

Brandon Energy Plan Review Process:

The Town of Brandon's Planning Commission's process for reviewing potential large-scale solar and other renewable energy generation projects within Brandon

For uniformity, Brandon adopts those standards used by the State of Vermont for system classifications and supports the RES standards developed by the State as well as other statutory requirements and Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) goals for emissions reduction and renewable generation:

- 15 kW or less as the definition of small residential systems.
- State and local and property tax statutes.
- The RES for Vermont utilities requires that 75% of electricity sold in Vermont in 2032 be obtained from renewables, and 10% must come from new, in-state, renewable generation at customer-sited facilities smaller than 5 megawatts.
- Access must be available to firefighters and other emergency responders.
- Every renewable energy project larger than 15 kW shall include a proposed site plan, a statement of compliance with all known and possible constraints, a project budget and scope, a qualified assessment by an energy professional as to the viability of the project, an action plan and a guaranteed funding source for decommissioning to ensure the site is safe, stable and free of structures and hazardous materials.
- State goal of having 90% of all energy use -- transportation, thermal and electricity -- come from renewables by the year 2050.

The following information will be sent to companies considering construction of renewable energy projects in/around the Town of Brandon.

1. Owner information

- A. Owner intends to construct a ___ kW at the following address or legal description (system site):
- B. This site is on (circle one):
 - Public Land
 - Private land
- C. Is this a residential or commercial installation?
- D. If residential and under 15 kW, please skip to section 3
- E. This site does or does not require local permits or improvements in public roads to access/operate the installation. If yes, please describe.
- F. Has owner secured rights to use the above-mentioned site?
- G. Please describe what benefits this project would bring to the Brandon community.
- H. This installation will be (circle one):
 - net metered
 - grid tied
- I. If net metered who will be receiving the generation credits?

- J. If this is a secure or restricted access site, how will security be handled? Will emergency personnel be able to access this site?
- K. Who owns the RECs? Will the RECs (Renewable Energy Credits) be sold?

Brandon is developing a site matrix that guides potential renewable energy investments in areas that avoid the known and possible constraints. This matrix is a proactive approach to help make investments in the district and enable Brandon to meet the local and state goals of renewable energy generation by 2050. The matrix will also show areas that the town has made investments in utilities to support residential and higher density population areas. A commercial project that would not make use of those utility services would limit the town's ability to recover utility investments.

2. Known and Possible Constraints

A. There are state and regional constraints on locating renewable energy installations. Please indicate if this site does or does not conflict with these known or possible constraints.

1. *Known Constraints: vernal pools; DEC river Corridors; FEMA floodways; State-significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered species areas; National Wilderness Areas; Class 1 and Class 2 wetlands.*
2. *Possible Constraints: Agricultural soils; FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas; Protected lands (state fee lands and private conservation lands); Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas; Deer wintering areas; ANR's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks; Hydric soils.*
3. *Regional Constraints: The regional energy plan lists additional conserved lands (state forests, state parks, town forests, streambank conserved areas, wildlife management areas, the Green Mountain National Forest) as a regional known constraint and Current Use (Use Value) parcels (in ag and silviculture production) as a regional possible constraint.*

B. The Town of Brandon has preferences based on the above-mentioned site matrix. Please include a site plan that shows location of renewable energy project in relation to the parcel boundaries, the converters and necessary power infrastructure to access the grid from this location. Indicate what utilities or services would be required by the City.

Brandon infrastructure and population density plans strive to concentrate residential growth to limit the impact of service infrastructure required. Any commercial proposals within these targeted population centers would need to be weighed against the future use of these spaces for population and municipal needs. Project will need to follow existing zoning procedures and practices.

3. Project details

- A. Type of generation:
- B. Expected kW/kWh annual generation:
- C. Is this a project that might be done in phases?
- D. Are there any other phases planned for this site in the future?
- E. Zoning variance required?
- F. If located on public land, are public approvals required?
- G. Expected construction start date:
- H. Expected completion date:
- I. Town of Brandon project timeline:
 - Completed review by developer and town
 - Pre-construction site visit
 - Final visit after PUC certificate of good issued and review of scope of project changes
 - Midpoint construction visit
 - Final preoperational visit
 - Annual operational visits (to ensure best possible service to investors, the Town of Brandon will request economic and energy updates from the company on an annual basis)

4. References and Tools:

- The Vermont Community Energy Dashboard: <https://www.vtenergydashboard.org/>
- VT Energy Dashboard (Brandon's baseline): <https://www.vtenergydashboard.org/my-community/brandon/progress>
- The Renewable Energy Atlas: <https://www.vtenergydashboard.org/energy-atlas>. This is a really helpful tool for communities and people interested in exploring energy projects, with the ability to get a sense of places with known or possible constraints -- or to identify sites likely best suited for renewable energy deployment. Search for Brandon and find the energy resources deployed, as well as go to: Select Layers on the right-hand side of the Atlas, to see the Act 174 constraints.
- Vermont energy committees network: <https://vecan.net/>