

Community Solar & 2021 Zoning Text Amendment

Overview

Board of County Commissioners
January 19, 2023



Background

- ☀️ State direction on solar mandates
- ☀️ Solar siting
- ☀️ Community solar pilot program (2015)



Community Solar Energy Generating System aka CSEGS



What is Community Solar?

- ☀️ A solar energy generating system from which electricity is shared by more than one household or customer *[Public Utilities Article, 7-306.2, Annotated Code of Maryland]*
- ☀️ Purpose → Share solar power benefits even if not on own property



Community Solar Pilot Program

Maryland definition...

Public Utilities Article, 7-306.2, Ann Code of MD

- ☀️ 2 or more subscribers
- ☀️ Connected to grid
- ☀️ Same electric service territory
- ☀️ Power generated reduces subscriber electric bill
- ☀️ $\leq 2\text{MW}$ per CSEGS
- ☀️ Statewide cap = 414MW



Desired Outcomes for Carroll County Zoning Text Amendment

Balance...

- ☀ Increase access to solar
- ☀ Minimize farmland impacts
- ☀ Mitigate community concerns
- ☀ Co-locate with agricultural use to offer co-benefits



Overview of Carroll County CSEGS Requirements

☀ Definition → MD State Law (as of Jul 2020)

☀ Location

- Agricultural District
- Principal permitted use
- 20 acres max for solar usage
- Existing remaining portions as of July 1, 2020



Requirements (continued)

- ☀ Permanent conservation easement required
- ☀ Requires site plan review & approval by Planning Commission
- ☀ Environmental Resources → No clearing forest areas + not located w/in stream buffer, floodplain, or wetland



Requirements (continued)

☀ Agriculture Co-Location

- Maryland's Solar Generation Pollinator-Friendly Designation
- Planted, managed, and maintained for...
 - Grazing of animals
 - Apiaries
 - Crops

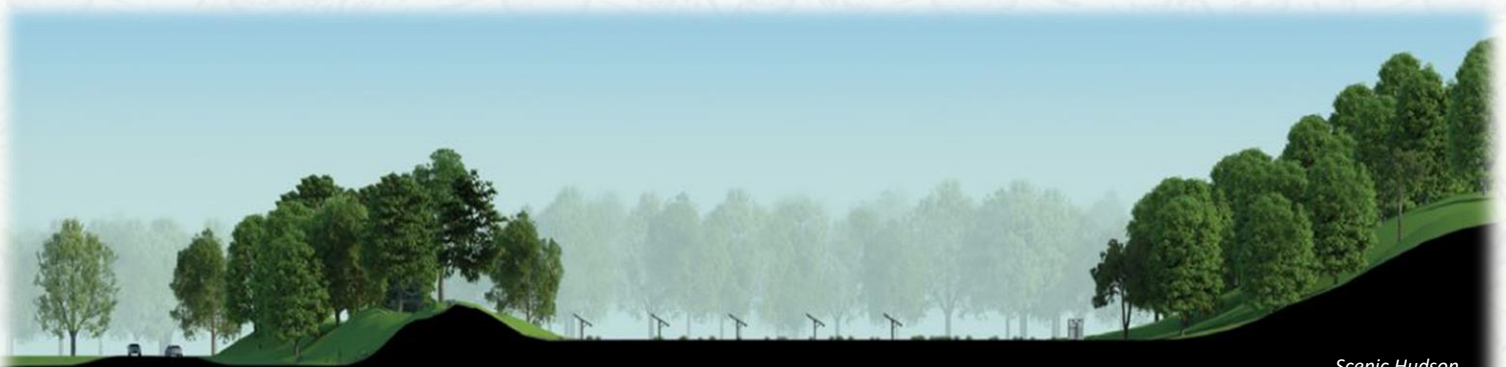




Requirements (continued)

☀ Landscaped Buffer

- Screen from street + contiguous properties
- Consistent w/ Landscape Manual
- Year-round screening from time of installation
- Hedgerow, native vegetation, earth berm
- Can be w/in setback





Requirements (continued)

- ☀ Installation → Ground-mounted
- ☀ Bulk & Height
 - 40-foot setback (centerline + adjoining)
 - 15-foot max height
 - No variance
- ☀ Project Infrastructure → Underground, except service connections & equipment
- ☀ Abandonment & Decommissioning Plan



Suitability

- ☀ Determined by solar developer
 - Proximity to lines
 - Capacity of lines
 - Site constraints (slopes, sun exposure, natural resources, etc.)
 - Cost
 - PSC + Utility Approval



- ☀ State Policy
 - Cannot adjoin another solar project or cross parcel lines
 - Cannot subdivide to build more if subdivided w/i past 5 years
 - Max 2 MW capacity



Far fewer parcels suitable than eligible



Process for Approvals Needed

Overall Process



Site Plan Submittal, Review, & Approval Process





Process for Approvals Needed

Site Plan Submittal, Review, & Approval Process

Pre-Submittal Conference

Concept Site Plan Submittal

Technical Review Committee

Planning Commission - Concept

Final Site Plan Submittal

Planning Commission - Final

**Mylars & Legal Documents Submittal +
Easement Agreement Prepared/Signed**

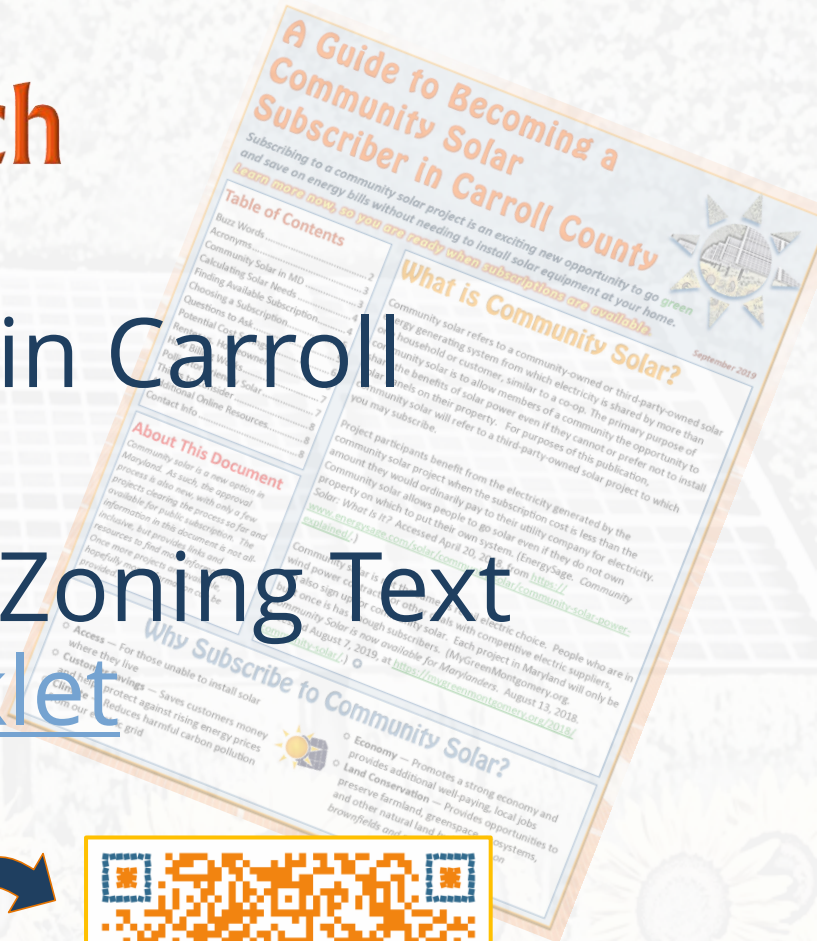
**Community Solar Projects Submitted →
None Reviewed by Planning
Commission Yet**

- 4000 Brown LLC Solar
- Nora Valley Community Solar
- Pleasant Valley Solar
- Chaberton Solar
Sunshine Community Solar
- Spring Valley Solar



Public Outreach

- ☀️ Community Solar in Carroll County Website
- ☀️ Community Solar Zoning Text Amendment Booklet



Website

Scan Me



Booklet



For More Information



<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/government/directory/land-resource-management/zoning-administration/community-solar-zoning-text-amendment/>

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