



Massachusetts Municipal Association

MMA BEST PRACTICES SERIES

Recommendations for Effective Local Government Administration and Management from MMA Policy Committees

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MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment **Best Practice Recommendation: Municipal Energy Plans**

BEST PRACTICE: Work with all municipal departments, stakeholders and utilities to develop a comprehensive energy plan for municipal buildings and facilities that will cut costs, reduce energy use and encourage the use of renewable energy sources and green energy.

Cities and towns should engage utilities, energy suppliers, municipal departments and community stakeholders to develop a plan that analyzes municipal energy use, needs and resources. This plan should include a review of costs and benefits, and incorporate specific targets, metrics and timelines related to future energy consumption. The benefits could include cost savings, energy efficiency, and positive environmental impacts.

Whenever feasible, municipalities should consider immediate action on items that have a clear payback, including the use of energy-efficient light bulbs, occupancy sensors, LED streetlights, building upgrades, and efficient heating and cooling to promote energy conservation in municipal buildings and schools.

Municipalities can also promote the use of renewable energy and incorporate renewable energy into the community's energy usage portfolio. One way to do this is through municipal solar projects. Municipalities should also consider energy storage, which can accommodate fluctuations in renewable energy production and meet peak load demands more efficiently.

Municipalities should work with their energy supplier to learn about strategies to cut costs. Municipalities can also lower costs through "load management" programs, which involves reducing energy usage at peak times by considering early or strategically scheduled closure of buildings or facilities on expected peak days. Load management initiatives could include residents and businesses as well. Capacity and transmission charges are based on energy consumption during peak hours, and lowering usage during peak periods will save money.

Municipalities should promote the use of fuel-efficient or electric vehicles to lower carbon emissions from the transportation sector. (This is one element of the city of Somerville's goal to become carbon-neutral by 2050.)

Effective municipal energy plans will also include an outreach and education component to provide information to municipal employees and residents. Municipal employees will feel more engaged in energy conservation if they understand the importance of these changes. Developing programs for residents to learn about clean and renewable energy and energy conservation is another important step that communities should consider.

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Resources:

MunEnergy: www.mma.org/about-mma/munenergy

"Ten Simple Strategies for Reducing Municipal Energy Costs," from the MMA's Municipal Advocate magazine
www.mma.org/sites/default/files/resources/energy_cost_strategies_0.pdf

Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center Report on Renewable Communities
www.environmentmassachusettscenter.org/sites/environment/files/reports/Renewable%20Communities%20-%20screen.pdf