

Green Communities

An Opportunity for Danvers

Informational Webinar for Town Meeting Members,
Select Board, and Board & Committee Members

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

Tonight's Agenda

7:00 Welcome & Review of Agenda and Meeting Objectives

7:05 The Opportunity: What Danvers Is Missing

7:15 The Five Criteria: What it will Take

7:25 The Stretch Code: Facts & Context

7:35 Interactive Polling: Where Do You Stand?

7:40 Q&A

7:58 Next Steps

Webinar Objectives

- Introduce the Green Communities Program
- Gauge interest in a deeper workshop to learn more

The Opportunity

What Danvers Is Missing

What Is Green Communities?

The Massachusetts Green Communities program, created by the Green Communities Act of 2008, provides **grants to cities and towns** that meet five energy-related criteria.

These grants fund practical projects. For Danvers it could fund these kinds of projects that are current priorities:

- Continue with LED lighting upgrades to save electricity costs
- Replacing building windows with more energy efficient units
- Replace Riverside School roof and update/replace deck insulation to meet stretch code
- Increase BMS/automation in buildings without systems
- Convert Thorpe School oil burner to something cleaner

\$209M+

awarded since 2010

301

MA communities designated

\$0

Danvers' share

Why Now? The Door Is Finally Open

Danvers was shut out of this program for over a decade.

Because Danvers is served by a municipal electric utility, it was ineligible under the original program rules.

That changed in September 2022, when Governor Baker signed Chapter 230 of the Acts of 2022, allowing municipal utility towns to opt in individually.

Danvers has not yet applied.

Every year we wait, those grant dollars go to other communities.

Peabody

Designated April 2024

\$271,560

South Hadley

Designated 2024

\$180,350

Reading

Designated August 2025

\$161,520

What Could Danvers Receive?

Designation Grant

\$170K - \$190K

Upon achieving Green
Communities status

Competitive Grants

Up to \$250K/year

\$500K for comprehensive
decarbonization projects

Competitive grants are awarded multiple times per year. Allows flexibility with timing.

What Our Neighbors Have Received

COMMUNITY	DESIGNATED	GRANTS	TOTAL FUNDING	ENERGY CODE
Beverly	2011	7	\$1,287,427	Specialized
Salem	2011	8	\$1,555,594	Specialized
Gloucester	2010	8	\$1,299,272	Stretch
Swampscott	2010	9	\$1,444,366	Specialized
Hamilton	2010	8	\$1,534,848	Stretch
Wenham	2010	9	\$1,525,118	Specialized
Saugus	2015	7	\$1,238,432	Stretch
Ipswich	2020	4	\$1,016,700	Stretch
Rockport	2017	4	\$750,388	Stretch
Topsfield	2011	5	\$329,254	Stretch
Peabody	2024	1	\$271,560	Stretch
DANVERS	Not yet	0	\$0	Base Code

Source: MA DOER
Green Communities
Grant Database, April
2026

The Five Criteria

What it Takes to become a Green Community

The Five Green Communities Criteria

1

As-of-Right Siting

Renewable energy facilities allowed by right in at least one zone

2

Expedited Permitting

Streamlined permitting for renewable energy projects

3

Energy Baseline + 20% Reduction

Baseline all municipal energy use; plan to cut 20% in 5 years

4

Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy

Replace fleet vehicles with efficient models when practical

5

Stretch Energy Code

Adopt the Stretch Code for new construction, large additions, and major renovations

1

CRITERION 1 OF 5

As-of-Right Siting for Renewable Energy

In plain terms: *Set aside at least one zoning district where clean-energy facilities can be built without a special permit.*

- Designate at least one location in the Town's zoning where renewable or alternative energy generation, research and development, or manufacturing is allowed "as-of-right" (no special permit needed).
- Typically an industrial or commercial district already suited to these uses; DOER provides a model solar bylaw to start from.
- Put in place through a zoning bylaw amendment.

AFFECTS

Zoning bylaw

TYPICAL APPROVAL

Town Meeting

TIMELINE

One-time action

2

CRITERION 2 OF 5

Expedited Permitting for Renewable Energy

In plain terms: *Guarantee that clean-energy projects get a local permitting decision within one year.*

- Adopt a process that requires local boards to act on the energy facilities allowed under Criterion 1 within one year, at most.
- Closely tied to Criterion 1; often handled at the same Town Meeting as a paired zoning amendment.
- Gives clean-energy developers a predictable, time-limited review.

AFFECTS

Permitting process

TYPICAL APPROVAL

Town Meeting

TIMELINE

One-time action

3

CRITERION 3 OF 5

Energy Baseline and 20% Reduction Plan

In plain terms: *Measure the Town's municipal energy use, then commit in writing to cut it 20% within five years.*

- Establish an energy-use baseline across municipal buildings and facilities (which can include schools, water and wastewater plants), street and traffic lighting, and vehicles.
- Adopt a written Energy Reduction Plan that names specific projects, expected savings, and a timeline to reach the 20% cut.
- Track the baseline in MassEnergyInsight, a free web tool from DOER.

AFFECTS

Municipal energy

TYPICAL APPROVAL

Town Manager

TIMELINE

Ongoing 5-year plan

4

CRITERION 4 OF 5

Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy

In plain terms: *Commit to buying fuel-efficient vehicles as the Town's fleet is replaced over time.*

- Adopt a written policy: when municipal vehicles reach the end of their useful life, replacements must be fuel-efficient models where commercially available and practical.
- Maintain an inventory of all four-wheeled municipal vehicles and a plan for replacing the non-exempt ones.
- Public safety vehicles (police, fire) and heavy specialty vehicles are typically exempt.

AFFECTS

Fleet purchasing

TYPICAL APPROVAL

Town Manager / Select Board

TIMELINE

One-time policy, applied ongoing

5

CRITERION 5 OF 5

Stretch Energy Code

In plain terms: *Adopt a more energy-efficient building code that applies only to new construction, large additions, and major renovations.*

- Town Meeting votes (simple majority) to adopt the Stretch Code, which minimizes the life-cycle energy cost of newly constructed homes and buildings.
- Applies only to new construction, large additions, and major renovations. It does not require existing buildings to make changes.
- A community may instead adopt the stricter Specialized Stretch Code, which adds electrification and solar-readiness. Either one satisfies Criterion 5. Danvers is NOT looking to take this step at this time.

AFFECTS

New construction, large additions and major renovations only

TYPICAL APPROVAL

Town Meeting

TIMELINE

One-time action

The Stretch Code

Not the Barrier You Think

What the Stretch Code Actually Is

Only applies to new construction and major renovations

Does not force changes to existing homes or properties

Requires performance-based energy standards (HERS rating)

A third-party expert verifies homes perform as designed

Homeowner protection

Buyers get verified energy performance, not just a checklist

The Massachusetts thermal code

FAST FACT

On average, only **12 new homes** are built and **fewer than 40** undergo major renovation in Danvers each year.

Danvers



Base Code

IECC 2021 w/
modest
amendments

50 municipalities,
< 8% of MA
population

New construction,
Major Alterations
+ Additions

Stretch Code

IECC 2021 w/
key amendments

246 municipalities,
61% of MA
population

New construction

Specialized Code

IECC 2021 w/
key amendments
+
Passive House
(multifamily > 12,000 sf)
+
All-electric or
Net-Zero or
Electric-ready + Solar

55 municipalities,
31% of MA
population

Where can you find the codes?

MA Building Code = CMR 780 10th Edition

Base Code

780 CMR Chapter 11R (residential)
780 CMR Chapter 13 (commercial)

Stretch Code

225 CMR Chapter 22 (residential)
225 CMR Chapter 23 (commercial)

Specialized

225 CMR Chapter 22 + Appendix RC
(residential)
225 CMR Chapter 23 + Appendix CC
(commercial)

What will change under a stretch code?

Stretch code affects new construction and MAJOR renovations

New Residential Construction, large additions, ADUs, and major renovations will be required to undergo HERS modeling to obtain a building permit and a passing HERS rating to obtain an occupancy permit.

Additional requirements for new construction:

EV ready wiring: 1x 240volt, 50-amp circuit per home (now added to latest 10th base code)

Heat/Energy recovery ventilation

Your Neighbors Already Have It

Every single community bordering Danvers has adopted the Stretch Code. Some have had it for 15 years. Several have gone even further.

<p>Beverly Since 2011 Now Specialized</p>	<p>Salem Since 2011 Now Specialized</p>	<p>Swampscott Since 2010 Now Specialized</p>	<p>Wenham Since 2010 Now Specialized</p>
<p>Gloucester Since 2010 Stretch</p>	<p>Hamilton Since 2010 Stretch</p>	<p>Topsfield Since 2011 Stretch</p>	<p>Saugus Since 2015 Stretch</p>

243 of 351 MA communities have adopted the Stretch Code. Contractors are already building to this standard.

What It Costs (and Saves)

DOER independent study: All-electric Stretch Code homes are cheaper to build AND operate.

Home Size	Fuel	Builder Cost vs. Base	Annual Savings
4,000 sq ft	All-Electric	SAVES \$20,062	\$548/year
2,100 sq ft	All-Electric	SAVES \$28,597	\$1,053/year
Townhouse	All-Electric	SAVES \$11,492	\$316/year
Multi-family	All-Electric	SAVES \$15,690	\$683/year

Source: DOER Residential Stretch Code Costs & Benefits Case Studies. Includes Mass Save incentives and federal tax credits.

Key Finding:

Heat pumps handle both heating AND cooling, eliminating the need for a separate AC system. That is why all-electric homes cost less to build.

For Contractors

If you are building anywhere in Beverly, Salem, Swampscott, Wenham, Gloucester, Hamilton, Saugus, Topsfield, Ipswich, Rockport, or Peabody...

You are already building to the Stretch Code or higher.

Danvers adopting the Stretch Code would not change what you are already doing.

Where do you stand?

Interactive Polling

Scale of Agreement

Statement 1:

"New homes and major construction projects in Danvers should be built to maximize energy efficiency and reduce long-term energy costs for homeowners."

1

Strongly
Disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neutral

4

Agree

5

Strongly
Agree

Scale of Agreement

Statement 2:

"The Town of Danvers should pursue every available grant opportunity to fund municipal projects before relying on local tax dollars."

1

Strongly
Disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neutral

4

Agree

5

Strongly
Agree

Q & A

Your Questions, Our Answers

Submit questions via chat or raise your hand

Next Steps

Land Use Summit

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Broader conversation covering Green Communities alongside other land use topics (ADUs, short-term rentals, and more).

Stay Informed

Visit the landing page:

resilient.danversma.gov

Take the poll and share your input
Talk to your neighbors

This is the beginning of a conversation, not the end. We want to hear from you.

Thank You

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