

Tool #3:

Integrating Solar into Existing Activities

What is it?

Integrating solar energy within other regional plans (e.g., regional energy plan, emergency preparedness plan, long range transportation plan, economic development strategy, sustainability plans, or development of regional impacts checklist) can meet multiple goals.

By incorporating solar into a regional plan, planners can coordinate the community's efforts and reach common goals more easily. Including solar into your regional plans can also show your region's commitment to advancing renewable energy sources and help build the foundation to secure future resources and political will to accomplish solar goals.

How do you do it?

- Identify solar as a key economic driver in your region by creating or supporting policy that bolsters regional solar investment.
- Establish rules and regulations facilitating solar energy development.
- Consider identifying public and private stakeholders willing to implement strategies outlined in your regional solar plan.
- Create the position of Regional Solar Energy Coordinator, designate a committee or coordinate with a public-private agency willing to implement solar policies and plans.
- Promote Solar in Development of Regional Impacts (DRI) by including solar roof access, photovoltaic (PV) street and recreational area lighting, among others. DRIs can also direct that developers must provide information on solar hot water heaters and PV to potential home buyers and allow them to select those options.
- Consider including solar within emergency or transportation planning. For example, solar can be used as backup for traffic controls and emergency radios.

Who else is doing it?

- The Solar Roadmap, provides resources, best practices and guidance on incorporating solar into regional plans, including permitting, inspection planning, zoning, interconnection, financing and market development. For more information, visit <http://www.solarroadmap.com/>.
- The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Commission (SWFRPC) has successfully promoted solar within their Development of Regional Impacts review requirements for the past 37 years. For more information, visit <http://www.swfrpc.org/dri.html>.
- The Pima Association of Governments (PAG) in partnership with the City of Tucson and Clean Energy Corp developed the Greater Tucson Solar Development Plan which promotes the development of solar in their region. For more information, see the PAG case study on page 26 of this *Guide*. or visit <http://www.pagnet.org/documents/solar/SolarDevPlan2009-01.pdf>.
- The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) incorporated solar into their Climate Action Plan to support the region's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. For more information, visit <http://www.mwcog.org/environment>.
- Berkeley, CA includes solar provisions within their Climate Action Plan. For more information, visit www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=19668.

Where can I get more information?

- The American Planning Association's (APA) Planners Energy and Climate Database, provides examples of the incorporation of solar within regional and local plans. www.planning.org/research/energy/database/
- The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments is a comprehensive resource created to assist local governments and stakeholders in designing and implementing a strategic local solar plan. The guidebook includes a section on including solar in broader regional planning efforts on page 20-22. http://www4.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/resource_center/sites/default/files/solar-powering-your-community-guide-for-local-governments.pdf