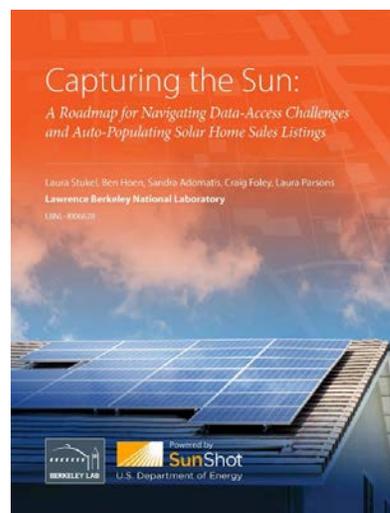


Capturing the Sun: A Roadmap for Navigating Data-Access Challenges and Auto-Populating Solar Home Sales Listings

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Overview

The report, *Capturing the Sun: A Roadmap for Navigating Data-Access Challenges and Auto-Populating Solar Home Sales Listings*, guides readers through a practical and realistic assessment to understand the key challenges and the best path forward to make solar data more available in a local context. Growing consumer demand for solar homes and the increase of inventories to more than a million U.S. homes has enhanced the case for an improved process for listing, valuing, and closing solar photovoltaic (PV) homes.



Background

The “Roadmap” is based on a concept known as *auto-population*, in which data aggregated in one industry is automatically matched with home sale listings in the real estate industry. For example, currently, a home listing may be auto-populated with data on property taxes and school districts.

Auto-populating solar data into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) could vastly increase the quality and quantity of solar data available to real estate agents, appraisers, and consumers, which, in turn, would grow demand for solar homes.

The most significant challenge facing auto-population in this context is access to solar data. Even at a local level, solar data is held by a large and diverse number of entities, and the most comprehensive and useful information is currently private.

Taking this challenge into consideration, the Roadmap identifies crucial first steps to make auto-population happen in local context, such as:

- Building a coalition of individuals to be “Journey Leaders” and “navigators” of an implementation strategy
- Conducting assessments of the available data and the solar and real estate business environments, and determining what access to the data is possible
- Determining which of the three likely pathways (see next page) should be pursued

The Roadmap includes a series of exercises to provide readers a hands-on opportunity to conduct important solar data assessments in their local context (see image at right).

Journey Leader Exercise: Landscape Assessment



As part of the Roadmap, Journey Leaders or other readers should complete a local landscape assessment for each section of the Guidepost. Use these guiding questions as a starting place to complete the worksheet.

Solar Marketplace

- The number of solar homes and how that has changed in the last one to two years
- The density of solar homes compared with all residential homes by ZIP code or town
- The names and contact information of the largest solar installers
- The range of ages and sizes in kWh of installed solar systems
- The frequency of homeowner-owned, TPO, and PACE-financed systems

Implementation Environment

Local MLS: _____ Decision-making model: _____

Size: _____ Training and communication model: _____

Footprint: _____

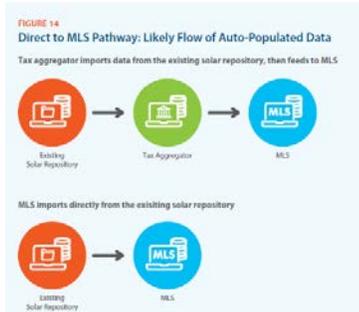
This research was supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative (under DOE contract No. DE-AC02-05C H11231). The SunShot Initiative is a national effort to drive down the cost of solar electricity and support solar adoption. SunShot aims to make solar energy a low cost electricity source for all Americans through research and development efforts in collaboration with public and private partners. Learn more at www.energy.gov/sunshot. The report and recommendations were the product of collaboration between LBNL and an extended team of subject-matter experts from the real estate, appraisal, and solar data industries.



From this foundation, the Roadmap envisions and presents three likely pathways (shown below) toward auto-population of solar data. Completing the assessment exercises will help readers identify the most logical pathway to pursue in their local context.

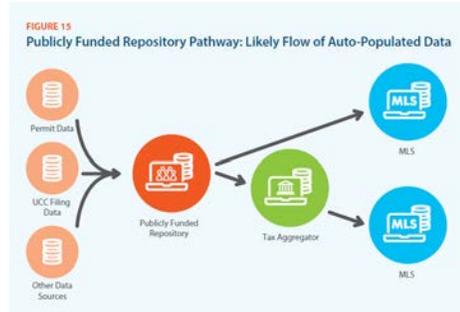
Direct to MLS

Combines public data with private MLS



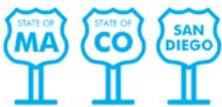
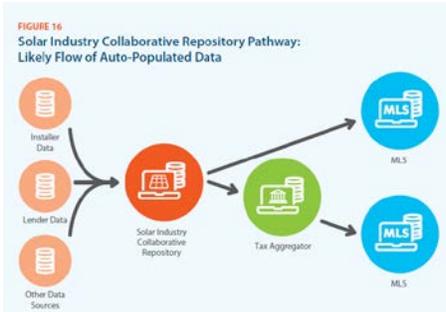
Publically Funded Repository

Built across either multiple data sources or MLS or both



Solar Industry Collaborative Repository

Requires industry collaboration



The three recommended pathways in the Roadmap were informed by real-life teams from San Diego, Massachusetts, and Colorado, who have been exploring their own early auto-population implementation strategies. In locations where data access is a particular hurdle, authors also provide “accelerator” strategies that could be pursued.

The Roadmap identifies general tips for planning a successful auto-population journey, which include:

- Pick the right travel partners from different industries
- Ask key questions early on to prioritize the most feasible local implementation strategy
- Use real estate industry standards to jump-start solar data transfer strategies
- Focus on achievable goals first to gain consumer consent and enable greater future access
- Be prepared for complex technology requirements, such as creating an aggregated data repository

The Roadmap is intended for a “Journey Leader”, likely a solar data advocate, but it will also be valuable to:

- State and local policy makers
- Real estate data aggregators and listing services
- Solar industry professionals
- Real estate industry

Auto-population will improve the overall process for promoting, assessing, and closing on a solar home. It will vastly increase the quality and quantity of data available during the real estate transaction. This may contribute to the establishment of a consensus that a “solar premium” exists in the marketplace, which may help grow demand and investment in renewable energy.

Journey Leaders and readers should not be discouraged by the complex scope of auto-population. The Roadmap is intended as the first step to inform and empower solar data advocates and other partners. It serves as a foundation for early conversations to guide stakeholders through the key questions to ask now to help illuminate the best pathway forward for future success toward an improved process for listing, valuing, and closing solar PV homes.