

## **ABSTRACT**

**CREATIVE PROJECT:** Allen County Indiana: Solar Integration through Cohabitated Development

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**COLLEGE:** Architecture and Planning

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**PAGES:** 55

This creative project provides recommendations to Allen County on how to incorporate utility-scale solar development into the master land use plans while preserving agricultural land and driving economic development. These recommendations were developed through the review of Federal and State directives and incentives surrounding utility-scale solar development as well as through interviews conducted with Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.'s Chief Economic Development Officer, Ellen Cutter, and American Electric Power's Director of Economic and Business Development, Ashley Savieo. Through this research it was identified that there is a direct correlation between access to renewable energy and the ability to attract industry. Additionally, competing land-use priorities between industry development, land preservation and utility-scale solar development can result in anti-solar policies deterring solar development and thereby hurting the ability to attract industry to Allen County.

Therefore, the recommendation is to combine commercial and industrial development with rooftop solar development that will equate to a utility-scale output and interconnect into the grid rather than be an energy offset to the building itself. This would be done through the use of a zoning overlay district and tax increment financing to direct utility-scale solar development and incentivize economic development within this zone. The site identified for

this cohabitated development would be approximately 8,000 acers surrounding the Fort Wayne International Airport which would allow for approximately 200 megawatts of solar energy generation. Establishing these policies would result in an aggregated utility-scale solar development mounted atop development by corporations who will be able to have the tangible benefits of renewable energy.