

Community Description

Description of basic attributes of community including population, number of owner occupied residences, and other community characteristics.

The Town of Adams is a small mill town located in the narrow Hoosic River valley and visually dominated by Mount Greylock, the highest peak in Massachusetts. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Adams has a population of 8,494. It is the third largest community in Berkshire County. The Town is predominantly residential but it does have business and industry, including retail, service, and manufacturing.

Adams has a total of 4,371 housing units, and approximately 55% of these units are owner-occupied. This equates to approximately 2,404 owner-occupied homes within the community.

Marketing and Outreach Plan

Outline a marketing plan that describes methods to create community awareness around the Solarize Mass program. Describe ways in which a joint marketing strategy between the community and the selected Installer could increase the number of sign-ups for a solar site assessment and expand solar PV adoption within the community. Provide a plan for implementation, including methods to engage additional community members and volunteers. This could include an outreach activity timeline, expected volunteer activity hours, preliminary goals for community participation and solar PV adoption during the program. Include information on where community events could be held, including the Solar 101 meeting.

Overview

The Marketing Plan for *Solarize Adams* will be effectively implemented by a strong Town government effort involving the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, and Community Development staff in partnership with broad-based community groups to maximize promotion and awareness of the program. Renewable energy and energy efficiency have been the focus of many public meetings of the Selectmen over the past few years as the Town has worked toward reducing its overall energy use and expanding its use of renewable sources of energy (see “**Local Interest**” below). For the past three years, the Town has had an active Green “Energy” Committee that, although so far unsuccessful in achieving Green Community status for Adams, has worked to bring energy efficiency to municipal operations and has worked specifically on two major solar PV installations to address energy use of Town government.

The Town’s Core Team and its volunteer base anticipate working with the following community organizations and schools:

- Adams Board of Selectmen
- Adams Events Committee
- Pro Adams
- The Center for Eco-Technology (CET)
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
- Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
- Adams Lions Club; Adams Leo Club
- Youth Center, Inc.
- Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
- Berkshire Arts & Technology (BaRT) Charter School

Outreach Methods

The Town's Core Team, local volunteers, Town staff, and partnering community organizations will undertake the following ways to market the Solarize Mass program and ensure the greatest possible participation by Adams residents.

Solar 101 (Kick-off Event) and Solar 201: These meetings will be well advertised in local papers, by flyers in local businesses, posters at various locations, on the Town's website, and through social media. An email contact list is being compiled (currently over 200 names) and reminders will be sent to all recipients. The meetings will be televised by Northern Berkshire Community TV and re-broadcast several times for additional exposure. The Adams Free Library has a large community room that is media ready and able to hold up to 300 people and the Adams Visitors Center has a capacity of 100 for meetings.

Informational Meetings: The Town's Solar Coach, members of the Core Team, CET and other supporting organizations will hold additional community meetings about the *Solarize Adams* program at various locations, including the Adams Visitors Center, the Adams Free Library, Town Hall, and at meetings of local civic groups like: the Maple Grove Civic Club; the American Legion (Post 160); the Adams Elks; the Masonic Lodge; the Mountain Club (Gebriigs Verein); and the Polish National Alliance.

Meetings/Mailings to Town Board, Commission, Town Meeting Representatives, and Committee Members: Like any Town in Massachusetts, Adams depends on the public service of many individuals who participate as elected and appointed Town officials or who serve on various volunteer committees. The Town will ask that each of these individuals become *Ambassadors* for *Solarize Adams*. If selected, the Town will quickly host a meeting especially for Town officials to learn about the program and what they can do to broaden outreach efforts to residents. The Town Administrator's office and Community Development will periodically send out additional information (via regular mail, email) to these "Ambassadors," which collectively represent about **165** individuals.

Partnership with Local Bank: The Town has reached out to Adams Community Bank regarding discounting loan rates for projects under Solarize Mass. The Town has a similar arrangement with the bank for housing rehab projects - extending it to *Solarize Adams* will make the program more affordable to residents.

Community Displays: The Core Team, working with the Town's Community Development staff, will develop an informational display on the Solarize Mass program for three locations – Town Hall, Adams Free Library, and the Visitors Center. Each visually attractive display will present information on the program, photos/details of PV installations, upcoming marketing events, and updates about reaching the next pricing tier.

Special Events: The Core Team and other volunteers will do informational tabling at the following special events: **Thunderbolt Ski Races & Thunderfest** (March 2014); **Adams Annual Town Meeting** (May 2014); **Community Night** (May 2014). Tabling at other community and/or organizational events will also take place.

Social Media: Information about the Solarize Mass program will be disseminated through a range of social media outlets. The Town's website will be updated to include a dedicated page for the Adams' Solarize Mass program with appropriate links to other pertinent web portals. The Town's Core Team will create a dedicated Facebook page with information about the program, photos of existing PV installations, updates on progress towards reaching the next pricing tier, and a calendar of upcoming events. The Town will request volunteer organizations (Pro Adams, Adams Lions Club, Adams Events Committee, etc.) to provide information about the program on their websites with links to both the Town's website and the *Solarize Adams* Facebook page. Periodic email blasts will be sent out to compiled lists of interested residents.

Targeted GIS Outreach: Town Community Development staff will work with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to identify areas within Adams that have buildings with good solar access. Individual property owners will be identified and contacted to follow up with specific program information.

Business Outreach: The Core Team, working with the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, will conduct one or more outreach events targeting the Town's business community. The events will allow business owners the opportunity to learn about the program and ask specific questions of the installer.

Press Releases: Town government and the Core Team will develop press releases to media outlets, work specifically with editorial staff and reporters of print media to ensure broad coverage of *Solarize Adams* throughout its implementation, and use radio and community access TV regularly to maximize reporting on the program.

Media Outlet

There are four main media outlets in the community, all of which will be extensively used in implementing the Town's marketing & outreach efforts. These include:

- **The North Adams Transcript** – A daily paper focused on the communities within the northern Berkshires, especially Adams, North Adams, and Williamstown. The Transcript reports extensively on local news and attends most Selectmen and other public meetings in Adams. The Town will rely on its existing positive relationship with the Transcript's editorial and reporting staff to maximize use of this newspaper.
- **iBerkshires** – An online newspaper that is focused on communities in the northern Berkshires. Reporters from *iBerkshires* attend most public meetings of Town boards and periodically undertake in-depth news articles on important local issues.
- **The Berkshire Eagle** – A daily newspaper with more of a county-wide focus. The Eagle continues to be a major resource in transmitting community information to the public at large.
- **Northern Berkshire Community Television** – Community access television station (Channels 15 & 17) that televises all local meetings in Adams.
- **WNAW Radio (1230 AM)** – The popular Thursday morning series "Community Insight" will be frequently used by the Solar Coach and the Town's Municipal Representative to generate interest and direct listeners to sources of program information.

Marketing Budget

Identify a preliminary budget of how the \$2,500 community marketing grant would be utilized, and whether you plan to provide a stipend (of up to \$500) to the Community Solar Coach. Optional: Tie potential expenditures to an outreach activity timeline or known events that will be taking place during the course of the Solarize Mass program.

The Town's marketing grant of \$2,500 would be used in the following manner:

- \$1,600 Advertising in local papers and air time on community television
- \$ 500 Stipend for the Town's Solar Coach
- \$ 400 Reproductions, supplies

In addition, the Town will match the \$2,500 grant by directing existing Town funds for the following purposes:

- \$2,000 Stipend for the Town's Solar Coach
- \$ 500 Postage for residential mailings

Additional Requirements (Maximum 1 page)

Community Permitting and Requirements

Identify the local permitting process for solar PV projects within the community, and requirements surrounding Solarize Mass program marketing materials. This should include, but is not limited to, information on the building and electrical permitting process and fee structures, as well as any local Historic or Conservation Commission requirements that may require engagement on projects. Please use Exhibit 1 below.

Optional: Identify potential streamlining efforts in anticipation of large a number of solar PV permit applications.

Permitting Component	Solar PV Requirements	Review Timeline	Cost	Associated Web Links
Building Permit (Roof Mounted)	Building Permit Application	1 week	Fee to be Waived	www.town.adams.ma.us
Building Permit (Ground Mounted)	Building Permit Application	< 2 weeks	Fee to be Waived	www.town.adams.ma.us
Electrical Permit	Electrical Permit Application	1 week	Fee to be Waived	www.town.adams.ma.us
Conservation Commission	Conservation review required only if ground-mounted system located in or near a resource area.	2-3 weeks	Varies – Typically in range of \$50-\$75	
Historical Commission	Not Applicable			
Airport, MA DOT, other	Not Applicable			
Community Sign Bylaws for temporary yard signs	As of right, < 4-foot square in area	Review for sign template, not each individual sign	\$0	
Community Sign Bylaws for banners, signs, thermometers, etc. in public spaces	Sign Permit Application	1 week if Board of Selectmen approval required	Fee to be Waived	

Exhibit 1. Community Permitting and Requirements Chart

(Optional) Proposed streamlining efforts:

The Town will carefully monitor review times for permitting solar PV projects under *Solarize Adams* to ensure reviews continue to be completed within the above timeline. Applications for building and electrical permits for *Solarize Adams* projects will be separated and reviewed on an expedited basis by the Town's Building Commissioner and Wiring Inspector. As needed, the Town will obtain additional support from its on-call Alternate Building Inspector (and on-call Wiring Inspector) should the number of permit applications impact the timeliness of reviews.