

SOLAR FACILITY SITING GUIDANCE

Planning Directors Roundtable

April 16, 2020

OBJECTIVE OF GUIDANCE

- In response to the interim report (December 2019) of the **Governor's Task Force on Renewable Energy Development and Siting**.
- Report includes recommendation to provide guidance to local governments to:
 - minimize the impact of solar facilities on rural lands
 - facilitate the siting of solar facilities on developed lands and brownfields.

ANNAPOLIS RENEWABLE ENERGY PARK



OBJECTIVE OF GUIDANCE

- One place to find Maryland-specific solar facility siting information:
 - **Local government experience and approaches** in developing siting ordinances.
 - **Judicial and administrative decisions** affecting local siting ordinances.

OBJECTIVE OF GUIDANCE

- So far, mainly focused on utility-scale solar facilities given concerns regarding:
 - Loss of agricultural or forest land
 - Relatively long facility lifespan
 - Viewshed impacts
 - Glare

CASE STUDIES

- Examples from both urban and rural jurisdictions.
- Examples of solar development on brownfields.
- Best practices and lessons learned based on the experience of local governments.
- Description of ordinance development process used.

EXAMPLE OF CASE STUDY

Solar Facility Siting Case Study

Jurisdiction: Queen Anne's County

Type: Utility-Scale, Undeveloped Land

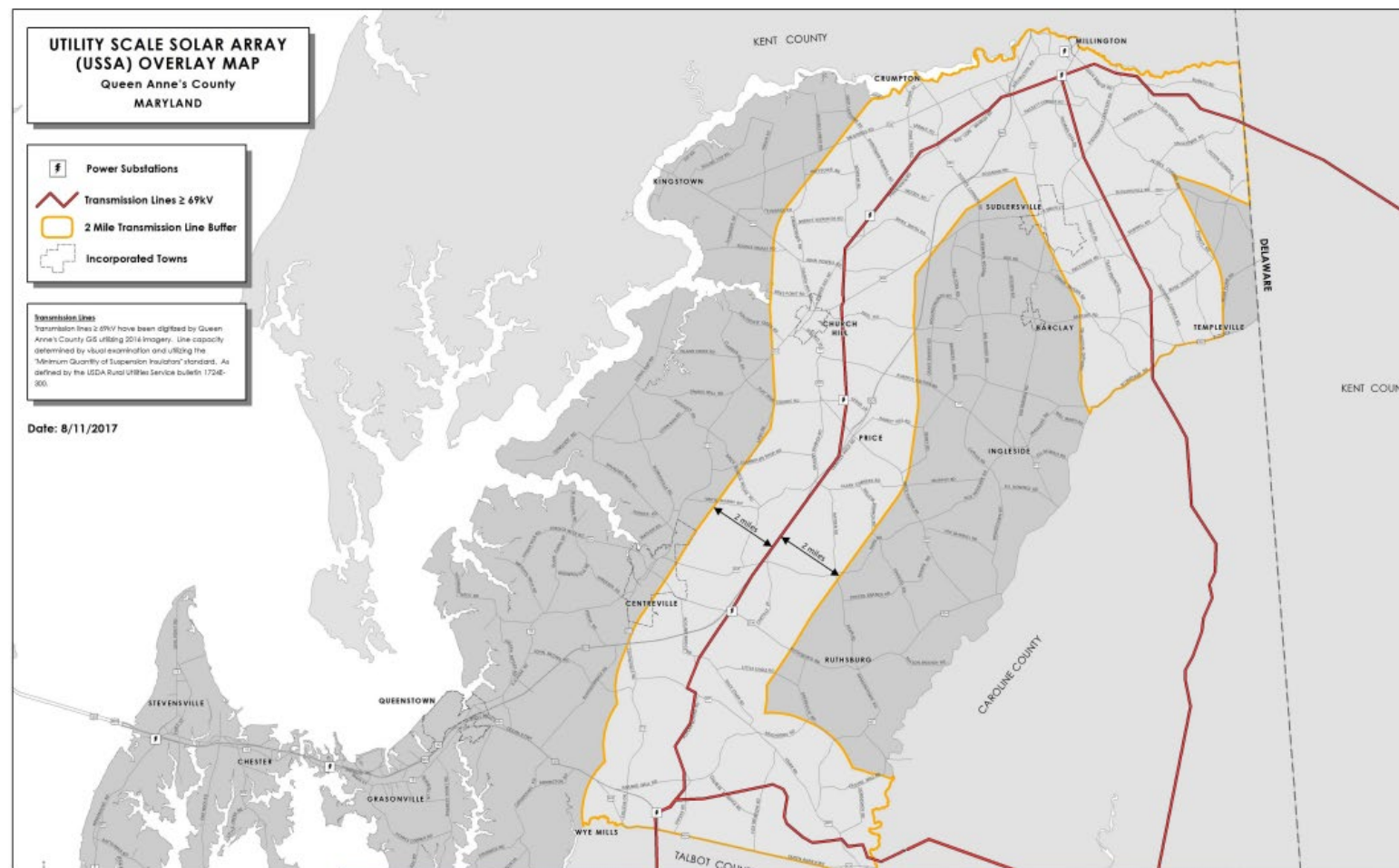
Zoning Used: Overlay District

Process: Stakeholder-Driven

Description of Process:

The county asked the solar industry to identify the area of the county of interest to them. The solar industry identified the area two miles from the 69-kV transmission line that extends north to south in the county. Using the Smart DG+ tool from the Power Plant Research Program at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, county staff created an overlay map to inform its public outreach effort. One benefit of the map is that it showed the public that not all lands in the county were of interest to the solar industry (such as the areas adjacent to 34.5 kV transmission lines).

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY SOLAR OVERLAY MAP



IMPACTFUL DECISIONS ON CPCNs

- Utility-scale solar facilities generally must obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN).
- CPCN decisions include those by the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) and Power Plant Research Program (PPRP).

IMPACTFUL DECISIONS ON CPCNs

- Excerpts from the PSC final order and/or joint secretarial PPRP letter.
- Links to news or blog articles regarding the decision.
- Links to the source documents on the PSC website to allow tracking of case progress over time.



STATE OF MARYLAND

December 17, 2019

Jason M. Stanek, Chairman
Public Service Commission
6 St. Paul Center
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: Case No. 9499, In the Matter of the Application of Morgnec Road Solar, LLC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Construct a 45 MW Solar Photovoltaic Generating Facility in Kent County, Maryland

Dear Chairman Stanek:

In accordance with Section 3-306(b) of the Natural Resources Article, and the process described in Section 7-207 and 7-208 of the Public Utility Companies Article, we are enclosing our preliminary recommendation in Case Number 9499 on behalf of the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources, Environment, Agriculture, Transportation, Commerce, Planning, and the Maryland Energy Administration. Our proposed license conditions and recommendation relate to

EXAMPLE OF CPCN DISCUSSION

- **PPRP decision to not oppose CPCN for Morgnec Road Solar, LLC. Kent County - December 2019.** The PPRP joint secretarial letter noted opposition of the project by the county, adjacent municipality, and local citizen and community groups. The PPRP joint secretarial letter did not recommend denial of a CPCN for a 45 MW utility-scale solar facility, noting the following: (1) the project would occupy land currently used for agricultural production; (2) the land in question is designated as a future growth area by the county and by the adjacent municipality; (3) the goal is for the applicant, county and town to reach agreement regarding the project's operation for a finite period of time while accommodating future growth of the adjacent municipality; (4) the PPRP's recommended licensing conditions #3 and #31 provide for the expiration of the CPCN upon the PSC's determination that it is in the public convenience and necessity that the project decommission to allow for the growth of the adjacent municipality, consistent with the comprehensive plans of the county and the town.
 - **The PSC has not yet made a decision regarding the CPCN.**
 - For more details on the case, including the PPRP joint secretarial letter and associated licensing conditions, see item 45 under PSC Case Number 9499 at:
<http://www.psc.state.md.us/search-results/?q=9499&x.x=14&x.y=14&search=all&search=case>

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

- Overview of Maryland processes for reviewing, modifying and approving proposals for utility-scale solar facilities, including PSC and PPRP resources.
- Links to the PPRP Smart DG+ online mapping application and Smart DG+ Zoning Guide.
- Information on ensuring compatibility of utility-scale solar facilities with military installations.

COMPATIBILITY WITH MILITARY INSTALLATIONS



**Military Aviation and Installation
Assurance Siting Clearinghouse**
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Sustainment



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SEEKING FEEDBACK

- Make webpage as useful and helpful as possible to local governments.
- Inform development and adjustments to local solar facility ordinances.
- What information would be most valuable to you?
- What is the best way to organize and present this information?

ASKS OF PLANNING DIRECTORS

- Are you interested in serving as a reviewer of the draft solar facility siting guidance text?
- Would you like to participate in an interview for a case study regarding your experience developing your local solar facility siting ordinance?
- Any feedback today regarding the content of the draft guidance?