



Town of Foster

Est. 1781

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

RE: 2015 Solarize RI Application- Town of Foster

### Community Outreach Plan

The community of Foster is tight-knit and civic-minded, with a majority of residents living here longer than 20 years, a majority of the ~4,628 (Census ACS 2009-2013 5-year estimate) population count older than 45 years of age, and an overwhelming majority owning their homes. *See Attachment I.* Our demographic profile illustrates the trend handed down through generations to put down roots here, raise a family and age here, and take pride in the land and in our ability to sustain and adapt.

Local groups, ranging from long-standing organizations with 600+ members to the organizer of a one-day event in October, have been more than willing to sign on as a Town partner in increasing awareness of the Program, and are wholly in support of these types of projects. *See Attachment F.* The marketing possibilities vary and include:

- A “Solarize Foster” Day
- Booths at scheduled annual meetings and events
- Flyers in area businesses
- Information posted on the Town’s website and affiliated web pages and social media
- Special community events (e.g. solar workshops)

Events can be held on a smaller scale on Town property such as the Town House, the Benjamin Eddy building, and the Woody Lowden recreation site where Board and Commission meetings are already conducted. We also have two libraries and three fire stations, several restaurants and retailers, and a golf course all adjacent to the center of Foster.

On a larger scale, the Captain Isaac Paine Elementary School is at the corner of Routes 94 and 6 and thus easily accessible, with ample parking and presentation capability, and is available in conjunction with school events as well as



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specifically and only for Solarize RI; they are excited about the educational opportunities.

Existing sign regulations allow for signs of a public use in all zones. *See Attachment E.* Temporary, yard, and/or banner signs are not singled out for that use, and Town property is exempt from the regulations anyway- there are no restrictions to advertising the Program, events, or private residential participants.

Two solar ambassadors have signed on to the effort. *See Attachment H.* One is a gentleman who is well-versed in using solar panels to power his residence, having constructed his house around them more than five years ago. The other just recently researched the options, contacted solar installers, and received a site assessment and pricing. Between the two of them, they cover the realm of experience and possibilities, and are happy to share their corresponding stories through direct contact as well as within the context of outreach activities.

In addition to the Municipal Representative, External Review Team, community partners, and solar ambassadors, staff and volunteer time is ready and willing to pitch in as events are scheduled or can be scheduled for every month during the approximately 4-month duration, and how to engage them is easy in such a Town of strong relationships and common interests- just ask. I anticipate that sign-ups for solar site assessments and expansion of solar PV adoption in Foster will be a by-product of the on-going movement towards affordable energy here. The final, and powerful, tool in our arsenal is simply word of mouth.