

## **Will County Land Use Department**

### **Brownfield Prioritization for Solar Energy Development**

#### **Appendix 1: Solar Project Site Prioritization Criteria**

### **Introduction**

CMA and Will County staff developed the following prioritization criteria to facilitate the process of ranking and screening sites for potential solar energy redevelopment. These criteria were adapted from *Screening Sites for Solar Photovoltaic Potential*, which was created by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in collaboration with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). This document, also referred to as the Solar Decision Tree, was created to screen sites for targeted use with brownfields, landfills, vacant parcels and sites identified as Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) facilities by the USEPA. For more information, see the mapping and screening tools on the RE-Powering America's Land website from the USEPA (<http://www.epa.gov/oswercpa/>).

CMA and Will County chose to adapt the Solar Decision Tree, rather than to use it in its current form, due to the sheer volume of sites that were being considered as part of this project. The criteria developed by CMA and Will County focuses on identifying sites based on information that was available through the Will County Department of Geographic Information Systems, the Will County Supervisor of Assessments Office and local knowledge of sites from County and municipal staff. Steps one through five of the criteria focus on the sites' available solar resource, land area, distance to existing infrastructure, site topography and land use exclusions. Steps six through nine focus on more detailed information for each site, such as existing obstructions, community vision, ownership and need for remediation.

### **Criteria**

1. Is the solar resource at the site equal to or greater than 3.5 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/day?
2. Are there at least two acres of useable space for ground mounted sites and can sites be prioritized so that of the sites two acres or larger, sites greater than or equal to 5 acres are Priority 1, and sites that are greater than or equal to two acres, but less than five acres are Priority 2.
3. Is the site less than one mile from a graded road?
4. Does the site have a slope of less than six degrees?
5. Is the site free of land use exclusions or restrictions that would preclude the use of PV, such as rivers, floodplains, wetlands, critical habitats, wilderness areas, or airports?
6. Are there significant shading, obstructions, or existing structures on the site?
7. Does the community have a vision for redevelopment of the site so that that complement renewable energy are Priority 1 and plans that exclude renewable energy in favor of commercial, manufacturing or industrial use are Priority 2?



8. Is the owner of the site interested in investing in, selling, or leasing the property to enable PV development so that sites owned by a local municipality are Priority 1 and all other types of ownership are Priority 2?
9. Has the site been assessed for environmental contamination?
  - a. Remediation is complete, or remediation is not required because site has no past uses in which contaminants were used > Priority 1
  - b. Remediation is in progress > Priority 2
  - c. Site has past uses in which contaminants may have been used and remediation is delayed, or not started > Priority 3