

While working towards becoming a more sustainable government may be a recent undertaking for many municipalities, for the Town of Easton this goal is over two decades in the making. Progress towards this goal continues to be made throughout all levels of government and the types of initiatives being made cover a broad range of environmentally conscious efforts:

Climate protection, planning, and emissions reduction

- The Oliver Ames High School Envirothon Teams have won multiple awards for their participation in this statewide environmental education program.
- The Town has installed bike racks at school and municipal facilities encouraging less reliance on fossil fuel powered commuting.
- In 2007 Easton embarked on its Community Visioning Process, which led to the formation of five focus groups, each of which presented ideas on making Easton a greener community.
- Easton continually updates its Open Space and Recreation Plan. The goals of the plan include, among others, protection of water resources and wetlands for conservation and recreation purposes, and protection of Easton's water supply.
- In 2009 Easton Public Schools and Recreation Department participated in the Safe Routes to School program, encouraging walking to school. 530 students participated in the International Walk to School Day, which kicked off the program on October 8th.
- Easton provides for as-of-right siting of renewable or alternative energy research and design (R&D) and manufacturing facilities in its Industrial zone. The Town has adopted an expedited permitting process for these facilities within this zone.
- The Easton Board of Selectmen approved the Easton Fuel Efficient Vehicle purchasing policy in July of 2010.

Energy efficiency and renewable energy

- By 2000 Easton's school and municipal facilities had been converted to using more efficient and cleaner natural gas fuel.
- In 2001 Easton received rebates for energy efficient lighting system upgrades at two school buildings through the then Massachusetts Electric (National Grid) Energy Initiative Program. These upgrades were estimated to save the town \$15,000 in annual energy costs.
- In 2002 Easton established a Street Lighting Policy in which active street lights were reduced to only those deemed necessary, saving the Town both energy and associated costs.
- Since 2007 Easton has continued to participate in the EPA's Community Energy Challenge. The municipal government and public schools have been committed to this Challenge to reduce energy usage by 10% or more.
- Easton Public Schools reduced energy use at the Fredrick Law Olmsted (FLO) School through the Energy Patrol at FLO. This group of students turns off lights and unplugs electronic devices when not in use.
- Since 2007 Easton continues to track municipal and school energy usage using Excel databases, Energy Star's Portfolio Manager, and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) MassEnergyInsight application.

- The Town participated in the Massachusetts DOER Energy Audit Program (EAP) resulting in audits being performed on all school and municipal buildings.
- Lighting in eight buildings was upgraded to achieve greater energy efficiency, as recommended by the EAP audits, through a National Grid incentive program. A reduction of 201,908 kWh in energy use, \$25,000 in energy costs, and 222,100 pounds in CO2 emissions is estimated to be the result of these upgrades.
- The Town was awarded Green Communities technical assistance through the DOER's Green Communities Division helping Easton achieve its goal to obtain official Green Community designation by committing to reduce its energy consumption by 20% over five years. This would amount to a total reduction of approximately 13,600 MMBtus.
- Easton received nearly \$8,000 through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Choice grant through the State's Clean Energy Center to fund outreach efforts aimed to educate the community on clean energy and energy efficiency.
- In spring of 2010 Easton's Green Communities Committee hosted a Home Energy Seminar sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association offering information relating to energy efficiency to all residents of the community.
- Easton installed a 50kW solar photovoltaic array through the Water Division's participation in the MassDEP's Energy Management Pilot Program. This installation is estimated to generate 58,815 kWhs of energy and save nearly \$8,000 in energy costs while reducing CO2 emissions by 1040 tons over the 25 year lifetime of the solar panels.
- Easton continues to install light sensors, time clocks, programmable thermostats, and other low cost energy saving mechanisms throughout its school and municipal facilities.
- Easton received designation as a Massachusetts Green Community in December of 2010. In the Spring of 2011 the Town was awarded \$168,300 in grant funding for several energy efficiency projects for municipal and school facilities.

Green building/sustainable design and construction

- At Easton's Annual Town Meeting in May of 2010 the Town voted to adopt the Stretch Energy Code, an appendix to the State's base building code requiring new construction in Easton to be more energy efficient by about 20% or greater than the base code.

Waste reduction and recycling

- The Easton DPW holds annual Community Pride Roadside Cleanup Days. The 2010 event included the participation of 100 Town employees and staff. 400-500 bags of trash were removed as a result of this event.
- The Green Team is the Oliver Ames High School recycling club who also work to raise awareness on other environmental issues.
- The Town offers a single stream recycling program to residents and town facilities. Easton residents participating in this program currently recycle 24% of their trash.

Purchasing of recycled and environmentally preferable products (EPPs)

- Green Communities Committee purchases Clean Energy Choice grant outreach materials through Massachusetts EPP vendors. These materials include recycled, biodegradable, and reusable products.
- The Town is working towards establishing a formal policy for purchasing EPPs.

Reduction or elimination of use of toxic chemicals and products

- The Water Division hosts an annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day for Easton residents. 524 residents participated in the 2010 Collection Day.
- The Police Department holds an annual Drug Drop off Day when the department accepts prescription and over-the-counter drugs to be safely destroyed.

Water conservation

- Since 1984 the Easton Water Division has held its annual Open House including a water themed poster contest for approximately 800 students which highlights the importance of education on drinking water protection and conservation.
- In 1993 the Water Division planted a Xeriscape (low water) demonstration garden at its office facility. The Massachusetts Garden Club included this garden in their 2000 annual Gardens on Tour event which hosted over 160 visitors.
- Easton is surpassed only by the City of Boston in the number of State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awards acquired by its Water Division which supplies a population of over 23,000 people with drinking water.
- The Town monitors the water usage of its 15 municipal and school facilities which consume water.
- The Easton Board of Selectmen and Water Division established water restrictions for municipal water conservation in 2010. To date the Easton Water Division has achieved a 65 gallon per capita per day rate of residential water use.

Natural resource protection

- Easton was a founding member town in the 1987 formation of the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (CRAAC). The Committee's main purpose is to educate the public on issues relating to aquifer protection. Due to the efforts of the CRAAC in 1993, the Canoe River Aquifer received federal Sole Source Aquifer designation.
- In 1990-1991 CRAAC, the Easton Water Division and Conservation Commission worked with other regional groups to designate two environs as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Hockomock Swamp and Canoe River ACECs are collectively comprised of nearly 34,000 acres.
- The Town has adopted more stringent local wetlands protection regulations for projects proposed within the ACECs.
- For over 20 years Easton has been an Arbor Day Foundation Tree City.
- In 2009 Easton received the EPA's Environmental Merit Award for open space preservation and environmental protection. Over 3,000 acres of land in Easton are currently under conservation.

In addition to these and other major achievements made by the Town, each day municipal officials and personnel, teachers and students, are setting an example by contributing to energy efficiency and overall sustainability in Easton through their everyday actions at Town facilities which include:

- Turning off lights and electronics when not in use.
- Utilizing task lighting.
- Installing CFL and LED bulbs.
- Limiting printing and duplexing when printing is necessary.
- Adjusting computers to energy saving settings and virtualizing computer servers.
- Eliminating unnecessary electronic equipment.
- Recycling office materials.
- Reducing daily water use.

Easton departments, officials, committees and individual personnel distribute information, implement practices, and support initiatives concerning energy efficiency, clean energy, water use reduction, and recycling. These efforts have been spearheaded by Easton's Town Administrator whose FY2011 goals and objectives include assisting with the implementation of energy efficiency and conservation measures proposed by DPW and assisting the DPW, School Department and Green Communities Committee in developing a five year plan and grant application to the DOER for its implementation.

Easton's long history of sustainable practices demonstrates how the Town has already been leading by example and will persist in these efforts by continuing to decrease energy and water use along with associated costs, conserve natural resources, reduce waste and emissions, protect public health and the environment, and promote the use of clean technologies as well as renewable and alternative energy, all while increasing Easton's overall sustainability.