

Solar Energy Considerations

The benefits of solar energy are well known. The power source, the sun, is a renewable and non polluting energy producer. Solar power helps communities reduce their power bills and lessen dependency on fossil fuels. It is a clean and abundant resource with lots of public policy advantages.

Greenport, without tall buildings and lots of open terrain, has an environment ready for solar installations. The town, with reasonable regulation and siting guidelines can reap the benefits of solar power for businesses, residents and town operations.

GOAL: Encourage and facilitate solar power use for the town and its residents.

- Appoint a solar energy contact person to receive training, updates on policy and interaction with agencies such as NY-SUN so the town can stay up to date on the latest solar strategies and technology.
- Ongoing review and implementation of the town's Solar Regulation ordinance #103.
- Recognize that current vacant buildings, parking lots and former industrial sites in town could become large solar energy systems both ground mounted and roof top mounted. This could be an important economic development strategy.
- Orient new development or large scale redevelopment for optimum solar collection.
- Consider a 'Solar Energy' fact sheet for distribution to site plan applicants.
- Consider solar energy use for town buildings and as new town buildings are planned (town garage, etc.)
- Maximize any tax or pilot benefits for the town available outside of the tax deferrals in place by current law.

- Recognize that land use conflicts could occur surrounding agriculture, forest land and adjacent building activity. Consult with other towns and solar users for problem solutions and mitigation.

The Agriculture and Markets Law considers solar systems to be 'on farm' equipment when installed on agriculturally assessed land and are protected under **Agriculture District Law**. These systems are protected from 'overly restrictive' regulations which are generally not part of the Greenport ordinance. They are a 'Type II' action for **SEQRA** purposes.

- Consider the least productive farm land for solar installation if possible with consultation with the land owner.
- Consider natural land formation, drainage and forest land in the siting and planning process.
- There may be a penalty if agriculturally assessed farm land is converted to solar use for off site consumption. Each case is different.

Greenport's Solar Energy Systems law, Chapter 103, recognizes the many considerations to be evaluated and many of the objectives for safe and productive use of solar equipment for our residents and developers.

The community can benefit by providing lower cost energy, providing jobs, saving on fossil fuels, and reducing pollution. As solar power continues to mature and develop, so should the towns plans and policies.

Solar Resources available, among others:

NY-SUN...NYSERDA Programs

The Solar Foundation.org

Interstate Renewable Energy Council

Variety of local solar installers and parent companies may provide no cost consultation and updates regarding advances in technology.