

# Facts & DETAILS

## Commercial Wind and Solar Energy Land Use Discussion

### PURPOSE

Today's public forum provides input on wind and solar energy systems in Sedgwick County. In February, Commissioners voted to prohibit applications for wind and solar energy operations through a moratorium, extending until August 12, 2019. The moratorium prohibits the acceptance and processing of an application for a commercial wind or solar energy system; there are no current applications for such systems in Sedgwick County.

### BACKGROUND

Wind Energy Facilities (WEF) and Solar Energy Facilities (SEF) are not individually listed uses in the Wichita-Sedgwick County Unified Zoning Code (UZC); however, commercial WEFs and SEFs are classified by the UZC as a "utility, major," meaning generating plants; electrical switching facilities and primary substations; water and wastewater treatment plants; water tanks; and radio, television and microwave transmission towers; and similar facilities of agencies that are under public franchise or ownership to provide rail transportation, water, sewage collection or other similar service.

The widely used GE wind turbine 1.5 megawatt model has a 116-foot blades atop a 212-foot tall tower for a total height of 328 feet. For comparison, the world's tallest wind turbine is 809 feet to the tip of the blades. Blade length is determined by wind conditions. A 2.3 megawatt system uses a 354 foot tall tower with 173-foot blades for a total height of 527 feet are used. Siemens first commercial wind turbine was installed in 1980.

### OPTIONS

Currently, all "utility, majors" require public hearings and conditional use approval by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC), and the County Commission if a protest petition is filed.

#### Option 1:

Leave the regulations as they are; rely upon the Conditional Use process to determine where and what development standards are appropriate.

#### Option 2:

Amend the UZC to incorporate development and performance standards specific to such facilities, such as the code has for "car lots" or "wrecking/salvage yard" found in Article III, Section III-D.6.

#### Option 3a and b:

- Limit the use to specific areas of the county by implementing an overlay zoning district that specifies where in the county the use can be considered, or
- ban the use in the entire county.

**Note:** Variations on these options, or some combination of parts of the options are available.

### CITIZEN INPUT

Residents may also provide comment on wind and solar energy systems in an online forum through Friday, April 26 at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).

### NEXT STEPS

- April 29** - Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD) staff to file draft amendment to Wichita-Sedgwick County UZC
- June 6** - MAPC to hear proposal
- July 17** - Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) to hear proposal

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