

Executive Summary



PIONEER VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY PLAN

January 2008

Prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and
Franklin Regional Council of Governments in collaboration with the
Pioneer Valley Renewable Energy Collaborative

Funding assistance provided by the Renewable Energy Trust
of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative

**The executive summary, plan, and appendices are available at
www.pvpc.org and www.frcog.org**

Acknowledgements

Many people have been working on this plan for the last three years. We wish to thank every one who helped. Some people conducted research, while others analyzed data. Many people reviewed draft chapters of the plan and participated in the development of elements comprising it. People came to educational sessions, shared their ideas on-line or engaged in on-the-ground efforts. Some volunteers went the extra mile. These people include Meleah Geertsma, Kate Neuner, Patricia Canavan, Stan Swiercz, Brittany Smith, Tom Murray, David Celata, Robert Rocheleau, and Co-op Power staff. Without their work, we would not have made as much progress with this plan as we did.

We especially want to thank all the people in the Pioneer Valley Renewable Energy Collaborative for their many hours spent in meetings, in person, online and on the phone. They helped us all to understand more deeply our dependence on petroleum and nuclear-based energy, our need to highlight efficiency, the possibilities and limitations of wind and biomass, and the need for focusing on clean or carbon-neutral energy. In short, they helped us to recognize the opportunity represented in our collective efforts here in the Valley and the possibility that by working in partnerships we can find a better way of relating to the earth through our collective and individual energy choices. They are:

Bart Bales, Bales Energy
Lynn Benander, Co-op Power
Natalie Blais, Congressman Olver
Gordon Boyce, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Dwayne Breger, Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources
Don Campbell, Campbell Assoc

Marybeth Campbell, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC)
David Caputo, Positronic Design
David Cash, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Stephanie Ciccarello, Town of Amherst
Tina Clarke, Clean Water Action
Laura Dubester, Center for Ecological Technology (CET)
Jonathan Edwards, SmartPower
John Fabel, Entrepreneur
Wayne Feiden, City of Northampton
Kristen Goland, MTC
Carol Jolly, Volunteer
Karen Jones, Pioneer Valley Electric Automobile Association (PVEAA)
Teresa Jones, Greenfield Community College
Paul Lipke, Sustainable Step New England
Peggy MacLeod, CET
Nancy Nysten, CET
Robert Rizzo, Mt Wachusett Community College
Tom Rossmassler, HAP Inc.
Stan Swiercz, Volunteer
John Walsh, Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO)
Sally Wright, University of Massachusetts Renewable Energy Research Laboratory

We are also extremely grateful to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative www.mtpc.org, and our grant contacts, Kristen Goland and Marybeth Campbell, for funding this initiative.

Thank you,
Catherine Miller, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Bill Labich and Peggy Sloan, Franklin Regional Council of Governments



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PIONEER
VALLEY
PLANNING
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Executive Summary

The Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan seeks a future where we minimize our impact on the earth's climate through the efficient use and generation of energy—energy that is safe, clean, ample, and helps sustain the economy. The Clean Energy Plan is part of a larger effort in the Pioneer Valley to create an ecologically sustainable region¹. This plan offers a path to a clean energy future, which will need to be implemented by communities, businesses, institutions, and even individuals, in their homes, backyards, businesses, and municipalities.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission initiated this planning process in 2003 by analyzing local barriers to the siting of clean energy projects in the Pioneer Valley and inventorying clean energy efforts underway². This analysis and inventory highlighted the need for a regional strategic energy plan for the Pioneer Valley. In 2005, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments secured funding from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to develop a clean energy plan for the region.

To help formulate this clean energy plan, project staff created an advisory committee known as the Pioneer Valley Renewable Energy Collaborative. Members were recruited from industry, planning, education, municipal governance, the not-for-profit sector, and the general public. This committee worked in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff and volunteers to analyze the energy situation in the Pioneer Valley and to propose a path to a clean and safe energy future. Methods for this effort included data collection, research and analysis, education, surveys, stakeholder analysis, and participatory planning. Details on the methods used to develop the plan are in the Appendix. In addition, we developed a clean energy primer that is also included in the Appendix.

More than 900 people helped to develop this plan in a very participatory planning process facilitated

between October 2006 and July 2007. The participatory planning process included:

- Public outreach and on-line public survey.
- On-line targeted surveys with email follow-up of municipal planning boards, public works and planning staff, and town administrators.
- Stakeholder interviews, educational sessions, workshops and conferences.
- An online planning process held between October and November 2006 with more than 300 people participating that developed the guiding principles, goals, project siting guidelines, and implementation strategies.
- Three in-person hearings with 60 people held in October 2006 (one in each of the three counties addressed in the plan).
- A day-long forum in April, 2007.
- An online survey and forum to provide feedback on the first draft of the Clean Energy Plan with more than 900 people participating from April to July 2007.

We have produced a clean energy plan for the Pioneer Valley with four very ambitious goals.

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir people's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our children and grandchildren are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.

Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846–1912)

Goals

Goal One: Reduce our region's energy consumption to 2000 levels by the end of 2009 and reduce that by 15 percent between 2010-2020.

Goal Two: Site sufficient new capacity to generate 214 million kilowatt hours of clean energy annually in the Pioneer Valley by the end of 2009 and another 440 million kilowatt hours by 2020.

Goal Three: Reduce our region's greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below year 2000 levels by 2050.

Goal Four: Create local jobs in the clean energy sector.

Our plan does not identify the specific projects that will achieve our clean energy generating goals because local officials and state regulators are the people who will decide which projects will be sited and permitted. There is no widespread regional consensus about the kinds of renewable energy resources or the scale of facilities people want to have sited in the Valley, but there is regional consensus on the need to act. More public dialogue and education are needed to develop a shared understanding of precisely which renewable energy resources to site and where to site them. In the

Self-determination has to mean that the leader is your individual gut, and heart, and mind or we're talking about power, again, and its rather well-known impurities. Who is really going to care whether you live or die and who is going to know the most intimate motivation for your laughter and your tears is the only person to be trusted to speak for you and to decide what you will or will not do.

June Jordan (b. 1939), U.S. poet, civil rights activist. "Civil Wars," *Moving Towards Home: Political Essays* (1989).

coming years, a large number of new projects will be proposed that we have not heard about yet, and so we focused our limited time developing guidelines for decision making (Guiding Principles) which can be applied both to proposed projects and to the many projects our communities will consider in the future and (Selection Criteria) to help local decision-makers make the best choice for their community and the region. Finally, we conducted a preliminary build-out analysis of our region's clean energy capacity so local decision-makers know what is possible.

Our Clean Energy Guiding Principles (condensed):

In the Pioneer Valley, we want to support efforts that:

- Reduce energy consumption through conservation and efficiency, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and nuclear energy and reduce greenhouse gases.
- Protect and improve the environment and the quality of life in the Pioneer Valley.
- Increase use of solar, wind, small hydro, clean biomass, and clean fuels technologies produced in community-scale, locally owned facilities that benefit all members of the community and create jobs.
- Focus government resources and policies on supporting the cleanest forms of energy and efficiency.
- Promote a comprehensive public transportation system while also working to make our communities more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and energy efficient.
- Encourage farmers and large land owners to preserve open space through development of energy production as an additional income stream.
- Make the Pioneer Valley one of the leaders in the country for reducing energy consumption and for producing clean energy and improving energy technology.

Selection Criteria

In order to accomplish the goals of this plan, we need to build new renewable energy generating plants in the Pioneer Valley. The siting of new renewable energy plants is often controversial. Siting decisions are made locally, not at the regional level since the legacy of home rule is cherished throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To assist local decision makers, residents and project developers, we developed nine criteria to evaluate proposed clean energy projects. Preferred clean energy projects in the Valley should:

- Reduce fossil fuel and nuclear energy use.
- Involve a clean renewable technology— “clean” as defined by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative – includes solar, wind, small hydro, and biomass-fueled facilities that meet all DEP requirements.
- Involve a community-scale facility i.e. promote community-ownership of renewable energy resources and support small businesses.
- Increase employment, gross sales, and patents generated by renewable energy-related businesses in the Pioneer Valley—to create local jobs with a living wage.
- Increase the affordability of clean energy for low and moderate-income households.
- Expand public transportation, car-sharing and car-pooling, pedestrian opportunities, bicycle use, alternative fuels, and zero or low emission vehicle use.
- Make it easier for farmers and forest landowners to maintain their open land due to lower energy costs and additional revenue streams.
- Maintain the water, air, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources inherent to the site and the surrounding region.
- Be able to be implemented within two to three years because it has strong local support and is consistent with existing local and regional plans and has identified funding sources.

Implementation—Key Action Recommendations

Based on research, expert opinions, and results of a very dynamic public planning process, this plan endorses specific action items for immediate implementation by key target audiences, including: municipalities, energy committees, regional planning agencies, businesses, nonprofits/advocacy groups, educational institutions, individuals, and Massachusetts legislators and policy makers. For details on action recommendations, see the full plan or the target audience action sheets, available at www.pvpc.org and www.frcog.org. Action recommendations include:

- Consider hosting or owning a clean energy generating system or plant in your community/ business/residence (financial assistance available from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative) where resources and environmental conditions allow.
- Conduct energy audits and implement efficiency and conservation measures identified—municipalities may want to consider a performance contract with an energy service company (ESCO) to spread costs for energy efficiency over a longer term. Utility companies provide free audits or contact www.masssave.com.
- Initiate or support efforts by planning and building departments to develop and adopt bylaws or ordinances to require or give incentives to encourage green buildings, energy efficiency, public transportation, clean fuels, efficient vehicles and sustainable development.
- Purchase clean energy.
- Join ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and follow their process to develop and implement local climate action plans while also working to help implement the Massachusetts Climate Action plan.

This plan is only the beginning. Additional work is needed by all members of the Pioneer Valley community to implement this plan. The actions we all need to take to reduce energy use are clear and available. Funding to act is not always at hand, but together we can bring the resources we need to our region. We have thoroughly researched the different ways our region can achieve Goal Two (site 214 million kilowatt hours of clean energy production in the Pioneer Valley by the end of 2009 and another 440 million kilowatt hours by 2020), but now individual communities, homeowners and business owners must step up and either build, or allow to be built, clean energy generating facilities in their backyards. The project selection criteria and guiding principles clarify the kinds of projects we want here in the Pioneer Valley. Our region has more work to do to understand how we can implement the actions we know to be effective to reduce our energy use through conservation and efficiency, community planning, waste reduction, improved transportation infrastructure and improved local food systems. This plan identifies best practices others are pursuing in these areas, but we were not able to develop detailed plans for each area given time and resource constraints. We know that as facilities are planned, and as municipalities and individuals and organizations request energy audits and do their part to act on other plan recommendations, local jobs in the clean energy sector will grow. Details on best practices are included in the Appendix as is an annotated webliography and bibliography.

“Future solutions would lie in the use of existing renewable energy technologies, greater efforts at energy efficiency and the dissemination of decentralized energy technologies and options”

From “energy {r}evolution: A BLUEPRINT FOR SOLVING GLOBAL WARMING,” European Renewable Energy Council, p. 3

Energy Efficiency & Conservation Potential

The Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships Inc. (NEEP) has determined that investments in efficiency improvements over a ten-year time period in New England could result in savings of 28 percent of the total peak summer capacity and 37 percent of the capacity represented by plants using fossil fuels. If a 28 percent reduction is possible for all of New England, we believe a comparable reduction is also possible for the Pioneer Valley. The main “reservoirs”

of economical efficiency potential are in lighting and heating in residential, commercial and industrial markets and in transportation efficiencies.

Industry: In the Pioneer Valley we can make our

industries more energy efficient through heat recovery, more efficient motors and drives, and the use of cogeneration (also called combined heat and power or CHP) systems that provide both heat and electricity.

Buildings: We can build new buildings that use less energy and improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings through different lighting, weatherization, different use of space, and better efficiency standards for building components and appliances.

Transportation: We can reduce our region’s energy use by reducing our driving, making it easier for people to walk or bicycle, using lighter weight vehicles, car-pooling and car-sharing, public transit, improved aerodynamics in vehicles, and more efficient propulsion systems, such as hybrid engines.

Renewable Energy Potential in the Pioneer Valley

Because this is a regional plan that shows a path to a clean energy future for the 69 communities of the Pioneer Valley, we thought at one time that we might be able to identify projects, either planned or imagined, that would meet our clean energy goal of generating 214 million kilowatt hours of clean energy annually, with another 440 million kilowatt hours by 2020. However, due to a variety of factors mentioned previously, most notably home rule in Massachusetts and the fast pace of development in the clean energy sector, we do not presume to identify exactly how the region will meet its clean energy goal. We have, however, completed the research necessary to reassure Pioneer Valley residents and decision-makers that we do indeed have the renewable energy resources necessary to meet and even exceed our goals.

Wind: Compared to Berkshire, Worcester, and particularly the coastal counties, the three counties

along the Connecticut River Valley do not have a plentiful wind resource. However, there are several areas that could host wind power projects, and a few communities are considering community-owned or sponsored wind turbines. In order to get a sense of scale, consider the example of four communities hosting projects of one to five full-scale turbines; in this example, the turbines could produce in the range of 40 million kilowatt hours per year, or about 5,600 households' worth of electricity.³

Landfill Gas: There are seven sites either currently producing or permitted to burn LFG for energy in the Pioneer Valley: two in Chicopee and one in Granby are functioning as of plan release (2008). Four more are in the works in the communities of Northampton, Westfield, Palmer and South Hadley. This means that all large landfills in the region have been (or are being) developed. As technology changes, it may become cost effective to develop the clean energy potential of smaller landfills.

Hydropower: According to a 1995 study prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy, "U.S. Hydropower Resource Assessment for Massachusetts", by the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory that used modeling software, there are at least 130 sites in Massachusetts river basins that have the potential to generate hydropower. The basin with the most undeveloped hydropower potential is the Connecticut River with 68 sites and an estimated capacity of 294 million kilowatt hours per year⁴. The Connecticut River Basin total is driven by three sites that have more than half the basin's total undeveloped potential. Over half of the estimated potential capacity across the entire state comes from sites that are currently undeveloped where impoundments might need to be constructed.

Biomass: The Sustainable Forest Bioenergy Initiative (SFBI) is an effort by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Division of Energy Resources to facilitate the development of biomass markets in Massachusetts. Draft results of the SFBI work suggest that roughly 1,116 - 1,314 million kilowatt hours of biomass energy could be developed in the western half of Massachusetts. This biomass build out in Massachusetts and the Pioneer Valley could include large power plants between 25 and 50 MW, combined heat and power plants between 5 and 10 MW, and numerous small 1-5 MMBtu/hr heat-only systems.

Biofuels: Biofuels are liquid or gas fuels made from organic fats and oils from plants and animals. Biofuels can be used for transportation or heating. Sugar cane, sugar beets, corn, soy beans, oil seeds, switch grass, and wood are some of the common plant sources of biomass that can be made into biofuels. Manure and fat are typical animal sources of biomass that can be made into biofuels. At this time, we are unable to project the amount of biofuels that that could be generated in the Pioneer Valley, but we do know that biofuels will play a role in our clean energy transition.

Solar PV: The estimated build out of clean energy from solar PV is limited only by the amount of appropriately oriented south-facing roof and other flat space available.

Solar Hot Water: Like solar photovoltaics, there is no measurable limit on the amount of energy we can generate from solar hot water in the Pioneer Valley. But unlike solar photovoltaics, solar hot water is relatively affordable. Solar hot water heating equipment can pay for itself in 5- 10 years and provide free hot water thereafter. Solar water heaters have a life span of 30-40 years. In most cases the solar collectors will outlast the roof on which they are placed.

For a copy of the complete plan and appendices, go to www.pvpc.org or www.frcog.org or call Catherine Miller at 413/781-6045.

¹ www.pvsustain.com
for more information about regional sustainability efforts

² www.pvsustain.com
has inventory and regulatory barriers assessment

³ To estimate this number, multiply the following assumed numbers: (4 towns) x (average project size: 3 turbines) x (average turbine size: 1,500 kW) x (average capacity factor: 27%) x (availability: 95%) x (8,760 hrs/year) = 40,444,920 kWh/year. Divide that by the average Massachusetts household's annual consumption of 7,200 kWh/year to get the number of households served. For an introduction to the meaning behind these numbers, see RERL's community wind fact sheet "Capacity Factor, Intermittency, and what happens when the wind doesn't blow?" at this address: www.ceere.org/rerl/about_wind/

⁴ Based on a seasonal average capacity factor for hydropower of 0.4.