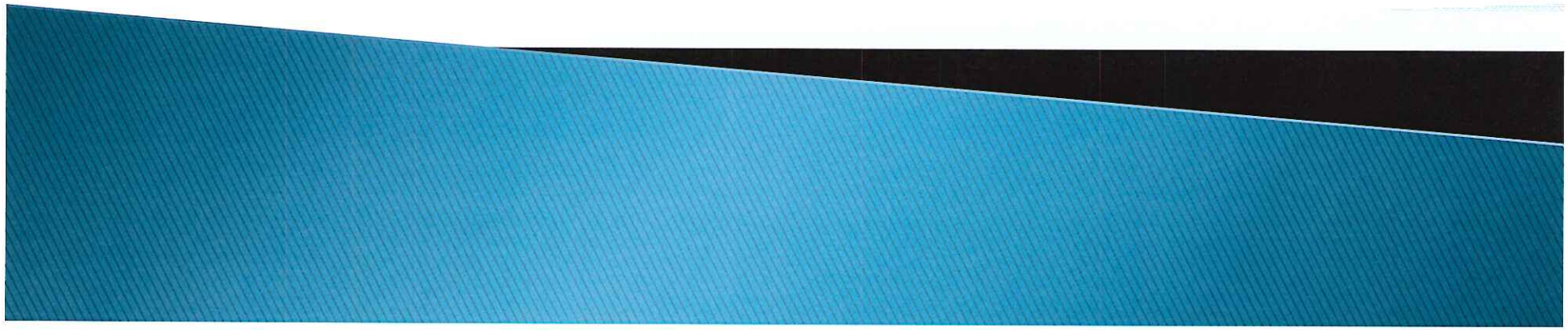
Eureka Township Draft Solar Systems Ordinance

Public Meeting
April 12, 2016



Study Background

The Township has identified that there may be public interest permitting in solar energy systems for private residential use and commercial development.

The Township adopted a 12-month moratorium in April, 2015 so that it could consider an ordinance for Solar Energy Systems. The Township's current zoning ordinance does not include solar energy systems as an allowed use.

Study Background

The Township's Planning Commission is developing an Ordinance to regulate:

- Accessory Solar Energy Systems and
- Primary (Commercial) Solar Energy Systems, such as Solar Farms and Community Solar Gardens

The draft ordinance includes

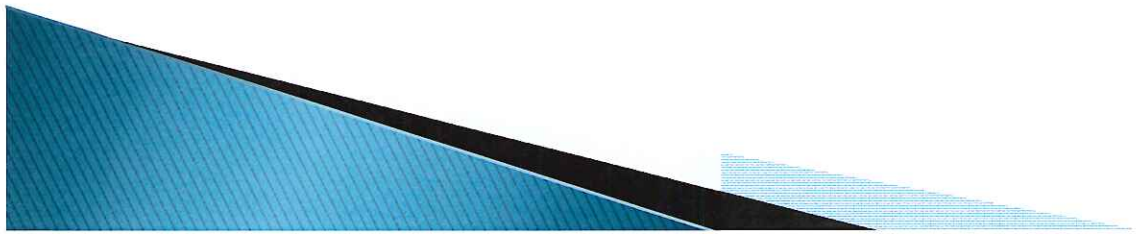
- Permit Requirements
- Performance Standards to address potential impacts and compatibility with other uses in the Township

Tonight's Meeting

The Planning Commission invited residents to the meeting tonight to let you know about the proposed ordinance, and get your comments and feedback. A public hearing on a draft ordinance will be held later in 2016.

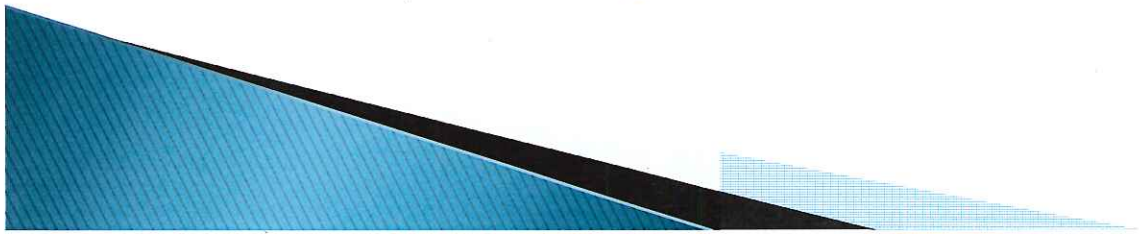
Tonight the Planning Commission members will:

1. Review the Draft Solar Energy Systems Ordinance with residents
2. Answer questions
3. Get your comments



Residential Solar Energy Systems—Proposed Ordinance

- Roof, building- and ground-mounted residential systems would be allowed as accessory uses throughout the Township.
- No land use permit would be allowed for roof- or building-mounted residential systems.
- Ground-mounted residential systems up to 10 kilowatts would require building permits
- Ground-mounted residential systems larger than 10 kw and less than 100 kw would require a CUP.
- Systems larger than 100 kw would be classified as Commercial Systems.



Residential Systems--Examples

Accessory Solar Energy Systems—Proposed Ordinance

- Proposed Performance Standards for Accessory Solar Energy Systems:
  - Roof and ground-mounted system must comply with setback requirements for accessory structures.
  - Roof- and building-mounted systems cannot extend above the highest portion of the roofline where they are mounted, or extend beyond the building perimeter.

Residential Solar Energy Systems—Proposed Ordinance

Proposed Performance Standards for Accessory Solar Energy Systems:

- Count toward the accessory structure limits in zoning districts and must comply with setbacks
- Ground-mounted systems would not be permitted in Shoreland areas.
- Will be considered pervious surfaces if they have vegetated groundcover under the system
- Height of the system could not exceed 15 feet.
- Meet Stormwater Ordinance standards
- Meet professional engineering standards

Solar Farms and Gardens (Primary Use Solar Systems) —Proposed Ordinance

Proposed Ordinance Requirements:

- Permitted in Agriculture District. Maximum size allowed would be 10 megawatts
- Interim Use Permit required
- Permit would expire when
  Lease expires, or 30 years
- Not permitted in:
  Shoreland Districts
  Wetlands
  Floodplain Districts
  Natural resource corridors

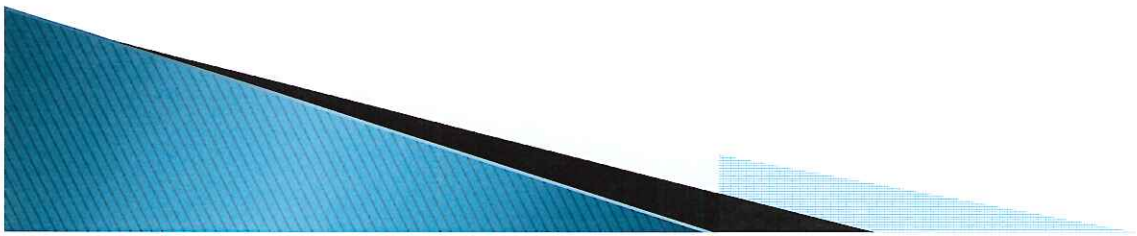
Solar Farms and Gardens (Commercial Systems) —Proposed Ordinance

IUP Permit application requirements:

- Detailed Site plan for existing and proposed
- Sketch elevation showing height compared to surroundings
- Interconnection agreement with utility
- Natural resource assessment (40 acres and larger)
- Liability insurance
- Decommissioning plan and letter of credit
- Glare study, if needed

Solar Farms and Gardens (Commercial Systems) —Proposed Ordinance

- Proposed Performance Standards
  - 50 megawatts and larger are permitted by the State of Minnesota
  - Minimum parcel size of 10 acres
  - No larger than 70 acres
  - Comply with State Building Code and other standards
  - Comply with principal structure setbacks
  - Shall not exceed 15 feet in height

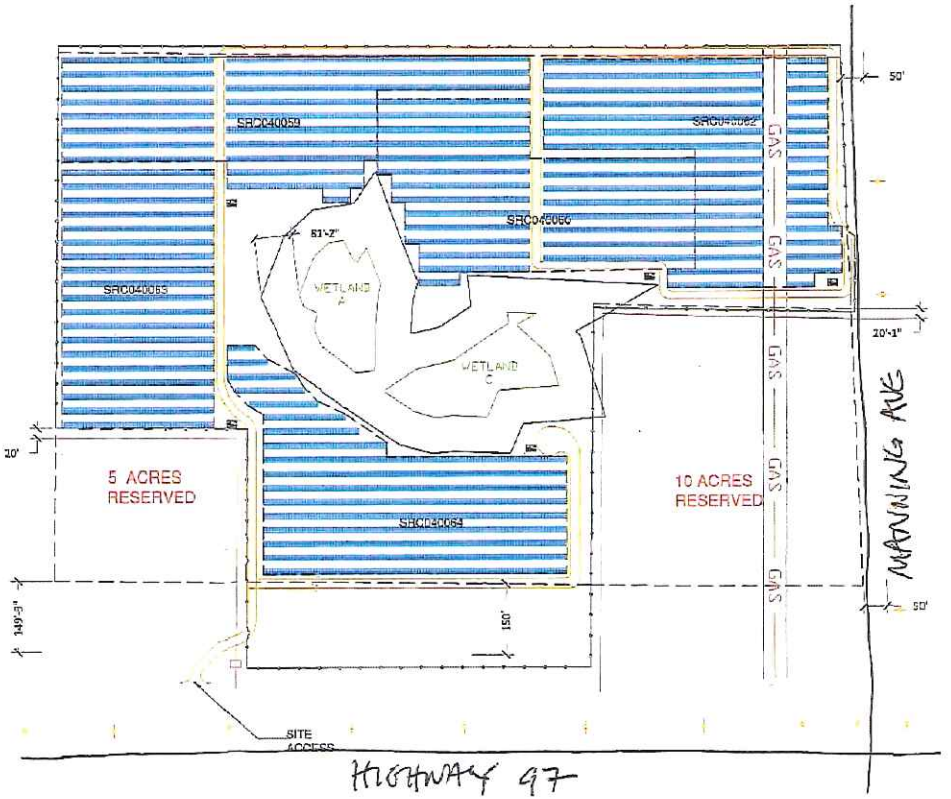


Solar Farms and Gardens (Commercial Systems) —Proposed Ordinance

- Must be screened from view from public right-of-way to extent possible by topography, setbacks, berming, vegetation
- Township may require wider setbacks or buffer between solar system and adjacent properties
- Engineer must certify structures
- Power and communication lines between banks of panels and to substations should be buried
- Vegetated ground cover required.
- Warning signs and fencing of high-voltage and mechanical equipment required
- Considered a nuisance if abandoned for more than 1 year.

Examples

- Scandia example
- 5 megawatts
- 25 acres panels
- 29-acre site



Scandia Example—15' height maximum

Questions and Discussion