



All Interested in the Planned Columbus Community Solar Initiative (CCSI):

The CCSI is a volunteer team of individuals from the local Sierra Club Winding Waters Group and Energy Matters Community Coalition who are motivated to promote clean, affordable energy in our community. This Initiative is modeled on the best elements of other grass-roots programs around the country, which have been successful in delivering simple, cost-effective means to “solarize” communities.

If you have been thinking about installing solar photovoltaic panels, then, like us, you probably want to be confident of:

- getting a good price,
- making a sound investment that will lower energy bills for years to come,
- getting the project done without hassle by a qualified installer who guarantees the work,
- reducing one’s carbon footprint.

If so, we hope you will join us and other Columbus area residents and businesses by making plans now for your solar project this year in a simple, economical, and proven way.

The CCSI is organizing the second group of participants who want clean solar power now. We will leverage our collective buying power to achieve better pricing from Third Sun Solar, a pre-qualified installer, in a simpler purchase process than if each of us were acting alone.

Here is how the process will work:

1. Participants form a purchasing bloc, each having firm intent to install their own solar array this spring or summer based on the results of competitive bidding which took place in the first round of the Initiative.
2. The CCSI Technical Committee evaluated ten (10) Indiana and Midwest installers based on their responses to a Request For Information (RFI) and then pre-qualify the best five (5) potential installers to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP).
3. Four of the five potential installers then completed a bid template for the portfolio of eight (8) Columbus area projects as the first step toward 1,000 panels in the community by year-end, committing to a “base price” (cost per watt) and other key parameters which will apply to every project.
4. One installer out of the five competitors – Third Sun Solar of Athens, Ohio -- was selected as the Initiative’s “partner” installer, based on relative “base price” as well as other value criteria in the case of close bids.
5. (The combined volume of the eight projects immediately and the 1,000 panels eventually, as well as the competition among four installers vying to be the sole winner was expected to yield the best proposals – and it did.)
6. The “partner” installer then conducts site visits and produces a final quote and analysis of cost/benefits for each participant. (Each quote and analysis will be cc’d to CCSI for audit purposes.)

7. Each project's final quote will include the "base price" per watt of installed capacity and other standard parameters but may also include special adjustments (+/-) for specified conditions varying from installation to installation (e.g., long-travel distances beyond Columbus City Limits, roof vs. ground-mounted, tracking vs. fixed array, monitoring & reporting system, REC registration, roof repairs, electric box replacement).
8. The participant (i.e., property owner) and the installer enter into a contract. The work is scheduled and performed, the solar panels brought online, and the participant pays the installer the contracted cost of the installation.
9. If needed, and in advance, the participant arranges financing, either through a lender or with the installer (if the installer provides that option).
10. Participants are asked to share before/after utility data and solar energy data with CCSI so that the program can quantify and celebrate the benefits for the first participants and future candidates.

Here is how to become part of the process:

We have attached supporting information, including a Letter of Intent, for your review. Please also join us for a CCSI Forum for Potential Participants on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Columbus Area Visitors Center, Fifth & Franklin Streets, Columbus, IN 47201, where we will review more details, address questions, and get to know you and others in the community seriously interested in "Going Solar."

All prospective participants who return the properly signed and dated Letter of Intent will be included in this round of the Initiative. Please return the Letter of Intent no later than Friday, September 2, 2016.

We are already in...

Dennis Baute

Mike Mullett and Patti March

Barry Kastner and Kathleen Leason

...and we hope you will soon be, too.

P.S., If you have questions not answered in this e-mail and its attachments or are not able to join us in the CCSI Forum for Potential Participants, please e-mail Mike Mullett at the address or telephone him at the number provided below.

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