

### **Marketing and Outreach Plan**

Outline a marketing plan that describes methods to create community awareness around the Solarize Mass program. Describe ways in which a joint marketing strategy between the Municipality, the volunteer team, and the selected Installer could increase the number of sign-ups for a solar site assessment and expand solar PV adoption within the community. Provide a plan for implementation, including methods to engage additional community members and volunteers. This could include an outreach activity timeline, expected volunteer activity hours, preliminary goals for community participation and solar PV adoption during the program. Include information on where community events could be held, including the Meet the Installer community meeting.

The timing of this Solarize Mass solicitation complements the Town's current initiatives of promoting the use of solar in municipal buildings and properties. The solar panels at the town's WWTP go online in February 2016. The Town Energy Manager is arranging for a Request for Proposals to be released in 2016 for solar vendors to bid on other town municipal sites. The Town is considering whether to participate in a Community Solar program. Solar parking canopies are being considered at the town's middle and high schools.

The Medfield Solarize Campaign will use various strategies to build community awareness, interest and participation in the Solarize campaign. We believe the best campaign strategy is to get general solar PV information out in circulation through the Town's various communications networks and have residents talk to each other about the possibility of renewables to create interest and excitement.

The Medfield strategy will include:

### **I. Preparation for Solarize:**

Before the launch of the Solarize Medfield campaign, the Medfield Solar Coach and the Medfield Solarize Mass Team will:

- Refine the outreach and marketing strategy
- Identify an individual to serve as the Assistant Solar Coach, who will assist with administrative and logistical tasks, including developing and maintaining databases and setting up meetings.
- Re-confirm the willingness of our Outreach Partners to participate and explore their ideas and level of involvement.
- Create marketing materials and branding
- Design and produce posters and other outreach materials

### **II. Outreach:**

#### *Initial Outreach to Pre-Identified Prospects:*

Once the Solar Installer is in place and the program can formally get underway, we will conduct immediate initial outreach to prospects we have already identified through:

- November 2015 preliminary interest survey (134 prospects)
- March 2016 Solar 101 program (not yet conducted)
- Further outreach to residents upon announcement of Medfield's participation (capturing people more likely to demonstrate interest once the Solarize program is confirmed).

Through this jump-start, we hope to achieve some early sign ups, creating excitement and interest that will reinforce the general outreach.

#### *General Community Outreach and Awareness Methods:*

1. Attend **scheduled community activities**: Participate in Medfield events including town-sponsored, sport and other school-related events where tabling opportunities will inform the community. Place posters, signs, or Solarize postcards at places where residents are likely to be waiting (e.g. town library, town hall, health centers).
2. Develop **educational opportunities**: Sponsor the PV 101 workshops included in the program as well as develop a PowerPoint presentation for small groups that explains solar options and the Solarize Mass program benefits.
3. Leverage **existing contacts and relationships with Community Partners**: Present to elected officials and community and faith-based groups and introduce their members to the benefits of photovoltaic systems and the opportunities of the Solarize Medfield program. Following a presentation, the Solar Team will assign a volunteer to follow through with the contacts made at the time to ensure that each resident who shows interest is contacted again with a follow-up communication.

MEC has had success with conducting outreach through existing organizational web sites, social media networks, email lists, newsletters, and in-person announcements / events. The Solar Team will identify and work with Solarize outreach partners to broaden outreach and work within existing networks to build interest and participation in Solarize Medfield. As stated earlier, MEC worked with Sagewell Inc. to conduct thermal imaging of residential properties in Medfield to identify opportunities to improve home insulation and air leaks.

Sagewell successfully reached out to Medfield residents using a variety of communication strategies. MEC provided Sagewell with contact information of residents and town organizations.

4. **Webpage:** Creation of a Solarize Medfield webpage which will serve as a central source for all Solarize information, events, FAQ, etc. The site will also include general information about solar PV technology, financing options, installations in Medfield, testimonials and links to other web resources.

*Targeted Prospect Identification and Outreach:*

We plan to leverage community and installer expertise to identify streets and neighborhoods with good general conditions for solar PV (as well as those with already installed systems). We have access to extensive networks within Medfield and a database of Town residents. We can combine this information to run targeted outreach programs in focused geographic neighborhoods. This may include door-to-door canvassing or “house parties”.

**III. Marketing:**

The Solarize Medfield program will work to further educate those interested in solar, secure participation in the program, and maintain their enthusiasm by:

- Providing interested parties with more detailed information about solar and the components of the Solarize campaign,
- Answering questions and addressing concerns regarding participation in Solarize Medfield,
- Forging personal relationships and connections with those interested in solar, and
- Facilitating communication between the solar installer and those who have signed up for Solarize Medfield.

We anticipate that Medfield residents will be exposed to marketing efforts by many solar PV installers in 2016 offering an assortment of equipment and financing. Recently there has been much news coverage about the industry in Massachusetts, its effectiveness, and its financial feasibility. Solarize Medfield will aid homeowners to gain confidence in the available information and facilitate a well-informed decision about whether to move forward with a solar system.

Our marketing strategy will be to ‘brand’ Solarize Medfield as a credible and neutral resource for homeowners interested in installing PV systems at their homes. Offered by a trusted community environmental group and supported by the Town, Solarize Medfield will become the ‘go to’ resource for unbiased information and assistance for homeowners who choose to pursue solar system installation. Through our presentations, literature, and website, we will help residents navigate the options to select the solar PV system and financing option that is right for them.

We believe the Solarize Medfield program will be an appealing option for residents not only due to tiered discount pricing, but because it offers the opportunity to work with a single reputable installer connected to the program, selected through a competitive qualitative process.

Our marketing effort will be carried out through different venues at varied locations:

1. **Presentations to community groups and organizations** who hold regular meetings and allow guest speakers, especially those groups listed in the Outreach and Team Description sections above. A lecture at the Medfield Historical Society will discuss the aesthetic and permitting issues around solar PV installations on historic homes.
2. **Public presentations** in Medfield school auditoriums, the town hall, the Medfield public library, the town public works building, and the senior center. The Medfield Solar Team will host informational events where those interested in solar can obtain both general information about solar power, as well as specific information about the Solarize program. Once the solar installer has been selected, frequent, smaller scale events and informational sessions will be offered where residents can speak directly with both the installer and residents

who have/or plan to install solar to get questions answered.

3. We will schedule a **Solar 101 workshop** for March 2016. This will give general information about solar PV and the opportunities and obstacles it presents.

4. **Announcement of the program** will be made through the Town website and electronic newsletters, blogs and mailing lists. We will have a Meet The Installer event in June 2016.

5. **Public relations** to foster community awareness through the Medfield TV station notices, programs and event coverage; as well as working with the local Medfield and MetroWest newspapers and Medfield Patch online to publish articles about the launch, progress and impact of the Solarize campaign and related solar stories.

6. **Town-wide direct mail:** Adding a notice to tax or water and sewer bill mailings

7. Arrange several **Solar House Tours** in Medfield highlighting successful installations. Market the tours specifically to homeowners who meet the site requirements for their own installations. A Medfield Selectman and the Police Chief, among others, will be asked to showcase the solar panels on their homes.

8. **Additional approaches** requiring collateral material that will be evaluated for time and cost-effectiveness, such as:

- Novelty displays on town property such as a solar-powered signs, lights or solar cars
- Lawn signs indicating a resident who has gone solar
- Door knob hangers indicating that a resident's house is suitable for solar

***Solar Ambassadors:***

The Medfield Solar Team will invite any resident or business who has signed up for solar (or who already has solar installed) to act as a Solar Ambassador. For example, an in-town veterinarian who arranged for solar panels to be installed on his clinic will be approached to act as Ambassador. The Ambassadors will be given materials and organizational support so that they can reach out to their own personal and community networks. We will also ask Solar Ambassadors to host open houses and other home-based events, allowing friends and neighbors to meet with the selected solar installer and other residents who have gone solar, in a more relaxed, low pressure social setting. We will have Solar Ambassadors participate in our March 2016 Solar 101 session. High school students will be trained to be solar ambassadors. The Medfield Solar Team will contact the ad hoc committee of high school students that have recently been formed to investigate the feasibility of solar on the school campus to gauge their interest in being ambassadors.

***Securing Solarize Sign Ups/Participation:***

To ensure that we translate interest into action, the Solar Coach and Solar Team volunteers will work with the solar installer to ensure that a personal follow-up (email, phone call, or post card) is sent to anyone who has attended a solarize education event to offer to answer any questions they may have. In addition, regular communications about Solarize campaign events, and progress will be sent to all residents and businesses that have signed up for the Solarize campaign, to sustain interest and ensure follow-through with their installation during the sign up period.

***Other Solarize Education and Outreach Activities:***

We anticipate having an **Assistant Solar Coach**, who will have more of a focus on follow-up and logistics.

This person will lead such efforts as:

- Maintaining a database of prospects and contacts to facilitate outreach and track sign-ups, proposals and signed contracts
- Responding to questions/inquiries by potential customers, e.g. on mechanics, pricing
- Helping homeowners assess their suitability for Solar via web tools
- Keeping-up regular communications with homeowners who have signed up, in order to maintain enthusiasm