



## For Immediate Release

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# CARPC Earns National Recognition for Promoting Solar Energy at the Local Level

MADISON, WI – The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission, a government organization focused on planning, development and resource preservation, received national recognition for encouraging solar energy growth in the greater Madison region.

Solar panels convert energy from the sun into thermal or electric energy. It is the cleanest and most abundant renewable energy source and can be used to heat, cool, and light homes and businesses.

CARPC received Bronze-level recognition from [SolSmart](#), a national program working with organizations and municipalities to enhance solar energy use. Meanwhile, Dane County received a Platinum designation, making it the first county in the country to receive this high-level designation.

“We are thrilled to be recognized,” said Jason Valerius, CARPC’s Executive Director. “But we are even more excited to see Dane County and local communities, including McFarland, Mount Horeb, Middleton, and Sun Prairie, receive recognition. These communities are leaders in our ongoing transition to renewable energy sources and we’re happy to support their leadership.”

Local governments achieve SolSmart designation by meeting established criteria that are based on national best practices for building solar-friendly communities. The SolSmart team of experts offers no-cost technical assistance and resources to help communities put these practices into action. Those that meet the criteria are designated SolSmart Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze.

One action CARPC took to earn the designation was hosting a Solar-Friendly Planning and Zoning Workshop at the Fitchburg Public Library in November 2023. At the workshop, local planning and zoning professionals learned how to incorporate solar into community plans, reduce barriers to solar and develop clear, consistent regulations and processes. CARPC coordinated with experts from the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, the SolSmart Gold-certified City of Steven’s Point and Full Spectrum Solar to prepare and deliver workshop content.

CARPC’s participation in the SolSmart program builds on the organization’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster community resilience to climate change, as outlined in the [2050 Regional](#)

[Development Framework](#), and helps support Dane County’s goal of meeting one-third of electricity use with solar by 2030.

“When communities adopt SolSmart practices, it becomes faster, easier, and more affordable to install solar energy systems,” said Caitlin Shanahan, CARPC Senior Community Planner and Outreach Coordinator. “Teamwork makes the dream work, which is why CARPC, the [Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change](#) and communities have been working together to make local renewable energy available throughout the region.”

To learn more about how CARPC supports solar development, visit:

<https://www.capitalarearpc.org/community-regional-development/solar-development/>.

**About the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC):** The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) strengthens the region by engaging communities through planning, collaboration and assistance. CARPC develops and promotes regional plans, provides objective information and supports local planning efforts throughout Dane County and the surrounding region.

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