



Ice Breaker

What is your favorite way to have “fun in the sun”?

Enter in the chat along with your name and affiliation.



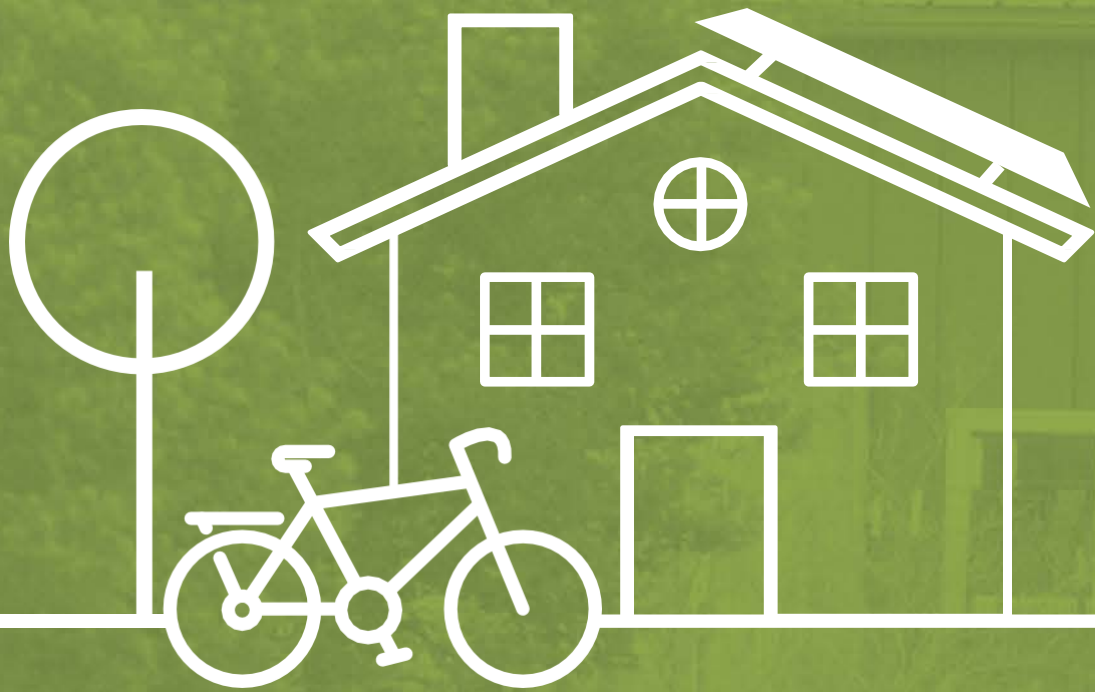
Intro to SolSmart

**HOW OUR REGION IS WORKING TOWARD
SOLAR BEST PRACTICES**

Webinar | June 15, 2023



Why does this matter?



COUNTY GOAL
1200 MW by 2030

01

SolSmart Overview

Debra Perry, ICMA

Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

- **Acknowledgment:** This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), under Award Numbers DE-EE0009950 & DE-EE0009951.
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Introduction to SolSmart

SolSmart is a national **designation** and **technical assistance** program that has helped over 500 local governments make it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar.



Nationally Recognized Solar Best Practices

- SolSmart communities are recognized for implementing **nationally-recognized best practices** that encourage the growth of solar energy at the local level
- SolSmart provides **clear guidance and templates** to help jurisdictions put these practices into action.
- The SolSmart criteria are determined by an **advisory committee of experts** in solar energy and local government, and criteria are updated periodically in order to reflect the latest best practices



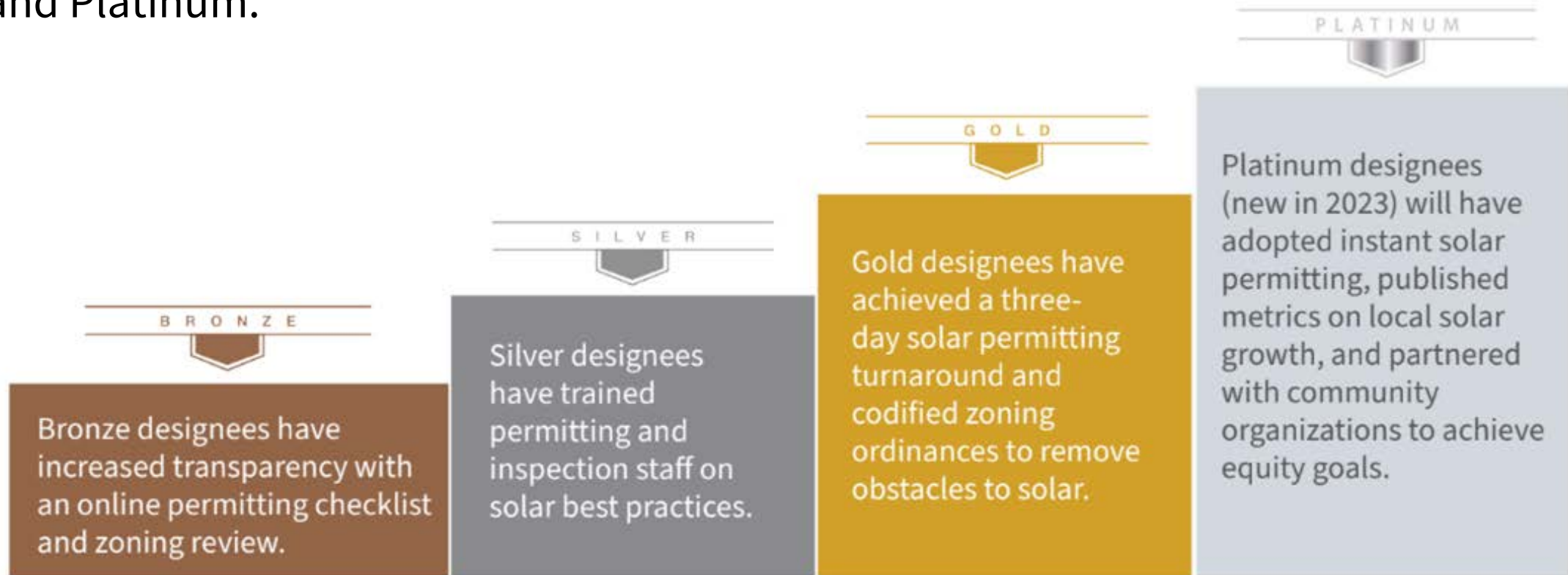
Designation Pathways

- **Standard Pathway:** Pathway applicable to most local governments that have authority over permitting, planning, zoning and/or inspection processes.
- **Modified Pathway:** Pathway for local governments that do not control all of the above processes.
- **Regional Organization Pathway:** Pathway for regional planning commissions and councils of governments.



Designation Structure

There are four levels of designation: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.



Designation Structure, cont'd

- In addition to meeting prerequisites, you must earn points in the following categories:
 - Permitting and Inspection
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Government Operations
 - Community Engagement
 - Market Development

Benefits of Solar

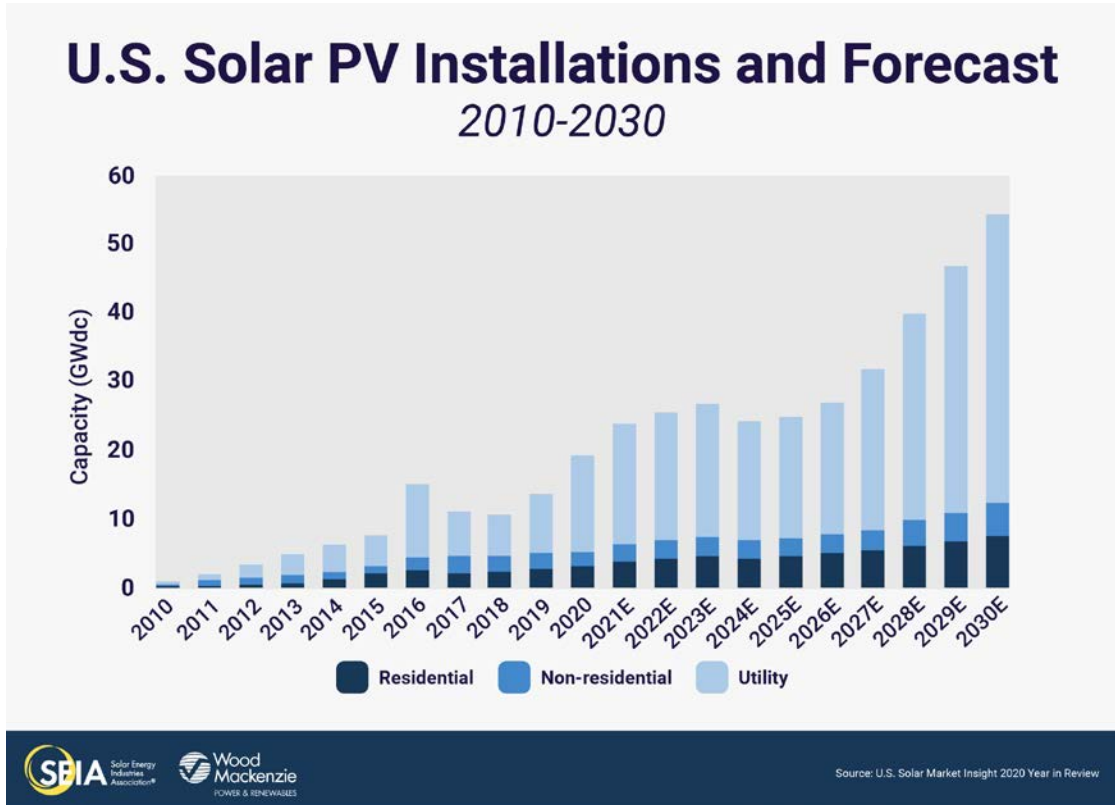
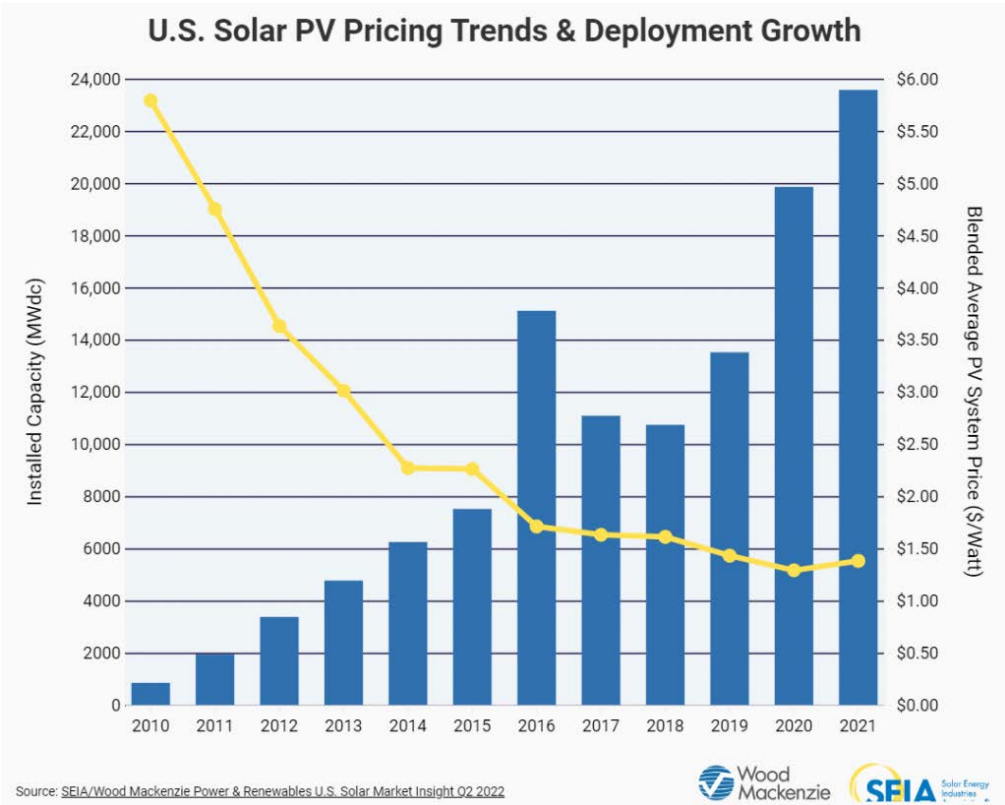


Creates local jobs and economic development



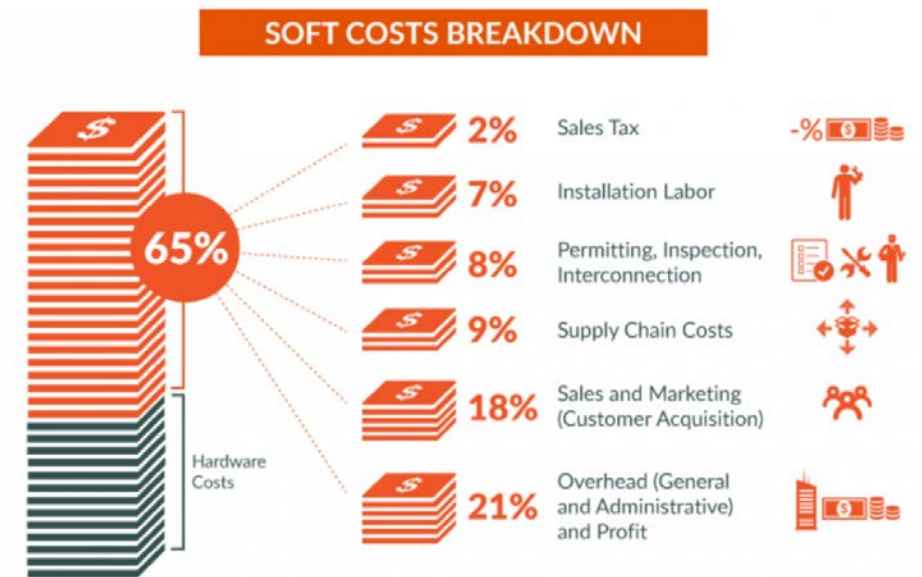
Reduces utility bills and provides price stability





Local Government Action is Important

- 65% of the cost of a solar PV system is not related to hardware. These “soft costs” can be reduced by action at the local level, including:
 - Streamlining permitting and inspection;
 - Supporting consumer education;
 - Leading by example;
 - Facilitating group purchasing;
 - Filling gaps in financing; and more!
- While the solar energy market is growing nationwide, ensuring that it grows in your community requires a proactive approach.



Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory "U.S. Solar Photovoltaic System Cost Benchmark: Q1 2021."

Review & Improve Local Processes

- Streamlining local permitting & inspection processes reduces the cost of solar and local government operations;
- Training staff ensures efficient permitting and inspection processes;
- Establishing clear processes for energy storage, EV charging and large-scale solar makes sure you are ready for these technologies in your community; and
- Practices like instant permitting with SolarAPP+ can make sure your community is ready for higher volumes of applications.

Advancing Energy Equity

- SolSmart is part of federal [Justice40 Initiative](#) working to ensure that benefits are equitably shared by history underrepresented and underserved communities
- SolSmart criteria reflects importance of inclusive engagement, strategies to reach underserved communities, and metrics to track impacts and benefits

Technical Assistance

- SolSmart technical assistance providers help communities update processes using established best practices
 - All participating communities receive a review of their zoning
- Delivery of technical assistance can be tailored to fit the community needs
 - Online - resource library, email, templates
 - Phone - conference calls, webinars, trainings
- The technical assistance is funded by SolSmart, and there is no cost to the community
 - Communities must commit staff time to working toward SolSmart designation
 - Communities must demonstrate a commitment to achieving designation

The SolSmart Designation Process



SolSmart Resources

SolSmart Resources

- Resource Page - <https://solsmart.org/resources/>
- SolSmart Program Resource Guide - <https://solsmart.org/resource/solsmart-program-guide>
- SolSmart FAQ - <https://solsmart.org/faqs/>

The SolSmart Team



02

The County & Regional Designation Process



Pursuing Regional Designation

Goal: To engage communities and foster discussion

Activities will include:

- Compiling solar development resources for local governments
- Conducting a zoning code assessment
- Hosting a zoning and permitting webinar (with OECC)
- Supporting communities who want to pursue local designation



Pursuing County Designation

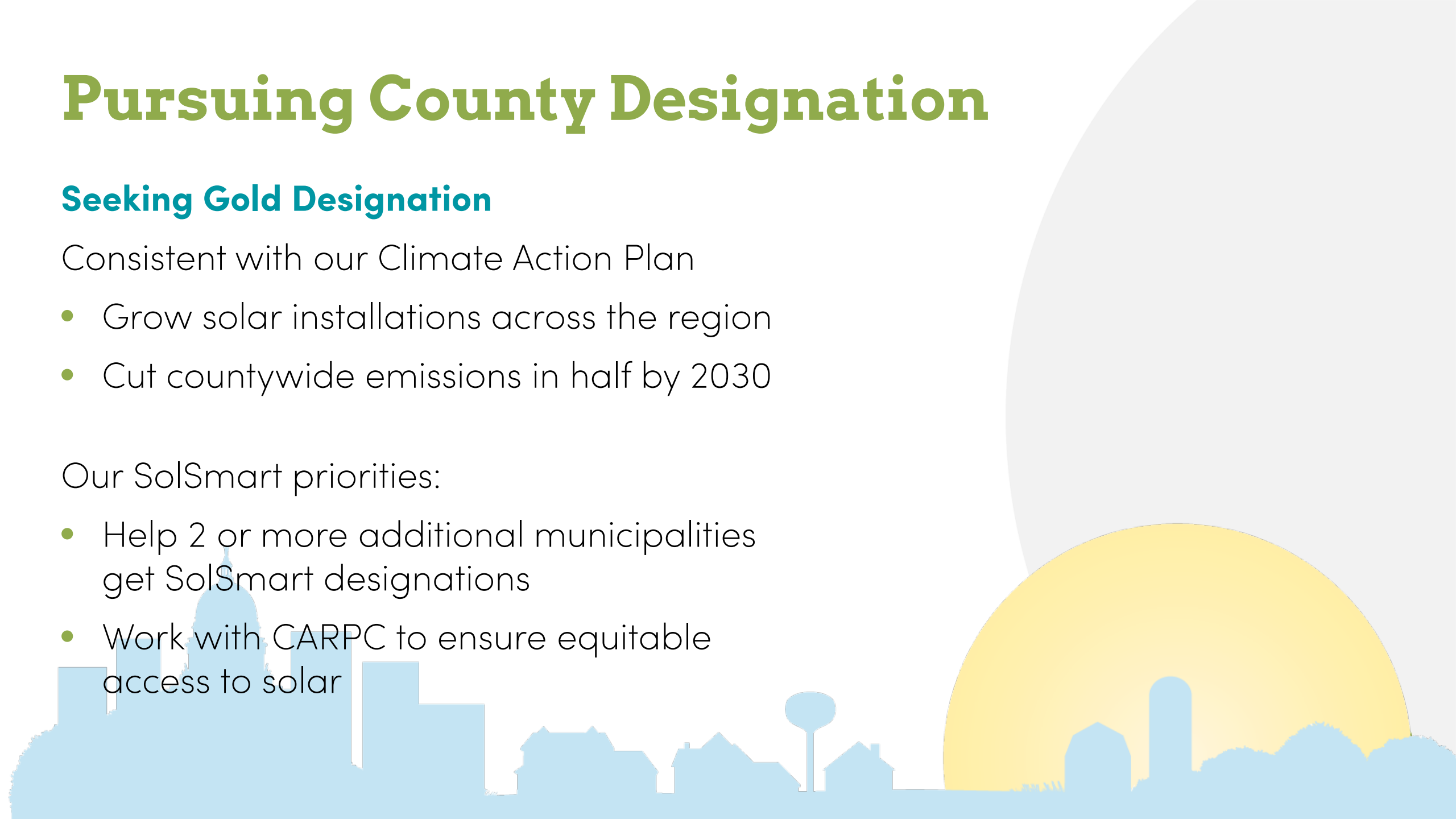
Seeking Gold Designation

Consistent with our Climate Action Plan

- Grow solar installations across the region
- Cut countywide emissions in half by 2030

Our SolSmart priorities:

- Help 2 or more additional municipalities get SolSmart designations
- Work with CARPC to ensure equitable access to solar



Pursuing County Designation

Key Designation Activities

- Documenting our current efforts
- Trainings for local government staff
 - Planning, zoning, permitting and inspections
- Support local government designations



Designation Consistent with Local Priorities

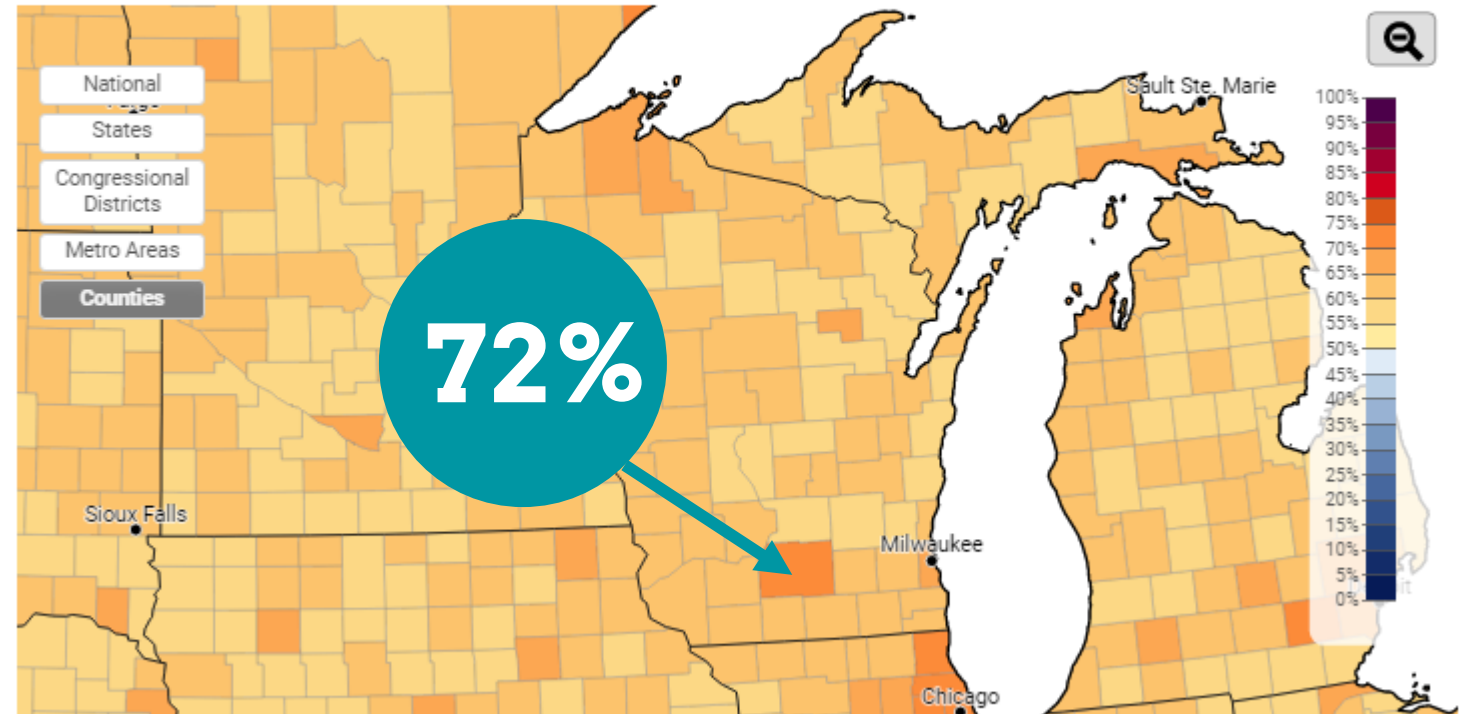
Estimated % of adults who think citizens should do more to address global warming (nat'l avg. 65%), 2021

Select Question: Citizens should do more to address global warming

Absolute Value

Click on map to select geography, or: Wisconsin

Select a County



UCSB
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

YALE PROGRAM ON
Climate Change
Communication

Utah State
University

<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/>

We're Making It Easy to Be SolSmart

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

We can go further
faster together



LOCAL STAFF TRAININGS

- Planning and zoning
- Permitting
- Inspections

SUPPORT

- Discussions to help folks understand and meet criteria
- Leveraging resources others have developed (e.g., OECC's page on HOA covenants)



Collaborative Example

MadiSUN

- City of Madison's solar group buy program
- OECC sponsorship = open to all residents in Dane County
- Your municipal support (e.g., promotion) = 20 SolSmart points!

Criteria Identifier	Criteria Points	Market Development Criteria
MD-1	20	Demonstrate activity in state regulatory and/or legislative proceedings regarding solar PV.
MD-2	20	Support a community-wide group purchase program (e.g., Solarize). Program must have occurred within the last 2 years.
MD-3	10	Define and implement a pathway specifically for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents to participate in a community-wide group purchase program through program design and/or financing support options.
MD-4	20	Support a community solar program.



03

The Local Designation Experience





Fitchburg, WI

Phil Grupe

Sustainability Specialist

phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov

Fitchburg's Energy Focus

2009 Wisconsin Energy Independent Community, 25x25

Green Tier Legacy Community, 2010

A decade-plus of investments in solar energy

LEED-Gold Library

2019 Clean Energy Resolution

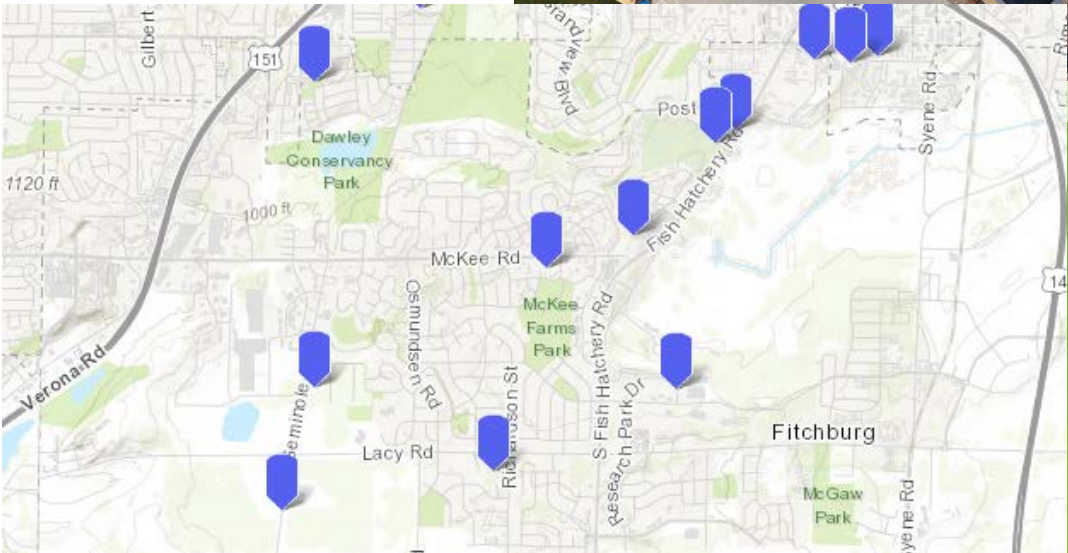
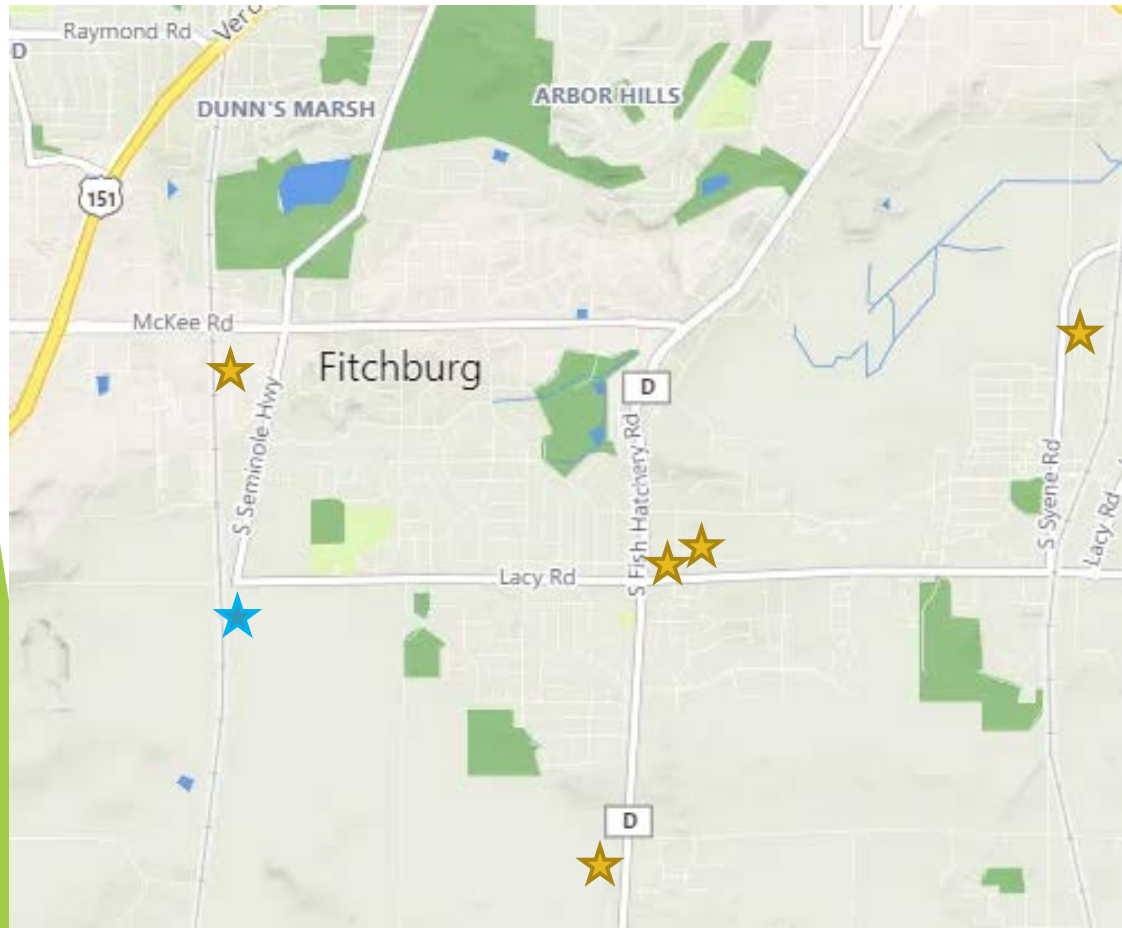
2019 SolSmart Bronze designation

EV adoption and promotion

Silver Bicycle-Friendly Community since 2015

2020 Dane County Climate Champions - 4 awards

Fitchburg and Solar



Fitchburg and Solar

- ▶ O'Brien Solar Farm: 20MW solar array on 160 acres in Fitchburg
- ▶ Fitchburg purchasing 0.5 MW eq.
- ▶ 2021: 10% of municipal electricity
- ▶ 2022: 17% of municipal electricity



- Assistance from a dedicated Technical Advisor
- Analysis of City's current situation, identifying low-hanging fruit and areas of greatest impact
- Coordinated efforts with various City staff

Fitchburg – SolSmart Process



Since achieving SolSmart designation in 2019:

- 287 residential solar permits approved (>70/yr), for projects totaling over \$6.8m in costs
- This likely represents over 4.5% of Fitchburg owner-occupied homes installing solar in just the past four years.
- \$54,500 in permitting fees, less than 1% of total project costs

Fitchburg – SolSmart Benefits

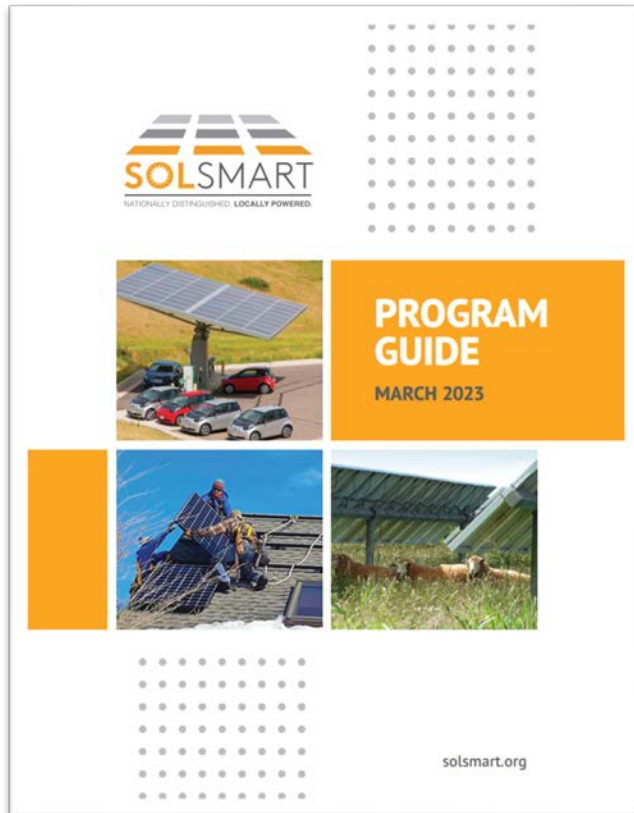


Future Developments/Goals


- ▶ SolSmart - Gold?
- ▶ SolarApp+ interest
- ▶ Continued municipal solar installations
- ▶ Participation in / promotion of community solar

Ready to Get Started?

REVIEW THE GUIDE



WRITE YOUR LETTER

SOLAR STATEMENT 

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Scott Annis
International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol St. NE, Ste. 500
Washington, DC 20002

Theresa Perry
Interstate Renewable Energy Council
125 Wolf Road, Suite 207
Albany, NY 12205

Dear Scott Annis and Theresa Perry:

On behalf of (local government name) I am proud to announce our commitment to become a SolSmart-designated community. In partnership with the SolSmart team, our dedicated staff members will work to improve solar market conditions, making it faster, easier, and more affordable for our residents and businesses to install solar energy systems. These efforts will also increase the efficiency of local processes related to solar development, which may save our local government time and money.

We will leverage SolSmart to achieve the following solar goals:

- Choose an item or type a custom description.
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- Choose an item or type a custom description.

These goals demonstrate that our community is committed to making continual improvement in our solar market. This includes ensuring solar development is inclusive and equitable. We're looking forward to learning more from the SolSmart program how to expand access to solar for all our residents and support solar energy adoption for those that are under resourced or underserved.

The SolSmart program will build on our solar efforts, such as (relevant plans or initiatives such as energy plans, community solar, solarize, state or other federal solar programs)

To measure progress along the way, we will track key metrics related to solar energy deployment, such as installed solar, permitting processing time, and growth in residential installations.

We understand that the SolSmart program has criteria and point requirements as outlined in the SolSmart Program Guide needed to achieve each tier of designation. We're excited to submit this solar statement to complete the first requirement of the program.

Inquiries related to our SolSmart participation can be directed to (city contact name) at (email address).

Sincerely,

Signed name
Printed name
Title

SCHEDULE A CALL

Introductory call with a SolSmart technical assistance provider

Call with OECC/CARPC to discuss regional cohort approach



04



Discussion



Contact Us



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