



Solar Farms Grow Out of Town Renewable Energy Goals

Prepared by:
Megan Day, AICP
National Renewable Energy Laboratory

INTRODUCING

Lorman's New Approach to Continuing Education

ALL-ACCESS PASS

The All-Access Pass grants you **UNLIMITED** access to Lorman's ever-growing library of training resources:

- ✓ **Unlimited Live Webinars** - 110+ live webinars added every month
- ✓ **Unlimited OnDemand and MP3 Downloads** - Over 3,500 courses available
- ✓ **Videos** - More than 1,800 available
- ✓ **Slide Decks** - More than 2,800 available
- ✓ **White Papers** - More than 1,800 available
- ✓ **Reports**
- ✓ **Articles**
- ✓ **... and much more!**

Join the thousands of other pass-holders that have already trusted us for their professional development by choosing the All-Access Pass.



Get Your All-Access Pass Today!

SAVE 20%

Learn more: www.lorman.com/pass/?s=special20

Use Discount Code Q7014393 and Priority Code 18536 to receive the 20% AAP discount.

*Discount cannot be combined with any other discounts.

🏠 » [State, Local, and Tribal Governments](#) » [Blog](#) » Solar farms grow out of town renewable energy goals

Solar farms grow out of town renewable energy goals

JUNE 05, 2015 BY MEGAN DAY

Dartmouth, Massachusetts (pop. 34,032) - With enough solar energy generated within its borders to power 3,250^[1] homes, Dartmouth leads the state of Massachusetts in renewable energy production. Dartmouth is also one of the first communities in the country to offset 100% of its municipal government electricity use with renewable energy.

The 2007 Dartmouth Master Plan articulates the town's leadership position on sustainable energy. The Plan clearly identifies support for renewable energy as a goal. Action steps include evaluating changes to local regulations to promote renewable energy, pursuing grants to develop alternative energy sources to meet municipal needs, and establishing 10- and 20-year goals for renewable energy use by municipal buildings.

Dartmouth's solar leadership began with the pursuit of wind energy. In 2009, seeking to fulfill their Master Plan's commitment to renewable energy, the town was pursuing the development of two utility-scale wind turbines to take advantage of its coastal breezes. Public concern about the planned turbines coincided with the town first considering solar on its capped landfill as a productive use for otherwise undesirable land. When the solar plans met with no community opposition and the town's finance director found the solar farm would generate more revenue for the town than the wind turbines, their course was set.

Under the leadership of Town Administrator David Cressman, the town capitalized on the low impact nature of solar farms and changed the bylaws to allow ground-mounted solar by right in any zoning district. A flood of interested solar developers and solar farms followed, from which the town now stands to make about a half million dollars a year.

Dartmouth generates revenue by purchasing power from one of the solar farms at 8 cents per kilowatt hour and selling excess power back to NStar, the electric utility, for about 13 cents per kilowatt hour. In addition, Dartmouth is a solar exporter, generating property and sales tax revenues from solar farms in Dartmouth that sell power to other jurisdictions, including a nearby town and school district.

Dartmouth leveraged its community-scale solar leadership to support clean energy on multiple fronts, promoting residential solar installations through the Dartmouth Solar Challenge and funding energy efficiency projects with their solar revenues. To date, the town has re-lamped all its street lights and replaced the lighting in town hall with LEDs. Next up on their annual solar-funded efficiency project list is relighting the library with LEDs.

Solar has not met with entirely smooth sailing in Dartmouth. One solar developer building next to a residential area caused complaints, primarily due to poor community relations and excessive noise and dust during construction. This led to the zoning bylaws reverting back to restricting solar farms to industrial areas only.

Due to the town's early support for alternative energy and community-scale solar farms, Dartmouth is now the solar forerunner in a leading solar energy state, generating twice as much solar energy as Boston.



Dartmouth Solar, the larger of two solar farms that offset the Town of Dartmouth's municipal electricity use. Photo by Dartmouth Solar, LLC.

[1] Generation estimate from System Advisor Model, home electricity equivalent from EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html#results>

The material appearing in this website is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Transmission of this information is not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client relationship. The information provided herein is intended only as general information which may or may not reflect the most current developments. Although these materials may be prepared by professionals, they should not be used as a substitute for professional services. If legal or other professional advice is required, the services of a professional should be sought.

The opinions or viewpoints expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of Lorman Education Services. All materials and content were prepared by persons and/or entities other than Lorman Education Services, and said other persons and/or entities are solely responsible for their content.

Any links to other websites are not intended to be referrals or endorsements of these sites. The links provided are maintained by the respective organizations, and they are solely responsible for the content of their own sites.