

December 8, 2022



Dear Planning Commission,

We are writing in support of the Special Use Permits for the Woodridge Solar Project. [Our research](#) has found this project to be consistent with the county's environmental and land use goals, and we hope it will be approved and constructed.

Livable Cville's mission is to advocate for policies to build an inclusive Charlottesville area with affordable housing, sustainable transportation, and healthy neighborhoods welcoming to all. Climate change and environmental justice are urgent matters, and we must address them at the local level.

The Woodridge Solar Project is an opportunity for Albemarle County to establish itself as a leader in Virginia for how to do utility scale solar projects well. It is a chance to say "yes" to renewable energy locally while preserving the ecological integrity of the site through a vegetation management plan that will remediate the land and grow hundreds of acres of native plants.

The project is consistent with Phase One of Albemarle County's [Climate Action Plan](#). The CAP recommends that when considering utility-scale renewable energy projects, the county should "strive to maintain a holistic perspective that accounts for potential climate benefits and the health of our local ecosystem." This project maintains that balance through a combination of reduction in carbon emissions, room for effective stormwater management, and an extensive vegetation management plan that qualifies for the Virginia Pollinator Smart program.

Another chance to make this much progress on the county's environmental goals through renewable energy is unlikely to come along anytime soon. Hexagon Energy secured a connectivity agreement with [PJM](#) for this project – and just in time, since the regional transmission operator recently announced a [two-year pause](#) on new power developments seeking connection to its grid. Rejection of Woodridge Solar could cause the county to miss this window of opportunity and give solar developers pause about pursuing local utility-scale projects longer term. It could take decades for smaller community-scale and rooftop projects to provide an equivalent amount of renewable energy in Albemarle County.

We understand that this project is complicated, represents a significant change for land use on this site, and is unlike anything ever done before in Albemarle County. We also see it as a win-win situation – giving Albemarle County the chance to both improve local ecological diversity and act quickly on its ambitious goals to address climate change.

We hope you recommend approval for this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Livable Cville