

Solar as Sustainability Approach in the Metropolitan Washington Region

MWCOG Workshop
Washington, D.C.
October 6, 2011





Visioning
and long-
range goal
setting



Photo: NREL

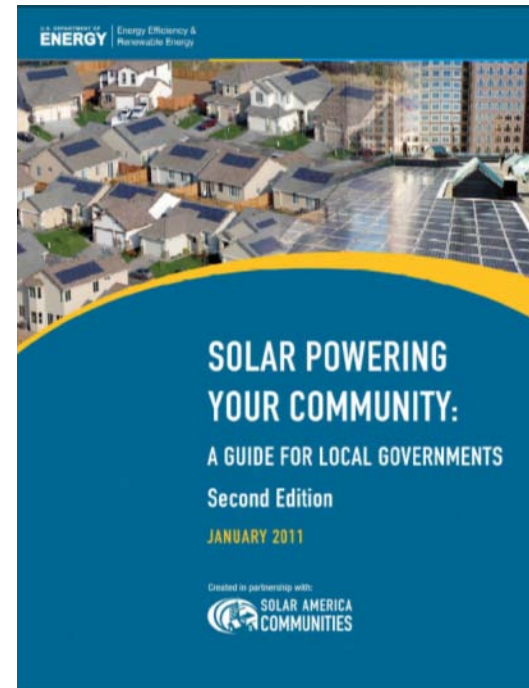


Photo: www.solar.calfinder.com

Does solar play a
role in the future
vision for your
community?

Plan Making

- Comprehensive, general, or master planning
- Sub-area plans
- Functional plans



Regulations
and
Incentives

Zoning ordinances

Subdivision ordinances
or regulations

Form based codes

Planned unit
development/ planned
residential development
ordinances

Transit oriented
development
regulations and
guidelines

Historic district
architectural or design
guidelines

Transfer of development
rights

Wetlands ordinances

Tree ordinances

Development
Work



Source: www.urbanmilwaukee.com

Review and approval
of development
projects

Public-private
development and
redevelopment
projects

Development
agreements

Public Investment

Infrastructure

- Streets
- Bike paths
- Water systems
- Transit...

Community facilities

- Schools
- Libraries
- Municipal buildings...

Source: NREL



Source: solaramericacommunities.gov

An example:

Seattle, Washington: Review of City Codes and Practices

Increase/improve
building energy
standards

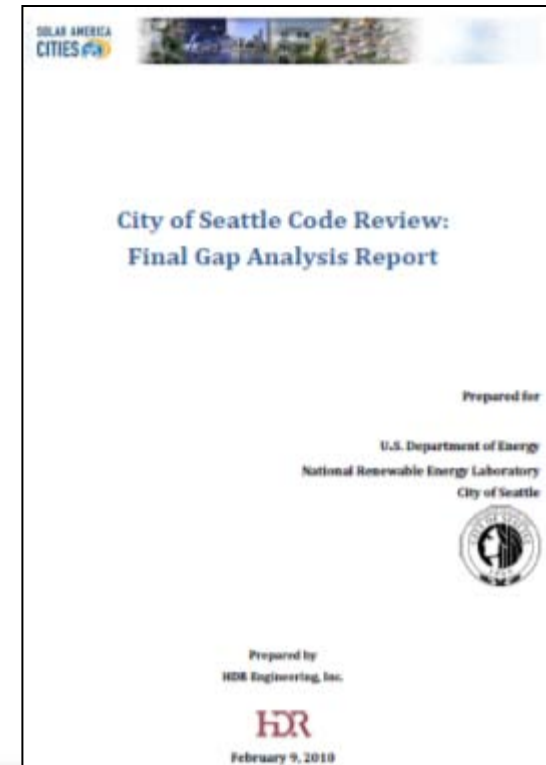
Require solar-ready
construction

Add flexibility to height
limits and roof coverage
limits

Develop or refine
definitions in the table of
uses to ensure that solar
energy projects are not
unnecessarily prohibited

Implement a solar access
ordinance

Increase focus on
commercial and
industrial land
use/development



Making Zoning Codes Solar-Friendly

Zoning Codes

- Typically seen as **barrier** to solar implementation
- Can be *opportunity* to easily, efficiently incorporate solar with clear provisions

Key Steps

Remove barriers

Enact standards

Create incentives

Enabling solar installations

Encourage solar-oriented lots

Maximize solar access

Permitted use in zoning districts

Considerations when drafting *provisions*

Roof-mounted
vs. ground-
mounted

Urban vs. rural
location

Grid-connected vs.
off-grid

Zoning districts
(residential,
commercial,
industrial)

Form-based code
vs. traditional
zoning code (focus
on use)

Permitted use,
accessory use, or
conditional use

Consider what *standards* may be needed

Height

Setback

Visibility

Coverage

Plan approval

Aesthetic conditions

Safety conditions

Resources

- Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments (2011)
http://solaramericacommunities.energy.gov/resources/guide_for_local_governments/
- Planning and Zoning for Solar Energy Essential Info Packet
<http://www.planning.org/pas/infopackets/open/eip30.htm>
- Solar Energy Standards in *From Policy to Reality: Updated Model Ordinance for Sustainable Development*
http://www.crplanning.com/pdfs/susdo6_09/solar.pdf
- *Site Design Strategies for Solar Access* in the Sustainable Community Development Code Framework
<http://law.du.edu/documents/rmlui/sustainable-development/SolarAccess.pdf>

Contact APA

Ask APA's Planning Advisory Service
Inquiry Answer Service about
Planning for Solar Energy!

Email pas@planning.org with
subject line "Solar Energy Inquiry"



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POWER TOOLS

Let PAS help you learn more about these topics:

- using plans and policies to encourage the installation of solar energy systems
- state and local solar access protections
- zoning standards for solar energy systems
- solar-friendly site and building design
- state and local incentives available to help offset the costs of installing solar energy systems

Have a Specific Question About Planning for Solar Energy?

Is your community considering a new program or policy to encourage the use of solar energy technology? APA's Planning Advisory Service (PAS) wants to help. Through its Inquiry Answer Service, PAS provides research assistance to thousands of planners at hundreds of subscribing organizations. Thanks to a partnership with DOE, ICRMA, and ICLEI, APA is extending this assistance to all planners, public officials, and solar advocates looking for information about how to promote solar energy use through plans, programs, and development regulations.

Submit your questions to pas@planning.org with a subject line of "Solar Energy Inquiry."

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