five key areas:

- Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings
- Net Zero New Construction
- Energy Supply (low carbon and renewable energy)
- Local Carbon Fund
- Engagement & Capacity Building (communication and resources)

Within each of these areas, the plan identifies short, medium, and long term actions, as well as what the projected greenhouse gas emission reductions are for each action.

### Lexington

The net zero team in Lexington began the process by holding a meeting open to the public and having Quinton Zondervan and Henrietta Davis from Cambridge present about their net zero process in Cambridge. According to Lisa Fitzgibbons and Mark Sandeen from the Lexington Global Warming Action Committee, this "established doability in the minds of the town," and demonstrated a clear path toward achieving net zero. It also reassured the town that they didn't need to reinvent the wheel in order to do it. The response from the first meeting was overwhelmingly positive, and after receiving a lot of input from the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and various committees, the team wrote a warrant article asking for funding to hire a consultant to establish a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions. They presented the article at town meeting, it passed, and they have hired Peregrine Energy as a consultant. Once they have detailed emissions data they will move forward on writing a net zero plan.