

Providing Opportunity; Protecting the Agricultural Land Resource



**Onondaga County Planning Federation
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Cornell AAP
Architecture Art Planning

The Challenge: Balance



Renewable Energy:

- Potential large economic benefit;
- Cut energy costs for farm operations;
- Generate additional revenues for farms;
- Recycle waste manure into energy.

The Challenge: Balance



Agricultural zoning:

- Should protect the agricultural land resource;
- Promote the wise stewardship of soil and water resources;
- Promote the long term economic viability of the agricultural sector.

Zoning for Solar

Definitions:

Make sure definitions are concise, and clear as to what your community means/desires;

Define any term that has a meaning that is specific to your zoning code, & your municipality;



Zoning for Solar



Definitions:

- Solar energy facility;
- Wind energy facility;
- Commercial solar/wind;
- Non-commercial solar/wind;
- Biogas generator.

Zoning For Solar

Definitions:

Solar Energy System, Non-Commercial

A solar photovoltaic cell, panel, or array, or solar hot air or water collector device, which relies upon solar radiation as an energy source for collection, inversion, storage, and distribution of solar energy for electricity generation or transfer of stored heat, primarily for use on the premises.

Town of Geneva NY Zoning Law

Zoning For Solar

Definitions:

Solar Energy System, Non-Commercial

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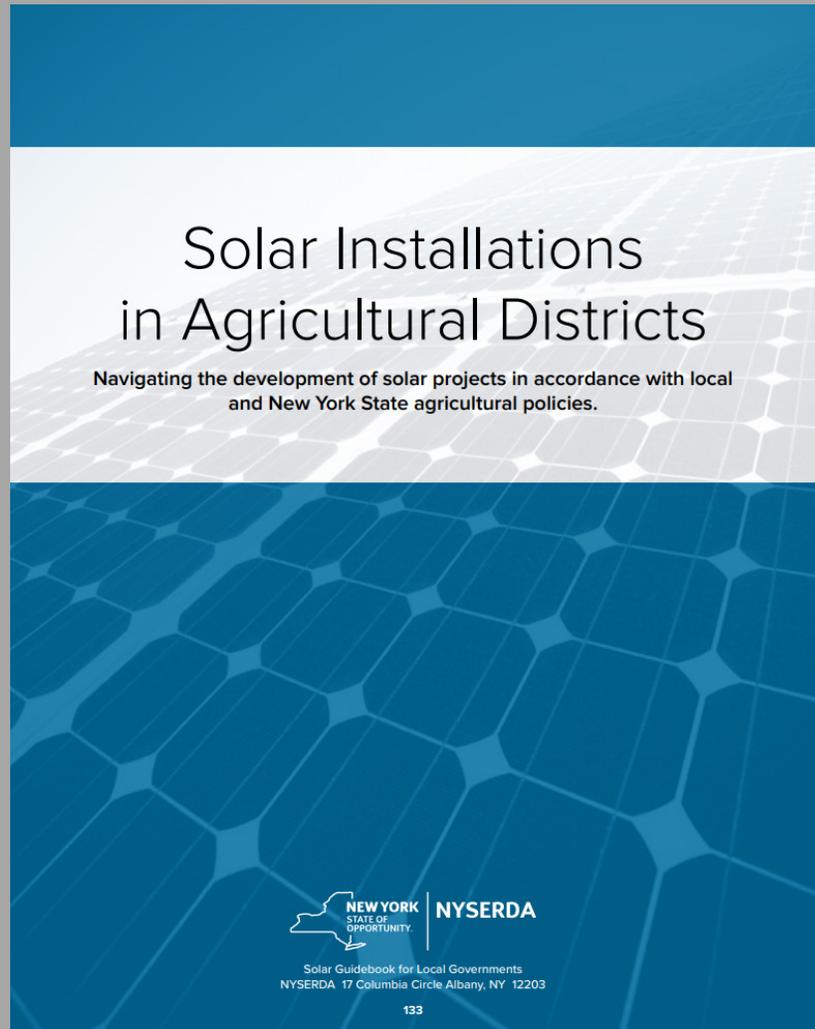


Photo courtesy Renovus Energy, Ithaca, NY

Town of Geneva NY Zoning Law

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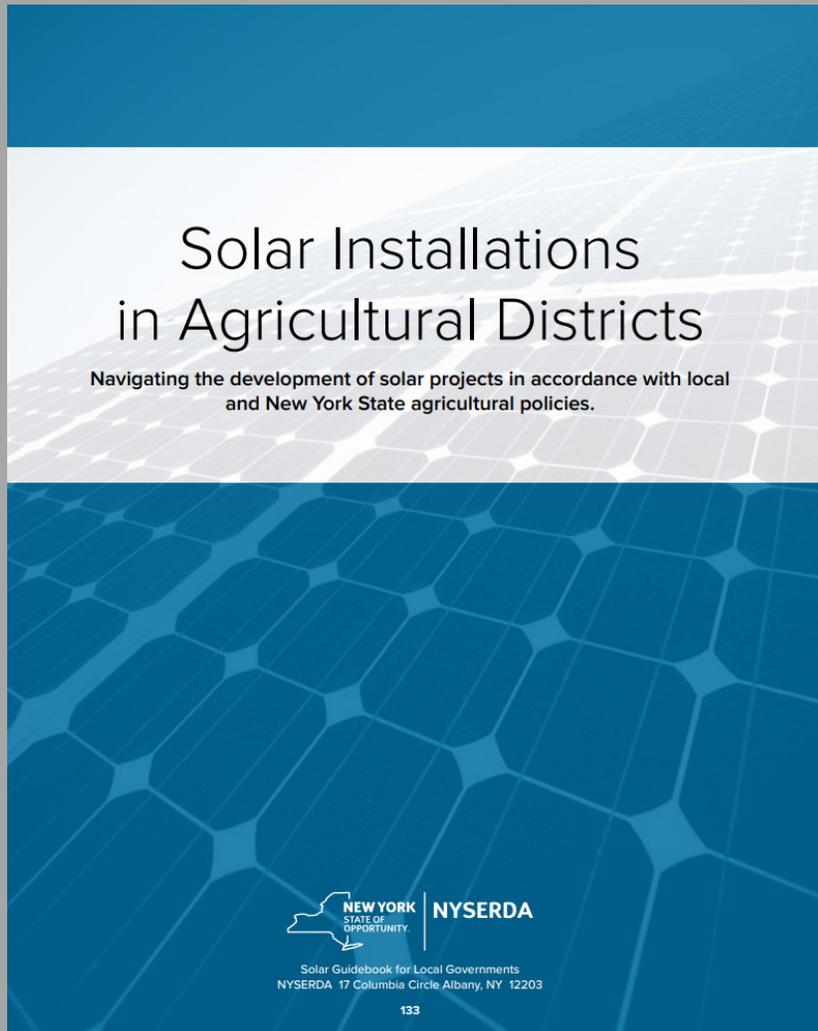
Zoning For Solar



NYSERDA:

- Farm-Related Solar - system where the electricity produced is no more than 110% of anticipated farm use.

Zoning For Solar



NYSERDA:

- Reasonable local regulations:
 - Streamlined site plan review;
 - Building/zoning permit & building code compliance;
- Overly restrictive:
 - Prohibited by local zoning;
 - Special Permit requirements.

Zoning For Solar



Non-commercial solar systems:

- Permitted use in agricultural zoning districts;
- Scaled to fit farm operation;
- Reasonable setbacks, height limitations;
- Avoid high quality soils.

Zoning For Solar

Definitions:

Solar Energy System - Commercial

An area of land or other area used for a solar collection system principally used to capture solar energy and convert it to electrical energy to transfer to the public electric grid in order to sell electricity to or receive a credit from a public utility entity, but also may be for on-site use...



Town of Geneva NY Zoning Law

Zoning For Solar



Commercial Solar Energy Arrays

- Not so compatible w/agriculture:
 - Competition for higher-quality lands;
 - Permanence of foundation systems;
 - Acreage requirements;

Zoning For Solar



Commercial Solar Energy Arrays

- Permit in appropriate locations within community;
- Site plan review appropriate:
 - Size & scale of development;
 - Environmental impact review;
 - Ensure compliance w/ standards.

Zoning For Solar

Well Crafted Standards:

- Setbacks (property lines, roads, streams, wetlands);
- Height and bulk limits;
- Protect prime soils & farmland of statewide importance;
- Avoid fragmentation of larger fields into re more difficult to farm smaller fields
- Decommissioning/site restoration plan;



Zoning For Solar

Well Crafted Standards:

- Avoid/reduce visual impacts (including glare);
- Landscape buffers(native plants);
- Underground utility/transmission lines;
- Fencing;
- All-weather roadways within site;
- Roadways flush to ground.



Zoning For Solar

Decommissioning:

- Time frame for completion of site restoration;
- Site to be restored to a useful condition:
 - Removal of aboveground and below-ground equipment, structures and foundations;
 - Restoration of the surface grade and soil after removal of equipment;
 - Revegetation of restored areas;



Questions?



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