

# Pepperell Community Electricity

## Education and Outreach Plan

May 31, 2023

This document presents a draft public Education and Outreach Plan for the Pepperell Community Electricity Program. This Education and Outreach Plan was developed in consultation with Pepperell Climate Committee and these outreach efforts have been customized to ensure that the population of Pepperell has as much access as is possible to program information and resources.

Pepperell will be able to finalize the strategy once the Program launch date and pricing have been established, which cannot happen until after the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) approves the Town's aggregation plan and the Town selects an electricity supplier for the Program.

### I. Education and outreach schedule

#### A. Aggregation plan development period

While developing its aggregation plan, the Town endeavored to begin engaging the community with the Program by announcing a public comment period of 30 days and soliciting comments (see Petition, Attachment G for copies of comments received). A public presentation of the plan was made during that 30-day period on April 11, 2023 (see Petition for Approval of Municipal Aggregation Plan (Petition), Attachment F for a copy of the presentation). The formal announcement, public comment period, and public presentation of the plan were publicized as follows:

- Sent out to the local newspapers, *Nashoba Valley Voice* and *The Lowell Sun*
- Posted on the home page of Pepperell's municipal website
- Posted on the home page of the Pepperell Community Electricity aggregation website (PepperellCommunityElectricity.com)
- Posted on a bulletin board in Town Hall
- Sent out via social media posts on official Town social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter
- Sent to municipal agencies and community organizations with a request that they share the information with their constituents/members, including the Pepperell Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, the Pepperell Business Association, the Pepperell Garden Club, and Lawrence Library.

The Town also developed initial program branding, launched an informational website, which is available at PepperellCommunityElectricity.com, and made customer support available to the public through the website so the public could get early answers to questions about the program.

See Petition, Attachment E for a copy of communications sent out about the public presentation of the plan and public comment period.

### B. Regulatory review period

While Pepperell's aggregation plan is undergoing regulatory review, the Town plans to build general awareness about aggregation and about the Town's goals to increase the renewable energy content of the community's electricity supply.

As part of those efforts, the Town will endeavor to provide information to residents and businesses through the community organizations that they interact with and that serve them. The Town will prioritize groups that provide support for vulnerable populations, such as low-income homeowners; renters, in particular those living in subsidized housing; seniors; immigrant populations and non-English speakers; those connected to faith-based communities; food pantries; and veterans. The Town will also involve groups whose missions focus on environmental and sustainability issues in outreach. The Town will offer to speak to staff and to constituents and provide information about the program. Exemplar organizations include:

- PACH: Pepperell Food Pantry
- Albert Harris Center: Pepperell Senior Center
- VFW Post 3291: Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Community Church of Pepperell
- Pepperell Christian Fellowship

To ensure access to program information during this period and on an ongoing basis during program operation, the Town will provide a link to [PepperellCommunityElectricity.com](http://PepperellCommunityElectricity.com) and basic information about the Plan in a prominent location on the Town's website. Once complete and approved by the DPU, the final version of all Program documents and educational materials will be made available and updated on [PepperellCommunityElectricity.com](http://PepperellCommunityElectricity.com).

### C. Electricity supply contract is signed

After the regulatory review process is complete, the electricity supply contract is signed. Signing the electricity supply contract does not itself include any outreach to the general community, but it is a milestone that moves the Town toward the formal education and outreach efforts that immediately precede program launch.

The contract is signed as a result of a competitive procurement process, and includes the program pricing, the program structure, the amount of any additional renewable electricity that will be made available to participants, the electricity supplier, and the electricity supply contract duration.

### D. Formal public education and outreach period

During the period of time between electricity supply contract signing and program enrollment, the Town will conduct a formal public education and outreach effort. That effort will include the following:

## **1. Contract announcement + website update + outreach to community organizations**

The Town will publicize a **press release/announcement** about the Program launch and Program details as follows:

- Posted on the Town website
- Posted on the Pepperell Community Electricity website (PepperellCommunityElectricity.com)
- Sent to local media publications, such as *Nashoba Valley Voice*, and *The Lowell Sun*
- Via announcement at a Select Board meeting
- Via Social media posts on official Town accounts, including Facebook and Twitter
- Via a cable access segment
- Sent to community and environmental advocacy agencies and organizations in Pepperell, such as the Pepperell Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, the Pepperell Business Association, the Pepperell Garden Club, Lawrence Library, and the Invasive and Native Plant Committee, with a request that they publicize the announcement to their networks
- Sent to faith-based organizations, such as the Community Church of Pepperell and the Pepperell Christian Fellowship, with a request that they publicize the announcement to their members
- Sent to agencies and organizations that provide support to vulnerable community members, such as the PACH (Pepperell Food Pantry), VFW Post 3291: Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pepperell Housing Authority, and the Albert Harris Center (Senior Center)

The **Program website** will be updated to include the following information:

- Supplier name
- Customer support information
- Program pricing and program option descriptions
- Information about the renewable energy content in the Program offerings
- A form that allows customers to select a Program option
- Opt-out information and a form for opting out online
- Information about how to opt in to the Program for those customers who will not be automatically enrolled, including an online enrollment form
- Information on submitting tax-exemption documentation
- Additional resources, such as the approved aggregation plan and the electricity supply contract

## **2. "Coming-soon" postcard mailing by the supplier**

- To ensure the public is looking for and recognizes the opt-out letter as an important and legitimate communication from the Town, a "coming-soon" postcard will be mailed to eligible customers in Pepperell. The contracted electricity supplier will cover the cost of the postcard and will execute the mailing.

## **3. Opt-out letter mailing by the supplier + public education events**

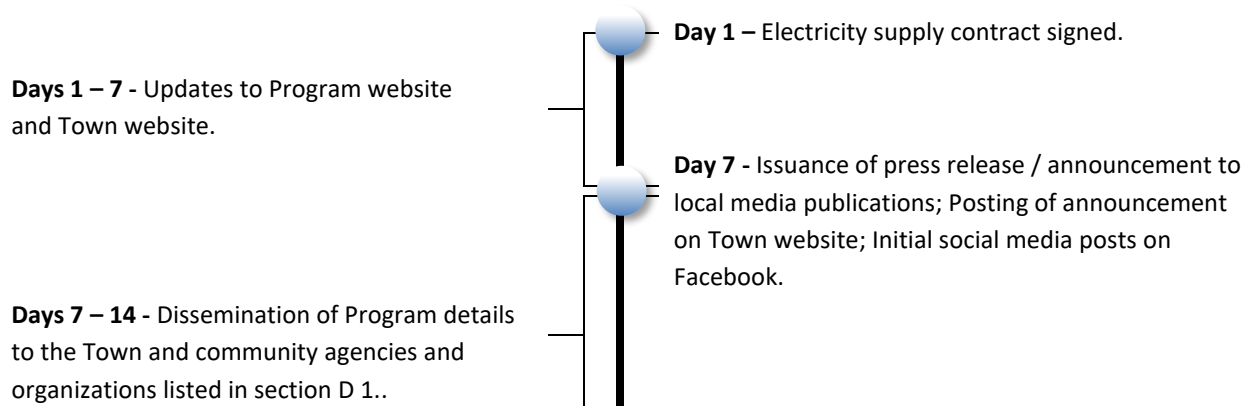
- The opt-out letter and reply card will be mailed to eligible customers in Pepperell, accompanied by the D.P.U.-required Language Access Document.<sup>1</sup>
- The Town will host **at least two community-wide public education sessions** that are available to the general public: at least one public education session at the Pepperell Senior Center targeted for seniors and at least one additional session. The public information sessions will be publicized in the Program announcement, on the Program website, and through the Town’s social media accounts. In addition, the Town will publicize the schedule of the information sessions to select community groups and committees listed in D. 1. and ask them to share with their members via email, social media, and other means.

**4. Anticipated materials for the public education effort**

- a. Informational presentation:** An informational presentation will be created to provide a Program overview at public education events
- b. An informational handout:** An informational handout will be created and distributed in public buildings, to community groups, and at public information sessions about the Program. The handout will provide updated Program details such as pricing, Program options, how to opt out, and participation information.
- c. Social media posts**

**Illustrative program outreach timeline**

Pepperell will endeavor to launch the program as soon as is possible after signing an electricity supply contract. The timeline below is illustrative. The actual timeline will be dependent on the actual length of time between when the supply contract is signed and the program is scheduled to launch, as well as other factors such as the availability of public spaces for meetings.



<sup>1</sup> The required Language Access Document translates the following text into 26 languages that, according to U.S. Census Bureau data, are the languages spoken by Massachusetts residents with limited English proficiency:

Important notice enclosed from Pepperell about your electricity service. Translate the notice immediately. Call the number or visit the website, above, for help.

**Days 14 – 21** - Expected publication of press release / announcement in local media; Presentation of announcement at Select Board meeting (actual date TBD depending in Select Board schedule);

**Days 21 – 28** - Recording of cable access segment and/or video presentation.



Discounts provided by National Grid to low-income customers will not be impacted by their enrollment in the Program.

#### E. After Program launch

After Program launch, customer support provided by MassPowerChoice, the Town’s Program consultant, will remain available via phone, email, and the web for the duration of the Program.

The Town will notify customers of any change in product price or renewable energy content consistent with all notification requirements for the competitive supply market required by the Department of Public Utilities that are applicable to aggregation programs. The Town will notify customers of any change in Program price (including a change in Program price at the start of a new supply period) at

least 30 days prior to any such change. At a minimum, the Town will provide that notification by issuing a media release, posting a notice in Town Hall, posting a notice on the Town’s municipal website, and posting a notice on the Program website, PepperellCommunityElectricity.com.

If, after Program launch, there is a change in law (i.e., “regulatory event or “new taxes per Article 18 of the ESA) that results in a direct, material increase in costs during the term of the ESA, the Town and the competitive supplier will negotiate a potential change in the Program price. At least 30 days prior to the implementation of any such change, the Town will notify consumers of the change in price by issuing a media release and posting a notice in Town Hall and on the Town website. The Town will notify the DPU Consumer Division prior to the implementation of any change in Program price related to a change in law. Such communication will occur at least ten days prior to the consumer notification and include copies of all media releases, Town Hall and website postings, and other communications the Town intends to provide to customers regarding the change in price.

As part of its ongoing service, the Town will provide the disclosure information required by G.L. c. 164, § 1(F)(vi) and 220 C.M.R. § 11.06. Like the other Massachusetts aggregations, the Town has requested a waiver from the requirement that the disclosure label be mailed to every customer and seeks permission instead to provide the information through alternative means. Specifically, on a quarterly basis or as received by the program's electricity supplier, the Town will publicize either the disclosure label or a link to download a PDF of the complete disclosure label along with explanatory text such as the following:

The electricity supplier for Pepperell Community Electricity, the Town’s electricity program, has sent an updated electricity disclosure label. Participants in Pepperell Community Electricity can use this label to learn about the electricity supplied through the program, including the sources of that electricity.

The Town’s intention is to publicize the labels in March, June, September, and December. The Town will publicize them in the following ways:

- By posting a physical notice and disclosure label on a bulletin board at Town Hall, the Council on Aging, and the Public Library
- As a news item on the home page of the Town website
- Via posts on the Town’s official social media outlets, including Facebook and Twitter
- Via announcement on the Town’s cable access channel
- By posting a notice and disclosure label on the Program website

## II. Access for customers with limited English proficiency and who require other assistance

The American Community Survey offers information on languages and language groups within the Town of Pepperell.

The most recent data is from 2020<sup>2</sup> and provides information about a combination of specific languages and language groups. Based on 2020 report data, out of a total of 2,599 residents over the age of five:

- 2,475 speak only English, and 124, or 5%, also or only speak other languages.
- Of those that speak other languages, 42, or approximately 34% (1.7% of the total population), speak English “less than very well.”
- Among those who speak English “less than very well,” all are speakers of Vietnamese.

The table below provides a summary of the 2020 American Community Survey data. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the original data and the data source used in the table.

**2020 Census data – Language and language group populations speaking English “less than very well”**

Language	Number of speakers	% of total Pepperell population
Spanish	0	0.00%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	0	0.00%
German or other West Germanic languages	0	0.00%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	0	0.00%
Other Indo-European languages	0	0.00%
Korean	0	0.00%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	0	0.00%
Vietnamese	42	1.62%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	0	0.00%
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	0	0.00%
Arabic	0	0.00%
Other and unspecified languages	0	0.00%

<sup>2</sup> Table C16001: Language Spoken at home for the population 5 years and over

For detail on specific languages instead of language groups, the older 2015 American Community Survey<sup>3</sup> provides greater detail. (The same detail is not available for the Town of Pepperell in 2020 American Community Survey data.) The table below offers that detail and assumes a total Pepperell population of 2,096, as reported in the 2015 data. In this slightly older but more detailed data, the population that speaks English “less than very well” includes speakers of Portuguese or Portuguese Creole, not Vietnamese. However, the number of speakers was just 30, which is even less than the number of Vietnamese speakers in the 2020 data. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the original data and the data source.

**2015 census data – Specific language populations speaking English “less than very well”**

Language	Number of speakers	% of total Pepperell population
Spanish or Spanish Creole	0	0.00%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	0	0.00%
French Creole	0	0.00%
Italian	0	0.00%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	30	1.43%
German	0	0.00%
Yiddish	0	0.00%
Other West Germanic languages	0	0.00%
Scandinavian languages	0	0.00%
Greek	0	0.00%
Russian	0	0.00%
Polish	0	0.00%
Serbo-Croatian	0	0.00%
Other Slavic languages	0	0.00%
Armenian	0	0.00%
Persian	0	0.00%
Gujarati	0	0.00%

<sup>3</sup> Table B16001: Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over



Hindi	0	0.00%
Urdu	0	0.00%
Other Indic languages	0	0.00%
Other Indo-European languages	0	0.00%
Chinese	0	0.00%
Japanese	0	0.00%
Korean	0	0.00%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	0	0.00%
Hmong	0	0.00%
Thai	0	0.00%
Laotian	0	0.00%
Vietnamese	0	0.00%
Other Asian languages	0	0.00%
Tagalog	0	0.00%
Other Pacific Island languages	0	0.00%
Navajo	0	0.00%
Other Native North American languages	0	0.00%
Hungarian	0	0.00%
Arabic	0	0.00%
Hebrew	0	0.00%
African languages	0	0.00%
Other and unspecified languages	0	0.00%

To ensure adequate access to the aggregation opt-out letter and other information about the Program for electricity customers with limited English proficiency, Pepperell will:

- Provide on-demand machine translation of the Program website before, during, and after Program launch, including price change announcements, which are featured on the website home page.

- Include the DPU-required Language Access document as a cover sheet with the opt-out letter mailing. The Language Access document will include the following text translated into 26 languages:

*Important notice enclosed from Pepperell about your electricity service. Translate the notice immediately. Call the number or visit the website, above, for help.*

In addition, the Language Access document will include the MassRelay TTY phone number for both Spanish and English speakers.

- Provide on-demand phone interpreting in 200 languages via the Program’s toll-free customer service telephone number before, during, and after Program launch.
- Endeavor to communicate directly with organizations that provide ESOL instruction to ensure their staff and students have a clear understanding of program communications and price change announcements.
- Any further need for interpreting or translation will be addressed on an ad hoc basis as the need becomes known to the Town, both before and after Program launch.

### III. Access for customers with a physical disability or who require visual or audio assistance

To the extent possible, all public education events will be held in accessible spaces such as Town buildings. In the event public education events cannot be presented as in-person events, they will be held online and as such will be accessible to those with limited mobility. Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing may request an ASL interpreter at these public events from customer support using the web form or via email, and this option will be communicated as a part of the Town's publicity about the events.

Before Program launch and on an ongoing basis after Program launch, customers who are blind or otherwise visually impaired may request assistance reading Program materials and the Program website, which will include price change information, by calling the customer support number. For customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Language Access Document, which will accompany the opt-out letter, will include TTY phone numbers for use by both English- and Spanish-speaking customers. In addition, customer support will be available via multiple modalities: voice (phone) as well as written (web form and email) both before and after Program launch.

### IV. Competitive supply customers

Where the Town’s education and outreach materials address the availability of the Program to competitive supply customers, those materials will disclose that such customers may be subject to penalties or early termination fees from their competitive supplier if they switch from competitive supply to the Town’s Program during the term of a competitive supply contract.

Appendix A – Source data for population speaking English less than very well

Table C16001, Language Spoken at home for the population 5 years and over

Original source data for Table C16001, entitled *Language Spoken at home for the population 5 years and over*, from the 2020 American Community Survey.<sup>4</sup>

Pepperell CDP, Massachusetts		
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	2,599	±394
Speak only English	2,475	±387
Spanish:	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
French, Haitian, or Cajun:	27	±29
Speak English "very well"	27	±29
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
German or other West Germanic languages:	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages:	19	±33
Speak English "very well"	19	±33
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Other Indo-European languages:	24	±27

<sup>4</sup> The table can be accessed directly at the following link: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Pepperell%20massachusetts%20c16001&y=2020&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.C16001>

Speak English "very well"	24	±27
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Korean:	10	±17
Speak English "very well"	10	±17
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese):	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Vietnamese:	42	±68
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	42	±68
Tagalog (incl. Filipino):	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages:	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Arabic:	0	±13
Speak English "very well"	0	±13
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13
Other and unspecified languages:	2	±5

Speak English "very well"	2	±5
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±13

Table B16001: Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over

Original source data for Table B16001, entitled Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over, from the 2015 American Community Survey.<sup>5</sup>

Pepperell CDP, Massachusetts		
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	2,096	±249
Speak only English	2,007	±260
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	47	±38
Speak English "very well"	47	±38
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
French (incl. Patois, Cajun):	12	±19
Speak English "very well"	12	±19
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
French Creole:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Italian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12

<sup>5</sup> The table can be accessed directly at the following link:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Pepperell%20massachusetts%20b16001>

Portuguese or Portuguese Creole:	30	±46
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	30	±46
German:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Yiddish:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other West Germanic languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Scandinavian languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Greek:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Russian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12

Polish:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Serbo-Croatian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Slavic languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Armenian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Persian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Gujarati:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Hindi:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Urdu:	0	±12

Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Indic languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Indo-European languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Chinese:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Japanese:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Korean:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Hmong:	0	±12



Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Thai:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Laotian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Vietnamese:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Asian languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Tagalog:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Pacific Island languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Navajo:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12

Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other Native North American languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Hungarian:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Arabic:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Hebrew:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
African languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12
Other and unspecified languages:	0	±12
Speak English "very well"	0	±12
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±12