



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2030

**Approved and Adopted by the Municipal Light Board on September 17, 2025**

The Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (WMLP) presents our Strategic Plan which lays a path forward from 2025 through 2030. WMLP's Strategic Plan is the culmination of an initial planning process and is a living, working plan that will continue to evolve over time. We view this strategic planning effort as the first step in incorporating long-term planning into the way we guide our business here at WMLP.

The WMLP's strategic planning team consists of the Director, Assistant Director, Business Manager, Office Manager, Sustainability Program Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, System Infrastructure Engineer, and two members of the Municipal Light Board.

Early in our planning process, we updated our Mission and Vision Statements to better reflect where WMLP is today and where we want to be in the future. These statements helped inform our goals and initiatives, which are the centerpieces of this Strategic Plan.

### **WMLP's Mission Statement**

The WMLP implements best business practices to protect the safety of our employees and the public, deliver environmentally sustainable and highly reliable electricity service at competitive rates, and provide financial and in-kind support to the Town. The WMLP conducts its affairs in a socially responsible and ethical manner, with respect for our many stakeholders.

### **Strategic Pillars**

Our Strategic Plan is organized into the following six pillars that reflect the key tenets of the WMLP's Mission and Vision Statements.

1. Safety
2. Sustainability
3. Reliability
4. Competitive Rates
5. Customer and Community Engagement
6. Non-Core Businesses

For each of the six pillars, we first present our goals that helped guide the development and selection of the key initiatives to achieve them. These goals reflect what we believe are most important for the WMLP during the next five years. Then through an analysis of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, we initially identified a long list of possible initiatives that could be implemented. We then analyzed them and selected a smaller list of key initiatives, through consideration of an often set of observations or trends about the electric

power markets, regional affairs and policy, and WMLP's business and field operations that are or will be important in the years to come. Examples include the WMLP's aging infrastructure, ability to handle the growing electrical load (from customer electrification) and threat of climate change (e.g., severe weather events), commitment to greenhouse gas reduction, lackluster level of customer engagement, competitive rates, and strong reliability and financial performance.

## 1. Safety

Ensuring the safety of employees, customers, and the public is the WMLP's top priority in all operations.

### Goals:

- **Zero Safety Incidents:** Strive to maintain a zero-tolerance policy on workplace injuries and accidents.
- **Community Safety Education:** Increase public awareness of electrical hazards through regular safety campaigns.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Strengthen systems and protocols for handling electrical emergencies, storms, and natural disasters.
- **System Security:** Strengthen the cyber and physical security of the WMLP's information systems and infrastructure.

### Key Initiatives:

1. Define and recalibrate pertinent and best-in-class safety goals and key performance indicators (e.g., OSHA Total Recordable Incident Rate or "TRI") for industry benchmarking. Apply for and publicize our safety awards (APPA).
2. Systematically enhance our safety training and communication programs and protocols (e.g., classroom, tailgate, driver) to incorporate best and up to date safety management practices for newer, inexperienced employees and for current staff, overcome their complacency and resistance to change.
3. Inventory aging equipment and proactively identify a plan and timeline for their preventative maintenance and/or replacement to minimize the risk of failure and safety incidents.
4. Use social media and new customer portal to communicate important news and alerts about system outages, the progress of our restoration activities, and electrical hazards (e.g., downed wires).
5. Support the Town's efforts being led by the Fire Department to develop and implement a community emergency response plan (e.g., prioritize restoration and backup power to critical facilities).
6. Work with  Utility Services and Town IT to actively monitor for and prevent cybersecurity threats and attacks to the WMLP's critical and sensitive systems (customer information and utility billing, SCADA, and outage management system (OMS)).

7. Work with Utility Services and Wellesley Police Department to enhance the protection and physical security of the WMLP's critical facilities (e.g., substations), including improved video surveillance, fencing and gate access, and incident response.

## 2. Sustainability

Promote the use of renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adopt practices that support long-term environmental and economic sustainability. Demonstrate and communicate program successes.

### Goals:

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions:**
  - Achieve 50% reduction in GHG emissions of our power supply by 2030, compared to 2007 levels;
  - 75% reduction by 2040; and
  - Net-zero emissions by 2050
- **Renewable Energy Integration:** Increase the share of non-carbon emitting sources of energy (solar, wind, hydroelectric, nuclear) in the WMLP supply portfolio.<sup>1</sup>
- **Electrification and Energy Efficiency:** Promote electrification and energy efficiency both internally and among customers to reduce demand and overall energy consumption.

### Key Initiatives:

1. **Renewable Energy Projects:** Partner with other Town departments (Climate Action, Select Board, DPW, schools, facilities) and renewable energy providers to integrate solar and storage in Wellesley.
  - a. Consistent with the MLP's WECARE policy, use WECARE funds to support utility- or community-scale clean energy projects such as community solar, public EV charging stations, and energy coaching; match or make up for reductions in grant funding; and collaboratively fund initiatives/projects recommended by the Energy Transition and Climate Resiliency Working Group.
  - b. Apply our Wellesley BESS experience towards exploring another battery system in Wellesley.
2. **Electrification and Energy Efficiency Programs:**
  - a. Evaluate the effectiveness and performance of our current residential rebate programs to improve customer uptake and experience and inform program expansion to residential multi-family and commercial customers.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, about 70% of the WMLP's energy portfolio is supplied from non-carbon emitting sources.

- b. Modify our EV charger rebate and Bring Your Own Charger (BYOC) programs to increase participation and compliance rates with off-peak charging.
- c. Use AMI data to proactively identify and prioritize areas that need infrastructure upgrades to reliably accommodate electrification.
- d. Investigate opportunities that would help customers who live in older housing stock achieve full electrification in lieu of service and panel upgrades (circuit switching, smart panels).
- e. Use AMI data to develop and test out time-of-use (TOU) rate opportunities and options to reduce customer demand, especially during peak periods.

### **3. Communication and Engagement:**

- a. Better promote our clean energy supply and low rates to our customers as sound environmental and financial support for pursuing and adopting electrification measures.
- b. Enhance our energy coach/home energy audit program tool kit and marketing campaign (e.g., workshops, seminars, events) to build customer enthusiasm, overcome resistance, and encourage weatherization and heat pumps. Publicize and direct customers to available rebate/financing opportunities from other MA programs.
- c. Better demonstrate the performance and success of our sustainability programs by incorporating GHG equivalencies (e.g., no. of newly installed heat pumps and EV chargers is equivalent to a certain no. of gasoline-powered cars removed off our roads) in our website and marketing/outreach materials.
- d. To the extent they are comparable, benchmark the performance of our sustainability programs against those offered by Mass Save®, in terms of both costs and benefits.

### **3. Reliability**

Delivering uninterrupted and high-quality power to the community is essential for maintaining trust and meeting operational goals.

#### **Goals:**

- **Reduce Downtime:** Achieve a goal of placing in the top decile in the appropriate system reliability index with fewer outages and quicker recovery times (SAIDI, SAIFI standards). Benchmark and publish results.
- **Grid Modernization:** Transition to a smarter, more resilient grid to reduce the risk of blackouts and improve service quality.
- **System Resilience:** Improve or upgrade infrastructure to withstand extreme weather and unforeseen events.

#### **Key Initiatives:**

1. Regularly publicize our reliability metrics (and awards), restoration activities and times, and activities/initiatives to improve system reliability (tree trimming, pole inspections and replacements, supply line and distribution feeder upgrades).
2. Build a robust, complete, and accurate GIS-based database and mapping of the MLP's distribution system including poles and transformers that is well integrated with AMI and OMS. Use these systems to: i) proactively and more quickly detect and manage outages, ii) improve restoration times, iii) more precisely identify and characterize the more vulnerable areas of the system (e.g., due to age, exposure to weather, high load conditions, or frequency/severity of past outages), iv) assess system impacts for preventive maintenance and reliability/resiliency improvement opportunities and informing the MLP's capital plans, and v) conduct planning and scenario analyses for system growth.
3. Consider aging infrastructure and projected load growth in our capital plans to more proactively plan for necessary improvements and expansion. Apply the MLP's capital, operating, and maintenance plans more holistically to inform and deploy a schedule of equipment purchases and replacements to minimize costs and maximize quality.
4. Explore alternative initiatives that would help improve community resiliency and defer certain system upgrades such as demand management/response, virtual power plants (VPPs), and solar and storage (microgrids).
5. Work with Utility Services and Town IT to review, assess, and improve the MLP's cybersecurity practices.
6. Involve more junior MLP staff in reliability reporting and planning activities.

## **4. Competitive Rates**

Provide cost-effective electricity services while balancing operational costs and future investments.

#### **Goals:**

- **Rate Stability:** Maintain affordable, understandable, and stable electricity rates for residential and commercial customers.
- **Efficiency:** Improve operational efficiencies to reduce costs without compromising service quality and customer satisfaction. Design rates to encourage customer electrification, energy efficiency, and use of renewable resources.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Ensure financial health by balancing customer affordability with necessary infrastructure investments. Ensure fair and stable revenue.

#### **Key Initiatives:**

1. Use AMI and new billing system to develop, test out, and institute alternative rate designs (e.g., seasonal TOU) that would allow customers to adjust their energy

consumption patterns and take advantage of lower electricity prices during off-peak periods, which often coincide with renewable energy availability, and result in potential costs savings and emissions reductions overall.

2. Commission a new Cost of Service study to modify and modernize the MLP's rate structure (fixed and volumetric) and allocation across the classes. Consider reclassifying certain customers in a more logical, simple, and transparent way to reflect the "modern grid" with solar and storage, EV charging, and customer electrification (e.g., institutional, primary rate, solar net metering credit and distribution charge, and individually metered municipal/commercial EV chargers).
3. Continually publicize (e.g., website, newsletters, customer portal) our competitively low and stable rates. Update and provide clearer information about our NY Power Authority hydroelectric credit and Purchase Power Adjustment and WECARE charges.
4. Consider changing/updating our WECARE charge and policy based on customer participation, fund balance policy and projected expenditures, Town and customer expectations and sentiment, and increasing cost of clean energy.
5. Review and adjust the MLP's hedging strategy to minimize supply costs and be better positioned to take on new clean energy opportunities.
6. Consider expanding the application of the MLP's bill discount to customers who not only pay early but also enroll in paperless billing and autopayment.

## 5. Customer and Community Engagement

### Goals

1. **Enhance Public Awareness:** Increase the community's understanding of energy usage, sustainability, and the WMLP's initiatives.
2. **Foster Community Participation:** Encourage active participation in electrification and energy efficiency programs, renewable energy projects, and community feedback.
3. **Improve Transparency and Trust:** Build trust through open communication and regular updates on company performance and sustainability efforts.
4. **Empower Customers:** Provide tools and resources for customers to manage their energy use and make sustainable choices.
5. **Build Strong Partnerships:** Collaborate with local governments, schools, and businesses to support community-wide energy and sustainability initiatives.

### Key Initiatives

1. Build a better website to regularly spotlight our reputation and success as a safe, reliable, responsive, environmentally sustainable, and cost-competitive electric service provider and provide information about our offerings in a thoughtful, well-organized, complete, and up to date manner.
2. Deploy a new customer information and utility billing system that gives the WMLP the much-needed capability and flexibility to institute, administer, and present alternative rate designs (e.g., TOU) in bill statements that are clear, detailed, and understandable to

its customers. In addition, the new system will allow the WMLP to better manage the customer relationship by automating the maintenance and retention of communications, service requests and complaints, and documentation (account enrollment and rebate forms, delinquent and shutoff notices).

3. Deploy a new customer portal (mobile application and on-line) that gives customers the ability to monitor and manage their electric use (and account) in near real-time, make service requests, and more conveniently access, view, and pay their utility bills.
4. Use social media and new customer portal to communicate important news and alerts on a timelier and more digestible basis.
5. Reinstitute periodic newsletters to inform and engage customers on latest happenings and provide important reminders (e.g., how to pay your bill, watch out for scammers, how to save energy).
6. Host workshops, seminars, and events to promote certain WMLP offerings (e.g., energy coaching, heat pump rebates).
7. Partner with the Climate Action Department, Sustainable Wellesley, and WPS to promote the Town's sustainability programs to the community through the students (e.g., sustainability education program).
8. Deploy a customer satisfaction survey to elicit feedback on and improve MLP performance, offerings, and customer service.

## 6. Non-Core Businesses

### Goals:

1. **Diversify Revenue Streams:** Reduce dependency on traditional electricity sales by developing new services and products.
2. **Enhance Customer Value:** Offer additional services that complement core utility offerings and improve customer satisfaction.
3. **Support Community Development:** Invest in projects that support local economic growth and resilience, benefiting residents and businesses.
4. **Promote Sustainability and Innovation:** Drive sustainability initiatives through innovative products and partnerships.
5. **Leverage Existing Infrastructure:** Maximize the utility's assets by offering services beyond electricity generation and distribution.

### Key Initiatives:

1. Take stock of and evaluate the status of and profitability of the MLP's internet, dark fiber, cellular antenna and pole attachment leases and contracts. Assess whether to continue/expand the business, taking also into consideration supporting community development (economic and resiliency benefits) and the future state of the MLP's electric infrastructure and financial diversity.
2. Work with the Climate Action Department to support and deploy additional Level 3 EV chargers in Town.

## Closing Thoughts

The WMLP's Strategic Plan is a living, working plan that will continue to evolve over time and will create benchmarks that can be tracked, particularly in the areas of safety, reliability, and sustainability. Annual adjustments will be required to our programs to stay on track and respond to market conditions.

In terms of possible risks, we acknowledge that while we now have a plan to achieve WMLP's strategic goals, the electric power markets (e.g., renewable power supply, forward capacity, transmission), along with policy changes affecting those markets, and economic conditions (e.g., cost of labor and equipment, new tariffs, supply chain delays) could change our expectations and are to be monitored.

With more than 70% of our energy portfolio already being supplied by non-carbon emitting sources, we are ahead of our greenhouse gas reduction goals. This plan sets forth initiatives that lay the groundwork to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 by integrating more local sources of renewable energy (e.g., rooftop solar and storage), enhancing and promoting our energy efficiency programs, and instituting alternative rate designs (e.g., TOU) to reduce peak demand. However, as our customers electrify their homes and vehicles and available sources of renewable power become scarce (e.g., offshore wind), the WMLP will likely need to adjust its strategy in the years to come to achieve its ultimate goal of net-zero emissions.

Given the growing electrical load and threat of climate change (e.g. higher frequency of extreme weather events) that will likely affect the long-term performance and reliability of our aging infrastructure, this plan also sets forth initiatives for the WMLP to improve the resiliency, safety, and security of our system and more proactively identify and target specific areas for preventative maintenance; equipment replacements and upgrades; and restoration in the event of an outage. These initiatives include integrating a new GIS-based database and OMS with our nearly complete AMI system and working with the Town and other partners to develop its community emergency response plan and bolster the cyber and physical security of our critical information systems and facilities.

Finally, this plan sets forth initiatives to improve our level of engagement with customers and the community, who expect exemplary system reliability and customer service and fair and competitive rates. The WMLP recently issued an RFP for a new customer information and utility billing system that will give us the much-needed capability and flexibility to take advantage of our new AMI meters and institute, administer, and present alternative rate designs (e.g., TOU) in bill statements that are clear, detailed, and understandable. In addition, the new system will allow the WMLP to better manage the customer relationship by automating the maintenance and retention of communications, service requests and complaints, and documentation (account enrollment and rebate forms, delinquent and shutoff notices). This new system will also include a new customer portal that will give our customers

the ability to monitor and manage their electric use (and account) in near real-time; more conveniently access, view, and pay their utility bills; make service requests; and receive important messages about their energy use, service outages and restoration, and WMLP offerings.

In addition, the WMLP recently reinstated its periodic newsletter, initiated a rebuild of its website, and increased its level of engagement with the Town's Climate Action department to highlight our achievements and successes and provide more current information about our key offerings (e.g., energy coaching, heat pump rebates, new online bill payment option). Another priority of ours is to deploy a customer satisfaction survey to elicit feedback on and improve MLP performance, offerings, and customer service.

The WMLP looks forward to working with its partners in other Town departments and industry organizations, as well as the community and its customer base to achieve its mission in the years ahead.