

LONG ISLAND SOLAR ROADMAP PROJECT

CONSORTIUM MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 28, 2019

To review the agenda and presentation materials, go to <http://www.solarroadmap.org>

ATTENDEES

Leadership Team

Aimee Delach, Defenders of Wildlife
Karen Leu, The Nature Conservancy
Jessica Price, The Nature Conservancy
Rupak Thapaliya, Defenders of Wildlife
Catherine Morris, Facilitator, CBI

Steering Committee

Tim Lederer, LIPA
Sarah Oral, Cameron Engineering for NYSERDA
Tara Schneider-Moran, Town of Hempstead
Tara Bono McDermott, EmPower Solar & LISEIA

Consortium Members

See a list of attendees in Appendix A.

OVERVIEW

Jessica reviewed the agenda and the meeting objectives:

- Adopt Vision, Goal, Strategy for Roadmap
- Provide tutorial on using interactive map showing areas of opportunity for low-impact solar development
- Get input on new sections on solar in agricultural settings in Economics Research Report

CHANGE IN PROJECT SCHEDULE

Jessica reviewed changes to the project schedule, driven by more time needed to finalize the spatial analysis:

NOV – JAN	Draft Synthesis Report
JAN 21	Consortium Meeting #5 - Webinar on final, island-wide mapping results
FEB	Consortium Meeting #6 - Review synthesis report & develop strategies
FEB – MAY	Draft Final Report and Maps
MAY	Launch Results - Final meeting to rollout results to broad audience

VISION, GOALS, STRATEGIES

The initial Vision, Goal, and Strategy statements were introduced at the last Consortium Meeting to help frame the purpose and approach of the final report. A subcommittee of three Consortium members volunteered to further refine them and exchanged a series of emails with suggested changes that were reviewed by the Leadership Team (LT). The resulting statements below were forwarded to the Steering Committee for their input. Catherine presented them to the Consortium and highlighted the changes. In response to a question, it was explained that the term “ownership models” was added to be more descriptive of community-owned projects and distinguished from market-driven, private sector models. Further clarification may be needed in the Economic Research section of the synthesis report where the term “business models” has been used.

- VISION – Rapid development of mid-to-large-scale solar power on Long Island that minimizes environmental impacts, maximizes benefits to the region and expands access to solar energy, including access to benefits by traditionally underserved communities.
- GOAL – Create and help implement a strategic plan for accelerating smart development of mid- to large-scale solar power on low-impact sites that meets the needs of local communities on Long Island.
- STRATEGIES - Collaborate with key stakeholders to identify and support changes in policy and practices, technology, siting, business and ownership models, community perceptions, and overall economic viability, which help accelerate smart solar development. Identify new research, information, and education needed to address knowledge gaps.

There were no further changes suggested, so these statements stand as adopted by the Consortium.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS MAP TUTORIAL

Karen walked through the new map interface and three ways to use the maps:

- **Explore:** Users can look at the estimated solar capacity by installation type and also see the different environmental layers. The information can be displayed at three different scales, including island wide, town level, and parcel or site level.
- **Filter/Query:** Users can to select parcels of interest or select all parcels within an area by drawing shapes on the map.
- **Analyze:** Users can export data as a CSV file and chart various data.

Tips and Updates:

- The maps do not yet show un-remediated brownfield sites, but these will be added.
- The LT is still negotiating a data sharing agreement with PSEG LI that will hopefully enable us to incorporate interconnection information into the map. The LT hopes to have the information by January.
- The map shows town zoning data in an overlay, but some towns' data still needs to be incorporated. Since towns have different codes to designate the zones and specific policies regarding solar in each zone, TNC will not try to align across towns nor display information about which zones do/do not allow solar installations. Rather, users will be able to see the zoning designation for an area of opportunity and can consult the appropriate town's zoning code for ordinances relevant to solar.
- If the data you are looking for is not initially visible, zoom in to reveal detail at a finer scale.
- Karen agreed that TNC would provide the boundaries of towns and villages on future maps.
- Please don't share the link beyond the Consortium at this point.

SOLAR & AGRICULTURE

Jessica reviewed the additions to the Economics Research paper that address solar in agricultural settings in three sections of the report:

- Opportunities and barriers

- Potential indirect costs and benefits
- Options for improving economic feasibility

Comments from Consortium members included the following:

- Discussion of the state's construction guidelines should also reference guidelines for operation and decommissioning, which cover the life of the project.
- The report should acknowledge that following the guidelines will potentially increase costs for the developer.
- Caution should be used in referring to solar as a way to preserve agricultural land. NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets considers land leased for solar for 20-30 years to be a permanent conversion, and the lease could be renewed to allow the solar plant to be repowered for another 20 plus years. Solar projects that result in only partial conversion, where agricultural production continues on part of the land, support farming operations and is not as detrimental as permanent conversion such as residential and commercial development. But, use of the entire farm for a solar project could result in permanent conversion as well.
- Solar has a much larger footprint than wind energy facilities and oil or gas drilling operations, which are not considered permanent conversion of the land for the purposes of the agricultural district tax assessment. For that reason, the recommendation that solar be treated like these facilities may need to be conditional, e.g. only if a portion of the land is used, or if the land has not been productive for x number of years.
- Co-location of agriculture and solar is promising, but likewise, the report should acknowledge that more research is needed, and some activities may not qualify, e.g. converting prime crop land in production to sheep grazing.
- The LT will take these points under advisement and revise these sections of the Economic Research Report with help from CN members.

PROCESS FOR DRAFTING SYNTHESIS REPORT & NEXT STEPS

- Jessica called for volunteers to supplement the Steering Committee who would be willing to review drafts of the Synthesis Report and provide feedback before it is presented in February to the full Consortium. Gina Coletti, Bridget Fleming, and Samantha Levy volunteered.
- Anyone else interested in being part of the review team should let Jessica know. We would like to limit the number to 5 Consortium members.
- Consortium members should submit comments on the maps and the additions to the Economics report focused on solar in agricultural settings via email or phone at any time in the next month.
- American Farmland Trust and TNC are hosting a forum on Solar and Agriculture in New York on Nov. 13 in Riverhead. Link to registration will be shared via email.

Appendix A. List of Consortium Member Attendees

- Lisa Broughton, Suffolk County Energy Office
- Alex Burgess for Sammy Chu, Edgewise Energy
- Gina Coletti, Suffolk County Chambers
- Meagan Fastuca, Town of North Hempstead
- Bridget Fleming, Suffolk County Legislator
- Peter Gollon, LIPA Board Member
- Nels Johnson, The Nature Conservancy
- Terese Kinsley, Town of Huntington
- Zachary Licht for Marj Issapour, Farmingdale State College
- Tim Lederer, LIPA
- Samantha Levy, American Farmland Trust
- Ryan Madden, Long Island Progressive Coalition
- Tara Bono McDermott, EmPower Solar & LISEIA
- Sarah Oral, Cameron Engineering for NYSERDA
- Kyle Rabin, Long Island Regional Planning Council
- Tara Schneider-Moran, Town of Hempstead
- Laura Steinberg, Town of East Hampton