



Commissioners of St. Mary's County
November 30, 2021

Request for Public Hearing

Ordinance to amend the Comprehensive
Zoning Ordinance for Solar, Major and
Solar, Minor Uses

CSMC formed the Solar Task Force in January 2020

Solar Task Force report to CSMC August 2021

Solar Task Force contracted with the Chesapeake Conservancy for an analysis for optimal solar sites in St. Mary's County

Optimal Solar Siting report includes:

- feasible solar sites and
- areas where
 - zoning,
 - economic, or
 - environmental factors preclude solar energy development.

- Preferred locations for ground-mounted solar:
 - degraded or contaminated sites,
 - County-owned properties, and
 - rural lands [not on prime ag soils]

Sites to avoid:

- ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands, and
- properties not compatible with the Navy mission.

Proposed ordinance adds two new uses to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance:

97.a. Solar, Major

98.a. Solar, Minor

97.a. Solar, Major. A Utility-scale solar energy generating system is a facility that:

- uses energy from the sun to produce electricity primarily for use off-site; and
- sells the electricity to the regional wholesale electricity market; and

97.a. Solar, Major.

- has a generating capacity of at least 2 megawatts; and
- requires a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity from the Maryland Public Service Commission.

97.a. Solar, Major.

- Major site plan is required – concept site plan approval from the Planning Commission
- Developer must meet the decommissioning requirements of the Public Service Commission, including proof of a bond or other financial security, set by the PSC

97.a. Solar, Major.

- Buffer yards 15 feet wide are required consistent with buffer yards already in the CZO
- Flexibility to have understory trees instead of canopy trees

97.a. Solar, Major

- Allow in all zones except RCA, LDA and AICUZ
- Setback and Height requirements per current CZO
- Navy review required:

Navy can request glint / glare analysis,
a heat retention analysis,
electromagnetic interference (EMI) analysis.

State decommissioning requirements

97.a. Solar, Major Preferred Locations

- County owned lands and facilities
- Public school owned lands
- Voluntary Cleanup Program restoration sites
- Brownfield sites
- Parking lots or similar grayfields
- Industrial zones

97.b. Solar, Minor. Produces less than 2 megawatts, electricity is primarily used on site

- Site plan is required for nonresidential
- Minor site plan – the facility is accessory to an existing nonresidential use
- Most of the electricity is used on site

97.b. Solar, Minor.

- Buffer yards 15 feet wide are required consistent with buffer yards already in the CZO
- Flexibility to have understory trees instead of canopy trees

97.b. Solar, Minor

Commercial /
Industrial /
Institutional /
Accessory Uses

- Setback and Height requirements per current CZO
- No additional permits beyond those currently required for building and electrical inspections

Solar, Community is a type of Minor Solar facility that:

- Is connected to the electric distribution grid
- Has at least two subscribers, no maximum
- Subscribers must be in the same electric service territory as the facility
- Generating capacity cannot exceed 2 megawatts

Residential Accessory Use Solar:

- Installed at private residences.
- All or almost all of the power generated is used on-site.
- Solar panels typically installed on rooftops; pole mounts, ground mounts, or canopies can also be used.
- Permit only is required for accessory residential use.

Requested date for the public hearing is
January 4, 2022

Time of day TBD

QUESTIONS?