



## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

*Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn Polito, Lt. Governor  
Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary  
Judith Judson, Commissioner*

## The Green Communities Division Partnering with Massachusetts Cities and Towns

*Wilbraham  
November 2017*

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# Green Communities Division

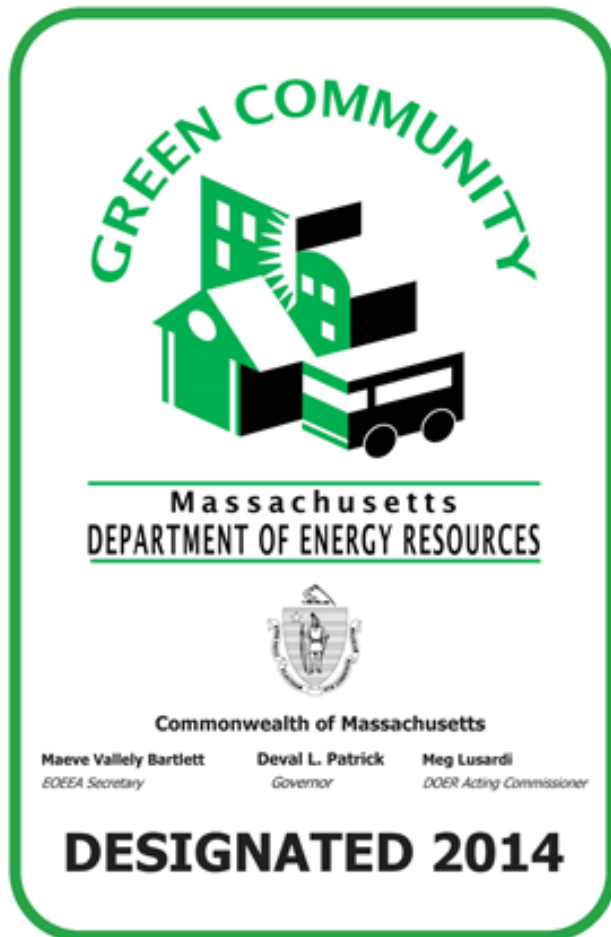
Serves as the hub for all Massachusetts cities and towns on energy matters



*Creating a Clean, Affordable and Resilient Energy Future for the Commonwealth*



# GREEN COMMUNITIES DESIGNATION and GRANT PROGRAM



Provides grants to **qualifying** communities to fund energy efficiency initiatives, renewable energy, innovative projects

## Qualification Criteria

1. Adopt as-of-right siting, in designated locations, for RE/AE generation, or RE/AE R&D, or RE/AE manufacturing
2. Adopt expedited (12 month) application/permitting process
3. Establish an energy use baseline with a plan to reduce baseline by 20% in 5 years
4. Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles
5. Require new residential construction and new commercial and industrial real estate construction to minimize life-cycle energy costs (**Adopt Stretch Code - 780 CMR 115, Appendix AA**)



<http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/green-communities/gc-grant-program/>

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# Criteria 1 – As-Of-Right Siting

**Adopt as-of-right siting,  
in designated locations,  
for RE/AE Generation,  
OR for RE/AE Manufacturing,  
OR for RE/AE Research and Development**

- Site Plan Approval and ConCom review still applicable  
**but NO Special Permits**
- Designated locations means NOT everywhere in town
- RE = Renewable Energy (Solar PV, Wind, Wave)
- AE = Alternative Energy (Biomass Combined Heat & Power)





## Criteria 2 – Expedited Permitting

### 12 months: date of initial application to date of final approval

- Applies only to the proposed facilities subject to the as-of-right siting provision.
- Can apply the MGL c 43D permitting process to these zoning districts
- Or letter from Town Counsel affirming nothing precludes an answer within 12 months

**Pretty simple to get a letter from Town Counsel**



## Criteria 3 – Energy Baseline

### **Establish Energy Use Baseline and Adopt a 5 Year Plan to reduce it by 20%**

- Includes all Municipal Buildings, Vehicles, Street and Traffic Lights
- You can use new Mass Energy Insight  
Or Energy Star Portfolio Manager or other tools
- The Baseline Year can go back 2 years (to FY 2014)
- Comprehensive 5 year plan to reduce that baseline usage by 20 %





## Criteria 4 – Fuel Efficient Vehicles

1. Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are available and practicable.
2. Police cruisers are exempt until commercially available.
3. Heavy-duty vehicles > 8,500 pounds are exempt.
4. Pick Up Trucks: 2wd = 17mpg; 4wd= 16 mpg  
Cars  
2wd = 29 mpg; 4wd = 24 mpg



# Criteria 5 – Minimize Life Cycle Costs

Require all new residential construction and all new commercial and industrial real estate construction to minimize, to the extent feasible, the life-cycle cost of the facility by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation and other renewable or alternative energy technologies.

The DOER recommended way for cities and towns to meet this requirement is by adopting the BBRs Stretch Code (780 CMR 115.AA) an appendix to the MA State Building Code.

- In a town, the Stretch Code must be adopted as a general bylaw by its Town Meeting.
- In a city, the Stretch Code must be adopted by the City Council, preferably by general ordinance.



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## Stretch Code old MIS-conceptions

- ‘Stretch Code is new and experimental.’  
No; It is based on Energy Star for Home
- ‘Stretch Code requires tight unhealthy homes’  
No; Building science has evolved
- ‘Homes w/ oil heat can’t meet the Stretch Code’  
No; It is easier to meet SC with gas, but ...
- ‘Town residents will be required to update their existing homes’  
No; New Stretch Code only applies to NEW residential construction and explicitly exempts additions, renovation & repairs



# The Stretch Code is no longer much of a Stretch

**A few years ago, the Stretch Code WAS a bit of a stretch compared to the base energy code (IECC 2009).**

**But on July 1, 2014 a new base energy code (IECC 2012) took effect. It required blower door tests and increased insulation levels in walls and attics. Your town had operated under that more energy efficient code for 2 ½ years**

**That base code “caught up” with the Stretch Code and some builders say that the Stretch Code was ‘easier’ to comply with than that 2012 Code (insulation levels for example...)**



# The Stretch Code is no longer much of a Stretch

**January 1, 2017 – there is now a NEW base energy code (IECC 2015) and an associated NEW Stretch Code which is almost NO Stretch at all.**

**Basic difference in cost is for a HERS Energy Rater which is required by Stretch Code for new residential construction. Total additional costs are between \$1,600 and \$3,000 for typical single family home. MassSave rebate covers most of this extra cost: \$1,300 - \$1,700.**

**And home owner receives annual energy cost savings year after year after year.**



# Green Communities Designation and Grant Program

- Grant allocations based on a **\$125K** base plus a population/per capita income formula
  - Range from \$130,725 in Hatfield to max award of \$1M for Boston
- Close to \$65 M awarded in total for both designation and competitive grants programs
- Projects being funded include electric and thermal (natural gas and fuel oil) energy saving projects, incremental costs for hybrid vehicles and grant administration costs.

