

**Memorandum** : To The Acton Board of Selectmen

**Subject:** Carport Solar Projects at Commuter Rail Station

**Date:** October 18, 2016

A solar development company has proposed to develop two solar carport/canopy projects at the South Action Commuter Rail Station. One project is on a small piece of property land owned by the MBTA on Railroad Street. The other project is at parking lot off of Central Street, owned by the Town of Acton. The company, Omni-Navatis, has been selected by the MBTA to develop solar projects on over 30 different properties owned by the MBTA. The company is responsible for obtaining all permits and approvals, as well as arranging financing, to build the project.

These carport structures would support the solar panels above the parking area and generate electricity to be sold to third parties (ie individuals, towns and/or companies but not the MBTA). The carport structures would offer protection from rain, snow in the winter, and the heat of the sun in the summer. The carport structures, designed and built properly, are safe and would not limit parking or use of the property. The electricity generated by the solar panels is clean, renewable energy which would help us meet our States renewable energy goals and would reduce the use of greenhouse-gas-producing fossil fuels.

For these reasons, the Green Advisory Board recommends that the Town supports these solar projects. Because the first project would be located on land owned by the MBTA/State, no further action is required on behalf of the Town. However, because the second project would be on land owned by the Town, an open, competitive process following MGL Chapter 24, would have to be used to select the developer of the project (as we did for the solar project at the transfer station on Rt. 2). The State continues to incentivize renewable energy projects and particularly carport solar projects which don't use open land. The Town could receive lease and property tax revenue from the project. Since the Town already receives almost all of its electricity from the solar project located at the transfer station, the Town doesn't need to purchase additional electricity. The electricity generated by the project could be sold to individuals, other towns and/or companies as determined by the selected solar development company.

The Green Advisory Board recommends that the Town further investigate the use of the commuter rail parking lot for a solar carport project. A project such as this would benefit of the people who park their car at the station, the Acton Taxpayers and the citizens of Massachusetts.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Members of the Acton Green Advisory Board