

CLEAN ENERGY FORUM FOLLOW UP

Focus on Solar

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Built Environment and Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC)
Meeting
Agenda Item 5

November 21, 2024



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Solar Forum Overview

- Hosted with the Mason Energy, a George Mason University Initiative
- One-day workshop October 28
- ~75 attendees



<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/10/28/clean-energy-forum-focus-on-solar/>



Solar Forum Goals

- Provide an overview of the relevant policy and regulatory landscape and key statistics on regional solar goals and deployment to date.
- Hear from industry leaders about what works and has worked and what more is needed to accelerate regional solar deployment.
- Identify opportunities and challenges for more widespread and rapid market deployment.
- Identify and build on solutions to capitalize on opportunities and overcome challenges.
- Highlight local and regional examples of successful projects and share specific step-by-step information about how those projects succeeded.
- Identify key players and stakeholders.

Learning From Regional Successes

- Rev. Jon Strand, Church of the Holy Comforter
- Jennifer Rokasky, Prince William County Schools
- Robert Lazaro, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Joshua Schimpf, Stafford County Schools
- John Morrill, Fairfax County



Active Work Sessions for Key Deliverables

Key Deliverables

- Memo that captures the challenges and what works and what does not work, including an overview of case studies with key relevant information
- Start of an Action Plan Framework (“*Solar Roofmap*”) that will map out workstreams and actions to address key challenges that need to be overcome to accelerate solar deployment in the region

Session 1: Project Economics and Funding

- Vote on which project type(s) to focus on
- Rank key challenges for discussion (based on pre-event survey)
- Identify solutions

Session 2: Permitting and Interconnection

- Vote on which project type(s) to focus on
- Rank key challenges for discussion (based on pre-event survey)
- Identify solutions

Session 3: Action Framework Planning

- For key solutions, identify supporting short term actions
- Confirm the who, the what and the when
- Commit to action and continued discussion

Key Challenges and Solutions: Project Economics and Funding

Project Type: Municipal

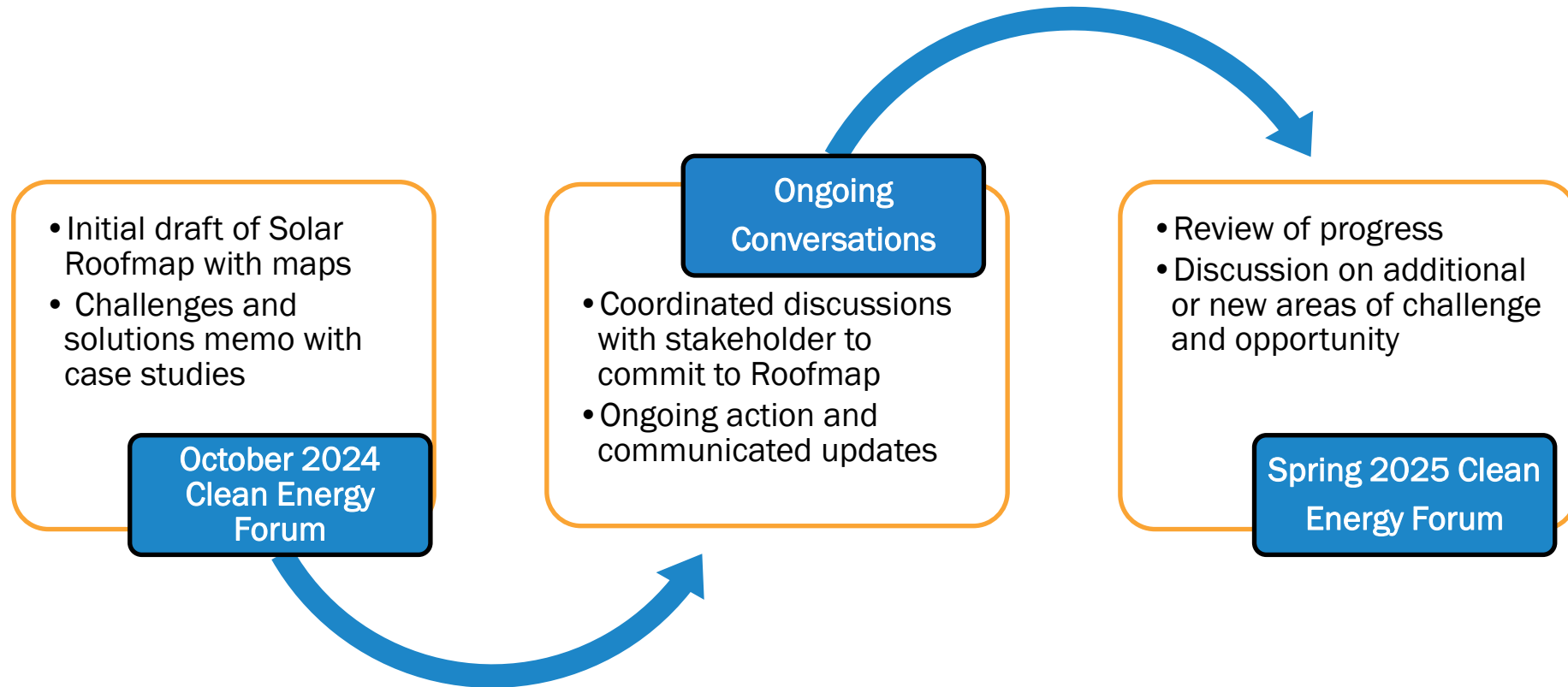
Challenge	Proposed Solution(s)
Capacity to pursue incentives or apply for competitive funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Depending on project structure, solar company may handle the tax/direct pay application process
Finding the incentive information; lack of consolidated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local organization communications, state/federal websitesDevelop a consolidated database/clearinghouse that's continually updated
Changing incentives levels/grant availability over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leveraging longer-term value streams (e.g., RECs)
Fitting multiple financial elements and structures together for projects in one-off and unique ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Green banks being more flexible to use portfolio approaches and providing ways to help standardize projects and scale successful approaches

Key Challenges and Solutions: Interconnection and Permitting

Project Types: Commercial/Multifamily

Challenge	Proposed Solution(s)
Additional required fiber connections and interconnection limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCC/state legislation advocacy and intervention
Staffing limitations Utility staffing issues → contracting to staff who are technically good but cannot move things forward inside the utility Permitting review/staffing can be a limiting factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging standard curricula requirements (e.g., from the Electrical Engineering Society)
Ability to assess sites that may have hosting capacity for DERs to avoid grid upgrade costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility provided hosting capacity maps (PEPCO & Dominion have them, but may not be comprehensive or reflect the reality of all project designs and site needs)
Ability to make the case/communication challenges and best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively understand and describe issues/communicate (group that is informed, motivated to share challenges at the regional level) • Figure out where there is common ground to address the load and put together compelling value argument • COG can be a facilitator in discussions, share approaches and lessons for dealing with permitting and interconnection issues (also can leverage VEPGA)
Varied permitting/zoning by jurisdiction (both standards & resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a developer that has a lot of local relationships and experience is still critical - how to help new ones move up the learning curve faster (can COG help offer resources that summarize) • Resource building opportunities for county staff in permitting and inspection standards • Is there a way to move to example best practices and provide standard permitting resources across similar jurisdictions
Connecting with property managers, especially where there are unique ownership situations and governance structures of condos or HOAs (can be resistant to adding rooftop solar given the complexities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arlington example - process guide, questions to ask to help the boards through the solar process • Move away from utility bill offset criteria for low-income MF (are there ways to adjust design criteria related to LMI housing)

Next Steps



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