

6. Community Outreach Plan

a. Solarize Massachusetts – Melrose Team

Municipal Representative: Martha Grover, Energy Efficiency Manager. In her part-time role for the City, Martha functions as a liaison at City Hall with the Melrose Energy Commission and works to pave the way internally to implement MEC initiatives. Since moving to Melrose ten years ago Martha has been involved in a number of community organizations and has developed good relationships with several groups in town. Martha has contributed her time and skills to the Melrose Energy Challenge by creating a group of seven PTO Champions who promote the campaign at their schools. She also assisted Next Step Living to connect with local businesses by making introductions to key partners. Finally, as a homeowner with a newly leased 4 kW solar PV array on her roof, she is very familiar with the issues homeowners consider and the installation process from contract signing to interconnection. She often serves as a resource for friends and neighbors who inquire about it. She would be willing to attend the Solar Coach training in order to serve as a back-up to the Community Solar Coach.

Community Solar Coach: Lori Timmermann, whose background information is provided above. We are very fortunate to have someone with her marketing skills and expertise on our team. She has already put in countless hours planning outreach, creating and posting flyers, setting up workshops, and helping to design print materials for the Melrose Energy Challenge.

In addition we have the support of the Melrose Energy Commission and the volunteers who have been working well together on the Melrose Energy Challenge for over a year of planning and implementation. The MEC Communications point person, Howie Newman, maintains the MEC website www.melroseenergy.org/ and assists with press releases and media outreach. MEC has a large contact list that will soon be maintained on Vertical Response (a non-profit version of Constant Contact) for ease of communication with their growing database.

b. Marketing and Outreach

As so many Melrose homeowners have had Mass Save home energy assessments and have taken steps to weatherize their homes and reduce their energy consumption, a logical follow-up step is to investigate clean energy options including solar. The Solarize Massachusetts opportunity is very well timed for Melrose as we are coming off of a successful six month home energy assessment campaign over the heating season and are poised to continue with an emphasis on solar PV during the spring and summer.

We have found that one key to success is consumer education and setting realistic and reasonable homeowner expectations regarding the risks and benefits. The solar acquisition process can be overwhelming and seemingly complex to property owners so it will be important to break down and explain the process in clear and easy-to-understand steps.

Over 50 Melrose residents attended the Melrose Energy Challenge kick-off event and expressed high enthusiasm over the resources available to make cost effective and energy efficient changes to their homes. Mayor Rob Dolan, State Senator Katherine Clark and State Representative Paul

Brodeur also spoke at the workshop, conveying their positive experience with receiving an energy assessment and their overall support.

Following the kick-off event, MEC members and Next Step Living representatives tabled and signed up homeowners for assessments at local events such as the Victorian Fair, Home for the Holidays, the STEM Expo, Melrose Elementary Science Fairs, the Melrose Craft Fair, Sally Franks Farmer's Market, the Hoover Cakewalk, Melrose World Culture Festival, Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast, and the Melrose Trivia Bee.

Additionally, MEC has collaborated with community experts to hold well-attended energy efficiency and sustainability workshops to Melrose residents including a January program on ice dam prevention, one in February on weatherizing older homes, and two upcoming workshops on home heating systems and window restoration.

Next Step Living (NSL) has played an important role in the marketing and outreach and we would look favorably at solar PV installer proposals that offer some of the same assistance. For instance, NSL set up a dedicated sign-up website link for MEC that goes in all of our outreach material, they partner with us at events, support our design and printing needs, engage with non-profit partners by offering donations back to the non-profit for scheduled assessments, provide monthly reporting to monitor our progress, and have brought subject matter experts and content to the workshops. In addition, homeowners who choose Next Step Living for their home energy assessment have been receiving pre-screening solar surveys and follow-up information on request from a Next Step Living Solar Advisor. They also have the capacity to conduct a survey of every residential roof top in Melrose in order to conduct a campaign targeted directly to residents whose roofs are good candidates for solar.

Solarize Massachusetts Solar 101/201 Workshop Location Options:

The following locations have all been used by MEC in the past and at no charge on weekends and evenings. We could secure the optimal location for one or more Solar 101 workshops in April and later depending on availability. All of these locations except the library could hold 100 participants.

- Memorial Hall
- Milano Senior Center
- Aldermanic Chamber at City Hall
- Melrose Public Library



Media outreach:

- Melrose Free Press and Wicked Local Melrose online
- Melrose Patch online
- Melrose Weekly
- MMTV public service messages

Other outreach methods we would employ to maintain the Solarize Massachusetts campaign presence:

- City Hall Kiosk poster
- Poster placements in storefronts and public venues
- Organizational partners email distribution networks
- Mayor's Blog, Twitter, Facebook
- Sustainable Melrose website (City of Melrose)
- Melrose Energy Commission website
- Videotape and run Solar 101 Workshop on public access MMTV (The 2010 MEC Green Building Open House and 2011 Melrose Energy Challenge Kick-off Event already appear regularly and given how often community members mention it, are viewed by many residents.)
- Water-bill inserts – Reach 10,000 resident homeowners in a three month billing cycle
- Main Street banner (reserved for the weeks of July 10-24 and August 7-21, the last available slots in 2012)



Upcoming event and tabling opportunities:

- Melrose Memorial Day parade
- Sally Frank's Farmers' Market
- Farm Direct Coop Depot
- Emma's Orchard farm stand on the corner of Main and Foster – opened this week
- Mayor's Neighborhood Nights Out throughout the summer
- Monthly Saturday morning DPW Days
- July 4th Celebration on the Melrose Common
- Melrose Little Leagues' opening day celebrations
- Spring soccer and lacrosse games and tournaments

Nonprofit partners already part of the Melrose Energy Challenge who would support Solarize Massachusetts:

- Parent Teacher Organizations (seven)
- Houses of Worship (four)
- Melrose Family YMCA of the Metro North
- The North Suburban Child and Family Resource Center

Business partners:

Current Melrose Energy Challenge partners include Hunts Photo and Video (they are installing a solar PV array of their own this summer); Coffee, Tea and Me café; Whittemore Hardware; and Gray's Appliance who are willing to promote the campaign in exchange for Next Step Living-

funded store coupons or gift certificates to those who schedule assessments. We could expand these partnerships to include Solarize Massachusetts.

The Melrose Chamber of Commerce has been very supportive of the Energy Challenge and would help us identify other potential business partners

Budget:

Free	Use of City Survey Monkey and Constant Contact accounts
\$450	Water bill inserts
\$300	Main Street banner
<u>\$1,250</u>	Printing handouts, flyers, posters
\$2,000	Total

c. Permitting

Solar PV arrays require Building and Electrical permits in Melrose:

- The Building Permit fee is \$11 per \$1,000 of the cost of the job for one and two family homes and \$15 per \$1,000 for all other installations in addition to a \$15 administrative fee. Rooftop installations require stamped plans by a professional engineer to ensure the existing structures can hold the additional load imposed by the panels.
- The Electrical Permit fee is \$50 plus a \$15 administration fee.

The Building Commissioner stated that if the construction documents are in order the permit process takes 1-3 days for Building and one day for Electrical. This seems to be a reasonable amount of time to ensure proper installation procedures are followed. He did not anticipate and problems with processing a large number of permit applications since they will be spaced out over several months following the sign-up period. It is a priority of the Mayor's to have an efficient and responsive permitting process in Melrose. The system was streamlined over the years so that most permits are processed the same day as long as the application is properly completed by the installer.

Denise Gaffey, Melrose City Planner, does not see any reason for Conservation Commission review of these installations. If a proposed building is in the limited downtown Historic District and a roof top installation would be visible from the street, it may require Historic District Commission review and approval.

7. Demonstration of local interest

Using the Town of Harvard's Solarize Massachusetts survey as a template, we created a similar survey on Survey Monkey. We made it available to the Melrose community from Friday, March 9th through Friday, March 16th and received 194 responses. See attached report results.

We posted it on:

- Melrose Patch
- Wicked Local Melrose (the Melrose Free Press online edition)
- Some PTO email newsletters and through our Melrose Energy PTO Champions
- Mayor Dolan's new blog and Twitter feed
- Melrose Chamber of Commerce
- Home pages of the Melrose Energy Commission and City of Melrose websites.

Given the limited timeframe, we weren't able to circulate the survey more widely but we were pleased with the results nonetheless.

The survey results demonstrate a favorable interest in residential solar installations (88% of those who responded). Seventy-five percent of respondents answered Yes, Probably, or Maybe as to whether they would be able move forward with an installation this year. The reasons that respondents gave as barriers to participating in a solar program include feasibility and financing issues, which provides an opportunity to educate and de-mystify the logistics of solar PV for those who might consider it.

We provided the contact information for Martha Grover, the Energy Efficiency Manager, with the survey and as a result we received many requests for further information and future status updates about the Solarize Massachusetts grant. Those names and email addresses have been saved and everyone received a follow-up response.

