

Project Overview & Objectives

Expanding Solar Access, Municipal Support, and Clean Energy Technology Adoption

Objectives:



- Increase residential and commercial solar PV and BESS installations
- Obtain SolSmart Designation to increase clean energy access, installation, and integration in Acton
- Reduce municipal, commercial, and residential reliance on fossil fuels, as outlined in ActOn CAP
- Provide resources for residents and developers

Approach and Methods



Research, Analysis, Brainstorming

Research on solar significance, installation options, available incentives, funding opportunities, state and local policies. Collaborated with Assistant Planner + Sustainability Office to craft goals for dashboard, solar access, and installations. Conducted initial feasibility study.



Outreach, Dashboard, and SolSmart Spreadsheet Development

Connected with SolSmart program, nearby communities, Clean Energy Coaches, local experts and Town officials. Developed spreadsheet of solar actions taken and to be taken by Town to obtain designation.



Feedback and Next Steps

Solicited feedback from Sustainability Office, Planning Department, Clean Energy Coaches, Energize Acton, and Green Advisory Board. Created and began working on next steps for Acton, including publishing dashboard and official SolSmart Program Designation. Revisited and revised feasibility study.

Deliverables and Findings

Ready, Set, Solar! Dashboard



Ready, Set, Solar!

Tools and Resources to Add Solar to Your Home and Business

Town of Acton Sustainability Office
February 5, 2026

Scan the QR Code to View Acton's Solar Dashboard



Planning and Zoning					
Criteria Identifier	Criteria Points	Description	Feasibility	Notes	Lead/Point of Contact
PZ-1	Required	Review zoning requirements and identify restrictions that intentionally or unintentionally prohibit solar PV development. Complete findings in a memo. (Required for Bureau). Examples include height restrictions, setback requirements, screening requirements, visibility restrictions, etc.	3	Recommended verification to provide a SolSmart signed Zoning Review Memo? We have to get that from them I guess?	Planning, Building
PZ-2		Present PZ-1 memo findings to planning commission or relevant body.	3		
PZ-3		Draft proposed language for changes to zoning code based on PZ-1 memo and PZ-2 dialogue. Involve planners and/or local zoning experts and/or the public (e.g., through community-based organizations) in the creation of the draft language.	4		
PZ-4		Post an online document from the Planning/Zoning Department that states accessory use solar PV is allowed by-right in all major zones. (e.g., via a zoning determination letter). (Required for Silver unless Gold Requirement PZ-5 is achieved. If PZ-5 is achieved, PZ-4 is not necessary).	1	Already achieved through PZ-5, not necessary	
PZ-5		Codify in the zoning ordinance that accessory use rooftop solar PV is explicitly allowed by-right in all major zones. (Required for Gold, PZ-4 is optional)	1		
PZ-6		Ensure the zoning ordinance language does not include intentional or unintentional barriers to accessory use rooftop solar PV, including but not limited to aesthetic or performance standards, screening requirements, limits to visibility, excessive restrictions to system size or rooftop coverage, glare or light pollution, and subjective design reviews.	1		

Main Takeaways

Reducing Fossil Fuel Reliance and Supporting Clean Energy Sources

Key Takeaways:



- Despite federal clean energy rollbacks, installing solar PV to your home and business is a resilient, cost-effective, and sustainable energy option
- Acton is actively pursuing opportunities to increase solar access, including through:
 - Large-scale solar projects (Syncarpha)
 - Increasing residential and commercial access to and knowledge of solar PV and BESS
 - Supporting community solar programs
- The Solar Dashboard and SolSmart Designation will increase community understanding of solar, answer installation and financing questions, and assert the importance of clean energy initiatives

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- Acton Clean Energy Coaches, Energize Acton, Green Advisory Board

