

## Section 10.03.2. Solar Energy Systems

Subd. 1. **Purpose.** This ordinance permits, as an accessory use, solar energy systems, while protecting the health, safety and welfare of city residents and the property interests of adjacent and surrounding land uses through appropriate zoning and land use controls.

### Subd. 2. **Definitions:**

- A. Building-integrated solar energy system. A solar energy system that is directly incorporated into the building by replacing typical building materials.
- B. Ground-mounted solar energy system. A solar energy system that is installed onto the ground directly or by means of brackets or poles.
- C. Roof-mounted solar energy system. A solar energy system mounted to a house or other building.
- D. Solar energy system. A set of devices whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage and distribution of solar energy for space heating or cooling, electricity generation or water heating.
- E. Solar thermal system. A system that includes a solar collector and a heat exchanger that heats or preheats water for building heating systems or other hot water needs of the building.

### Subd. 3. **Performance Standards**

- A. Permitted accessory use. Solar energy systems are allowed as an accessory use in all zoning districts, subject to the following requirements:

#### 1. Standards

- a) Height. Roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not project beyond the peak of the roof and shall not be more than two (2) feet above the roof surface to which they are attached. EXCEPTION: Low-slope (at or less than 1:12 pitch) roofs may have a roof-mounted solar energy system extending not more than thirty-nine (39) inches above the roof surface, or extending to the height of the roof's parapet, without regard to projection and set back not less than three

- (3) feet from the roof edge. Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height.
- b) Location. Ground-mounted solar energy systems must be located in the side or rear yard only.
  - c) Setbacks. Ground mounted solar energy systems shall be set back the minimum distance required for an accessory structure in the zoning district in which the system is installed.
  - d) Coverage. Roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not cover more than 80 percent of the total area of the roof. Solar energy systems must have three (3) feet of clearance around all edges to facilitate emergency responder access.
  - e) Feeder Lines. All power exterior electrical or other service lines must be buried below the surface of the ground.
  - f) Exemption. Building-integrated solar energy systems are exempt from the requirements of this section and shall be regulated as any other building element.

## 2. Safety

- a) Compliance with building/zoning codes. All solar energy systems shall comply with the Minnesota Building Code and any local building and/or zoning code requirements.
- b) Compliance with electric code. All solar energy systems shall comply with the National Electrical Code.
- c) Compliance with plumbing code. All solar thermal systems shall comply with the Minnesota State Plumbing Code.
- d) Certifications. Solar energy system components shall be certified by Underwriters Laboratories Inc. and the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation. The city reserves the right to deny a building permit for proposed solar energy systems deemed to have inadequate certification.

## 3. Approval

- a) Permits. The erection, alteration, improvement, reconstruction, and/or movement of a solar energy system requires a building permit from the city.

b) Utility Notification. The owner of a solar energy system that will physically connect to a house or other building's electrical system and/or the electric utility grid must enter into a signed interconnection/power purchase/standby agreement with the utility prior to the issuance of a building permit.

4. Abandonment

a) If the solar energy system remains nonfunctional or inoperative for more than twelve consecutive months, the system shall constitute a public nuisance. The owner shall obtain a demolition permit and remove the abandoned system at their expense. Removal includes the entire structure, including collector, mount, and transmission equipment.

5. Easements

a) It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to secure any desired solar easement to protect solar access for the system (per Minnesota Statutes Section 500.30).

6. Aesthetics. All solar energy systems shall use colors that blend with the color of the roof or other structure. Reflection angles from collector surfaces shall be oriented so as not to interfere with the use and enjoyment of other properties. Where necessary, screening may be required to address glare.

Source: Ord. 757-2<sup>nd</sup> Series  
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