



Guidelines for Qualifying as a Green Community

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS TO QUALIFY AS A GREEN COMMUNITY

As outlined in MGL c. 25A §10(c), a municipality or other local government body must do all of the following:

NOTE: One or more municipalities may together submit an application to qualify as a regional Green Community. Each municipality in a regional application must meet each of the requirements with one exception: the 20% reduction from the energy baseline can be applied in the aggregate across all of the municipalities. When grant awards are made to those communities who have qualified as a Green Community, special consideration will be given to regional applications.

1. Provide for the as-of-right siting of renewable or alternative energy generating facilities, renewable or alternative energy research and development (R&D) facilities, or renewable or alternative energy manufacturing facilities in designated locations.
 - “As-of-Right Siting” is defined as siting that provides for the allowed use of, and does not unreasonably regulate, or require a special permit.
 - An applicant can meet this requirement by providing as-of-right siting for one of the three types of facilities described.
 - If a community has as-of-right siting in place for R&D and/or manufacturing facilities in general, this can meet this requirement, but the community must demonstrate that the zoning by-law applies to renewable and alternative energy R&D or manufacturing.
 - Communities can select the specific locations for the as-of-right siting, i.e. where these facilities are to be located, but these locations must be feasible and practical.
 - e.g: Locations for wind are required to have adequate wind resources (6m/s at 70 meters) and biomass CHP locations are required to have a sufficient thermal load
 - If providing as-of-right siting for generation, the community must select technology that is practically available and provides a realistic opportunity for generation. It is expected that a community will appropriately utilize its available renewable resources, and this will be taken into consideration in the review of an application meeting this requirement. For example, it would be expected that a community with wind resources of 6m/s or above will provide as-of-right siting for wind generation.
 - As-of-right zoning by-laws can apply appropriate standards that protect public health and safety and provide for non-discretionary site plan review. Reasonable environmental performance standards per the developed by-law may be incorporated into the Site Plan Review (SPR) process (e.g. height, setback, etc...), but cannot be so stringent as to make the use infeasible. The thrust of this aspect of the policy is that SPR be truly non-

discretionary. In other words, if the standards and zoning requirements are met, the project can be built. This is distinct from the Special Permit (SP), in that the SP may be denied if the Planning Board or other permit granting authority is not satisfied with the project.

- An applicant can meet this requirement with as-of-right siting for renewable or alternative energy generation with *one* of the following project requirements:
 - On-shore Wind – a turbine of a minimum 600 kW in size or above
 - Off-shore Wind – a turbine of a minimum 2.5 MW or above
 - Solar Photovoltaic – a single ground-mounted system of a minimum of 250 kW or above
 - Biomass CHP - a minimum of 5MW in a stand-alone building
 - Ocean, wave or tidal – no minimum threshold

NOTE: When grant awards are made to those communities who have qualified as a Green Community, special consideration will be given to those who have met the as-of-right siting requirement through renewable and alternative energy generation.

2. Adopt an expedited application and permitting process under which these energy facilities may be sited within the municipality and which shall not exceed 1 year from the date of initial application to the date of final approval.
 - The expedited application and permitting process applies only to the proposed facilities which are subject to the as-of-right siting provision.
 - An applicant can meet this requirement by applying the expedited permitting process of MGL c 43D to these zoning districts.
 - The one (1) year deadline requirement must include an effective enforcement mechanism, such as constructive approval provision

3. Establish an energy use baseline inventory for municipal buildings, vehicles, street and traffic lighting, and put in place a comprehensive program designed to reduce this baseline by 20 percent within 5 years of initial participation in the program.
 - Energy use baseline is applied in the aggregate across building, street lights and vehicles on an MMBTU (million British Thermal Units) basis
 - AFTER all energy reduction measures have been taken, credit may be given for the addition of renewable energy resources to reach the 20% reduction goal.
 - A community can meet this requirement if it has completed an inventory as described above and has already implemented a program to reduce the baseline within the previous 24 months.
 - For applications consisting of more than one community, all communities must complete the inventory. However, the comprehensive program to reduce the baseline by 20% can be applied across all communities.
 - Acceptable tools for performing the inventory are:
 - EnergyStar Portfolio Manager
 - ICLEI software
 - DOER's Energy Information Reporting System
 - Other tools proposed by the community and deemed acceptable by DOER

4. Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.
 - Heavy-duty vehicles such as fire-trucks, ambulances, and public works trucks are exempt from this criterion.

- Police cruisers are exempt from this criterion. However, municipalities must commit to purchasing fuel efficient cruisers when they become commercially available. Police department administrative vehicles must meet fuel efficient requirements.
- If an applicant does not have a vehicle fleet other than heavy-duty vehicles and/or police cruisers, it must propose alternative means for meeting this requirement, eg. having in place policies and procedures that promote reduced fuel usage for the municipality. For example, carpooling incentives for municipal employees, preferred parking for employees with hybrid vehicles, bike racks at municipal buildings and incentives for employees to bike to work.
- An applicant must provide a vehicle inventory for non-exempt vehicles and a plan for replacing these vehicles with vehicles that meet the fuel efficiency ratings below. These fuel efficiency ratings are set to ensure that at least 5 or more automatic transmission models of mass production are available for sale in Massachusetts (all from affordable brands; no luxury brands). Based on 2009 and 2008 EPA data, vehicles are to have a combined city and highway MPG no less than the following:
 - 2 wheel drive car: 29 MPG
 - 4 wheel drive car: 24 MPG
 - 2 wheel drive small pick-up truck: 20 MPG
 - 4 wheel drive small pick-up truck: 18 MPG
 - 2 wheel drive standard pick-up truck: 17 MPG
 - 4 wheel drive standard pick-up truck: 16 MPG

(NOTE: A spreadsheet of the vehicles that meet this requirement is provided on the DOER website: [DOER Fuel Efficient Vehicles Spreadsheet](#))

5. Require all new residential construction over 3,000 square feet and all new commercial and industrial real estate construction to minimize, to the extent feasible, the life-cycle cost of the facility by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation and other renewable or alternative energy technologies.
 - Cities and towns can meet this requirement by adopting the new BBRs Stretch Code, the new appendix to the MA State Building Code. Should a community chose to not adopt the stretch code and choose to use another standard, the community must provide evidence that this alternative standard minimizes the life cycle energy costs for all new construction and is enforceable by the community

[BBRS Stretch Code](#)