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**Town of Westerlo
2021
Comprehensive Plan**



DRAFT - February 11, 2021



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Renewable Energy & Infrastructure

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Renewable energy sources restore themselves over short periods of time and do not diminish. Solar, wind, geothermal and hydro are renewable and carbon-free, and effectively inexhaustible.

Renewable Energy & Infrastructure

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NYS ENERGY POLICY

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, New York State announced a plan to address the State's aging energy infrastructure through what is known as REV, or Reforming the Energy Vision Initiative. Spearheaded by Governor Cuomo and Richard Kauffman, the Chairman of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), this program enlisted the Public Service Commission (PSC) to create a framework to establish a resilient and renewable energy grid in New York State. The State's renewable electricity goals set by REV and by the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) aim for 100% carbon free electricity by 2040, and a 70% renewable supply by

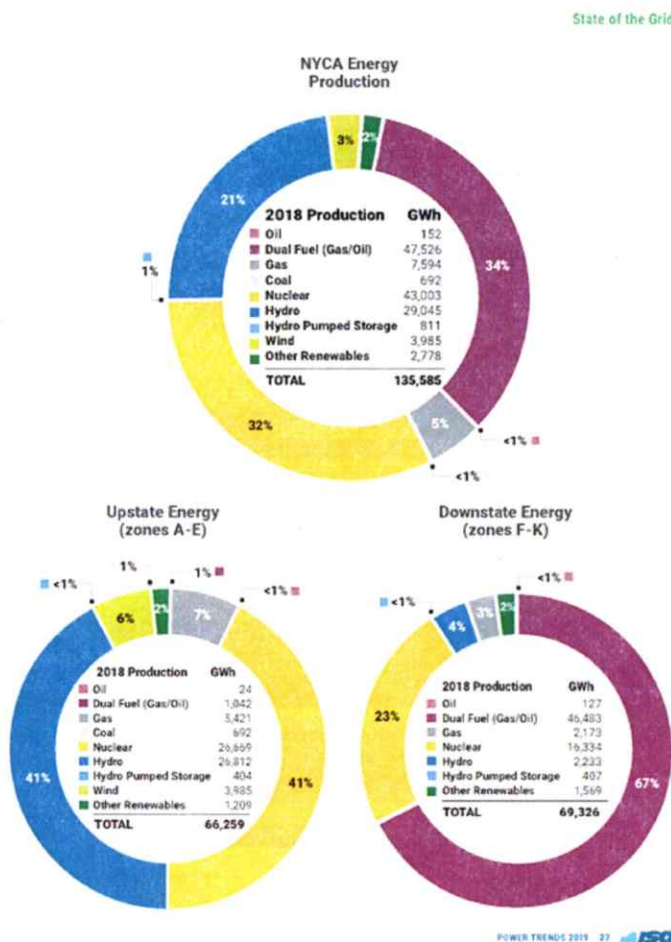
2030 in order to achieve a Statewide greenhouse gas emissions goal of 85% from 1990 levels by 2050 (2015 SEP Amendment). Additional State goals include 3,000 MW of energy storage by 2030 and 6,000 MW of distributed solar by 2025.

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Approximately 60% of New York's power generation infrastructure is over 35 years old (<https://rev.ny.gov/rev-initiatives>). As New Yorkers saw after Hurricane Sandy, aging infrastructure in combination with storms with increasing severity can and will devastate communities. Transitioning to modern technology that distributes locally generated

renewable energy would likely decrease price volatility while simultaneously curbing the impacts of climate change.

According to 2018 data from the New York Independent System Operator's annual report, the Town of Westerlo's electric supply, which is included in Load Zone F, is primarily composed of fossil fuel generated energy (see figure to the left). Many of these fossil fuel fired power plants are older facilities with higher operating and fuel costs and are most used during peak demand hours of the day. This means that when electricity is needed most, during peak hours, the grid taps into what's available, fossil fuel generated energy. One possible replacement option that would reduce the cost of demand energy and simultaneously decrease emissions is solar plus storage. It is because of this new market for renewable energy that the Town of Westerlo experienced a surge of interest from solar developers over the past five years. In combination with New York State incentives, market demand, Westerlo's geographic location within Load Zone F, available open space, and affordability the Town became a prime location for Distributed Energy Resources (DER), also sometimes known as community solar.



than 25 kW and laid out definitions for large scale, and small scale solar systems. At the time the local law was passed 25 kW was the threshold because systems larger than 25 kW fell within the State's Article 10 process for large scale systems.

All major electric generating facilities larger than 25 MW which are not subject to review by the Office of Renewable Energy Siting were previously sited according to New York State's Article 10 law. This comprehensive law provides guidance to the New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) about authorizing construction and operation of major electric generating facilities. The Article 10 law streamlines the application process for developers, while providing a rigorous process for local input and ensuring environmental and public health laws are followed.

Additionally, New York's 2020 budget bill contained the most significant overhaul of large-scale renewable energy project permitting since the enactment of Public Service Law Article 10. The new Act will effectively dismantle the Article 10 process, and represents a major step toward achieving the goals set forth in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act ("CLCPA"). These goals include having a minimum of 70% statewide electricity consumption come from renewable sources by 2030, and an emission-free grid by 2040. Under the Act, large-scale renewable energy projects will now apply to a streamlined permitting regime overseen by a newly-created Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES). Accordingly, the law is no

longer codified in "Article 23" of the State's Economic Development Law but instead in Section 94-c of the Executive Law. Like the Article 10's Siting Board, ORES may issue a Section 94-c permit only if it finds that the project would comply with applicable laws and regulations. However, ORES, may elect not to apply, in whole or in part, any local law or ordinance which would otherwise be applicable if it makes a finding that, as applied to the proposed major renewable energy facility, it is unreasonably burdensome in view of the CLCPA targets and the environmental benefits of the proposed major renewable energy facility. This differs significantly from Article 10's "unreasonably burdensome" standard, which is judged "in view of the existing technology or the needs of or costs to ratepayers whether located inside or outside of such municipality." The Act thus gives ORES significantly more flexibility to choose not to apply a local law and changes the applicable standard to one that expressly promotes consideration of progress toward the State's CLCPA's goals and the specific environmental benefits (as opposed to all impacts) of the project over the local values embedded in the local laws.

The Town's 2017 law established that all large scale solar energy systems required Special Use Permit approval and were subject to site plan review. Also included in the 2017 law were set back requirements, height limits, coverage limits, glare and heat requirements, visual impact assessments, landscaping and screening guidelines, and lighting and sound regulations. Additional requirements included lease

information, annual status updates on the system, insurance and bond requirements, and decommissioning plans.

Local Law No.4 of 2018, found [here](#), amended the 2017 law by expanding on the requirements for decommissioning bonding. These guidelines were based off suggested regulations in the [New York State Solar Guidebook](#) (the Guidebook has been updated several times since its use on the 2018 law). Specifically, the law provided detailed regulations regarding the disposal of waste, land restoration standards, and the timeframe for restoration work. Further, it expanded the criteria required to determine the amount of the decommissioning bond such as hiring a professional engineer or architect to determine a cost estimate for complete removal and remediation of a site. It also included a clause to hold the bonding entity responsible if the Town was not satisfied with the decommissioning. Lastly, the amended law required an annual 2% escalator to the value of the bond for the life of the solar PV system.

Again in 2019 the Town's solar regulations were amended according to [Local Law No. 1 of 2019](#). This change removed language regulating coverage requirements in the hamlets, which essentially disallowed solar development in those areas. The new guidelines further elaborated on decommissioning requirements by asking for a detailed remediation plan. The 2019 law also changed the fencing guidelines for the Site Plan. Other changes included increased escrow requirements for continued consultant/expert assistance.

Additionally, there was a substantial change to the law's decommissioning requirements by adding an annual declaration certifying the continued safe operation of said solar energy system. The new law identified time periods in which a system could be considered abandoned and expanded again the remediation requirements. The decommissioning requirements instated by the 2018 law were amended to remove the 2% escalator and instead implement a 5-year review period to ensure appropriate bonding amounts.

In response to an overwhelming amount of solar system applications and coinciding public concern the [Town passed Local Law No. 2 of 2019](#) which implemented a temporary moratorium on large scale solar energy systems, energy storage systems, and wind generation systems within the Town. This moratorium was extended for an additional one-year period on August 18, 2020. The 2019 moratorium initiated the Town's effort to update the Comprehensive Plan and subsequently amend the Town's Zoning Law with language for appropriate and responsible siting of future renewable energy systems.

WIND ENERGY

The Town of Westerlo's Zoning Law does not include any language regulating wind energy generation. Further, there are no existing or proposed wind energy systems within the Town. Section 18.40 of the Town's Zoning Law does address battery storage systems built in partnership with solar energy systems. The code requires the batteries be placed in a secure container that meets the requirements of the International Building Code, Fire Code and NAFPA

70. There are also guidelines related to disposal.

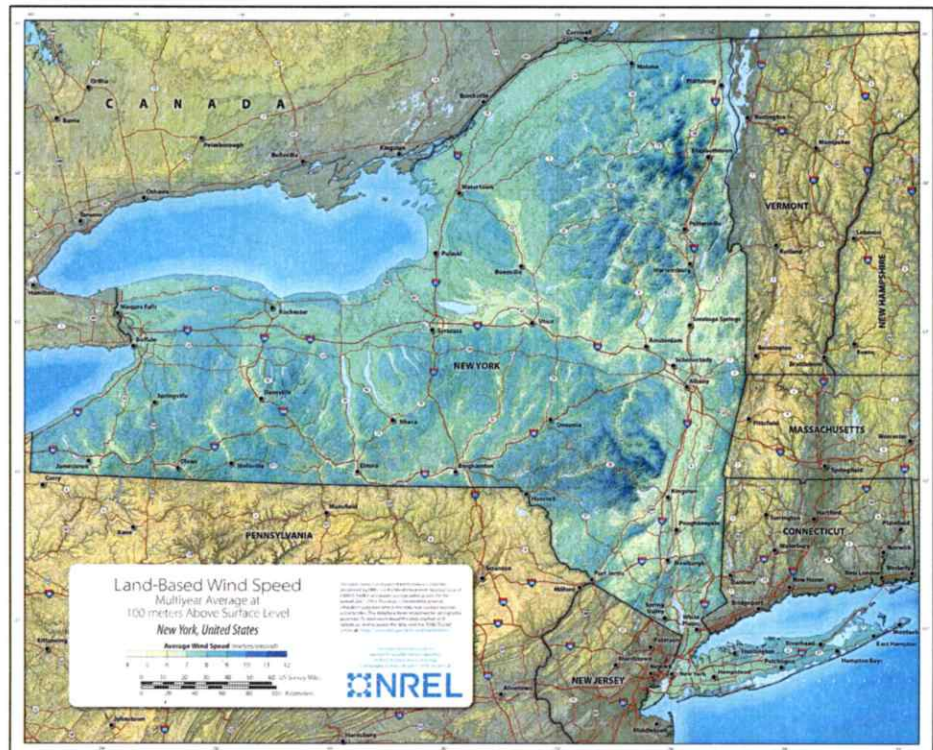
In May 2016 NYSERDA implemented an [incentive program](#) for community distributed wind energy systems that were 5 MW or less. This program was comparable to NYSERDA's community solar program in that it offered a monetary incentive for each kW of potential energy produced. However, this program was not nearly as popular as its solar counterpart likely because small scale wind energy systems are not as financially attractive to developers and because of siting and permitting issues. This program opportunity closed in December 2019. Based on market patterns wind energy systems not only require adequate wind but also economies of scale, as seen in large scale offshore wind projects, to be economically feasible.

Pictured below is a [map](#) produced

by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) that depicts Land-based Wind Speed in NYS. According to the [New York State Wind Energy Guidebook](#) and the [New York State Battery Storage Guidebook](#) a site's annual average wind speed should be 6.5 meters per second or stronger at a wind turbine's hub height noting that some projects may require stronger average winds to realize economic viability. Based on NREL's map of wind speeds at 100 meters above surface level, the Town of Westerlo has average wind speeds between 7 and 10 meters per second.

BATTERY STORAGE

The combination of NYS's energy storage goals and [incentives](#) and the decreasing costs of energy storage technology, specifically lithium-ion batteries, has generated increased interest in solar plus battery storage.



NYS Land-based Wind Speed Map

According to the [Department of Energy](#), increased production of electric and hybrid vehicles and the subsequent increase in battery production has lowered the price of lithium-ion batteries. Utility-scale battery storage could reduce the grid's vulnerability by increasing the amount of dispatchable energy. Increased battery storage would reduce dependence on peak demand powerplants and allow the grid to distribute stored renewable energy on demand.

Energy storage installations pose several operational risks including operational hazards, fire and thermal events, extreme weather and natural disasters, and cybersecurity risk. In addition, like all energy technologies, battery storage presents hazards such as chemical spills, mechanical hazards, high-voltage electric power system hazards, and disposal concerns. These

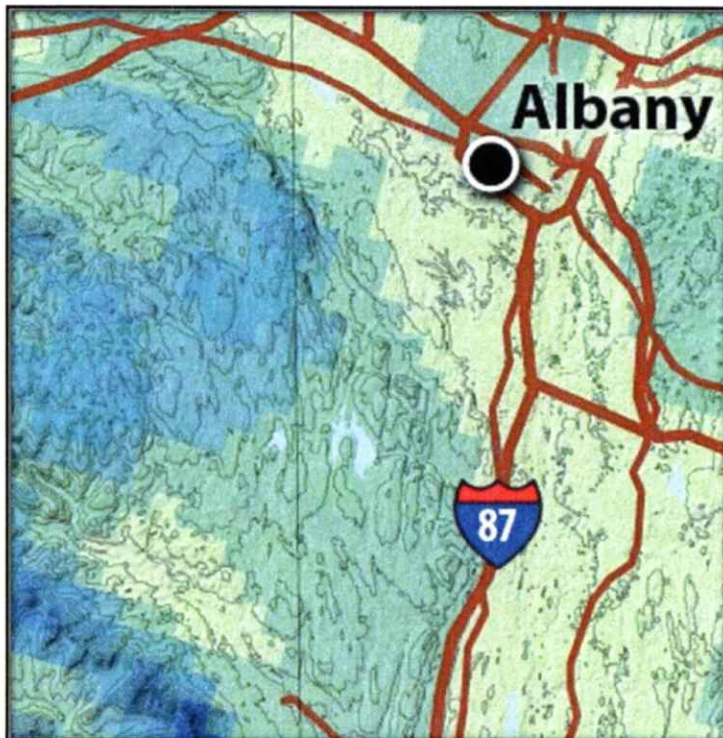
hazards can be mitigated with careful management and design.

PILOT AND COMMUNITY HOST AGREEMENTS

[New York State's Real Property Tax Law Section 487](#), exempts real property that contains solar energy, wind energy, farm waste energy, micro-hydroelectric energy, fuel cell electric generating, micro-combined heat and power generating equipment, or an electric energy storage system approved by NYSERDA from taxation for a period of 15 years beginning once construction is complete and the array is generating electricity. This applies to community solar, large scale renewables and rooftop residential solar alike. In order to account for this exemption, the Town of Westerlo as well as the Greenville school district established payment-in-lieu-of-tax (PILOT) agreements with

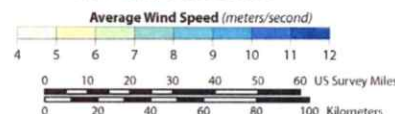
solar developers. Note, all approved and existing community solar arrays in the Town of Westerlo are located within the Greenville school district. The total PILOT payment may not exceed the total amount the owner would have paid in taxes to the extent of any increase in assessed value to the system. PILOT payment schedules for approved solar projects in Westerlo are shown below. The first time Westerlo will receive any PILOT payments is 2021. In addition to annual PILOT payments, property owners are also responsible to pay tax on the land under which the solar arrays sit. Finally, each of the approved projects in Westerlo included Host Community Agreements, which granted a one-time payment of \$15,000 (totaling \$75,000) to be put toward improvement and maintenance of Westerlo Town Parks.

While a municipality does have the ability to opt out of the exemption, this decision would create an environment where it would be economically unattractive for renewable energy developers to build within the Town. This would remove any opportunity for Westerlo residents to benefit from renewable energy installations. In addition, it would eliminate any profit from future PILOT agreements and it would potentially raise taxes for individual homeowners with small renewable energy systems, i.e. rooftop solar.



Land-based Wind Speed - Albany Area

Land-Based Wind Speed Multiyear Average at 100 meters Above Surface Level New York, United States



The data shown are modeled wind resource estimates developed by NREL via the Wind Integration National Dataset (WIND) Toolkit and depict average wind speeds for the period 2007-2013. This map is intended for general education purposes only as the data may contain regional uncertainties. The data have been smoothed for cartographic purposes. To learn more about the data creation and validation, and to access the data, visit the WIND Toolkit online at: <https://www.nrel.gov/grid/wind-toolkit.html>

This map was produced by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for the U.S. Department of Energy. Cartographer: Mike Holcomb, 1/20/16 January 2016



APPROVED AND EXISTING ENERGY SYSTEMS

Costanza Solar, LLC 252 CR 405 Westerlo, NY (Tax Map 162.-2-4) 2 MW

The Costanza Solar PILOT was executed on December 5, 2018 and required Costanza Solar to make annual payments for 15 years. The annual payment is \$8,686 per megawatt (MW) of capacity with an annual 2% escalator. After 15 years the total contribution to the Greenville Central School District amounts to \$201,589.34 and \$75,105.24 to the Town of Westerlo.

Costanza Solar PILOT Payment Schedule

\$8,686/MWAC for 2 MW Project

Year	School	Town
1	\$ 11,657.00	\$ 4,343.00
15	\$ 15,381.16	\$ 5,730.50

RT32 Westerlo Solar 1, LLC 6798 State Route 32 Westerlo, NY (Tax Map 176.-1-14.2) 5 MW

The RT32 Westerlo Solar 1, LLC PILOT agreement was executed on December 21, 2018 and with a 15-year term that requires \$7,500 per MW of capacity based on a 5 MW system. After 15 years the total contribution to Greenville Central Schools amounts to \$450,708.05 and \$150,236.01 to the Town.

RT 32 Westerlo Solar 1 PILOT Payment Schedule

\$7,500/MWAC for 5 MW Project

Year	School	Town
1	\$ 28,125.00	\$ 9,375.00
15	\$ 37,110.34	\$ 12,370.11

RT405 Westerlo Solar 2, LLC 120 County Route 405 Westerlo, NY (Tax Map 176.-1-14.2) 5 MW

The RT405 Westerlo Solar 2, LLC PILOT agreement was executed on December 21, 2018, and with a 15-year term that requires \$7,500 per MW of capacity based on a 5 MW system. After 15 years the total contribution to Greenville Central Schools amounts to \$458,252.35 and \$162,125.78 to the Town.

Westerlo Solar 2 PILOT Payment Schedule

\$7,500/MWAC for 5 MW Project

Year	School	Town
1	\$ 11,109.38	\$ 3,703.13
15	\$ 14,658.58	\$ 4,886.19

Westerlo NY 1 77 CR 405 (Tax Map 176.-1-46.1) 1.975 MW

The Westerlo NY 1 PILOT was executed on February 10, 2020 has a 15-year term and required \$7,500 per MW of capacity based on a 1.975 MW system. After 15 years the total contribution to Greenville Central Schools amounts to \$192,119.04 and \$64,039.70 to the Town.

Westerlo NY 1 PILOT Payment Schedule

\$7,500/MWAC for 1.975 MW Project

Year	School	Town
1	\$ 11,109.38	\$ 3,703.13
15	\$ 14,658.58	\$ 4,886.19

Medusa NY 1, LLC 2 MW, 626 CR 351 Westerlo, NY (Tax Map 161.-2-23 and 162.-2.20) 2 MW

The Medusa NY 1 PILOT was executed on May 11, 2020 and required a 2% escalator 15 years with an annual payment of \$7,050 per MW. After 15 years the total contribution to Greenville Central Schools amounts to \$182,877.88 and \$60,959.28 to the Town.

Medusa NY 1 PILOT Payment Schedule

\$7,050/MWAC for 2MW Project

Year	School	Town
1	\$ 10,575.00	\$ 3,525.00
15	\$ 13,953.49	\$ 4,651.16



CONCERNS

There are reoccurring concerns over developing renewable energy systems in rural areas that are historically agricultural regions. These concerns, such as preserving open space, scenic vistas, prime soils, and soils of statewide importance often conflict with an equally strong desire to maintain private property rights. Renewable energy systems are often the most regulated use within a municipality's code in an effort to preserve the rural nature of the town. The Town of Westerlo is no exception to this trend. To reach a balance between infringing on private property rights while protecting Westerlo's iconic resources, the Town must take into consideration the economic and environmental impacts of renewable energy development within the Town.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Town of Westerlo became attractive to solar developers in recent years because of a culmination of ideal conditions. These conditions also make the Town less than ideal for most other commercial development. Lack of central water and sewer is a barrier for businesses who wish to develop within the Town. In addition, traditional commercial enterprises are ideally located on main thoroughfares while renewable energy systems can be developed off the beaten path. Renewable energy systems contribute to the Town's tax roll without adding stress to local schools or town amenities. Further, many of the developments are located on agricultural land and future renewables could provide land owners an opportunity to either retire or continue farming a portion of

their property with additional income from leasing their property to solar developers. Finally, the community solar developments within the Town provided residents the ability to take advantage of locally generated solar discounts on a portion of their electricity bills.

Presumably, in an effort to preserve the rural nature of the community, renewable energy systems are often the most regulated use in a municipalities code.

Renewable Energy Goals

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POLICY STATEMENT:

Over the past decade, and especially in the last five years, use of solar and wind to create electric power has greatly increased throughout New York State. New York State has a very aggressive energy and climate policy, including initiation of the Clean Energy Standard, a mandate to get 70% of electricity in the State from renewable sources by 2030. This policy has spurred exponential growth of solar installations in the capital district region – for individual use and for the grid. Although there has not been as much growth in the wind industry in Albany County, that too has seen much wider development over the years in certain places in New York. As the State continues its renewable energy program and further expands it to encourage battery storage of electricity from renewable sources, expansion of solar and wind facilities will continue in communities all across the State.

Increased interest in and demand for both large scale and small scale renewable energy generation in the Town of Westerlo has prompted the Town Board to identify this topic through the Comprehensive Plan update process as one needing further attention. This Plan update is focused on a variety of renewable energy land uses here and at the same time, balance those uses with other important goals of the Town. The Town Board also recognizes that beyond the larger solar and wind projects, many homes, farms and local businesses use solar for their individual use.

GOAL STATEMENT:

As large solar facilities have become more prevalent in the Town, County, region and State, the Town Board identified the need to address increased use of solar and wind facilities in the Town. At the time of the prior Comprehensive Plan development, multiple large scale solar and/or wind facilities were not envisioned. Now, conditions are different, such that especially solar facilities are more common, and the Town Board desires to establish more detailed policies to address this land use in Westerlo.

There has been a great deal more interest in renewable energy, especially for solar, but also for wind, and battery storage. As a result, the Town has experienced increased interest from renewable energy producers to site new facilities in the Town.

The purpose of this update is to ensure the Comprehensive Plan establishes a more detailed renewable energy policy for the Town and provide the Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals with a solid foundation for decision-making related to future renewable energy facilities in Westerlo. Building on the broad direction of the prior Comprehensive Plan, Westerlo desires well-articulated policies that encourage renewable energy opportunities that also support other important Town goals, values and needs.

The overall goal of this Plan is to allow for a variety of land uses and at the same time preserve the essential character and environment of the community. This Plan emphasizes the need to promote new development in a way that ensures that the core values of the community are maintained. (Reference Vision Statement).

In considering future renewable energy development in Westerlo, this Comprehensive Plan update recognizes and reaffirms other Town values, features and goals to be considered when solar, wind or other energy facilities are proposed. These are:

- **To have a strong agricultural community**
- **To promote businesses that are environmentally friendly and fit with the rural character of the Town**
- **To protect the rights of individual property owners**
- **To conserve and protect its natural resources including air, water, and open spaces**
- **To maintain its essential rural and small-town character**
- **To preserve the natural and scenic beauty of the landscapes across Town**

The Town Board desires to maintain that direction and finds that these core values remain relevant in 2021. However, in order to meet these stated goals as well as promote appropriate renewable energy, the following new goals and recommendations are offered.

Goal 1:

Manage renewable energy development in a way that preserves Westerlo's rural character and landscapes.

Objective 1.1: The Town should create and adopt land use regulations that secures the rural character of the Town by protecting and preserving open spaces, unique habitats, viewsheds and ridgelines, wetlands and ecologically sensitive sites, archaeological and historic sites, and areas of exceptional beauty whenever possible. Update the Town's renewable energy code to better guide the siting and development of all small scale and large scale community renewable energy projects in Town.

Action 1.1.1: For all large scale renewable facilities, establish minimum landscape plan requirements, and require all landscape plans to be considered during the application/site plan review process. Screening and buffering new renewable energy facilities will be very important to meet the goals of the Town. Any new local law should specify the expectation of the Town to fully screen the facility to the maximum amount feasible and identify, at least generally, the need for vegetated berms, use of native hardwood and evergreen trees and shrubs, and features such as fences in order to maximize screening. Requiring full-build photo simulations of views of the facility from key points would be important to help the Town visualize any aesthetic impacts. Landscaping should include only the use of native perennial vegetation and pollinator species when determining an appropriate landscaping plan.

Action 1.1.2: Require strict adherence to all County and State stormwater management regulations, guidelines, and best practices when siting large scale renewable energy facilities to ensure minimum impacts from erosion, run off and necessary soil disturbance.

Action 1.1.3: Expand solar definitions within the Town Zoning Law to be more consistent with the NYS Solar Wind and Battery Guidebook.

Action 1.1.4: Establish policies and procedures to improve the public communication and notification process for all renewable energy development projects.

Action 1.1.5: Enhance the standards and criteria to be evaluated by the Planning Board for developing all small scale and large scale renewable energy projects. Special consideration and emphasis should be given to community character, historic consistency/protection, protection of environmental features, maintenance of traffic flow, glare, and viewshed disruption. These are all key items identified in the Plan that should be considered and specifically evaluated in the site plan or special use process. This should be done as a typical plan review requirement and not done as part of the SEQRA review process.

Action 1.1.6: Create specific solar and wind use site plan review and/or special use permit review checklists for the Planning Board to more thoroughly review and process applications that come before them for approval. This law should include details on what data, maps, plans, and other information must be part of a complete application. This detail is important for both the review process and the applicant. Clear instructions up-front will help the Town move through the review and approval process more efficiently if these expectations are clearly outlined and followed. Provide training to the Planning Board on the use of these checklists.

Goal 1:

Manage renewable energy development in a way that preserves Westerlo's rural character and landscapes.

Action 1.1.7: The Town should support the professional development and continuing education for all Town officials and committee members in their field to ensure that they are aware of the changing array of laws, regulations, and options available to them to perform their job by providing yearly training opportunities.

Action 1.1.8: Require mandatory recycling of equipment such as PV panels, inverters, switchboards, circuit breakers, fencing, roads, foundations, cables, conduits, etc., in all renewable energy facilities' decommissioning plans.

Action 1.1.9 Identify and encourage the siting of new technologies or renewable energy infrastructure on town owned lands, other than park lands, to ensure that lease revenues flow directly to the Town.

Action 1.1.10 Update the Town Zoning Law requiring that all on-site utility lines related to renewable energy facilities be placed underground, to the maximum extent possible, for all new residential and commercial projects.

Action 1.1.11: Adopt a Town of Westerlo Highway Preservation Law to protect Town hamlets and roads from the visual and physical impacts of renewable power facilities development and maintenance activities.

Action 1.1.12: Discourage large scale community renewable energy projects that can be seen from local roads. Encourage large scale renewable energy projects to be sited outside of important open viewsheds or away from road sides.

Action 1.1.13: Consider undertaking a study to identify and map significant viewsheds in the Town of Westerlo. This study could be used in turn to potentially identify other areas more suitable for large scale solar facilities.

Action 1.1.14: Seek to establish more clear lines of communication with neighboring municipalities in order to better coordinate and communicate the potential impacts of renewable energy projects that may span across municipal boundaries. Require the Town Board and/or Planning Board to more proactively participate in the SEQRA coordinated review process initiated by neighboring municipalities for large scale renewable energy projects occurring adjacent to the Town of Westerlo town boundary.

Goal 2:

The Town will work to ensure that any new commercial development, including renewable energy projects, do not impinge on existing agricultural operations or established residential areas.

Objective 2.1: To preserve the Town's limited agricultural resources and lands, which help to create and maintain open spaces, scenic viewsheds and contribute to the Town's rural character.

Action 2.1.1: Promote the siting of large scale renewable energy facility proposals on fallow or inactive agricultural lands in order to preserve the Town's active farm lands for agricultural uses.

Action 2.1.2: Discourage the development of large scale renewable energy facilities on land designated as prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide importance.

Action 2.1.3: Discourage the clear cutting of forested lands for development of large scale renewable energy facilities.

Action 2.1.4: Discourage any renewable energy project or group of projects located in the Town or in adjacent towns which requires the construction of a tower and/or transmission lines that cannot be located on existing towers or replacement distribution line poles from the site which pass through the Town.

Goal 3:

Accommodate renewable energy development(s) in the Town of Westerlo that will benefit the Town of Westerlo taxpayers, Albany County and contribute to New York State's renewable energy goals.

Objective 3.1: Accept New York State renewable energy policies and support use of clean, renewable energy for residents, farms and commercial uses.

Action 3.1.1: Preview the renewable developer's lease agreements and utilities interconnect agreements.

Action 3.1.2: Proactively negotiate renewable PILOT agreements. I.E. PILOT percentages for the Town of Westerlo, Albany County and the allotments to the municipality's funded school district(s).

Action 3.1.3: Utilize the renewable developer's funding of any Town of Westerlo required technical resource(s). This may include, but is not limited to, engineering, landscaping, architectural, wildlife, etc. professionals necessary for a comprehensive plan to site the renewable power plant project. Each and every proposed renewable project in the Town of Westerlo will be evaluated separately by professionals based on the siting topography and include resulting impacts/considerations for the surrounding properties. Illustrations, graphs, charts, three-dimensional views, etc. of the physical topographical attributes will illuminate and promote the features necessary to minimize adverse renewable physical and visual impacts. The Town's guidance and direction from these professionals should supervise all renewable siting, regardless of the physical location and/or size. Using trained and experienced professionals will better promote the preservation of Westerlo's rural landscapes and reduce the costs of community services for the Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board associated with reviewing renewable energy-related projects.

Action 3.1.4: Promote the usage of renewable project Host Community Agreements to help offset the costs of improvements to the Town of Westerlo's community services. Future HCA's can be negotiated for future town improvements including parks and other amenities.

Goal 4:

As upgrades and renovations become necessary, municipal facilities and infrastructure should include energy conservation measures and renewable energy technology.

Objective 4.1: Improve the energy efficiency and energy independence of municipally owned new construction and existing building stock through building codes, energy efficiency upgrades, and renewable energy options.

Action 4.1.1: Support retrofitting and remodeling projects of Town facilities to include energy efficiency components through expedited permitting, state sponsored technical assistance, and available grant funds.

Goal 5:

Develop a policy that addresses solar access and/or solar easements for existing and new development.

Objective 5.1: To encourage solar energy usage in the design and construction of new buildings.

Action 5.1.1: Promote solar energy systems on public buildings and new commercial buildings.

Action 5.1.2: Consider solar orientation of future buildings, streets, and lots that may be approved in the Town via subdivision or site plan review local laws so that land can be efficiently used for capturing solar or other renewable energy sources. For instance, subdivisions can be designed to maximize solar access by orienting streets and front lot lines along an east-west axis. Building orientation is important for solar energy generation as well. Other opportunities to maximize solar energy system use include building placement on the lot, orientation of the roof, size of roof areas on the south or west facing side of the building, or roof areas being kept free of shading or mechanical equipment.

Goal 6:

When establishing renewable energy policy for the Town, Westerlo should also consider use of the New York State Solar Energy Guidebook and the New York State Wind Energy Guidebook and the Battery Storage Guidebook in the development of renewable energy policy and recommended local laws. These guidebooks have many good ideas, discussion, model laws, and options for the Town to consider.

Objective 6.1: To provide consistent, legal and appropriate guidance for the development of new renewable energy codes.

Action 6.1.1: Use the Municipal Solar Procurement Toolkit for instruction on how the Town could utilize land for solar development.

Action 6.1.2: In developing a new law, the Town should be aware of and remain consistent with New York State Agriculture and Markets requirements for establishment of wind and solar facilities on farms located within a certified New York State Agriculture District. Wind and solar facilities used to power farms are considered farm structures and should not be overly regulated as per NYS AML 25aa.

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