

MEMORANDUM

From: Art Noel (Lower Merion Township) and Adam Beam (SolSmart Advisor)
To: SolSmart Designation Review Staff
Date: August 30, 2017
Subject: PZD-1c: Proposed Language for Lower Merion’s Solar Ordinance

This memorandum serves to provide documentation for Lower Merion to receive credit for the PZD-1c action. It will describe the current state of affairs of Lower Merion’s zoning ordinance rewrite, including the incorporation of solar PV in this rewrite.


In 2016, Lower Merion wrote a new Comprehensive Plan. It was a consensus-driven, solution-oriented vision for the future of the Township. This vision is to: “Preserve Lower Merion’s classic residential neighborhoods, township’s village cores and commercial areas to improve walkability, expand transit use, and encourage design excellence.” One of the primary recommendations of the plan is to create a new, user-friendly Zoning Code to achieve the community’s vision.

The new zoning code project began in January 2017. Lower Merion Township’s Board of Commissioner’s selected DPZ Partners, LLC to write the zoning code that would correspond with the vision laid out in the Comprehensive Plan. Currently, the consulting team is conducting an analysis of the existing zoning code and subdivision regulations. The findings of that initial analysis are hoped to be presented to the community in September.

DPZ Partners met with Township staff the week of 8/21/2017. Township staff delivered a template solar zoning ordinance written by the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). The template ordinance provides draft language for inclusion of solar in the zoning code, and has been adapted for use in many municipalities within Montgomery County. The template ordinance addresses the issues laid out in Lower Merion Township’s PZD-1a zoning review memo. These include, but are not limited to:

- Allowing rooftop solar PV as a by-right accessory use in all major zones
- Providing exemptions or allowances for solar PV installations from height restrictions
- Not regulating for glare
- Providing a pathway for primary use solar PV.

The draft language is attached to this memo’s corresponding email. DPZ Partners will use the draft language provided in the MCPC as a starting point for the proposed language for supportive provisions for solar PV in this zoning code rewrite.

Signature:  _____ Date: 9/6/17