



## **Planning for Renewables**

The demand for development of renewable energy facilities in Greene County, such as utility-scale solar, may continue to increase due to the recent passage of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The newly enacted legislation requires New York to get 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources like wind, solar and hydropower by 2030 and create a statewide electrical demand system with zero emissions by 2040.

Some municipalities in the County have grappled with the need to determine how best to plan for and regulate solar facilities at the local level that both protect community character and at the same time support and encourage renewable forms of producing power. There are a growing number of resources available to help local officials learn about how best to plan for renewable energy resources in their communities.

[Community Solar](#) facilities have been increasing in number in New York State. Greene County now has several Community Solar facilities. There are community solar projects in Greenville, Freehold, Cairo, Palenville and Tannersville. Another facility is being proposed in Coxsackie. Community solar facilities provide access to solar energy generation to households and businesses that do not have access to solar because they rent, live in multi-tenant buildings, have roofs that are not conducive to a solar system, or other mitigating factors. The Community Solar project has a large numbers of solar panels (often ground mounted) on several acres of land. Also called 'solar farms' they are designed to provide residents the opportunity to either subscribe or purchase solar power by renting or buying the number of panels they need to supply electricity to their homes or business. To be a part of a community solar project you need to have an account with an electric utility. Community solar projects in NY and in Greene County can be located on NYSERDAs [Community Solar Mapper](#)

NYSERDA provides technical assistance and other resources to [Communities & Local Governments](#) and has developed both New York State Solar Guidebook and a Wind Energy Guidebook. The [Solar Guidebook](#) includes tools, and step-by-step instructions to support local governments managing solar energy development in their communities. NYSERDA also provides a [Model Solar Zoning](#) and a [Solar Toolkit Developed to Help Municipalities Advance Solar Projects](#). The [Wind Energy Guidebook](#) can help prepare local decision makers and community members for wind energy development.

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets has also produced [Guidelines for Agricultural Mitigation for Solar Energy Projects](#) and [Guidelines for Agricultural Mitigation for Wind Power Projects](#).

Organizations such as the American Farmland Trust and Scenic Hudson provide [resources on the siting of solar](#), and have developed a [Guide to Farming Friendly Solar](#) and [A Guide to Siting Renewable Energy in the Hudson Valley](#). This Pace University article on [permitting and zoning for wind energy facilities](#) may be helpful at the local level.

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