The Verona Community Energy Plan

July 2026

This report was made possible through a grant from New Jersey's Clean Energy Program™. New Jersey's Clean Energy Program is brought to you by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (NJBPU)

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("NJBPU" or "Board") is the state agency with authority to oversee the regulated utilities, which provide critical services such as natural gas, electricity, water, telecommunications, and cable television. The law requires the Board to ensure safe, adequate, and proper utility services at reasonable rates for customers in New Jersey.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM (NJCEP)

NJCEP, established on January 22, 2003, in accordance with the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act (EDECA), provides financial and other incentives to the State's residential customers, businesses and schools that install high-efficiency or renewable energy technologies, thereby reducing energy usage, lowering customers' energy bills and reducing environmental impacts. The program is authorized and overseen by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU).

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE JERSEY

Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities in New Jersey. Launched in 2009, Sustainable Jersey is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports community efforts to reduce waste, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and improve environmental equity. It provides tools, training and financial incentives to support and reward communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Sustainable Jersey is one hundred percent voluntary and each municipality can choose whether it wants to get certified and the actions it wants to do in order to achieve enough points to get certified.

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*Strategy 5 of the New Jersey Energy Master Plan has not been included in Verona's Community Energy Plan because Strategy 5 encourages changes to state-level energy distribution.

Figures

I. Introduction

Verona is committed to addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This Community Energy Plan details the specific strategies Verona will pursue in the coming years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the local energy system. The Plan covers municipal operations such as the municipal vehicle fleet and buildings, as well as public policies and programs designed to support the community in reducing emissions.

The Verona Council will ratify this Community Energy Plan on July 20, 2026. During the creation of this plan, the Township of Verona, Sustainable Verona, and the public developed these strategies.

Starting in October 2025, Verona's Green Team began reviewing the Sustainable Jersey Guide for Sustainable Energy Communities and Community Energy Plan Workplan Template and meeting with municipal staff to determine how to prioritize and implement the high-impact initiatives. Relevant community data was gathered from the Sustainable Jersey Data Center. DMR Architects will present the draft Community Energy Plan at a public meeting on July 6, 2026. The final community Energy Plan is planned to be adopted by municipal resolution on July 20, 2026.

Verona's Community Energy Plan establishes how the municipality will promote the transition to sustainable energy over the next several years. Initiatives were selected based on demonstrated effectiveness, unique local opportunities, and co-benefits for the community as a whole, such as improved local air quality, energy savings for residents, and workforce development.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to our future prosperity in Verona, and globally. New Jersey is both a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a state particularly vulnerable to climate change. Increasing heat waves, intense storms, and sea-level rise caused by climate change will dramatically alter our coastal state for many years to come (NJDEP, *Scientific Report on Climate Change*). According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's NJ Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report, New Jersey adds almost 100 million metric tons of CO2e to the atmosphere annually. New Jersey can

Co-benefits of Sustainable Energy

The sustainable energy transition offers an opportunity to realize various co-benefits in our community and beyond. Besides reducing GHG emissions, implementing this plan will improve:

- Public health
  - Lower concentrations of ground-level outdoor air pollutants
  - Removal of indoor air pollution sources
- Social equity
  - More affordable transportation
  - More affordable renewable energy
- Resiliency
  - More dependable electric grid
  - Decreased reliance on imported energy

mitigate the local and global impacts of climate change with a rapid transition from the current GHG-intensive energy system to one that optimizes energy use and produces energy with minimal GHG emissions.

Recognizing New Jersey's role in climate change mitigation, the State of New Jersey has established a goal of 100% clean energy in the state by 2050. *The New Jersey Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050* outlines the state's strategies for achieving that goal while also addressing issues of social and economic inequity. To promote action at the local level in support of the state's goals, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) launched the Community Energy Plan Grant Program, offering support and funding for municipalities to develop a Community Energy Plan. Verona received the Community Energy Plan Grant and completed this Plan as a participant of the grant program.

II. Community Overview

Verona Township is a small, primarily suburban/urban municipality located in Essex County, New Jersey, encompassing approximately 2.82 square miles about 78.6 million square feet. According to the community data provided by Sustainable Jersey, the township has a population of 13,478 and is characterized by a predominantly White (92%) community, with Black (1%), Asian/Pacific Islander/Hawaiian (4%), and Other (3%) populations also represented; Hispanic or Latino residents of any race make up 6% of the population. The municipality includes 5,246 households, and the median household income is $135,122, a value significantly above the U.S. poverty threshold, reflected further by the township's low poverty rate (approximately 2.4%). Verona's Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) score is 15, with a statewide rank of 476 out of 564 municipalities. Because the MRI ranks municipalities from most distressed (rank 1) to least distressed (rank 564), Verona's low score and high rank indicate that it experiences comparatively strong economic conditions and low levels of municipal distress relative to most communities in New Jersey.

Population Characteristics for Verona, NJ

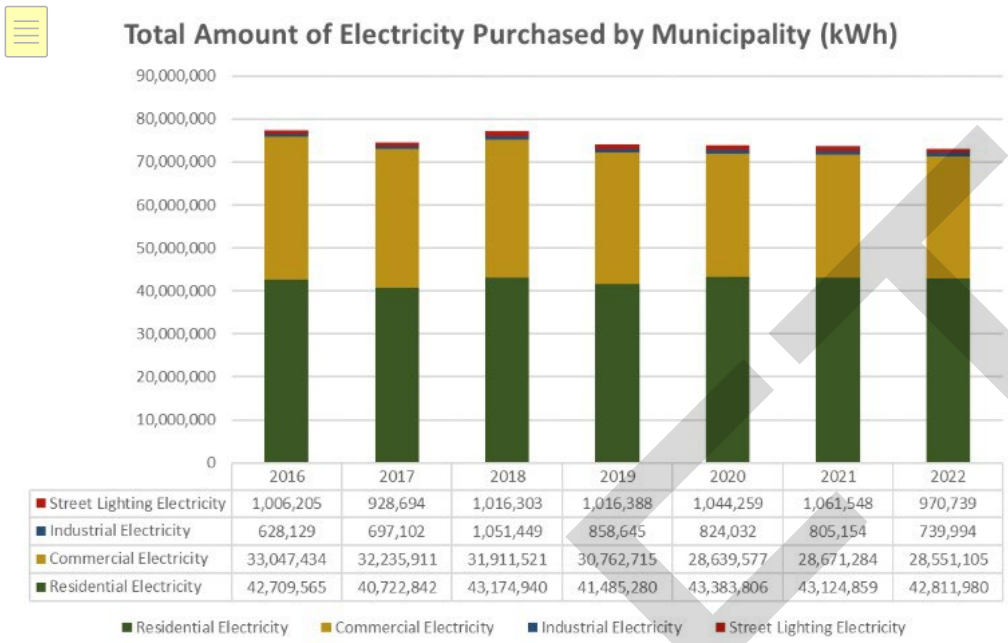
Population	Households	Median Household Income	Percent of Population in Poverty	NJ DCA MRI Score*	NJ DCA MRI Rank*
13,478	5,246	$135,122	2.4%	15	476

Table 1. 2020 Population Characteristics
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Community Profile Data by Municipality
*MRI = Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI)

Electricity and Natural Gas Usage Data

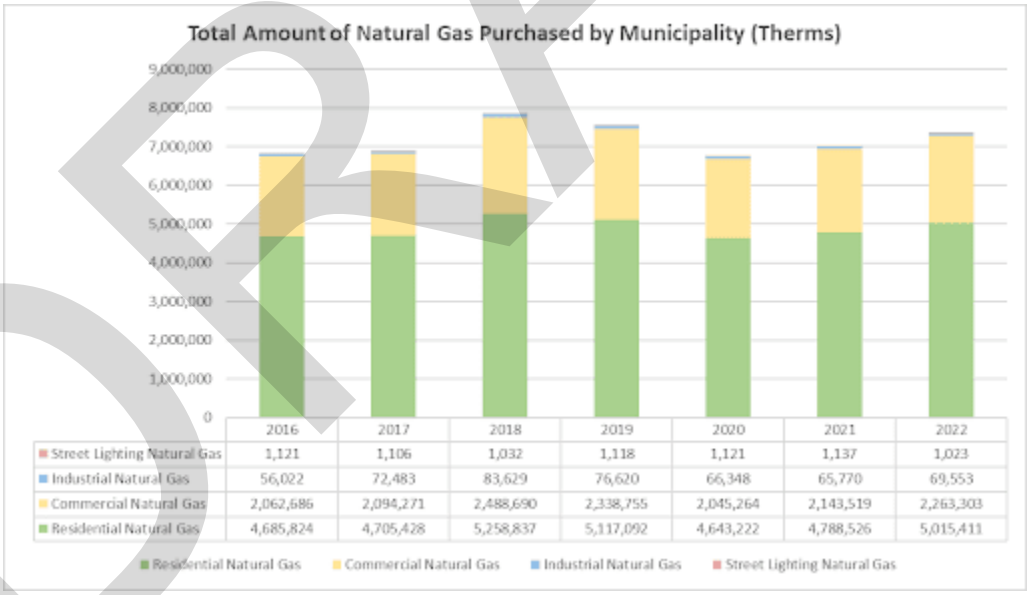
Most electricity and natural gas use are currently associated with Residential Electricity based on Data received from Sustainable Jersey. Utility companies generally organize electricity and natural gas use into four sectors – residential, commercial, industrial, and street lighting. The commercial sector includes nonprofits and government entities such as schools and municipal buildings, as well as businesses.

As illustrated in the charts on the next page, the Residential Electricity sector accounts for the majority of electricity and natural gas use in Verona. In other words, Residential Electricity buildings present the greatest opportunity for energy use reductions.



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Street Lighting Electricity	1,006,205	928,694	1,016,303	1,016,388	1,044,259	1,061,548	970,739
Industrial Electricity	628,129	697,102	1,051,449	858,645	824,032	805,154	739,994
Commercial Electricity	33,047,434	32,235,911	31,911,521	30,762,715	28,639,577	28,671,284	28,551,105
Residential Electricity	42,709,565	40,722,842	43,174,940	41,485,280	43,383,806	43,124,859	42,811,980

Chart 1. Amount of Electricity Purchased by Sector (kWh)
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Aggregated Community-Scale Utility Energy Data
Note: electricity values represent purchased electricity and do not include customer-generated electricity, such as from rooftop solar.



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Street Lighting Natural Gas	1,121	1,106	1,032	1,118	1,121	1,137	1,023
Industrial Natural Gas	56,022	72,483	83,629	76,620	66,348	65,770	69,553
Commercial Natural Gas	2,062,686	2,094,271	2,488,690	2,338,755	2,045,264	2,143,519	2,263,303
Residential Natural Gas	4,685,824	4,705,428	5,258,837	5,117,092	4,643,222	4,788,526	5,015,411

Chart 2. Amount of Natural Gas Purchased by Sector (Therms)
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Aggregated Community-Scale Utility Energy Data

Community GHG Emissions from Energy Use

In 2020, the total community-wide greenhouse gas emissions from electricity, natural gas/heating fuel, and transportation energy use in Verona was 99,963 metric tons CO_2e. The largest share of community emissions came from On-Road Vehicles followed by Residential Natural Gas.

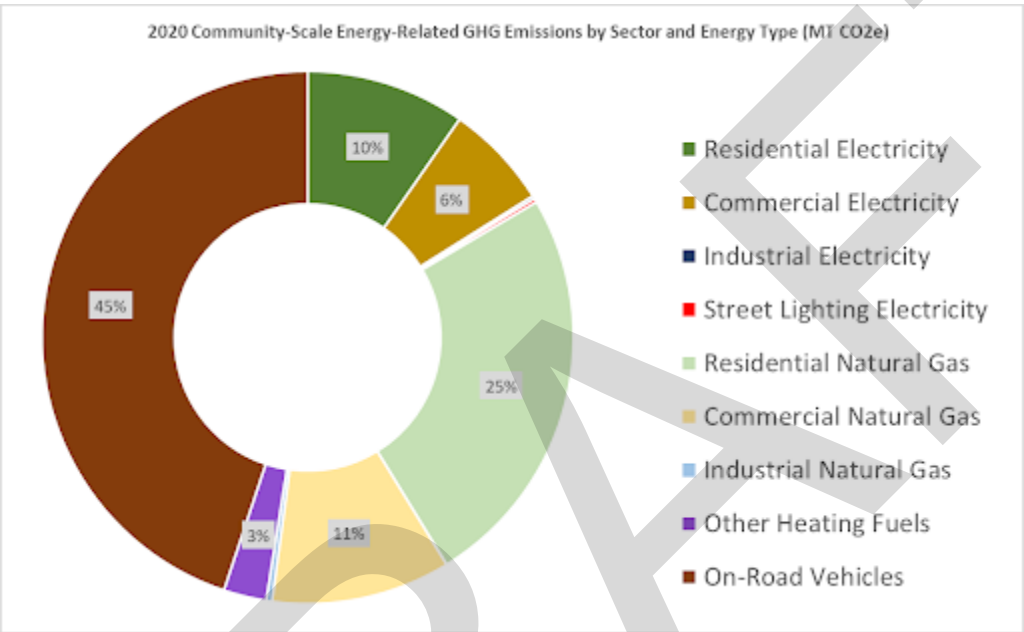


Chart 3. Overall GHG Emissions of Verona by Subsector
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Data

Transportation

In 2019, 54,366,185 Vehicle miles were traveled with passenger cars, followed by light trucks (commercial & passenger). In 2020, cars, trucks, or vans accounted for 77% of the total mean of transportation to work, followed by working from home at 13%, and public transportation at 9%.

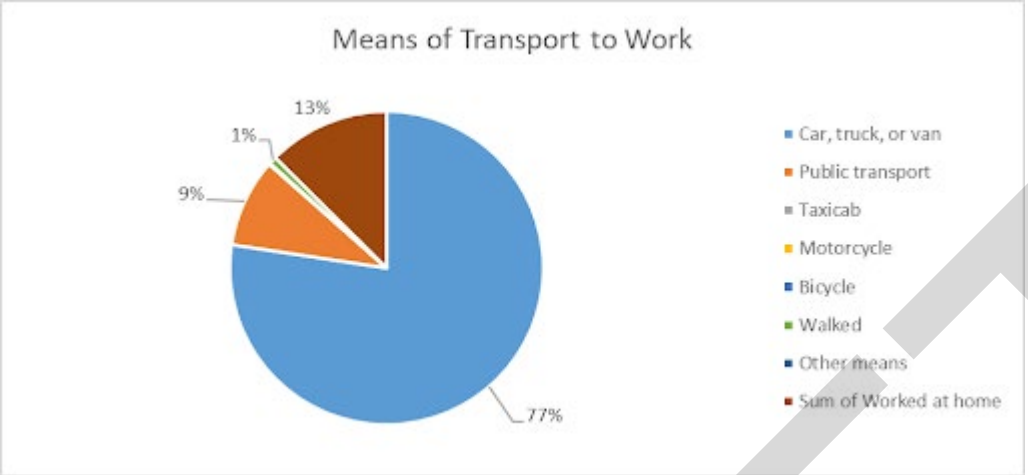


Chart 4. Means of Transport to Work 2020
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Community Profile Data by Municipality
Original Source: 2020 American Communities Survey

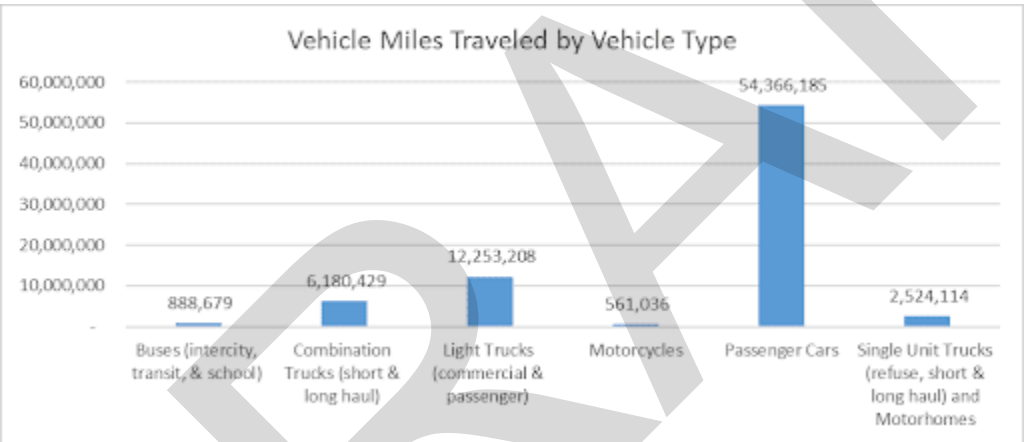


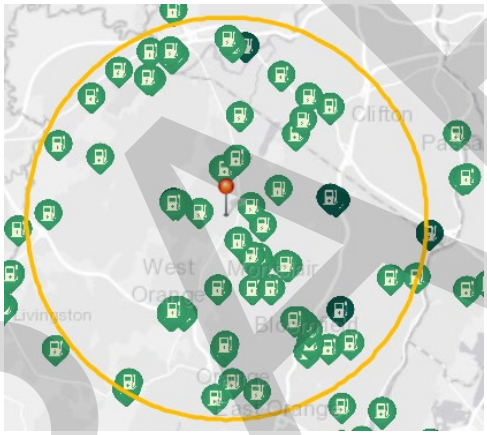
Chart 5. Vehicle Miles Traveled for 2019
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Vehicle Miles Travelled.
Original Source: NJTPA On-road VMT Data

Existing Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Between 2015 and 2020, the number of EVs increased significantly from 5 to 81 raising the share of electric vehicles from 0.06% to 0.88%. The public EV charging Infrastructure in Verona Township area map on the right shows a dense network of charging stations within the community, including Level 1, Level 2, and DC fast chargers. Overall, the data suggests strong progress toward supporting EV use through both increased ownership and expanded charging availability.

Estimated Number of Vehicles and Electric Vehicles			
Year Updated	**Estimated Total Passenger Vehicles**	**# of EV's**	**% of Electric**
2015	8811	5	0.06%
2020	9179	81	0.88%

Table 2. Estimated Number of Vehicles and Electric Vehicles
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Electric Vehicle Ownership Data
Original Source: NJTPA Alternative Fueled Vehicles Report



Light green tags (not shown) – Level 1
Medium green – Level 2
Dark green – DCFC

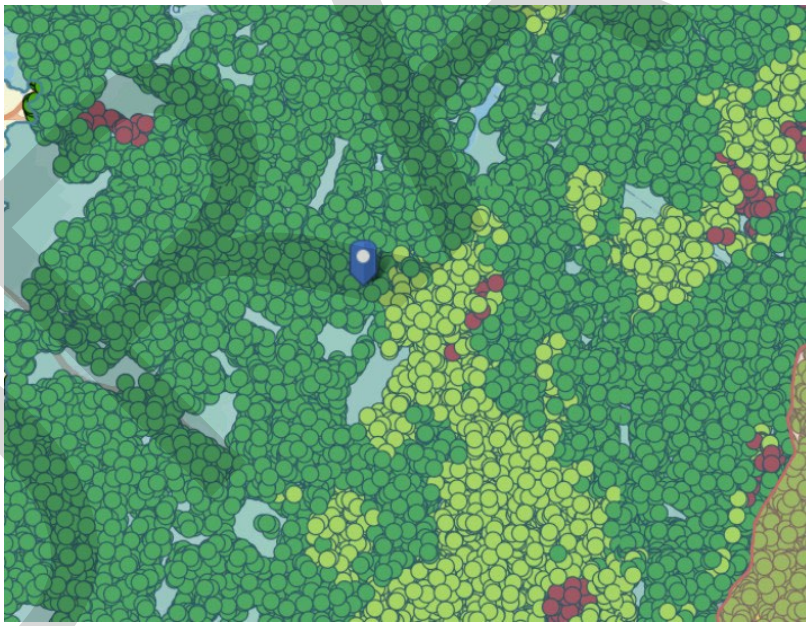
Map 1. Public EV Charging Infrastructure In Verona Township Area
Source:https://njdep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e41aa50dd8cd45faba8641b6be6097b1

Renewable Energy

Verona has both strong rooftop conditions and supportive grid capacity for solar energy. Overall, the combined data suggests that the area is well-positioned for significant growth in solar installations and renewable energy development.

Darker shades indicate shady rooftop area and lighter shades indicate sunny rooftop area.

Map 2. Solar Potential by Property
Source: Project Sunroof - Data Explorer | Verona Township



The dots represent the estimated accommodation limit for that location:
<100 kW AC; 100 to 1000 kW AC; >1000 kW AC

Map 3. Solar Available Capacity
Source: PSE&G. Available Capacity

Residential Energy Data

Verona has an 82% owner-occupied housing and a low 2% of the population in poverty. There are 3,616 1-unit detached housing types (single-family homes) followed by 1,050 of 20 or more units (multi-family). From 2008 to 2021 there is a 5% lifetime participation in the Residential Energy Efficiency Incentive Programs.

Household	Median Household Income	Percent of Population in Poverty	% Owner-occupied	% Renter-occupied
5,246	135,122	2%	82%	18%

Table 3. Residential Housing Data
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Community Profile Data
Original Data: US Census. 2020. American Community Survey

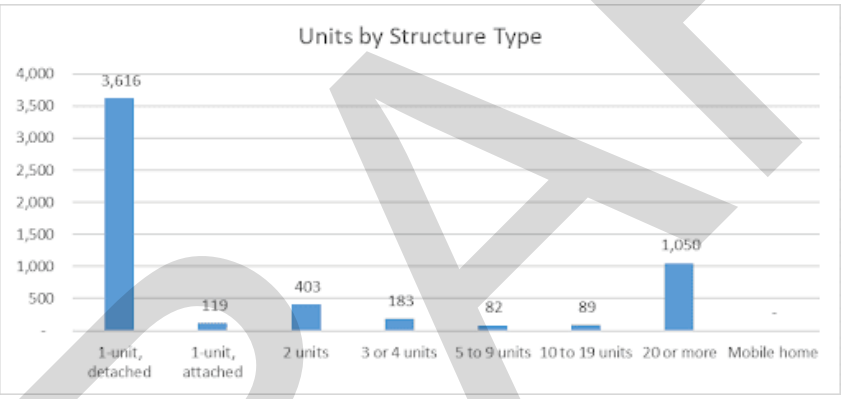


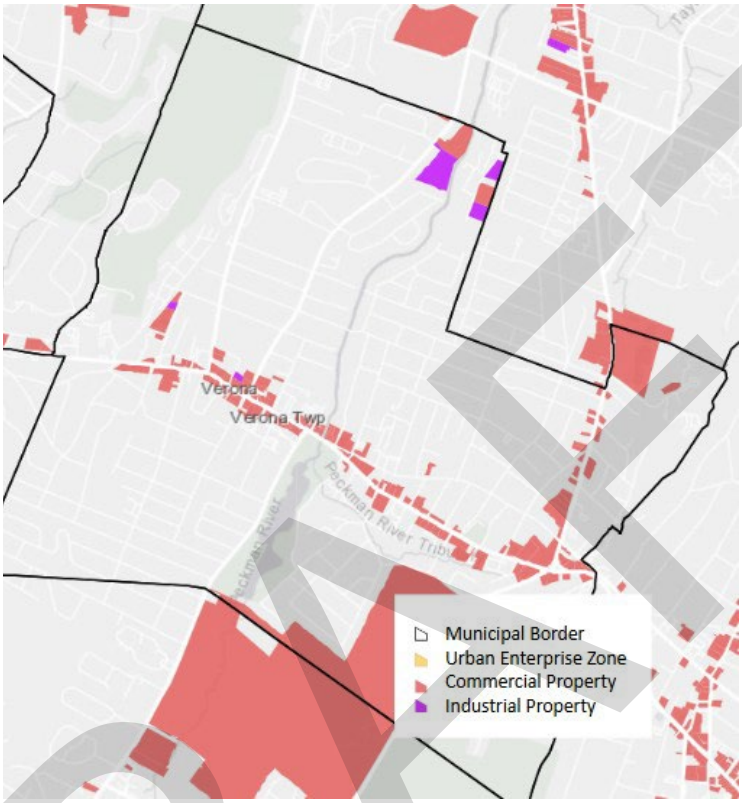
Chart 6. Housing Units by Structure Type
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Community Profile Data
Original Data: US Census. 2020. American Community Survey

Date Updated	Units in Structures with 4 units or less	Total Completed Projects	Current Lifetime Rate %
Mar-21	4,227	200	5%

Table 4. Lifetime Participation in Residential Energy Efficiency Incentive Programs
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Energy Efficiency Program Participation (2008-2021) Lifetime Residential Participation Data
Original Source: New Jersey's Clean Energy Program DOE Refresh Data

Commercial Energy Efficiency

As of March 2021, 191 commercial and industrial parcels existed, with 25 that have completed energy-efficiency projects, reflecting a 13% lifetime participation rate in New Jersey's Clean Energy Program for Verona.



Map 4. Commercial and Industrial Properties
Source: Sustainable Jersey. NJ Commercial and Industrial Properties Map
See map: https://arcg.is/fXi9j
Sustainable Jersey. CI Parcels 2020
https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/C_I_Parcels_2020.xlsx

Date Updated	C & I Taxed Parcels	Total Completed Projects	Current Lifetime Rate %
Mar-21	191	25	13%

Table 5. Lifetime Participation in Commercial Energy Efficiency Incentive Programs
Source: Sustainable Jersey. Lifetime Commercial Energy Efficiency Program Participation Rate (2021), Original Source: New Jersey's Clean Energy Program DOE Refresh Data

III. Work Plan

The Verona Community Energy Plan is primarily an implementation and action plan. This section details all of the initiatives selected as Verona's priorities for the next 3 years. These initiatives will generate significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions for both municipal operations and the wider community while providing numerous local co-benefits, such as improved air quality and creation of local jobs.

The initiatives are organized by the Strategies of the *New Jersey Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050*. Each Strategy section includes one or more initiatives. Implementation details are provided for each initiative, including the initiative lead person/entity, the time frame for implementation, and any significant obstacles to successful implementation.

The Workplan reflects a cross-section of initiatives from each strategy to ensure a balanced approach. The CEP can be supplemented at a later date to add more initiatives if desired by the township.

Strategy 1: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Transportation Sector
1.2 Train First Responders on EVs and EVSE
1.4 Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles
1.5 Improve Municipal Fleet Efficiency
1.6 Install Public EV Charging Infrastructure

Strategy 2: Accelerate Deployment of Renewable Energy and Distributed Energy Resources
2.3 Train First Responders on Solar
2.9 Implement Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA)
2.11 Support Community Solar as Outreach Coordinator

Strategy 3: Maximize Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Reduce Peak Demand
3.1 Upgrade Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities
3.2 Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign
3.3 Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign

Strategy 4: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Building Sector
4.3 Encourage Benchmarking and Commissioning for Existing Buildings

Strategy 6: Support Community Energy Planning and Action with an Emphasis on Encouraging and Supporting Participation by Low- and Moderate-Income and Environmental Justice Communities
6.5 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Community-Serving Institutions

Strategy 7: Expand the Clean Energy Innovation Economy
7.1 Adopt Energy Storage Policies

Strategy 1: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Transportation Sector

Transportation accounts for over 40% of New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions, primarily due to on-road gasoline consumption (NJDEP, "Transportation & Emissions"). Fossil fuel-powered transportation also produces local air pollution that significantly harms the health and quality of life of residents. Verona can electrify municipal fleet vehicles and promote transportation electrification throughout the community to lessen the negative impact of the transportation system on the community and the world.

Initiative 1.2: Train First Responders on EVs and EVSE

Description: To further public confidence and maintain emergency preparedness, require training on electric vehicles and associated infrastructure for local first responders.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Chiefs of VPD, VFD and Rescue squad	*Fall 2026*	*Medium*	*1 day event recurring every 36 months.*	*Municipal funds seeking sponsorships and grants*

Held initial event in fall 2023 to show how first responders can address EV emergencies, with plans to hold additional events every 36 months.

Departments involved:

- Police Department
- Township Manager
- Fire Department
- Rescue Squad
- DPW

Obstacles/Barriers:

Weather related - indoor arrangements if necessary

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Key emergency response personnel participate in training and education programs for local first responder
• Integrate training into department policies and procedures
• Maintaining no less than 90% of the previous attendees.

Next steps:

1) List of departments or employees who should attend the training event

2) Set a date for the next event

3) Confirmation of initiative lead

Initiative 1.4 Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles

Description: Replace existing municipal fleet vehicles with plug-in hybrid, battery electric, or other sustainable alternative fuel vehicles (AFV), informed by fleet analysis.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration	*Winter 2025-26*	*High*	*Ongoing*	*2025 Budget and NJ BPU Clean fleet incentive*

The township was awarded a clean fleet grant and matching funds have been authorized to kick off the first municipal EV purchases and EV charger expansion. Fleet charging infrastructure installed for municipal vehicles is in place and funding is in place for expansion, some of which has been installed. *1st EV has been purchased and placed into service.

Departments involved:

- Administration
- Vehicle Maintenance Staff
- Public Works Department
- Finance Department/QPA

Obstacles/Barriers:

1) Availability of vehicles & finding a co-op or state contract

2) Identifying most appropriate vehicles to convert to alternative fuel vehicles

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Strategic list prioritizing vehicles in fleet to replace with AFVs
• Second battery electric vehicle added to municipal fleet

Next steps:

1) Look at the existing municipal fleet and identify possible vehicles that could be replaced with EVs, typically vehicles that are driven more/use more fuel are more cost-effective to electrify.

2) Think about how the vehicle will be charged, see initiative 1.6.

3) Build support among the intended users of the vehicle.

4) Shop for the EV (will it be purchased through a co-op, contract, go out to bid) See AFV Procurement guide in resources.

5) Identify funding opportunities and apply for incentives. Note: The Inflation Reduction Act's Direct Pay (Elective Pay) program continues to allow municipalities, school districts, and other tax-exempt entities to receive direct payments from the IRS for certain qualifying clean energy projects and investments. While federal tax credits for electric vehicle purchases have largely expired, Direct Pay may still be available for other eligible clean energy and infrastructure projects. See Sustainable Jersey's Direct Pay resources and current IRS guidance for the latest eligibility requirements.

Initiative 1.5 Improve Municipal Fleet Efficiency

Description: Implement strategies such as interdepartmental coordination to right-size the municipal fleet (vehicle replacement or retirement), and optimize fuel use with improved route planning, driver efficiency, and reduced idling to reduce operational costs and GHG emissions from municipal fleets – public works, police, fire, etc.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration & DPW	*2026*	*Medium*	*Ongoing*	*General and capital fund while seeking grants and other funding sources*

Mechanics have software to track and identify mechanical or fuel efficiency metrics on the fleet.

Departments involved:

- Administration & all other Departments with Municipal Vehicles
- Purchasing Department or Officer
- Fire Department
- Public Works Department
- Finance Department
- Vehicle Maintenance Staff
- Police Department

Obstacles/Barriers:

Finding funding sources.

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

- *Defining department by department elements that can have greater efficiency in that departments fleet & preparation of a fleet management plan.*
- *Annual fleet inventory process established*
- *Municipal fleet procurement plan is established*
- *Reduction in fleet emissions*

Next steps:

1) Create a fleet inventory using the resources in the Sustainable Jersey Fleet Inventory action

2) Use appropriate tools to identify vehicles that can be cost-effectively replaced with electric vehicles

3) Look at the Sustainable Jersey Meet Targets for Green Fleets action to identify additional fleet efficiency measures (fleet tracking tools, idle reduction technology, etc.) that make sense for the municipal fleet.

4) Set up scheduled maintenance for all fleet vehicles

5) Coordinate with all departments to consider shifting to non-motorized transport options wherever possible.

6) Prepare fleet management plan

Initiative 1.6: Install Public EV Charging Infrastructure

Description: Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including chargers, signage, and safety and accessibility features, for public use.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration	2026	*Medium*	*ongoing*	*PSE&G, BPU, State & Federal incentives/grants, local municipal funds*

Public chargers have been available at Town Hall and at the Verona Community Center for a total of four ports, two in each location. An additional 4 ports have been installed at Everett Field and 2 ports have been added to the Community Center, in 2026. Plans exist for expansion of charging infrastructure at public facilities and parks.

Departments involved:

- Township Administration
- Purchasing Department
- Engineering Public Work Department

Obstacles/Barriers:

Unknown Demand within Verona

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

- *Double the usage of the publicly available charging infrastructure within 3 years.*
- *Installation of publicly available fast chargers.*

Next steps:

1) Determine areas with the highest potential for EV usage and the greatest need for charging infrastructure using professional consultants.

2) Work with the utility to understand the current electrical infrastructure. Do priority location(s) selected have sufficient electrical capacity to support the installation, or does new equipment needs to be installed?

3) Determine the number of chargers and charger type(s) to be installed based on community needs.

4) Identify method for covering the costs of charger equipment purchase and installation. (i.e. - grants, municipal funding and/or private partnerships with EV companies)

5) Identify and apply for incentive programs that could help fund the installation. Continually monitor such programs as they may evolve and new programs may become available.

6) Review and update municipal fees ordinance on annual basis to reflect evolving community demand and electric rates.

Strategy 2: Accelerate Deployment of Renewable Energy and Distributed Energy Resources

Expanding renewable energy generation is necessary to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from our energy system. New Jersey's most readily available renewable resource is sunlight, which more and more utility customers can now access thanks to declining prices and new systems like community solar. Verona can continue to refine local policies regarding solar and other renewable resources to promote local growth of renewable generation capacity.

Initiative 2.3 Train First Responders on Solar

Description: To further public confidence and maintain emergency preparedness, require training on solar for first local responders.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
OEM Coordinator	*2027*	*Medium*	*1 day every 36 months*	*Municipal funds seeking sponsorships and grants*

Departments involved:

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Department
- Rescue Squad
- Police Department
- DPW
- Township Manager

Obstacles/Barriers:

Finding real life training locations

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Key emergency response personnel participate in training and education programs for local first responder
• Integrate training into department policies and procedures
Maintaining no less than 90% of the previous attendees.

Next steps:

1) Work with the first responders, including law enforcement, volunteer fire, volunteer rescue squad and office of emergency management and create a list of key emergency response personnel who would need to undergo these training and education programs.

2) Identify the training and education programs on solar and allied infrastructure available for the first responders. e.g.:

- New Jersey Division of Fire Safety & Kean University Fire Safety Training

- Interstate Renewable Energy Council - Clean Energy Resources and Training

- U.S. DOE. - SolSmart Standard Program Guide

3) Document date/years of the training and education programs and the details of the personnel who have undergone the same.

4) Set a regular frequency for these training and education programs to occur once every 3 years.

5) Plan how ongoing trainings and education programs for First Responders on solar can be integrated into department policies and procedures.

Initiative 2.9 Implement Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA)

Description: Establish a Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA) program. R-GEA is a third-party electric supply contract negotiated by a municipality (or group of municipalities) on behalf of its residents. Utilizing their population size, municipalities can negotiate for a supply that is more sustainable, often less expensive than can typically be achieved by individual residents.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration	*2025*	*Medium*	*Ongoing*	*Not Applicable*

Verona is a member of the Sustainable Essex Alliance Energy Procurement Cooperative.

Departments involved:

- Administration
- Town Council

Obstacles/Barriers:

Current energy market has left recent bids uncompetitive with default utility rates as the only recommended option.

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Third-party supplier bids received below the default utility electricity rate
• R-GEA contract contains renewable content at least 20% above the current Renewable Portfolio Standard at the time

Next steps:

1) Remain a member of the SEA-EPC and attend meetings as they are called.

2) Maintain communication with Gabel Associates as the selected professional consultant with the SEA-EPC with regular updates on the status of the cooperative and the viability of next steps/decisions.

3) Encourage the consultant to remain mindful of the groups mission and to re-bid the cooperative regularly to determine energy provider interest and to allow the cooperative an opportunity to regularly review energy rates/bids.

Initiative 2.11 Support Community Solar as an Outreach Coordinator

Description: Use municipal resources and networks (mailing lists, websites, etc.) to educate the community about community solar in general and the details of local projects (e.g., subscription rates and requirements).

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Sustainable Verona	Spring 2026	Medium	2026-2027	*Sustainable Verona budget*

Departments involved:

- Sustainable Verona
- Verona PIO

Obstacles/Barriers:

None anticipated

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Local community solar information posted to municipal website
• Community solar promoted by outreach partners via their networks (Verona Environmental Commission and Verona Township)

Next steps:

1) The outreach team will work with the elected body to decide what criteria community solar projects should meet to be included in the municipal community solar outreach campaign (see Municipally Supported Community Solar action for more details).

2) Sustainable Verona will conduct a general outreach and education campaign.

3) Sustainable Verona will develop relevant and up-to-date outreach materials to distribute. (Sustainable Verona members are testing the links and signing up for Community Solar for themselves in Dec 2025/Jan 2026, this will better equip them to educate others.)

4) Create an outreach campaign plan:

- Develop social media flyers / posts

- Hold an informational webinar for residents, with an expert presenting the topic

- Identify outreach partners, ie. VEC & Verona Township

Strategy 3: Maximize Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Reduce Peak Demand

Energy efficiency and conservation are the most cost-effective methods of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the energy system. Improving energy efficiency also generates local jobs, reduces local pollution, improves health and comfort, and adds resiliency to the energy system. Verona can utilize energy efficiency to lower costs in municipal operations and encourage the community to follow suit to realize these many benefits.

Initiative 3.1 Upgrade Energy Efficiency for Municipal Facilities

Description: Upgrade municipal facilities to be more energy efficient. New Jersey's Clean Energy Program and the electric and natural gas utilities offer incentive programs that guide municipalities through the upgrade process, starting with walk-through audits to establish the most effective measures to reduce energy use. Following implementation, showcase upgrades in energy efficiency outreach to local commercial entities.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration	*2026*	*High*	*36 months; ongoing*	*Energy savings will offset all capital project costs*

A Local Government Energy Audit has been performed on Verona facilities in coordination with the BPU.

Departments involved:

- Building Department
- Administration
- Public Works Department
- Finance

Obstacles/Barriers:

Success relies upon bids which prove to be cash flow positive project

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

- *Make determination on next steps (Direct Install, ESIP, etc.) within 12 months.*
- *Initiate project or ESIP bid within 18 months.*
- *Effectuate reduction in peak energy usage after completion of efficiency upgrades.*

Next steps:

1) Prepare ESIP bids based upon recently completed LGEA.

2) Evaluate ESIP RFP responses and select a vendor for an implementation contract.

3) Monitor and evaluate the results of the implementation projects after installation.

Initiative 3.2 Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign

Description: Implement an outreach effort to help residents take advantage of energy efficiency incentive programs offered by New Jersey's electric and natural gas utilities, including Home Performance with ENERGY STAR and Comfort Partners.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Sustainable Verona	*Spring 2025*	*High*	*2 years*	*Sustainable Jersey Residential Energy Efficiency Program Grant*

Program unveiled in Spring 2025 with website unveil and presentation for residents at the library that lined up with Earth Day. This was followed up in September with another presentation for residents at the community center. Both of these presentations featured Scott Fischer from Ciel Power and representatives from Sustainable Verona to answer residents' questions about the program.

Departments involved:

- Town Manager / Town Council
- Environmental Commission/ Green Team
- Mayor's Office
- Public Information Officer

Obstacles/Barriers:

Lack of engagement/sign-ups

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• 5% of residents participate in Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program during the campaign

Next steps:

Sustainable Verona has worked closely with Sustainable Jersey to understand the benefits of implementing this campaign in Verona. We are lucky enough to have an architect on our team, Christine Liaukus, who has been instrumental in educating our team and implementing this initiative for Verona residents. Sustainable Jersey has created a webpage for Verona, we've mailed one direct mailing to all residents so far and have a second mailing planned for 2026.

1) Sustainable Verona has reviewed and assessed the characteristics of the local community to build a successful outreach campaign.

2) Sustainable Verona has partnered with Ciel Power as the preferred contractor for residential audits / implementation. This has alleviated "analysis paralysis" for residents.

3) Sustainable Verona has held 3 public presentations (2 at the library, 1 at the VCC ballroom) to educated residents on Energy Efficiency in their homes.

4) Sustainable Verona has tabled at events to build awareness of the ongoing Energy Efficiency initiative.

5) At our last presentation, Sustainable Verona included a panel of resident who have received audits & had work done to speak to their experience. This element proved to be very successful and we are working on uploading video testimonials to our social media and webpage.

6) Sustainable Verona is considering the idea of rebates for residents and also using Project Ambassadors.

7) Sustainable Verona was awarded a $10k Staffing & Community Engagement grant and is actively pursuing staffing to support these active initiatives & keep momentum moving.

Initiative 3.3 Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign

Description: Implement an outreach effort to help local businesses take advantage of energy efficiency incentive programs offered by New Jersey's electric and natural gas utilities.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Sustainable Verona	2025	Medium-Low	2 years	Municipal funds; seeking grants

Program rolled out in Summer 2025 with website unveil and general business breakfast for local business owners. Followed up by secondary business lunch in September 2025 aimed specifically at local restaurant owners. Both business presentations featured Kelvin Roberson from TRC to answer questions about program.

Departments involved:

- Town Manager / Town Council
- Environmental Commission / Green Team
- Public Information Officer

Obstacles/Barriers:

Lack of engagement/sign-ups

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• 5% of businesses participate in Small Business Direct Install program during the campaign

Next steps:

Sustainable Verona has worked closely with Sustainable Jersey to understand the components of this program, and SJ has connected SV with a local vendor - TRC. SV has been working with Kelvin Roberson at TRC to bring the details of the PSEG Energy Efficiency programs to Verona business & building owners.

1) Identify the utility company or companies serving your community and become familiar with the incentive programs offered - this has been completed

2) Compile a list of local businesses to use as a target for the outreach and education effort - this has been completed

3) Create an outreach plan for your target audience. Options include:

-- Identify existing community events that outreach materials could be distributed at - SV has completed

-- Consider local newspapers, mailing, TV channels, social media and other outreach channels - SV has completed

-- Host informational sessions, workshops, and webinars detailing the program and its benefits - SV has held 2 'business breakfasts' in 2025

4) Work with the utility partner(s) to prepare the outreach materials for the campaign. The utility partner(s) may provide financial support for mailings and other outreach strategies: Sustainable Verona has been working with Sustainable Jersey on this campaign. SJ has created a webpage for Verona, and informational resources for this initiative.

5) Consider selecting one or more Small Business Direct Install contractors to feature in the outreach campaign. This is in progress with SV.

Strategy 4: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Building Sector

According to New Jersey's Energy Master Plan, 62% of the state's total end-use energy consumption is associated with buildings, with space heating, water heating, appliances, and industrial uses accounting for 28% of New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions. Decisions made during new construction and building retrofits have significant and long-lasting impacts on this energy use. Verona can reduce energy use and emissions from buildings by prioritizing green design in new construction and utilizing municipal buildings as models for the community.

Initiative 4.3 Encourage Benchmarking and Commissioning for Existing Buildings

Description: Educate local building managers about benchmarking (comparing energy use to similar facilities) and commissioning (optimizing energy equipment to reduce energy use). Inform building managers of utility building management programs that include benchmarking and/or commissioning.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Administration	*2026*	*Low*	*Ongoing*	*Local funds*

The Township has an EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager account for municipal buildings. Sustainable Verona has begun outreach efforts to existing commercial properties.

Departments involved:

- Administration
- Buildings & Grounds
- Public Information Office
- Finance

Obstacles/Barriers:

PSE&G does not automatically aggregate energy into the EnergyStar portfolio which makes it more burdensome for internal responsibilities. Such responsibilities will likely require professional consultants.

Buy-in from local businesses is limited.

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

- Stakeholder training on portfolio manager and update of all energy data.
- Information about benchmarking and commissioning posted to municipal website
- Information about Township facility benchmarking on website.
- Accomplish enrollment by institutional and larger commercial buildings.

Next steps:

1) Provide information to commercial property managers about the free energy tracking and benchmarking program offered by the New Jersey's Clean Energy Program.

2) Businesses that are too small for energy management incentive programs should consider working with in-house staff resources to complete a self-led commissioning program, such as the U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR Treasure Hunt Program.

3) Partner with an energy consultant to assist in marketing and outreach efforts to increase response rates and interest in the commercial buildings.

Strategy 6: Support Community Energy Planning and Action with an Emphasis on Encouraging and Supporting Participation by Low- and Moderate-Income and Environmental Justice Communities

New Jersey's Energy Master Plan calls for Community Energy Plans like this one to drive a rapid shift to a clean energy system that specifically benefits low- and moderate-income (LMI) and environmental justice (EJ) residents. Under the current system, low- and moderate-income residents often struggle to afford energy resources such as electricity and gasoline. Meanwhile, environmental justice communities suffer from health problems caused by pollution from the fossil-fuel-based energy system. By integrating the needs of LMI and EJ communities with local energy initiatives, Verona can alleviate burdens on these communities caused by the current system while mitigating global climate change.

Initiative 6.5 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Community-Serving Institutions

Description: Reach out to limited-capacity entities that serve low- and moderate-income communities to encourage participation in state and utility energy efficiency programs. Outreach strategies include messaging indirect benefits of energy efficiency to organizational mission and segmenting outreach to various types of organizations with different needs.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Sustainable Verona	*Spring 2026*	*High*	*1-3 months*	*SJ / PSEG Commercial Energy Efficiency grant*

Departments involved:

- Business Administrator
- Community Affairs
- Economic Development

Obstacles/Barriers:

Time / Staffing

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

Sustainable Verona is planning to hold an event specifically targeting community-serving institutions for energy efficiency programs
• 5% of eligible entities participate in a state/utility energy efficiency program

Next steps:

1) Municipality should create a list of community-serving institutions as the "target audience" for this outreach effort - SV completed. One of Verona's churches, Church of the Holy Spirit, has been through the Direct Install program. The reverend is featured in the SJ video.

2) Implement the outreach campaign:

– host workshops to speak of the process, incentives, and benefits of completing energy efficiency upgrades to facilities such as saving energy, saving on utility bills, and ensuring a safer environment. SV is planning this.

– make information on energy efficiency incentives available on the municipality's website. SV is planning this.

Strategy 7: Expand the Clean Energy Innovation Economy

Clean energy industries already employ thousands of residents in the state and will employ thousands more to implement the transition to 100% clean energy. Innovation in clean energy technology can generate further high-quality job growth while developing new tools for tackling greenhouse gas emissions. Verona can lead the charge in developing New Jersey's clean energy innovation economy through forward-thinking policies and development of clean energy resources.

Initiative 7.1 Adopt Energy Storage Policies

Description: Adopt standards and establish requirements for permitting battery energy storage systems. Post information about energy storage regulations to the municipal website and ensure appropriate municipal staff are informed.

Lead	Start Date	Priority	Anticipated Length	Funding Sources
Zoning Officer & Construction Official	*2027*	*Lower*	*12 months*	*N/A*

Departments involved:

- Governing Body
- Administration
- Fire Prevention
- Zoning / Planning staff
- Construction Department

Obstacles/Barriers:

Identifying the proper oversight & enforcement department

Community notes:

Measures of Success:

• Regulations adopted addressing battery energy storage
• Permitting system for energy storage established

Next steps:

1. Municipal staff (town manager, town attorney, zoning officer, fire prevention officer and construction office) will draft a battery energy storage ordinance for recommendation to the Council.

2. Drafted ordinance will be submitted to the elected body for public comment and eventual approval.

3. Municipal staff will provide guidance for rules and permitting process on municipal website.

4. Municipal staff will provide public information outreach to the community regarding the new municipal standards.

5 References

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State of New Jersey. 2018. *New Jersey's Railroad Network.* https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/gis/maps/RailRoadlines.pdf.

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Appendix. Data Sources

Almost all data used in this plan is sourced from the Sustainable Jersey Data Center.

Community Overview Data		
Section, Map, or Table	**Original Source(s)**	**Link to data**
General Information Section	U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS)	SJ Community Profile Data by Municipality
Current Housing Units by Year Built Chart	U.S. Census ACS	SJ Community Profile Data by Municipality
Number of Units by Structure Type Chart	U.S. Census ACS	SJ Community Profile Data by Municipality
Commercial & Industrial Properties Map	NJ MOD IV Tax Data	SJ Commercial & Industrial Properties Map
Commercial & Industrial Properties Data	NJ MOD IV Tax Data	SJ Commercial & Industrial Properties Data

Energy Use Data		
Section, Map, or Table	**Original Source(s)**	**Link to data**
Amount of Electricity Used by Sector (kWh) Chart	NJ Investor-Owned Utilities	SJ Aggregated Community-Scale Utility Energy Data
Amount of Natural Gas Used by Sector (Therms) Chart	NJ Investor-Owned Utilities	SJ Aggregated Community-Scale Utility Energy Data
Number of Occupied Housing Units by Primary Heating Fuel	U.S. Census ACS	SJ Community Profile Data by Municipality
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Charts	SJ GHG Emissions by Municipality	SJ Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Data

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Data		
Section, Map, or Table	**Original Source(s)**	**Link to data**
Solar Installations Chart	NJCEP Solar Installation Data	SJ Solar Installation Data
Commercial Energy Efficiency Program Participation Data	New Jersey Clean Energy Program (NJCEP) Data	SJ Energy Efficiency Program Participation (2008-2021) Data - Lifetime Commercial Participation
Residential Program Participation Data	NJCEP Data	SJ Energy Efficiency Program Participation (2008-2021) - Lifetime Commercial Participation

Energy Efficiency Projects Completed by Municipality Data	NJCEP Data	SJ NJCEP Local Government Projects 2008-2021

NJBPU Community Energy Plan Grant Workplan Template Full List of Initiatives

Strategy 1: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Transportation Sector

List initiatives included in this strategy:

1.1 Adopt Supportive Zoning and Regulations for EV Infrastructure

1.2 Train First Responders on EVs and EVSE

1.3 Train Non-Emergency Staff on EVs and EVSE

1.4 Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles

1.5 Improve Municipal Fleet Efficiency

1.6 Install Public EV Charging Infrastructure

1.7 Encourage Non-Municipal Fleets to Improve Efficiency

1.8 Encourage Workplace EV Charging Infrastructure

1.9 Community EV Outreach

1.10 Anti-idling and Enforcement

Strategy 2: Accelerate Deployment of Renewable Energy and Distributed Energy Resource

List initiatives included in this strategy:

2.1 Adopt Supportive Zoning and Permitting for Private Solar

2.2 Post Solar Permitting Checklist

2.3 Train First Responders on Solar

2.4 Train Non-Emergency Staff on Solar

2.5 Install On-Site Municipal Renewable Generation

2.6 Buy Renewable Energy for Municipal Facilities

2.7 Offer a Solar Employee Benefit Program

2.8 Institute a Community-wide Solar Purchasing Program

2.9 Implement Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA)

2.10 Support Community Solar as Project Ambassador

2.11 Support Community Solar as Outreach Coordinator

2.12 Host a Community Solar Project on Municipal Property

Strategy 3: Maximize Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Reduce Peak Demand

List initiatives included in this strategy:

3.1 Upgrade Energy Efficiency in Municipal Facilities

3.2 Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign

3.3 Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign

3.4 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Large Energy Users

Strategy 4: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Building Sector

List initiatives included in this strategy:

4.1 Implement a Green Building Policy

4.2 Construct New Buildings as Model Green Buildings

4.3 Encourage Benchmarking and Commissioning for Existing Buildings

4.4 Require Developers to Complete Green Development Checklist

4.5 Conduct Outreach Targeting New Construction in the Community

Strategy 6: Support Community Energy Planning and Action with an Emphasis on Encouraging and Supporting Participation by Low- and Moderate-Income and Environmental Justice Communities

List initiatives included in this strategy:

6.1 Make Community Energy Planning Inclusive

6.2 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents

6.3.1 Support Shared Micro-Mobility Program (e.g. bicycles, scooters, etc.)

6.3.2 Support E-Mobility Transit options (e.g. EV Shuttle bus, carpool services)

6.3.3 Support EV Car-Share Program

6.4 Support Low- and Moderate-Income Community Solar Subscriptions

6.5 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Community-Serving Institutions

Strategy 7: Expand the Clean Energy Innovation Economy

List initiatives included in this strategy:

7.1 Adopt Energy Storage Policies

7.2 Install an Energy Storage System

7.3 Develop Local Microgrid

7.4 Develop/Participate in a District Energy System