

Green Communities Fact Sheet

Chilmark Energy Committee

In 2008, Massachusetts committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, as compared to a 1990 baseline. As part of the effort to achieve this goal, the Commonwealth established the Green Communities program to foster energy efficiency programs across all 351 municipalities in the state. Our Energy Committee is recommending voter approval for two town meeting warrant articles this spring to allow us to complete application for Green Communities designation.

As of December 2018, 240 cities and towns have become Green Communities, including West Tisbury and Tisbury. We are late to the party.

Benefits to the Town

- **Eligibility for significant energy-related grant funding** – Community Center HVAC upgrade, Chilmark School HVAC, the new emergency services building(s)...
- **Better control and lower cost for our municipal energy use**
- **Promotion of energy-efficient construction**
- **Fostering of renewable energy / clean energy technology use**

Becoming a Green Community

Five criteria are required to be met for the town to apply for the program:

1. Establish a limited site (as little as 1.5 acres) in town that is available for renewable energy projects (municipal or commercial).

A so-called “as-of-right” zoning overlay has been approved by the Planning Committee and the Board of Selectmen at the town landfill. No projects are planned or required; the town must approve any use.

2. Adopt expedited permitting responses for renewable energy projects.

This means a response (not a final decision) in 12 months or fewer, and should be easily do-able.

3. Establish a municipal energy use baseline, with a 5-year target to reduce energy use by 20%.

This includes only municipal buildings / energy use, and only good-faith efforts to achieve the 20% reduction are required in practice.

4. Agree to purchase fuel-efficient municipal vehicles.

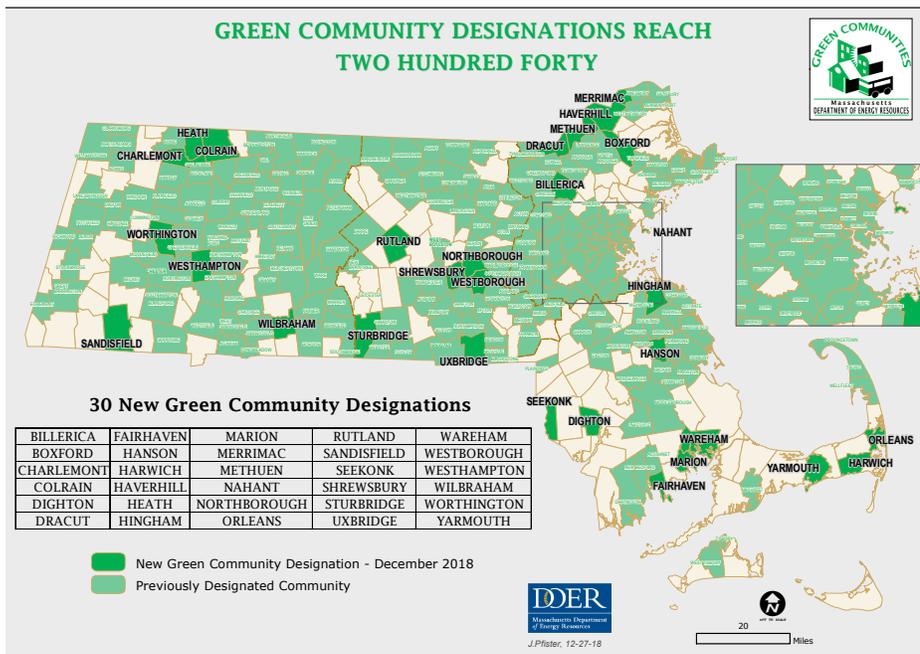
This means energy efficient, not necessarily electric, and does not include heavy vehicles or police cruisers.

5. Adopt the Massachusetts Stretch Building Code for energy efficiency. Approximately 70% of municipalities in the Commonwealth, including Tisbury and West Tisbury, have adopted the code.

The so-called Stretch Code applies only to new residential construction, not renovation or additions. With recent changes to the base building code, the Stretch Code and the base code are converging – the “stretch” is quite small.

The economics is compelling. For example, for a 2550 square foot newly constructed residence with propane heat:*

- *Prior to existing utility rebates, the builder’s cost under the Stretch Code would increase by ~0.5% over the base code;*
- *The net increase in cost after rebates would be ~0.2%;*
- *The energy cost savings to the owner would be ~\$475 per year;*
- *The house will have an increased value with a high energy efficiency rating.*



* <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/11/16/small-propane-heated-home-2017.pdf>