

MEMORANDUM

May 19, 2021

To: Johnson County Planning Commission

Fr: Jay C. Leipzig, AICP, Director
Sean Pendley, AICP, Deputy Director
Karen Miller, Senior Planner

Re: Update regarding Utility-Scale Solar Energy Facilities (Solar Farms)

During the April 27th Planning Commission meeting Denise Nelson of the Berkley Group (planning consultants) lead a preliminary discussion of important development considerations regarding Utility-Scale Solar Facilities, including issues related to site size, setback and screening requirements, and decommissioning the facility.

Planning staff has begun the process of incorporating these issues into an overall set of amendments to the zoning regulations to allow Utility-Scale Solar Facilities and also amendments to the comprehensive plan to guide our consideration of this use. As part of the process, staff has met with representatives from the Berkley Group, NextEra, and the City of Gardner. Staff will also contact other surrounding cities.

Throughout this process, Planning staff will be balancing accommodating the requirements of solar facilities with the County's need to:

- provide for city growth and development within this urban county;
- provide for efficient development of other infrastructure and services;
- uphold the County's rural character and open spaces;
- preserve the County as attractive and desirable place to live and work;
- protect environmentally sensitive areas;
- protect existing and proposed parks, streamway trails, and other natural, recreational or cultural amenities;
- protect existing and future residential areas; and
- maintain the highest level of fiscal responsibility and minimize the burden on taxpayers.

Staff will continue drafting these amendments and will submit a draft to the Planning Commission for consideration at the June 22nd meeting.