

Community Outreach Plan for Pittsfield and Lenox

Team / Permitting: Please see separate documents provided by each community which outline their individual Team approach and local Permitting conditions.

Benefits of a Group Proposal: The City of Pittsfield and the Town of Lenox have a long history of municipal collaboration on matters that affect each community locally as well as regionally. Within the past several years, Pittsfield and Lenox have been active partners in the *Sustainable Berkshires* initiative; have been partners in the development of a regional bike path; have held joint planning board meetings on Rt. 7 corridor management issues; have executed agreements to accept wastewater and cleanse it at PTS WWTP; have executed agreements to provide drinking water to Lenox; and have executed agreements by which Pittsfield provides weed harvesting services to Lenox. While these examples of inter-municipal cooperation have provided benefits to each community, the most significant outcome has been a strengthened relationship and on-going dialogue on issues of common interest.

A partnership between Lenox and Pittsfield in the *Solarize Massachusetts* program immediately impacts the ability to motivate residents and drive the adoption of small-scale solar PV projects through a joint venture focused on targeted outreach and marketing, which will aid in generating interest and, in turn, drive down the cost of installation. It is our hope that the efforts in the central Berkshire region will also contribute substantially to Gov. Patrick's effort to reach 250 megawatts of solar power installed in the Commonwealth by 2017.

Specific Benefits of the Pittsfield/Lenox group proposal:

- Larger residential pool (combined housing units 24,531)
- Greater potential for aggregating sales (reduced pricing) for participants
- Efficiency and economy of scale for selected installer.
- Opportunity for a regional approach to small scale PV marketing (*Sustainable Berkshires*)
- Leveraging of the existing energy efficiency programs in each community
- Combined outreach would be more effective for residents who live/work/shop in Pittsfield/Lenox
- Draw from expertise and experience of both communities
- Provides a framework to promote a 'friendly competition' between the two communities to achieve widespread solar adoption.

Local Interest: Both Pittsfield and Lenox have embraced their Green Community designations and, with support from both municipal leaders and the public, have been working to promote energy efficiency at both the municipal and residential level. Without question, there is local interest in each community to drive a successful small-scale PV program.

In Pittsfield, interest in renewable energy and energy efficiency is high. Some examples of local interest include:

- In 2008, the City formed the Green Commission which has been very active in promoting energy efficiency.
- The 2009 Master Plan, developed over the course of one year with numerous public input sessions and community surveys, lays out a vision of Pittsfield as a 'Sustainable Community'. From the Plan: "Sustainability in the 21st century will be paramount to the community's long-term growth and prosperity. Pittsfield will strive for economic as well as environmental sustainability in our endeavors. We will maximize opportunities in areas such as public transportation, energy efficiency, water conservation and the use of environmentally-friendly building materials as well as healthy and pedestrian-friendly."
- The *Powering Pittsfield* initiative was launched in 2010. This program has developed an innovative, effective and sustainable program that will enable residents and businesses to achieve broader and deeper energy savings than they would otherwise achieve through existing Massachusetts energy efficiency and clean energy programs. At present, numerous businesses and building owners in the downtown core have undertaken energy efficiency projects. *Powering Pittsfield* is now moving into the residential sector.
- In the fall of 2011, the Powering Pittsfield program hosted MA CEC for a Solar 101 presentation that was well attended.

In Lenox, interest in renewable energy is also quite high.

- Lenox Environmental Committee has been active since the Fall of 2003. They were heavily involved in the idle-free campaign, Lenox Unplugged Campaign and the voluntary stretch code campaign. They have held numerous green living fairs.
- The town has an existing Solar Initiative Grant Program which currently has 30 \$2,000 grants to award residents and businesses towards the installation of PV and solar hot water systems. (Interest in this program has been mediocre and could benefit from the resources of Solarize MA)
- Lenox has an active Wind Energy Research Panel
- The town recently created the municipally funded position of Sustainability Coordinator.
- Lenox has been in the development of a municipal solar project, with approvals anticipated at the May 2012 annual town meeting

Marketing and Outreach:

Both Pittsfield and Lenox have experience in providing marketing and outreach for community based energy conservation initiatives (most recently *Powering Pittsfield* in Pittsfield and the Solar Initiative grant program in Lenox). Though

there will be differences in how each community undertakes marketing and outreach, it has been agreed that Pittsfield and Lenox will work together on outreach strategies where a joint approach makes sense. More specifically, we hope to collectively:

- Develop a uniform look to all marketing materials, etc (same branding)
- Record Radio PSA's for the several local radio stations that cover the two towns
- Author an 'op ed' piece, signed by both the Mayor and the Town Manager
- Appear on a Pittsfield Community TV ½ hour show promoting the program
- Utilize a Facebook page for social media promotion

In order to make the joint marketing approach work effectively, it is recognized that the Pittsfield Team and the Lenox Team (including solar coaches) will need to have monthly check in meetings, or more often if necessary, especially as the program kicks off. These meetings will help to identify successes and challenges to overcome and will include the selected installer who will be a critical partner in the outreach campaign. Combined with the support and resources offered by the MA Clean Energy Center, we are confident that this three-way partnership approach will be effective in accelerating the penetration of solar PV in both Pittsfield and Lenox.

Individually, each community will also seize on opportunities to promote the program at town-wide events. In Pittsfield, these would include the popular Third Thursdays downtown, Live on the Lake concert series, and at the downtown farmers markets, events which attract Lenox residents as well. In Lenox, these would include the concerts at Lilac Park and other downtown summer festivals.

Each community also pledges to perform direct outreach via established city/town web pages, email lists to all employees, boards and commissions, neighborhood groups, and interested residents. Lenox also has a 'foot brigade' ready to canvas neighborhoods promoting the program.

In Pittsfield, we have found great success in the promotion of events by working with the school department to send home flyers in backpacks of the students. As this represents an additional opportunity for clean energy education to students, that flyer will also highlight web-based resources where school children can learn about clean energy and the importance of utilizing solar. Both Pittsfield and Lenox will commit to the development of a flyer which will be sent home in the backpacks of local students.

Within the City of Pittsfield and in the Town of Lenox, there are multiple locations with presentation capabilities where community events, including Solar 101, could be held. These locations include the Lenox High School auditorium, Lenox Town Hall, Pittsfield City Hall city council chambers, the Berkshire Athenaeum, and various junior high and High schools in Pittsfield. The Pittsfield and Lenox teams will be thoughtful about the scheduling / timing of events at these locations

in order to maximize attendance opportunities for those interested in the Solarize MA program.

Lessons Learned – Solarize Mass Pilot:

A review of the first Solarize Mass Pilot project has informed the Pittsfield and Lenox outreach strategies. Specifically, we have been mindful of the ability of the deadline to spur people into action and to address this we plan to engage with our local non-profit organizations, resident groups and media outlets early and aggressively to promote the campaign and emphasize the timing of this opportunity. We are also aware of the importance of engaging the community with a sustained informational campaign to increase public interest accompanied by community events to pull in larger amounts of people and will design our outreach campaign to reflect this. We also plan to utilize a diverse set of outreach tools in order to maximize the number of community members reached in both communities.