Purchasing Power – Appendix 4

Feasibility Criteria

This resource accompanies the recommendations of *Purchasing Power: Best Practices Guide to Collaborative Solar Procurement*, co-published by Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, the World Resources Institute and Optony. The Best Practices Guide assists commercial and government entities in the process of organizing and executing a collaborative solar purchase. Readers are encouraged to tailor these resources and sample documents to the needs of their individual initiatives. This tool did not undergo the formal external review typical of WRI documents, but suggestions for improvement are welcome. To reach the authors with feedback or questions, please refer to the contact information available at [www.wri.org/buying-solar](http://www.wri.org/buying-solar).

This resource is Appendix 4 – “Suggested Feasibility Criteria.” It is intended for use in Steps 2-4 of the Best Practices.
These are some basic suggestions for feasibility criteria to screen potential solar PV sites and determine which to include in the collaborative procurement during the site bundling analysis. These criteria are also intended to be discussed at the solar project workshop and distributed to participants along with the Step 2 Survey in order to guide them on which sites to include. For each collaborative purchase, the feasibility criteria should be reviewed and modified to fit the climate and permitting requirements of the region, as well as the initiative’s target market segment. For example, the preferable minimum square footage should be changed as appropriate for each collaborative purchase before distributing the criteria to participants. This is by no means an exhaustive list. These criteria are useful to identify ideal sites, although other sites may be determined to be viable with additional screening.

Technical Criteria:
1. Exposure - Good sun exposure, preferably south facing. Site gets full sun from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
2. Site Size - Sites will preferably be at least 5,000 square feet of available un-shaded space (rooftop or parking lot) for solar panels. Smaller sites are feasible but will impact project economics.
3. Building Height - Buildings up to 3 stories tall (for occupied buildings; parking garages can be any height). Taller buildings are feasible but will impact project economics.
4. Access to Grid - Existing access to electrical lines that connect to the electrical grid is preferable, as costs to install new meters or lines can be prohibitive.
5. Use - Building expected to be in place for at least 20 years
6. Roof age - Roof age less than 10 years old or plan for replacement as part of the project
7. Roof load capacity - Roof capable of carrying the load of the PV equipment (between three and six pounds per square foot)

Non-Technical Criteria:
1. Organization is willing and able to make the site available for the installation of a PV system
2. Building is owned by the organization
3. For commercial entities, solid business financials are generally recommended to ensure best financing terms if financing is required. Companies will generally be required to show last three years of audited financial statements

An additional note on potential future sites:
If your organization is currently planning the construction of a new facility, consider making it “solar ready”. With little or no additional investment upfront, a solar ready building provides the option to install an optimized solar system at some point in the building’s life without incurring extra costs at that point. The National Renewable Energy Lab’s Solar Ready Buildings Planning Guide is an excellent resource: http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy10osti/46078.pdf