



**SUSTAINABLE
WESTCHESTER**



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Town of Bedford Leads the County in Community Solar Adoption -- the First Town to Enroll in Community Solar and Residents Are Invited to Join

(Bedford & Mount Kisco, New York, May 2020)

As a leader in climate action in Westchester County and New York State, the Town of Bedford today announced that it has enrolled its eligible electricity accounts in community solar through non-profit, Sustainable Westchester. This action marks another first as Bedford is the first municipality in Westchester, as well as one of the first in New York State, to participate as a subscriber in community solar.

The Town of Bedford has completed enrollment of its eligible smaller accounts and signed a Letter of Intent to participate as an anchor subscriber with its large electricity accounts in another move to further its commitment. Participating in community solar will save the Town money on its electricity bills – up to 10% - while spurring development of new solar facilities in the region and helping to reach the state’s ambitious climate goals.

Bedford Supervisor, Chris Burdick has encouraged residents, faith organizations, and small businesses to join the Town in enrolling in community solar through Sustainable Westchester. Subscribers can now enroll on the same terms as the Town, locking in the opportunity to save up to 10% on electricity bills for up to twenty years. Bedford 2020 is also working with Sustainable Westchester to promote community solar to residents and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the community.

“We are doing everything possible to combat the climate crisis. The Town is considering adopting ambitious climate action goals, which includes 85% renewable energy supply by 2030. The community expects the Town to act with a sense of urgency. To move us ahead, we are taking decisive action—first

to enter into this agreement and then to be an anchor participant for one of the largest solar farms in the state, located in Tioga County, New York. We urge residents of the Town to take advantage of Community Solar for guaranteed savings on their electricity bills while promoting renewable energy," said Chris Burdick, Bedford Town Supervisor.

Community solar enables people to subscribe to a large solar installation located in their utility service territory. Energy produced by the solar farm is sent to the electric grid and subscribers receive a credit on their electricity bill, representing the value of their share of the energy produced. Subscribers then pay the owner of the solar farm a discounted amount for that solar credit. Sustainable Westchester's Community Solar is compatible with Sustainable Westchester's Westchester Power (CCA) program, other ESCOs, and their utility. Residents who already have solar on their property, however, are not eligible for Community Solar.

Lodestar Energy is developing, constructing, financing, and will operate the community solar farm in which the Town has enrolled. Lodestar has worked with utilities, school districts, cities, counties, states, commercial businesses, industrial clients, and others to develop over 30 solar projects worth over \$175 million. "We are committed to providing clean, renewable energy to the Town of Bedford and their residents and proud to be associated with Sustainable Westchester," said Jaime A. Smith, founder of Lodestar Energy.

Sustainable Westchester's Director of Solar Programs, Nina Orville, notes, "we are proud to partner with the Town of Bedford, a valued member of our organization, and with Lodestar Energy on this initiative. Community Solar is another way the Town and the Bedford community can take action to protect our climate and we're pleased that the enrollment terms provided by Lodestar offer significant savings."

The New York State Public Service Commission regulates community solar to ensure consumer protection and the approach is integral to achieving the state's ambitious climate goals, including more than tripling solar energy production by 2025. Community Solar is an important component of the state's environmental and climate justice mandates.

The Town of Bedford has long been at the forefront of adopting and advocating for renewable energy. This leadership has taken the form of installing rooftop solar on two of its own municipal facilities, participation in Sustainable Westchester's Westchester Power program which makes renewable energy the default for Bedford residents, participation as one of the first communities in the Solarize Westchester rooftop solar, and HeatSmart Westchester programs, and now through its municipal participation in Community Solar.

Con Edison and NYSEG customers throughout Westchester can learn more and enroll at www.sustainablewestchester.org/solar. The sign-up process takes 5 - 10 minutes and requires utility account information and setting up automated payments for the solar credits. Most Westchester residents are unable to benefit from solar installations on their homes, and community solar expands access to the benefits of solar energy to almost everyone - with no investment and no solar installation required.

About Sustainable Westchester

Sustainable Westchester is a nonprofit consortium of Westchester County local municipalities facilitating effective collaboration resulting in sustainability initiatives and cutting-edge innovation. Our goal is to bring socially responsible, environmentally sound, and economically viable solutions that create resilient, healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities.

Sustainable Westchester's portfolio of energy solutions includes Westchester Power, the first in NYS Community Choice Aggregation program that provides 100% NYS hydropower and fixed electricity supply rates to its customers. Currently, Westchester Power is the default supplier in 27 County municipalities servicing nearly 1/3 of Westchester County households' customers. To date, the Westchester Power Program has made a significant environmental impact eliminating over 600,000 metric tons of CO₂. Community Solar and its precursor Solarize Westchester is responsible for driving renewable energy and solar adoption to thousands of Westchester residents and includes a municipal solar integration partnership with NYPA bringing solar benefits to municipalities across the county. HeatSmart an energy efficiency, clean heating and cooling solution provides options for home and commercial buildings through geothermal or air source heat pumps. HeatSmart provides a valuable solution for all Westchester residents and businesses and importantly for those in current gas constricted areas. On the forefront of innovation and always looking for and developing the next generation of solutions, Sustainable Westchester is working with NYSERDA in the development of direct supply and energy storage and is in development of a Sunshine to EV model for adoption in member municipalities. Sustainable Westchester understands that transportation is a critical component of the energy discussion and its Clean Transportation Project includes the facilitation of municipal fleet conversion and the infrastructure for charging stations. Included in its focus, Sustainable Westchester facilitates a zero waste initiative anchored by app technology for municipal recycling solutions (Recycle Right!). Other areas of focus include land use and complete streets.

For more information, contact Maria Genovesi, Director of Marketing, Communications & Outreach at (914) 242-4725 x104 or maria@SustainableWestchester.org or visit sustainablewestchester.org for general information.

About the Town of Bedford's Sustainability Initiatives

The Town of Bedford has achieved an astonishing 44% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions town-wide, being only municipality in the state to achieve such results, as one of the first in the state to adopt a Climate Action Plan. The Town is a founding member of Sustainable Westchester and was critical in launching Westchester Power, the first community aggregation program in the state. The Town is considering adopting an ambitious new Climate Action Plan which will be integrated into the Town's Comprehensive Plan calling for carbon neutrality and 100% fossil free energy, with the following specific goals: 80% Greenhouse Gas Emissions reductions by 2030, 85% renewably sourced electricity by 2030 and Net Zero Emissions by 2040.

About Lodestar Energy

Lodestar has worked with utilities, school districts, cities, counties, states, commercial businesses, industrial clients and many others to develop over 30 solar projects worth over \$175 million. Lodestar currently owns and operates more than 40 megawatts of solar projects in the Northeast, including ground mounted, rooftop, and canopy systems powering over 7,500 homes and offsetting over 40,000 tons of CO₂ annually.