COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
November 19, 2019

Element 5.0 Land Use

Amend Narrative
5.1 Current Land Use (pg. 42) vs. 5.3 Development Trends (pg. 47)

Solar energy, residential zones and historic preservation can successfully coexist in communities when intersecting interests are addressed during the planning process. While solar energy systems have the potential to assist homeowners, local businesses and commercial/industrial users and farms meet energy goals, it is important that solar energy installations and related equipment does not significantly alter the residential neighborhood or historic integrity of buildings and the landscape.

Energy 2035: Rhode Island State Energy Plan describes the existing statewide energy system and sets a vision, goals and policies to improve energy security, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability in all sectors of energy production and consumption. In February 2019, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and the Division of Statewide Planning jointly issued guidelines entitled *Comprehensive Plan and Solar Energy Systems and Renewable Energy Guidelines: Solar Energy Systems Model Ordinance Templates, Zoning and Taxation.*

The Town should consider preferred parcels within the community to promote solar energy systems such as capped or closed landfills, inactive quarries and brownfield parcels, sites that may have the potential to be re-developed for the purpose of producing renewable energy.

Amend Policies
5.5 Land Use Goal, Policies and Actions (pg. 53-54)

Encourage roof and ground-mounted solar energy systems as an accessory use on farms or as a primary use sited on previously disturbed land such as closed landfills, brownfields, quarries and sand and gravel pits. Minimize solar array encroachment on productive farmland, healthy forests, sensitive ecological sites and historic buildings and properties.

Amend Actions
Design Standards Action 17a (pg. 59)

Develop and adopt Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations that govern the installation of roof and ground-mounted solar energy systems and promotes their safe and effective use. Standards for the siting, placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification and decommissioning of such installations shall address public safety, minimize impacts on environmental, scenic, aesthetic natural and historic resources while providing clean and renewable electricity. These documents will assist Tiverton to incorporate local renewable energy resources in a manner that provides for orderly growth, and development that recognizes the goals and patterns of land use.

Amend Element 11 Implementation
Element 5.0 Land Use- Action 17a (pg. 147)

Action #	*Action Description*	*Primary Responsibility*	*Supporting Responsibility*	*Notes*	*Timeframe*
17a	Develop and adopt Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations that govern the Installation of roof and ground-mounted solar energy systems.	Town Council	Planning Board		ST

Element 10.0 Economic Development

Amend Narrative
10.3.1 *Agriculture (pg. 128)*
Solar energy systems offer farmers and woodlot owners of undeveloped land new economic opportunities and options. For example, dairy farms use large amounts of electricity and dairy farmers can benefit from on-site solar panels that produce electricity for use in the dairy operation. Additionally, ground-mounted solar energy systems may be a low impact alternative economic consideration for landowners who are under pressure from subdivision developers. Solar power can economically benefit farms and other traditional land uses and thereby support Tiverton's rural and scenic appeal as a tourism destination while controlling suburban sprawl.

Measures such as pollinator-friendly plantings between and beneath the solar panels shall be encouraged to assure maintenance of the soil quality so that agricultural use may be possible in the future. Decommissioning regulations should assure that the land can be fully reclaimed through re-vegetation or re-forestation to standards that at a minimum meet its original quality.

10.6 *Economic Growth Opportunities (pg. 137)*
Renewable Energy
The Town recognizes it can provide an economic benefit to local residents and consumers implementing safe, effective and efficient use of Solar Energy Systems applying adopted Zoning and Land Use Regulations. These mechanisms will minimize impacts on scenic, agricultural, natural and cultural resources while increasing resiliency, reducing the use of and reliance on fossil fuels for power production, reducing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions and providing domestically-sourced alternatives to our existing energy supply.

Additional energy choices improve competition in the electricity supply market and empowers residents, businesses and farms to have more control over their respective energy supplies. Renewable energy can stimulate effective investment in and management of public energy infrastructure systems to support existing and future development, and large ground-mounted systems will provide new local tax revenue with minimal impacts on Town infrastructure and services.

Amend Policies
10.7 Economic Development Goals, Policies and Actions (pg. 138)

- Support orderly growth of renewable energy systems to improve resiliency and economic strength.

Amend Actions (pg. 140)

Action 19: Implement a solar energy system ordinance that allows for roof and ground-mounted solar energy systems, including the residential zones as primary or accessory uses that provide new economic incentives that assist residents and businesses, supports agrarian and rural activities and encourages economic development. Encourage large scale solar energy system projects towards previously disturbed or impaired land.

Action 20: Establish through the solar energy ordinance standards for roof-mounted solar canopies and ground-mounted solar energy storage systems, ensuring they are compatible with the neighboring buildings in scale, height, design and safety. Solar energy storage systems may pose unique human or environmental health and safety hazards that should be addressed and monitored through the solar energy ordinance.

Amend Element 11 Implementation (pg. 165)

Action #	*Action Description*	*Primary Responsibility*	*Supporting Responsibility*	*Notes*	*Timeframe*
19	Implement a solar energy system ordinance that allows for roof and ground-mounted solar energy systems, including the residential zones as primary or accessory uses that provide new economic incentives that assist residents and business, supports agrarian and rural activities and encourages economic development.	Town Council	Planning Board		ST
20	Establish through the solar energy ordinance standards for roof-mounted solar canopies and ground-mounted solar energy storage systems, ensuring they are compatible with the neighboring buildings in scale, height, design and safety.	Town Council	Planning Board		ON