

Canton Electricity Choice Part Three: Customer Decision-Making Process

By Tom Birmingham, Chair, Canton Energy Advisory Committee

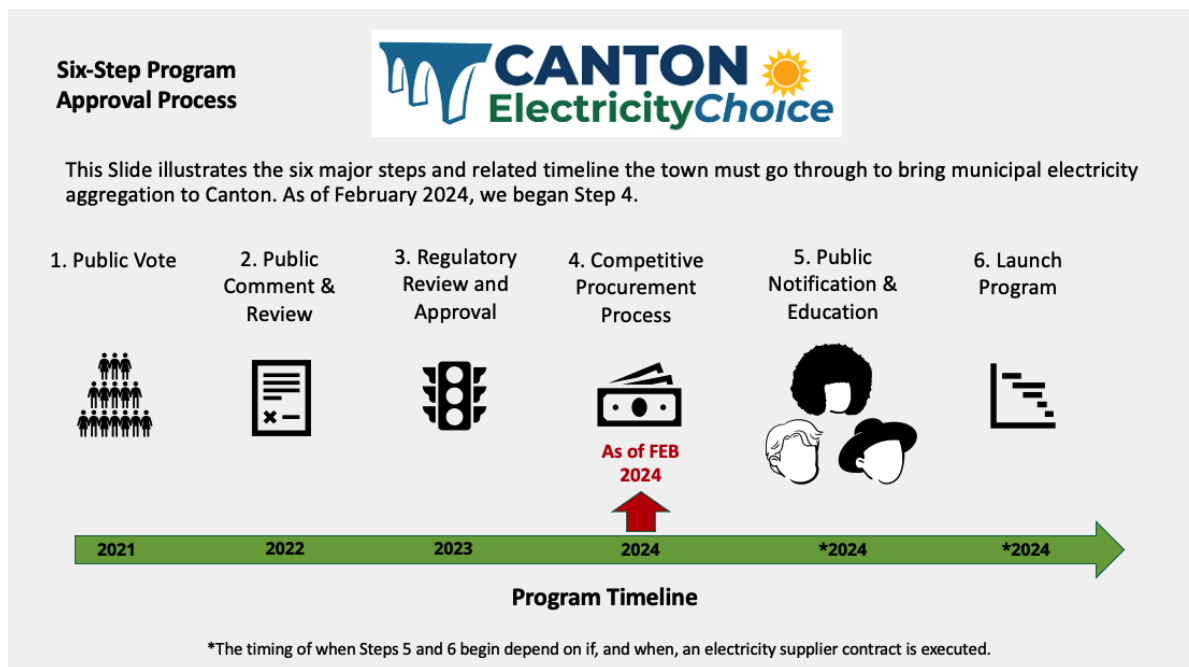


This is Part Three in a three-part series of articles to appear in the *Canton Citizen*. These articles have been written to help our residents and businesses become more familiar with what *Canton Electricity Choice* is all about. In sum, it is an optional form of group electricity purchasing that provides several benefits. These benefits are not otherwise available to most consumers on their own. Think “buyer’s club” for electricity with no hidden fees or penalties. You can see all three articles along with other helpful information at CantonElectricityChoice.com.

Part One provides an overview of the *Canton Electricity Choice* program. This includes a high-level description of the six-step program approval process necessary to bring this type of electricity choice program to Canton.

Part Two takes a deeper dive into Step 4 of this six-step program approval process. This is the critical Competitive Procurement Process phase, which the town entered in February 2024.

Part Three details what decisions residential and business customers will need to make to participate, or not, in this voluntary program. It also explains by when these decisions will need to be made. These are referred to as Step 5 (Public Notification & Education) and Step 6 (Launch Program) of the six-step program approval process. See the below diagram for an illustration of the entire six-step program approval process.



Customer Decision-Making Process

It is likely that in 2024, most Canton residents and businesses will be faced with an important decision about their electricity supply. This decision, which depends on the outcome of the competitive procurement process described in Part Two of this series, involves the following four options:

- **OPTION 1 (“Default”)**: This is called the “Standard Green” or “Default” option. It is the middle-tiered program option that customers will automatically be enrolled in unless they manually choose a different option; or
- **OPTION 2 (“Opt Up”)**: This is called the “Canton Plus Green” or “Opt Up” option. This is the highest tiered program option and requires manual selection to participate; or
- **OPTION 3 (“Opt Down”)**: This is called the “Canton Basic” or “Opt Down” option. It is the lowest tiered program option and requires manual selection to participate; or
- **OPTION 4 (“Opt Out”)**: This is called the “Eversource Basic” or “Opt Out” option. This is the option for customers who choose to stay with Eversource and requires manual selection.

Any customer wishing to select Options 2-4, above, must visit [CantonElectricityChoice.com](https://www.cantonelectricitychoice.com) or call customer support at 1-844-202-6101.

Customers who are currently contracted with a competitive electricity supplier may either remain with their current supplier or manually switch to *Canton Electricity Choice*. Check with your current supplier to determine if there are any early termination fees for switching and visit [CantonElectricityChoice.com](https://www.cantonelectricitychoice.com) or call customer support at 1-844-202-6101 for more information.

To ensure consumers are properly informed of their options, Canton is required to complete Steps 5 and 6 of the *Canton Electricity Choice* program. Below is a high-level description of each step.

Step 5 - Public Notification and Education Requirements

Step 5 of the *Canton Electricity Choice* program requires the town to deploy its approved Public Notification and Education Plan (“Plan”). This Plan is triggered any time Canton completes Step 4 - the Competitive Procurement Process (i.e., the Town Administrator signs or renews a competitive electricity supplier contract).

The Public Notification and Education Plan includes the following four important elements:

1. Contract announcement, website update, and community outreach;
2. “Coming soon” postcards to be mailed by the contracted electricity supplier;
3. “Opt-out” letters to be mailed by the contracted supplier; and
4. Other public education events and effort.

Of these four elements, the “Opt-out” letters, which explain all options, often capture the most public attention. This letter is complete with useful information to help customers decide which is the best option for their circumstances. Sample Plan materials are currently available at [CantonElectricityChoice.com](https://www.cantonelectricitychoice.com). Actual “Opt-out” letters to be mailed to customers as part of Step 5 will reflect the contracted information that only is available after a supply contract is signed as part of Step 4.

Please also refer to [CantonElectricityChoice.com](https://www.cantonelectricitychoice.com) or call 1-844-202-6101 for help understanding how your Eversource bill will change. You will still receive a single bill from Eversource, but there will be a difference between your current supply charge vs. your new *Canton Electricity Choice* program supply charge. Eversource will still manage your delivery charge.

Step 6: Program Launch

Canton will endeavor to launch the *Canton Electricity Choice* program as soon as is possible after signing an electricity supply contract. The timeline from when the contract is signed to when the program launches is approximately 60 days. This timeline is subject to change depending on factors such as the availability of public spaces for informational/educational meetings.

The following sample timeline is provided for illustrative purposes:

Days 1 – 7 - Electricity supply contract signed; Updates made to Program website and town website.

Days 7 – 14 - Issuance of press release / announcement to local media publications; Posting of announcement on town website; Initial social media posts on Facebook; Dissemination of Program details to community and environmental advocacy organizations, town committees, Canton Citizen and Canton Community TV, etc.

Days 14 – 21 - Mailing of coming-soon postcard and additional social media posts; Expected publication of press release / announcement in local media; Presentation of announcement at Select Board meeting (actual date TBD depending in Select Board schedule); Mailing of opt-out notice and reply card.

Days 21 – 28 - Social media post reminders about community information sessions on town social media accounts; Recording of cable access segment and/or video presentation.

Day 35 - Community-wide information session (actual date will depend on facility availability); Distribution of informational handout.

Day 42 - Community-wide information session at Canton's Council on Aging Senior Center (actual date will depend on facility availability).

Day 50 - 58 – Social media posts with opt-out deadline reminders on town social media accounts; Opt-out deadline; Enrollment can begin / program launch.

Comparison of Supply Options

In the end, this program is about making informed customer choices. The following table compares the customer electricity supply options available via the *Canton Electricity Choice* program. As described above, there are four options: (1) the "Default" or "Standard Green" option, (2) the "Opt Up" or "Canton Plus Green" option, (3) the "Opt Down" or "Canton Basic" option, and (4) the "Opt Out" or "Eversource Basic" option. This example assumes a contract term of 24-months.

Canton Electricity Choice	SAMPLE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY			
Supply Options	Eversource Basic 1/	Canton Basic 2/	Canton Standard Green 3/ (Default Option)	Canton Plus Green 4/
Sample \$ Rate / kWh	\$0.17/kWh	\$0.15/kWh	\$0.16/kWh	\$0.17/kWh
Fixed Rate for 24 months	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
More renewables from New England than either Basic Service option	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Level of Renewable Energy 5/	Meets MA minimum renewable energy standards	Meets MA minimum renewable energy standards	Includes 25% more Renewable Energy Certificates (MA Class 1 RECs) than required	Includes 50% more Renewable Energy Certificates (MA Class 1 RECs) than required
Contract Duration 6/	6 Months	24 Months	24 Months	24 Months
Customer Required Action 7/	Manually Opt Out	Manually Opt Down	Automatically Opt In	Manually Opt Up

NOTES:

1/ Eversource Basic represents what a typical residential or commercial customer is paying today if they are enrolled in Eversource's Basic supply option. Customers preferring to remain on Eversource Basic will need to manually "opt out" of the Canton Standard Green option during the initial enrollment period or anytime thereafter.

2/ Canton Basic represents what a typical residential or business customer would pay if they manually "opt down" from the Canton Standard Green option. In this example, the benefit of Canton Basic over Eversource Basic is more price certainty (i.e., a longer duration period) and lower cost (savings compared to future basic service prices are not guaranteed). Canton Basic will offer the same level of renewable energy as the Eversource Basic option.

3/ Canton Standard Green represents what a typical residential or commercial customer would pay when they are automatically enrolled in the Canton Electricity Choice program. This is also known as the "default option". In this example, the benefit of Canton Standard Green over Eversource Basic is more price certainty (i.e., a longer duration period) and lower cost (savings compared to future basic service prices are not guaranteed). The benefit over Canton Basic includes 25% more MA Class 1 RECs.

4/ Canton Plus Green represents what a typical residential or commercial customer would pay if they manually "opt up" from the Canton Standard Green option. In this example, the benefit of Canton Plus Green over Eversource Basic is more price certainty (i.e., a longer duration period), but no price difference. The benefit of Canton Plus Green over Canton Standard Green includes 25% more MA Class 1 RECs.

5/ The exact level of MA Class 1 RECs (i.e., units of electricity generated from 100% clean renewable energy sources located within the New England region) to be included in the Canton Standard Green and Canton Plus Green options will be guided by the Canton Electricity Choice Program Goals captured in Canton's Competitive Procurement Process Guidelines.

6/ The exact duration of any competitive supply-related contract will be guided by the Canton Electricity Choice Program Goals.

7/ All supply options will be available to all Canton residents and businesses. Canton Electricity Choice's approved Education and Outreach Plan will help ensure customers understand how to "choose" the best option for their needs (i.e., remain in the "default option" or manually "opt out," "opt up," or "opt down"). This Plan will be launched following the signing of any competitive supply contract. The process to manually choose alternative options will involve a few simple steps that can be completed either on-line or by calling a toll-free number.

Learn more about *Canton Electricity Choice* at CantonElectricityChoice.com or by calling 1-844-202-6101, including optional translation services.