



# Renewable Communities 2021

## Massachusetts cities and towns leading the way to 100% renewable energy

### Natick: Municipal and residential solar

Natick has pursued a wide range of strategies to increase solar installations in town, including on public buildings and on homes.

Natick was one of the first communities in Massachusetts to add solar panels to municipal buildings.<sup>1</sup> By August 2020, solar panels had been installed on the roofs of ten schools and municipal buildings, including the public works building and the Lilja Elementary School.<sup>2</sup>

The new Kennedy Middle School will feature 403 kilowatts of solar capacity, including a rooftop installation and a parking lot canopy, and 223 kilowatts of battery storage.<sup>3</sup>

To increase residential solar installations, Natick has hosted three group-purchase programs. For the first program, in 2012, the town partnered with a solar company to offer discounts to residents.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016 Natick participated in Solarize Mass, an initiative of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the Green Communities Division of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to accelerate the adoption of solar energy on the community level.<sup>5</sup> Through Solarize Mass, thousands of people in over 70 communities have installed solar energy systems. Natick's Solarize program led to 156 solar installations totaling 1.2 megawatts of capacity added, more than any other Solarize program to date.<sup>6</sup>

Natick is currently participating in the MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge, alongside Ashland, Holliston, and Framingham. The program, which runs from June–December 2021, connects homes and small businesses to

discounted solar installations as well as air-source and ground-source heat pumps.<sup>7</sup>

Natick's solar endeavors are consistent with its Net Zero Action Plan, published this April, which calls for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and 100 percent carbon-free electricity through the town's municipal aggregation program by 2030.<sup>8</sup> To achieve these goals, Natick will take several steps to increase electricity generation from solar. These actions include installing more solar on municipal and school properties, requiring the owners of large buildings to reduce their emissions over time, and mandating "climate-ready" features, such as solar panels or green roofs, on the roofs of new buildings.<sup>9</sup>

1. "Renewable Energy," Town of Natick, <<https://www.natickma.gov/1233/Renewable-Energy>>.

2. "New solar projects could save Natick \$2M," Henry Schwan, MetroWest Daily News, 19 August 2020, <<https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/story/news/environment/2020/08/19/natick-possible-2-million-savings-from-solar-projects/42576313/>>.

3. *Natick's Net Zero Action Plan*, Town of Natick, April 2021, <<https://www.natickma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11352/Final-Natick-Net-Zero-Action-Plan-2021-2025>>, 24.

4. "Natick Solar Challenge to Begin Soon," Robert Rosen, Patch, 26 December 2012, <<https://patch.com/massachusetts/natick/natick-solar-challenge-to-begin-soon>>.

5. "Solarize Mass", Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, <<https://www.masscec.com/solarize-mass-1>>.

6. "Solarize Mass Program Results," Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, <<https://www.masscec.com/solarize-mass-program-results>>.

7. "MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge launches next Thursday," MetroWest Daily News, 11 June 2021, <<https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/story/news/2021/06/11/metrowest-solar-clean-heat-challenge-launches-june-17/7660642002/>>.

8. *Natick's Net Zero Action Plan*, Town of Natick, April 2021, <<https://www.natickma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11352/Final-Natick-Net-Zero-Action-Plan-2021-2025>>, 12 and 21.

9. *Ibid.*, 24, 31, and 33.