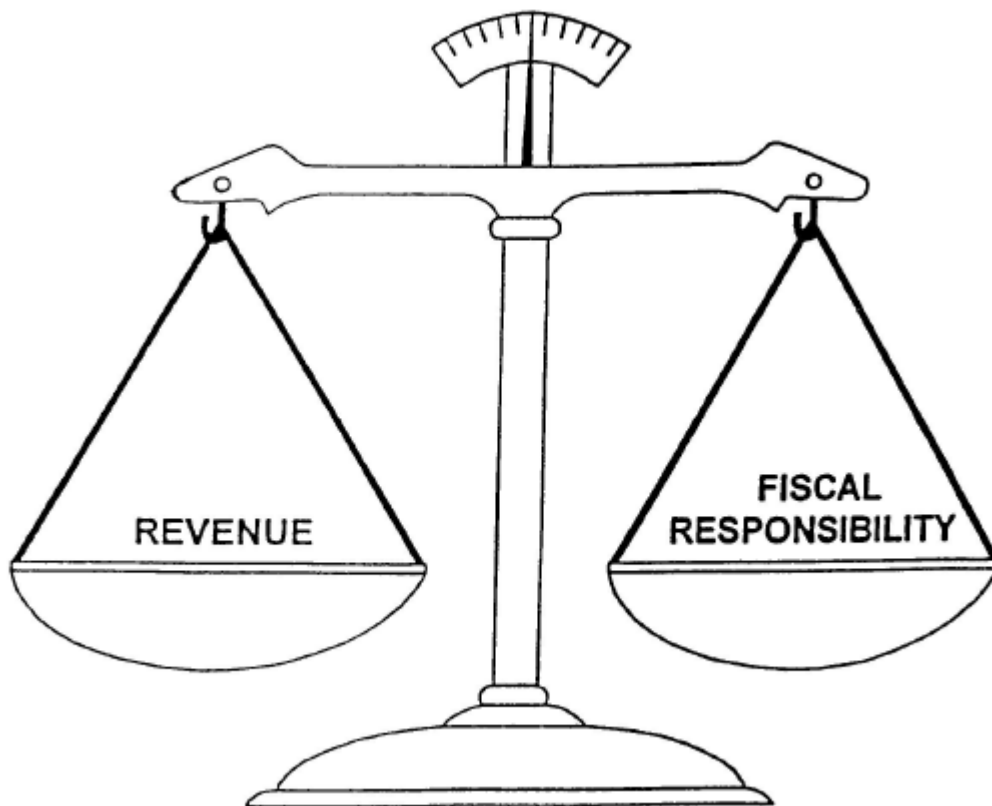


**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
NORTHBRIDGE FINANCE COMMITTEE**



**Special Town Meeting
Tuesday, February 6, 2018
7:00 p.m.**

**Northbridge Middle School Auditorium
171 Linwood Avenue
Whitinsville, MA**

THINK

VOTERS CHECK LIST

To be considered on each vote:

1. IS IT NECESSARY? Or is it something that is not really needed or perhaps already being provided by a private or public group?
2. CAN WE AFFORD IT? Remember, there is no limit to what we would like, but there is a limit to what we can afford.
3. WHAT WILL IT COST ULTIMATELY? Many proposals are like icebergs - only a small fraction of the total is apparent on the surface.
4. HOW WILL IT AFFECT BASIC LIBERTIES? If it imposes unreasonable or illegal restraints on your life or that of others, it should be vigorously opposed.
5. IS IT IN THE BALANCED BEST INTEREST OF ALL? If it is designed to benefit a small group or special interests, while taking unfair advantage of others, work for its defeat.
6. IS IT A "FOOT-IN-DOOR" PROPOSITION? Compromising a little now may bring an oppressive burden later, either in more regulation or more taxes or a combination of both.
7. DOES IT PLACE TOO MUCH POWER IN THE HANDS OF ONE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP? Once decisive power is granted to a non-elected public official, a commission or a municipal authority, the private citizens may lose effective control.
8. DOES IT RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE MINORITY? This is a cornerstone of our Republic.
9. IS ITS APPEAL BASED ON EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA OR FACTS? The farther a proposition gets away from facts, the more critical one should be.
10. DOES IT SQUARE WITH YOUR MORAL CONVICTIONS? If so, fight for it. If not, oppose it.

From Finance Committee Handbook

February 2018

Dear Voters:

Enclosed is the warrant for the Special Town Meeting along with a recommendation prepared by the Town Manager and Finance Committee.

The lone warrant article seeks to amend the Zoning Bylaws by creating a solar overlay district. This change is in response to a request to place a solar project on land located off Quaker and Puddon Streets.

Please review the information in this booklet, make note of any questions you might have and bring the booklet with you to Town Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Plato Adams, Chairman
James Barron
Lisa Ferguson
Steven Gogolinski
Jill Meagher
Christopher Pilla
Christopher Thompson

TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE

WARRANT FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018 - 7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1: (Board of Selectmen)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 173 of the Code of Northbridge, Article XX [Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installations] by adding the following new subsections to provide for a "Community Shared Solar Overlay District", as follows:

§ 173-136.1 Community Shared Solar Overlay District (CSSOD)

The Community Shared Solar Overlay District (CSSOD) is hereby established as an overlay district within the Town of Northbridge. All requirements pertaining to the underlying district(s) shall continue to be in full force and effect, except where the provisions of the CSSOD supersede such underlying requirements or provide for an alternative to such requirement(s).

§ 173-136.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Shared Solar Overlay District (CSSOD) is to allow for the siting, construction and operation of a Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation (LGSPi).

§ 173-136.3 Location

The boundaries of the Community Shared Solar Overlay District (CSSOD) are shown on map entitled "Northbridge, Massachusetts Zoning Overlay District Map" prepared by CMRPC-Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission dated December 19, 2017. The CSSOD is comprised of land identified on the 2017 Northbridge Assessors' Map 27, as Parcels 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, and 89.

§ 173-136.4 Permitted Use

The provisions of the CSSOD apply to the construction of solar photovoltaic systems as defined herein and in accordance with Article XX, Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations, of the Northbridge Zoning Bylaw.

§ 173-136.5 Definitions

A. Appurtenant Structures. All structures, the use of which is appurtenant (secondary to) a solar photovoltaic system, including but not limited to equipment shelters, storage facilities, transformers, and substations.

B. Community Shared Solar. A Community Shared Solar (CSS) project is a solar photovoltaic system that provides benefits such as electricity, net metering credits, and return on investment to multiple participants. A CSS project is a project hosted by an entity and supported by multiple participants, who invest in the project or purchase the electricity or net metering credits generated.

C. Hazardous Materials. Hazardous materials stored, used or generated on site shall not exceed the amount for a Very Small Quantity Generator of Hazardous Waste (VSQG) as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) pursuant to regulations at 310 CMR 30.000, and shall meet all requirements of the DEP, including storage of hazardous materials. If hazardous materials are utilized within the solar electric equipment, impervious containment areas capable of controlling any release to the environment and to prevent potential contamination of groundwater shall be required.

D. Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation. A solar photovoltaic system that is structurally mounted on the ground and is not roof-mounted, has a minimum nameplate capacity of 250 kW DC, and generates power utilized at least in part off-site.

E. Rated Nameplate Capacity. The maximum rated output of electric power production of the photovoltaic system in direct current (DC).

F. Solar Array. Solar panels arranged in a group to capture sunlight to be converted into usable electricity.

G. Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System. A power system designed to supply usable solar power by means of photovoltaics, consisting of an arrangement of several components, including solar panels to absorb and convert sunlight into electricity, a solar inverter to change the electrical current from DC to AC, and other related electrical accessories.

H. Special Permit Granting Authority. The Planning Board shall be the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for solar photovoltaic systems within the Community Shared Solar Overlay District (CSSOD).

§ 173-136.6 Special Permit

In accordance with §173-74 [Special permits], the Planning Board may issue a special permit for solar photovoltaic systems pursuant to the requirements and standards noted herein upon site plan review and approval of same in accordance with §173-49.1 [Site plan review by the Planning Board].

§ 173-136.7 General Requirements

In addition to the general requirements provided for in §173-136 for Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installations, the following requirements shall apply to Community Shared Solar systems.

A. Compliance with laws and regulations. The construction and operation of Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations (LGSPI) shall be consistent with all applicable local, state and federal requirements, including but not limited to all applicable safety, construction, electrical, and communications requirements. All buildings and fixtures forming part of a solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed in accordance with the State Building Code.

B. Building permits. No LGSPI shall be constructed, installed or modified except in accordance with a duly issued building permit.

C. Site plan review. No LGSPI shall be constructed, installed or modified except in conformity with a site plan approval by the Planning Board. The Planning Board shall consider and apply the requirements set forth herein and as provided for in §173-136 [General requirements].

D. Setbacks and screening. Minimum setbacks for a LGSPI shall be as follows: a minimum front lot depth of 100-feet; minimum side lot depth of 50-feet and minimum rear lot depth of 50-feet. Every abutting property shall be visually screened from the LGSPI through any one or combination of the following: location, distance, plantings, existing vegetation and fencing. No setbacks shall be required for interior parcel lot lines of adjoining parcels held in common ownership within the CSSOD.

E. Building lot. A LGSPI shall be permitted on contiguous parcels of land of one hundred acres or more within the CSSOD and having a minimum lot width of 50-feet on a public way within the Town of Northbridge. Adjoining interior parcels without frontage that are held in common ownership shall be considered toward the 100-acre requirement for a LGSPI application. A LGSPI shall be permitted on multiple adjoining parcels through the issuance of a single building permit.

F. Lot access. Access to a LGSPI may be provided via the qualifying frontage or from adjoining parcels held in common ownership as may be approved by the Planning Board as part of site plan review;

Or take any other action relative thereto.

TOWN MANAGER’S SUMMARY: This article seeks to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 173 of the Code of Northbridge, Article XX, by adding new subsections to Large-Scale Solar Photovoltaic Installations entitled “Community Shared Solar Overlay District” to establish an overlay district; including permitted uses, definitions, special permit standards, and general requirements for the siting, construction and operation of a Community Shared Solar (CSS) project. A CSS project is a solar photovoltaic system that provides benefits such as electricity, net metering credits, and return on investment to multiple participants. A CSS project is a project hosted by an entity and supported by multiple participants, who invest in the project or purchase the electricity or net metering credits generated. A CSS project may offer an alternative for those who cannot install solar on their own property.

FINANCE COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee ***recommends passage*** of this article. The creation of an overlay district will allow the town to properly manage the proposed solar project. Vote: The Finance Committee voted 5-0 with one abstention to support Article 1.

VOTER’S COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS: _____

NORTHBRIDGE, MASS.

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS December 19, 2017

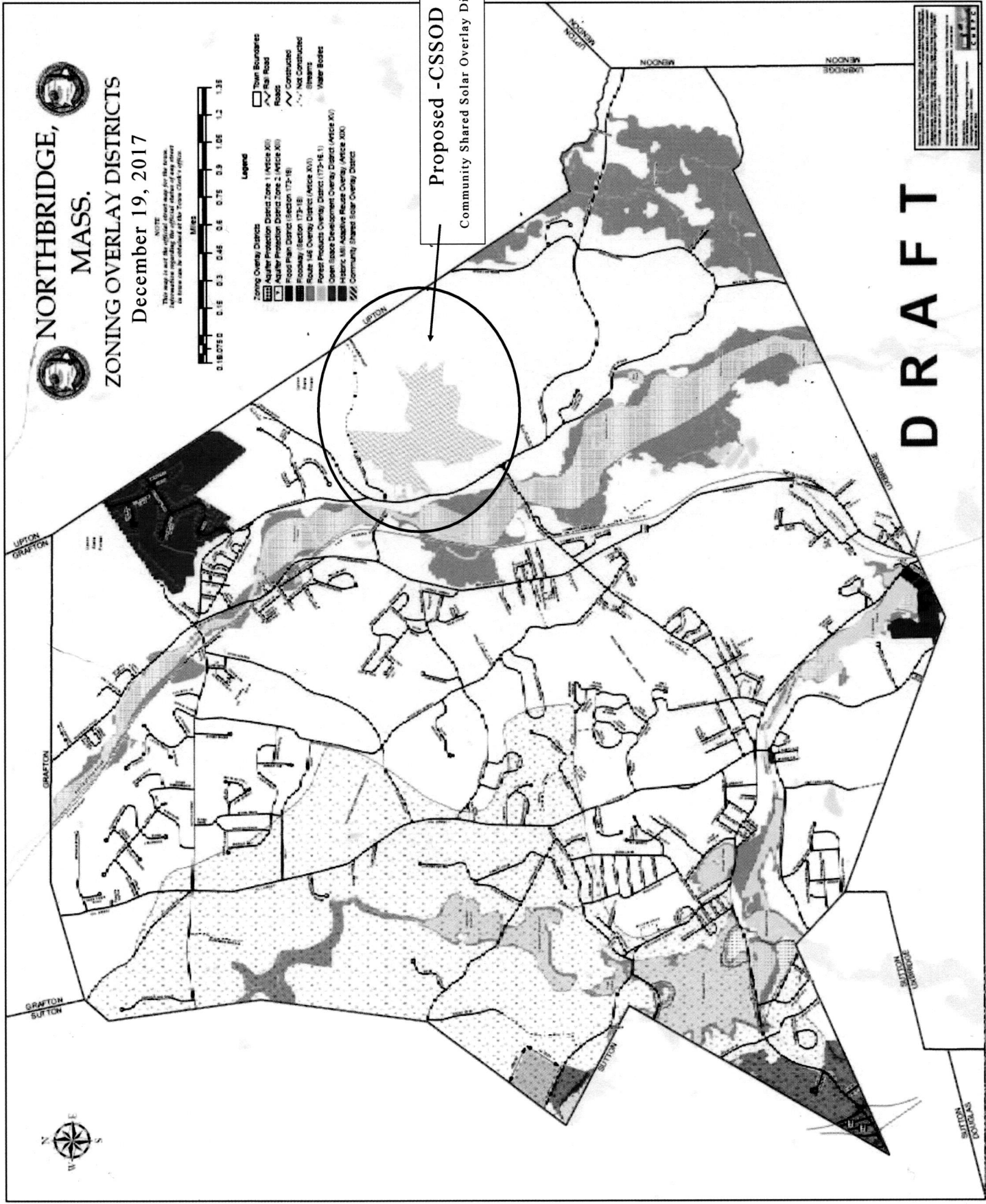
NOTE:
This map is not the official record of the town's zoning overlay districts. It is a draft map for informational purposes only. The official record of the town's zoning overlay districts is the zoning ordinance as adopted by the town clerk's office.

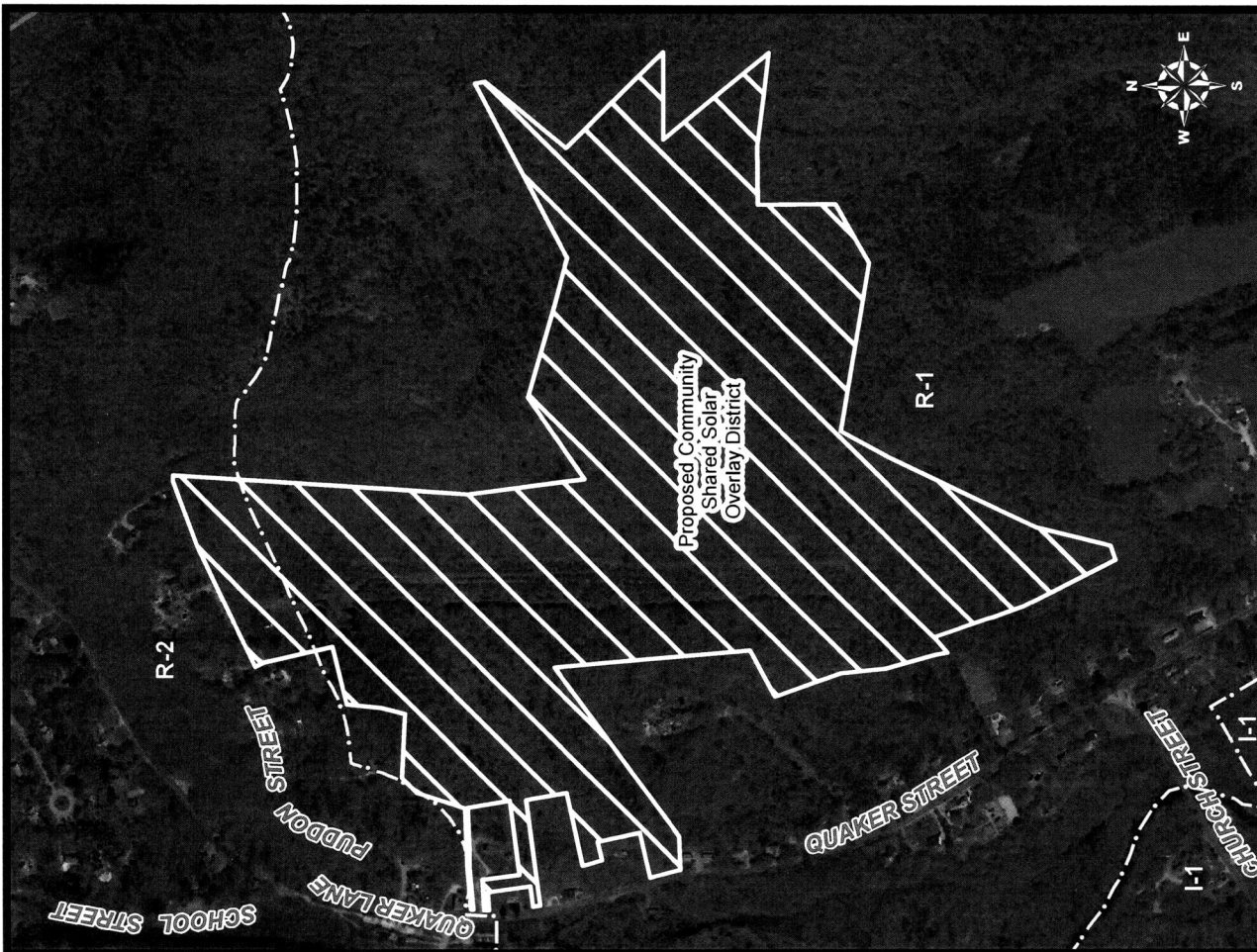


- Legend**
- Town Boundary
 - Rail Road
 - Road
 - Constructed Stream
 - Not Constructed Stream
 - Water Bodies
- Zoning Overlay Districts**
- Aquifer Protection District Zone 1 (Article X)
 - Aquifer Protection District Zone 2 (Article X)
 - Flood Plain District (Section 173-18)
 - Floodway District (Section 173-18)
 - Route 146 Overlay District (Article X)
 - Forest Products Overlay District (Article X)
 - Open Space Development Overlay District (Article X)
 - Historic Mt. Asgard Overlay District (Article X)
 - Community Shared Solar Overlay District

Proposed -CSSOD
Community Shared Solar Overlay District

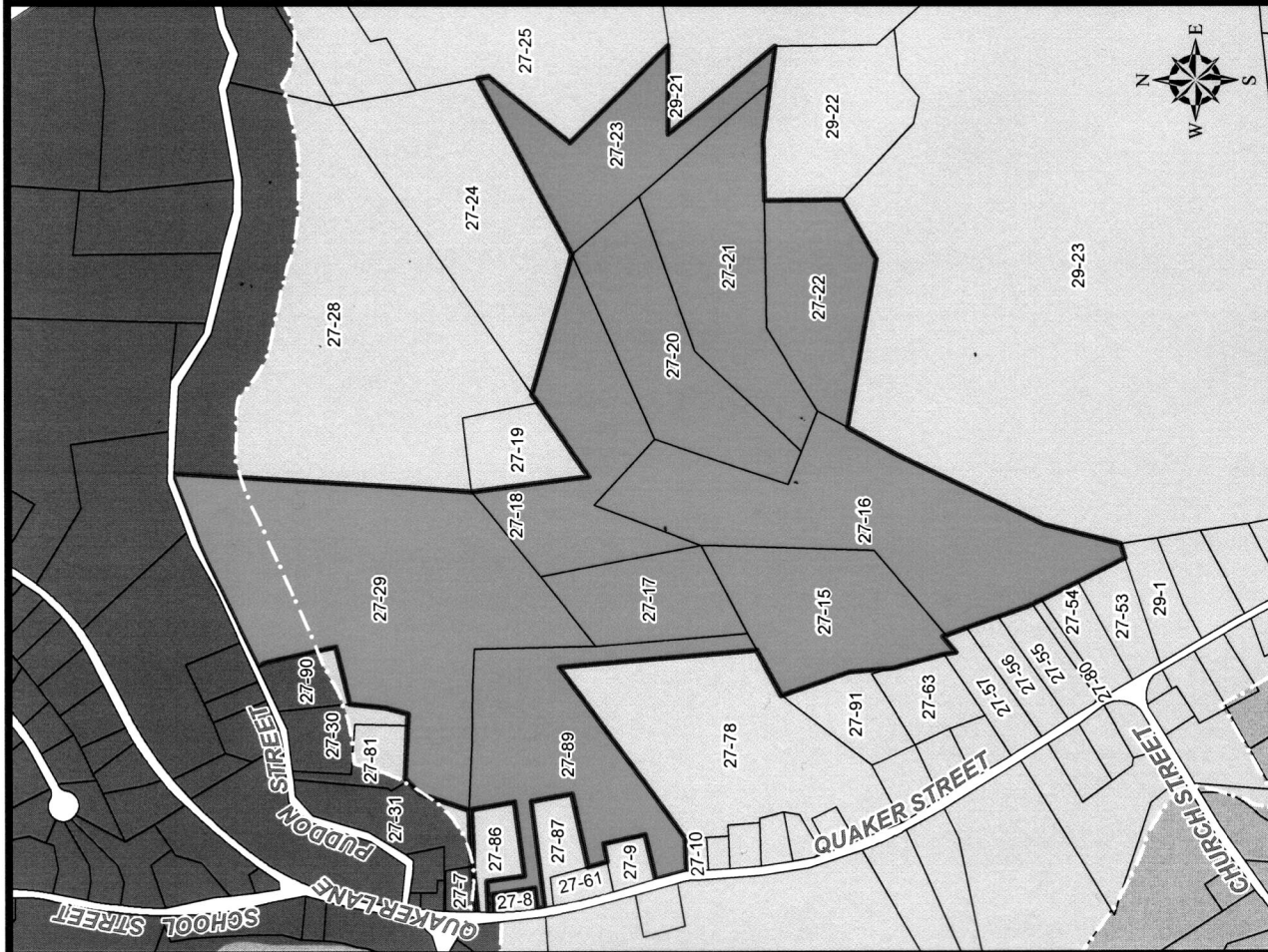
DRAFT





Proposed Community Shared Solar Overlay District

Northbridge, Massachusetts
November 30, 2017
1 inch = 853 feet



Source: Data provided by the Town of Northbridge, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), MassDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division, Imagery (C) Google
Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.

Produced by
For

Town of
Northbridge, MA

Industrial One (I-1)

Residential One (R-1)

Residential Two (R-2)

Proposed CSSOD

Legend

COMMON TOWN FINANCE TERMS

APPROPRIATION

An amount of money voted to be spent for specific purposes.

ARTICLES

Each of the numbered items of business in the Warrant is called an Article. Articles for a town meeting are submitted to the selectmen by boards, departments, and by citizens of Northbridge. All Articles must be voted upon; none can be withdrawn from the Warrant.

CHERRY SHEET

The cherry colored form received each year from the state listing the town's State Aid and county and state charges against the town.

FISCAL YEAR

July 1st through June 30th and normally designated by the year in which it ends.

FREE CASH – AVAILABLE FUNDS

Surplus revenue less all uncollected taxes from prior years. A source for funds at special town meetings, special projects or lowering the tax rate. Actual amount is determined at the close of each fiscal year. Free Cash should be thought of as being the town's "Savings Account"

GENERAL FUND

The fund into which the general (not-earmarked) revenues of the town are deposited and from which money is appropriated to pay the general expenses of the municipality.

LOCAL RECEIPTS

Money collected by the town departments for Automobile Excise taxes, licenses issued by the clerk's office, Parks and Recreation activities, etc.

OVERLAY

The amount raised by the Assessors in excess of appropriations and other charges to cover abatements granted and avoiding fractions.

OVERLAY SURPLUS

The accumulated amount of the not used overlay for various years which may be used for extraordinary or unforeseen purposes or voted into the Reserve Fund.

OVERRIDE

A referendum question on the ballot in a general election which allows a town to assess taxes in excess of the allowable 2 ½ % yearly increased allowed by law. Override questions must specify the purpose of the override and require a majority vote for approval.

RESERVE FUND

A fund to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures. A sum may be appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting not to exceed 5% of the tax levy of the preceding year.

SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED)

Special Education is a program that serves students who have disabilities that impair learning. The town is partially reimbursed through Chapter 70 based on availability of funds and through recently enacted circuit breaker legislation.

SURPLUS REVENUE

The amount by which cash, accounts receivable and other assets exceed liabilities and reserve (a bookkeeping item not be confused with Available Funds.) Actual amount is determined at the close of each fiscal year.

TAX LEVY

The revenue a community can raise through real estate and personal taxes. This is limited by Proposition 2 ½ but can be increased by an override.

TRANSFER

The authorization to use an appropriation for a different purpose or from the Reserve Fund for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.

WARRANT

The list of items, known as Articles, to be considered at the town meeting is called the Town Warrant. The only business that may be considered is that listed in the Town Warrant.

**Presort Standard
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Whitinsville, MA
01588**

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

Special Town Meeting

**To: Postal Customer
01588**