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Building a Greener Future: Five New Central Mass Towns Designated as *Green Communities*

[Worcester, Massachusetts] December 28, 2017: The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is pleased to announce that **the Towns of Douglas, Leicester, New Braintree, Webster, and West Boylston have achieved Green Communities designation through the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) *Green Communities* program. As a result of designation, these towns will receive a combined award of \$758,345 as well as eligibility for competitive funding.** Individually, their designation awards are as follows:

- Douglas: \$145,940
- Leicester \$158,800
- New Braintree: \$127,285
- Webster: \$180,885
- West Boylston: \$145,435

Established under the Green Communities Act of 2008, the Department of Energy Resources *Green Communities* program helps Massachusetts cities and towns implement clean energy solutions that reduce long-term energy costs and strengthen local economies. Statewide, 25 new towns and cities were awarded Green Communities designation. To date, the program has designated 210 Green Communities and awarded more than \$80 million in funding for energy conservation measures.

Each of the 5 Central Massachusetts towns received support from CMRPC's Green Energy Technical Assistance program. Established in 2014 to help towns meet Green Communities requirements and other energy goals, CMRPC's program has grown ten-fold since its launch. In 2017, CMRPC assisted 19 communities with various aspects of the Green Communities process, from designation preparation to annual reporting and grant administration.

Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director of CMRPC, notes "We are thrilled to witness the effect this program is having in Central Massachusetts. With the Baker-Polito Administration as its champion, Green Communities is creating tangible change. From the energy projects funded by DOER and EEA to spillover effects occurring in Green Communities (such as increased participation in recycling programs), this program is enhancing our resilience and sustainability for years to come."

Green Communities designation requires the completion of 5 criteria, including as-of-right siting of renewable or alternative energy facilities; adopting an expedited permitting process for the energy facilities; developing an energy use baseline and energy reduction plan; purchasing only fuel-efficient municipal vehicles; and adopting an energy efficient "stretch" building code. All Green Communities commit to reducing municipal energy consumption by 20 percent over five years.

Municipalities interested in the Green Communities program or other energy reduction projects are encouraged to contact Dominique DuTremble of CMRPC at ddutremble@cmrpc.org or (508) 459-3336 or visit www.mass.gov to find their Regional Green Communities Coordinator.

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