

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

AGENDA ITEM: 3.17



Administration Department

SUBJECT: Resolution Endorsing the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution CS² Program

MEETING DATE: December 14, 2021

FROM: [Alex Arteaga](#), Management Analyst

BUDGET IMPACT: None

Recommended Motion

Adoption of Resolution #2021-R-88 Endorsing the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution CS² Program.

Background and Discussion

At the September 28, 2021 Village Board meeting, the Village Board voted to adopt Wilmette's Greenest Region Compact Sustainability Plan. As part of the Sustainability Plan, there were three recommendations related to renewable energy.

- 1.4.1.2 – Maximize Village, business, and residents' use of locally installed community solar
- 3.4.8 – Develop an Outreach and Education Campaign for Residents, Small Businesses, and Building Landlords (including use of renewal energy)
- 5.4.5 – Consider a program to encourage residents to subscribe to community solar through the Clearway Energy, Trajectory Energy Community solar program.

Based upon the adoption of the Sustainability Plan, Village Staff has been researching opportunities to offer its residents and small business customers access to renewable energy sources. One of those opportunities is the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution (CS²) program. This program began in 2018 to work with municipalities and their residents to match them with community solar projects being developed. Currently, the CS² has been adopted by the following communities:

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| • Deerfield | • Glencoe | • Bannockburn |
| • Northbrook | • Highland Park | • Glenview |
| • Skokie | • Lake Bluff | • Lombard |
| • Evanston | • Lake Forest | • Mount Prospect |
| • Schaumburg | • Niles | |

The subscription model allows subscribers to offset a portion of their electrical consumption with electricity generated by shared solar resources located in their electric utility's territory. The way this works is that multiple consumers share a single solar farm, the electricity generated from the solar farm is delivered to the electric grid, and then the utility issues credits to the consumers that are subscribed to the solar farm. This helps to reduce the energy supply charge of a consumer's energy bill.

There are a variety of companies that offer 'Community Solar' programs. This large marketplace can cause consumer uncertainty based upon the array of contract terms, eligibility, and fees. Based upon this feedback from municipalities, the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus developed the CS² Residential Program, which allows municipalities to extend fair and transparent subscription terms to their residents and small businesses.

The program is opt-in, meaning residents and small business owners must individually enroll into the CS² Program or join the program waitlist. Program subscriptions are offered on a rolling basis as community solar facilities are built and connected to the electric grid. As community solar projects are completed, residents on the waitlist will be contacted and offered an opportunity to complete the subscription process.

Next Steps

Following the submission of a Program Expression of Interest form, staff met with Mark Pruitt of the Power Bureau to determine program feasibility (Mr. Pruitt is contracted by the Mayors' Caucus to provide expertise to participating municipalities). Based upon this conversation, staff considers this to be a viable program that warrants the Village's participation. Below is an outline of the required program admission steps that a municipality needs to undertake to provide this program to residents:

- Approval of program subscription terms and participation
- **Passing of a municipal resolution approving program participation**
- Submission of a program endorsement letter from Village officials
- Requesting a current mailing list for all residential and small commercial accounts from ComEd
- Registration of the Village of Wilmette as a Marketing Designee by the Illinois Power Agency
- Marketing of program information to eligible accounts (residents and small businesses) through multiple Village communication channels
- Enrollment of eligible municipal electrical accounts into the program

If the Village Board decides to endorse the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution CS² Program, Village staff would next submit a program endorsement letter and contact ComEd to receive a current mailing list for all residential and smaller commercial accounts.

From the residential and small business consumer side, if the program is approved, the following actions would need to be taken to enroll in the program:

- Receive direct mailing from Village and CS²
- Determine if the program is appropriate for them to enroll in
- Use online sign-up to determine if account is qualified for subscription

- If eligible, the account would be assigned to a Community Solar farm on a first-come/first-assigned basis
- Consumer would agree to subscription and billing service agreements and enroll in auto-pay billing
- Once assigned, net metering credits would arrive each month

The consumer would always retain the right to terminate the contract with 30 days-notice.

Public Education

For the Village to properly market program information to interested residents and businesses, a comprehensive marketing strategy would be utilized. This strategy would include program promotion through the Village's website, e-news, and social media channels. Additionally, direct mailers sent by the Power Bureau would be provided to all eligible residential and commercial account addresses. All program promotional materials would be produced collaboratively between Village staff and the Power Bureau, allowing staff final approval of relevant items like mailing lists, mailers content, press releases, and website content. Typically, program promotional materials are distributed 4 to 6 weeks after the adoption of a municipal resolution. Based upon the current timeline, customers could begin the enrollment process in the first quarter of 2022 with the potential of receiving net metering credits in the second quarter of 2022.

Budget Impact

Small budgetary impacts for public education.

Documents Attached

1. Resolution #2021-R-88
2. Sample Commercial Terms
3. Community Solar Presentation – Provided by the Power Bureau and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-R-88

**A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE COMMUNITY SOLAR CLEARINGHOUSE
SOLUTION (CS²) PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Village of Wilmette, Cook County, Illinois (the “Village”) is a home rule municipal corporation as provided in Article VII, Section 6 of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois and, pursuant to said constitutional authority, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus provides a forum for the chief elected officials of the Chicago region to develop consensus and act on common public policy issues and multi-jurisdictional challenges; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus has a history of environmental stewardship, from energy efficiency, water conservation, urban forestry, and participation in the Greenest Region Compact; and

WHEREAS, it is important for Mayors and local governments throughout Illinois to take leadership roles to advance sustainability both in their own communities and in concert with regional, national and global initiatives; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate local support of new solar development in Illinois, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus created the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution (CS²) Program (“Program”) which will allow residents to support the development of shared solar resources in Illinois without the need to install solar panels on their homes and properties through subscriptions. By obtaining a subscription, a resident can reduce their total cost of electricity supply by receiving net metering credits on their monthly utility bills; and

WHEREAS, the Program will assist the Village of Wilmette in its ongoing effort to provide residents with access to sustainable energy solutions that enhance the quality of life for

residents along with protection and stewardship of the environment and sustainable economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board finds that it is in the best interests of the health, safety and welfare of the Village to endorse the CS² Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the President and Board of Trustees of the Village Wilmette:

SECTION 1: The foregoing findings and recitals, and each of them, are hereby adopted as Section 1 of this Resolution and are incorporated by reference as if set forth verbatim herein.

SECTION 2: The Village of Wilmette endorses the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution (CS²) Program proposed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and will educate and inform residents regarding its availability.

SECTION 3: The Village Manager is authorized to execute any necessary documents and take all actions necessary to carry out the purpose of this Resolution.

SECTION 4: This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

ADOPTED by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Wilmette, Illinois, on the 14th day of **December 2021** according to the following roll call vote:

AYES: None.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

Clerk of the Village of Wilmette, Illinois

Approved on December 14, 2021.

Village President

Attest:

Village Clerk

ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE COMMERCIAL TERMS FOR COMMUNITY SOLAR SUBSCRIPTIONS

SAMPLE COMMERCIAL TERMS FOR CS² COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM

The commercial terms outlined below were adopted by the first communities to use the CS² Program for their resident (e.g., Village of Oak Park, North Shore Consortium). The CS² Program secured commitments from community solar developers to offer a limited volume of subscriptions that met these terms.

KEY COMMERCIAL TERMS FOR CS ² COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM	
Net Metering Credit Split	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subscriber receives 100% of all utility net metering credits on the monthly utility bill. Subscriber pays 80% of all monthly net metering credits to through electronic billing
Eligible Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential and Small Commercial accounts receiving service from Ameren Illinois or ComEd Must remain on utility default tariff rates
Enrollment Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No credit check or minimum credit score \$0 enrollment fees
Agreement Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 15-20 years Subscription sale and transfers allowed
Subscription Termination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$0 termination fees with 60 days' notice Termination for non-payment or placement on non-Default tariff rates for 2 consecutive billing cycles
Consumer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online enrollment, electronic billing, call center, program website Services paid by community solar farm developers
Marketing Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mailings, press releases, municipal website content Paid by community solar farm developers

Because of the limited availability of community solar projects in the ComEd region, communities may not be able to secure the same terms noted above. The CS² Program will present the best terms available in the market on an ongoing basis, and municipalities can determine whether to accept those amended terms prior to fully participating in the program.



COMMUNITY SOLAR FOR WILMETTE

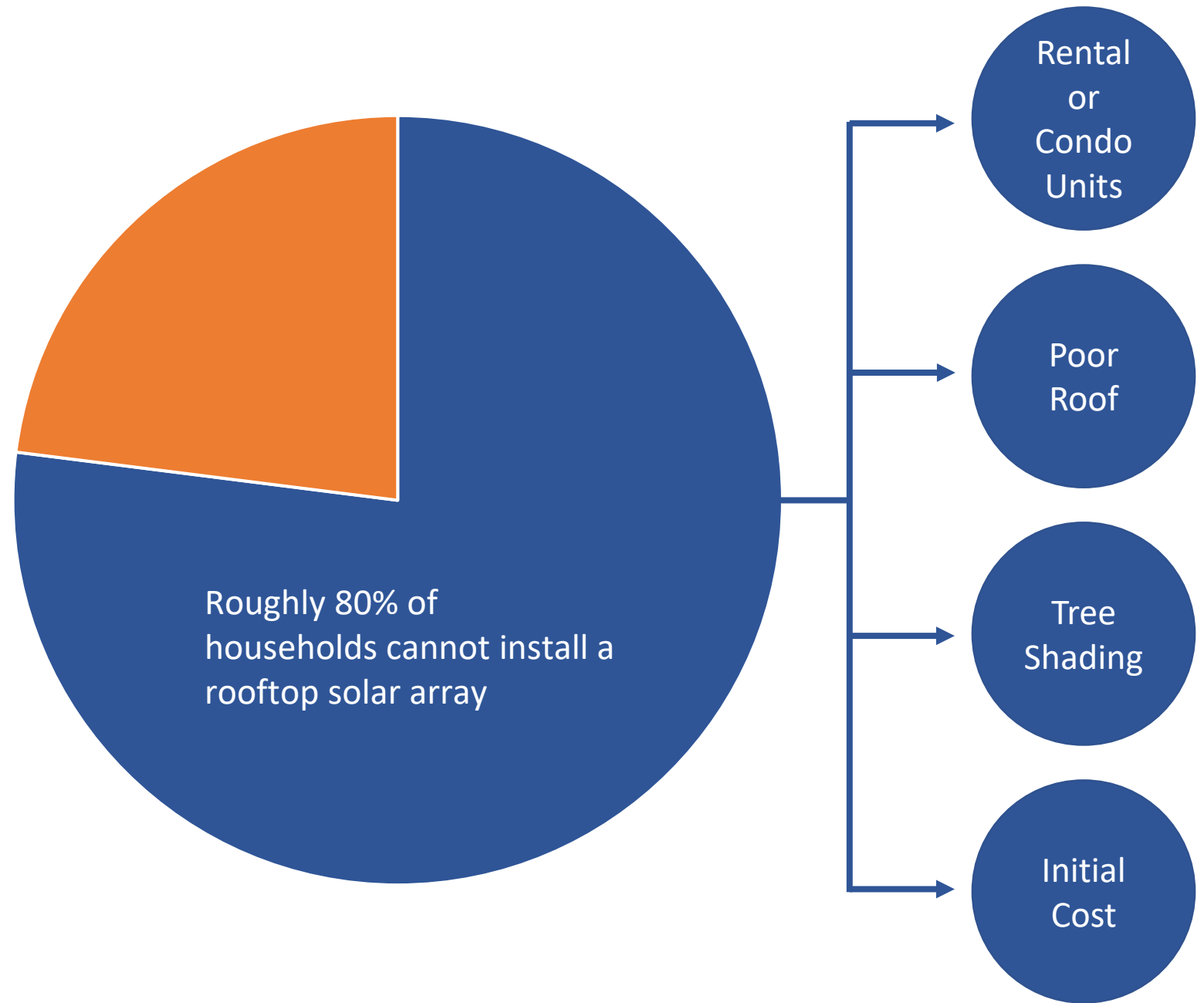
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
METROPOLITAN MAYORS CAUCUS

The Power Bureau, LLC | Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

PROBLEM: ACCESS TO SOLAR

Real Barriers

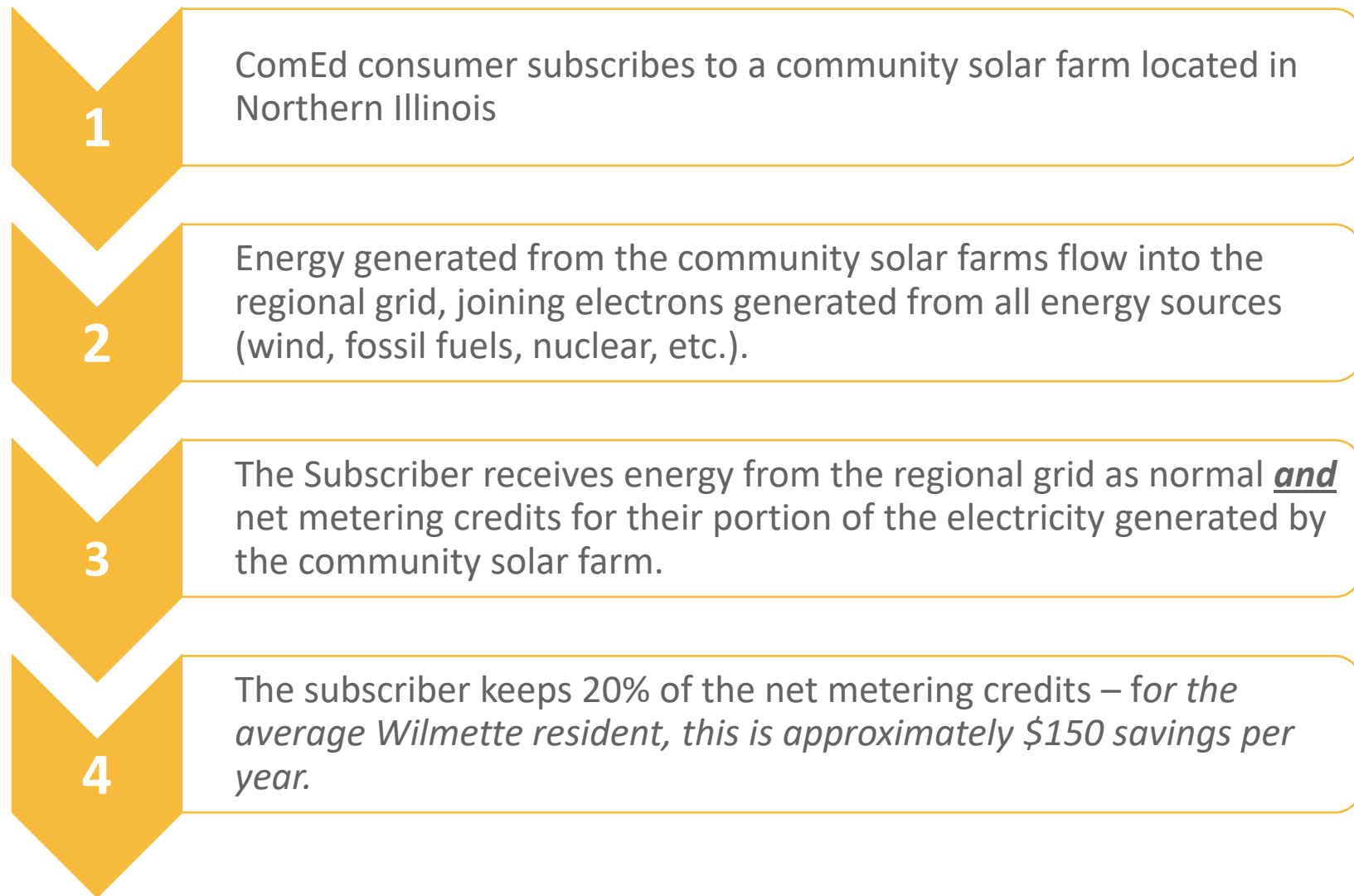
- Restrictions for renters and condo owners
- Many roofs cannot support weight of solar arrays
- Shade from trees prevents solar from generating electricity
- The initial cost of solar is still too high for consumers



SOLUTION: COMMUNITY SOLAR

Community Solar

- Consumers can claim a portion of a large community solar project
- An option to get the benefits of solar without installing any equipment



CS² PROGRAM

Partnership Structure

- Mayors Caucus
 - Competitive bidding
 - Negotiations
 - Customer support
- Municipalities
 - Approve contract terms
 - Messaging
 - Consumer awareness
- CS² Program
 - No credit checks
 - No enrollment fees
 - No termination fees
 - Guaranteed Consumer electricity supply cost savings



CS² PROGRAM

Billing Structure


- Consumer receives all net metering credits on their ComEd bill
- Consumer separately billed for 80% of net metering credits

Requirements

- Electronic autopay
- Ensures accuracy
- Reduces operating costs to support consumers savings

Before Community Solar

Electric Bill

 **SUPPLY** **\$84**
1200 kWh X \$0.07 = \$84

 **DELIVERY** **\$45**


TAXES & FEES **\$15**

TOTAL COST **\$144**

Total Cost: \$144

After Community Solar

Electric Bill

 **SUPPLY** **\$24**
1200 kWh X \$0.07 = \$84

Net Metering Credit
-1000 kWh X \$0.06 = -\$60

 **DELIVERY** **\$45**

TAXES & FEES **\$15**

TOTAL COST **\$84**

Subscription Bill

Net Metering Credits **\$60**

Subscriber's Share (20%) **-\$12**

TOTAL COST **\$48**

Total Cost: \$84 + \$48 = \$131

Total Savings: \$12

CS² PROGRAM

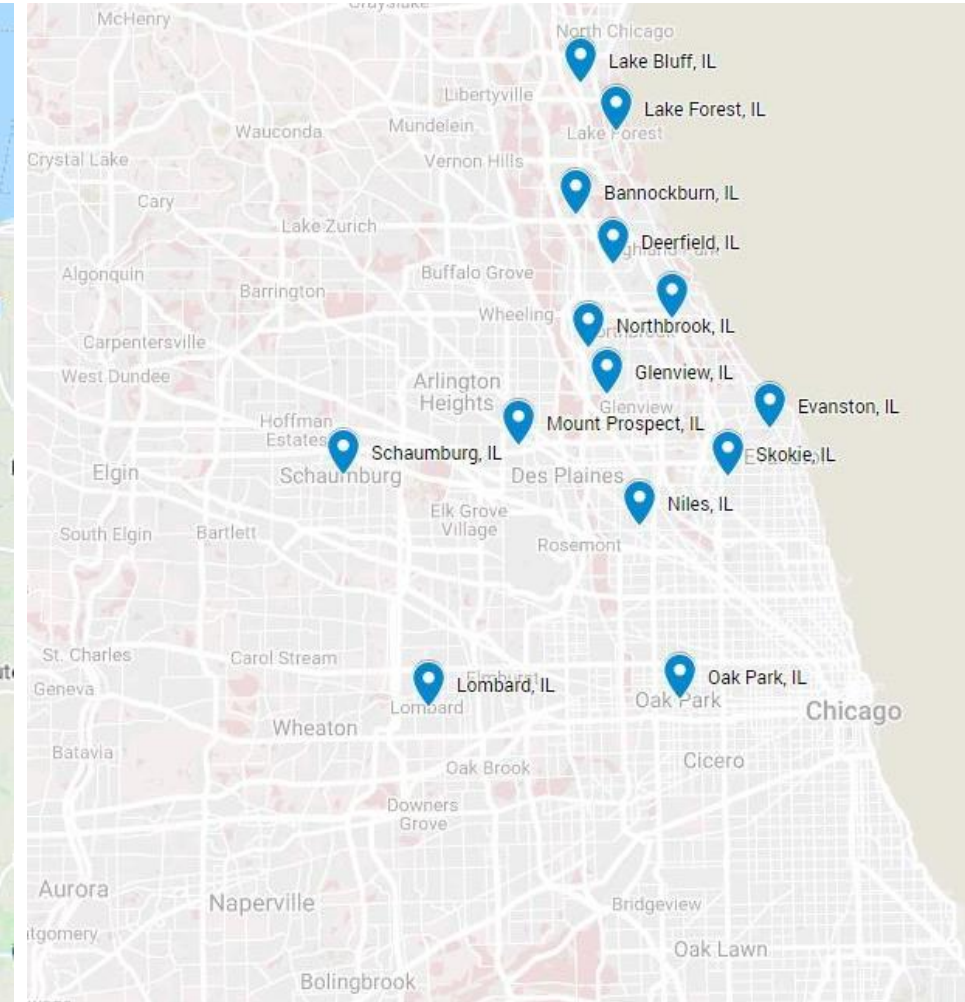
Track Record

- 14 communities
- 10 Community Solar projects available
- Residential and municipal facilities subscribed
- Over 3,200 residents signed up for Community Solar Subscriptions

Participating Community Solar Farms



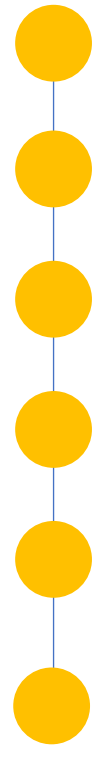
Municipalities Participating in CS2 Program



NEXT STEPS

Timeline

- 4-6 weeks is typical time between municipal resolution and mailers
- With a December resolution, Wilmette consumers could begin receiving net metering credits as early as March/April 2022

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- Village of Wilmette signs up for the CS2 Program.
 - Village approves mailing list, mailers, press releases, web content
 - Direct mail campaign sent to residents, paid for by developers.
 - Residents sign up online
 - Residents accounts are reviewed, and a subscription contract is sent
 - Residents accounts are assigned to a community solar farm and net metering credits begin within 1-2 billing cycles



Thank You!

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