

## Accessory Solar and Small Solar Facilities

### Accessory Solar Energy System.

A system which is used for the production of electricity from energy collected by the sun including solar energy collectors, power generation facilities, facilities for storing and transforming energy, and any other appurtenant facilities, which is designed to supply power to principal use(s) on the lot.

Each lot may include a solar energy system designed to supply power to the principal use(s) on the lot. A solar energy system that cannot meet all the following standards requires review and approval through the Public Site Plan Review process. An accessory solar energy system must meet the following standards:

#### Building-mounted system:

- a. The system components must be mounted as flush to roof or structure as practicable.
- b. A building-mounted system may exceed the zoning district maximum height by no more than five (5) feet.

#### Ground-mounted system:

- a. The system setbacks are the same as the minimum building setbacks in the underlying zoning district.
- b. The height of the system cannot exceed 15 feet.
- c. The total area of the ground mounted solar energy system cannot exceed ten percent of the lot's net area.  
The ground mounted system may exceed five acres as long as the system is sized for the power consumption of the principal use on the lot.  
(Note: this is in addition to any building mounted solar energy system.)

Accessory Solar Energy Systems are currently deemed use-by-right in every major zoning district in Larimer County aside from the following:

- NR - Natural Resources
- AP- Airport

Small, Building Mounted Solar Energy Facilities are allowed by right in every major zoning district in Larimer County aside from the AP - Airport zoning district.

Small, Ground Mounted Solar energy facilities may be permitted pursuant to approval of an Administrative Special Review Process in every major zoning district aside from the AP - Airport zoning district.

All projects must meet standards outlined within the Larimer Use Code regarding needed setbacks from lot lines, roadways and other features among other requirements. For more information about standards for use-by-right solar projects in Larimer County, please refer to the [Land Use Code](#). For additional information on Land Use Code requirements contact:

On-Call Planner  
970-498-7679

Email: [planning@larimer.org](mailto:planning@larimer.org)

All building permits will be reviewed for compliance with zoning setback requirements and zoning use as designated by the Land Use Code.

### Building Permit

A building permit is required for the installation of solar systems/facilities, ground, roof or wall-mounted either photovoltaic (PV) or solar (SP) panels.

- PV system converting sunlight to electricity.
- PV or SP system used for potable water heating.
- PV or SP system used for space heating or cooling, swimming pool heating, etc.

### Small Solar Energy Facility.

A facility which is used to produce electrical energy from energy collected by the sun including solar energy collectors, power generation facilities, facilities for storing and transforming energy, other appurtenant facilities and any transmission lines, which is developed for the purpose of supplying or distributing electrical energy to users, a customer or customers.

A building-mounted small solar energy facility that meets the following standards is allowed by right:

- a. The system components must be mounted as flush to roof or structure as practicable.
- b. A building mounted system may exceed the zoning district maximum height by 5 feet.

A ground-mounted small solar energy facility in which all components together disturb an area of five (5) or fewer acres requires review and approval through the Public Site Plan review process. *This approval must be obtained prior to submitting a building permit application.*

- a. The facility setbacks are the same as the minimum building setbacks in the underlying zoning district.
- b. The total area of the ground mounted solar energy system cannot exceed fifty percent of the lot's net area.
- c. Power lines must be underground except where the electrical collector wiring is brought together for connection to the transmission or distribution network, adjacent to that network. Proposed transmission facilities must be identified and included as part of the Small Solar Energy Facility project.
- d. A small solar energy facility must be designed to minimize site disturbances. Reestablishment of all disturbed areas, including the construction access, shall maintain the historic drainage patterns and permeable ground cover and must be done to minimize environmental impacts. Temporary and permanent erosion control measures shall be used as necessary to minimize erosion of the site.
- e. A Small Solar Energy Facility application must include an agreement that addresses decommissioning and abandonment of the facility. The agreement must at a minimum provide for reuse or dismantlement of the facility at the owner's expense. Disturbed areas shall be reestablished to historic drainage patterns and ground cover.