

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

Solar energy systems are designed to capture and utilize the energy of the sun to generate electrical power. A solar collection device is the actual materials used to collect solar rays and all associated structural devices needed to support and convert/transmit the energy collected. These devices may be either freestanding or attached to a structure.

I. STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL

A. **Level 1 System** – Defined as roof mounted or building integrated.

- i. Permitted Use in all Districts.
- ii. Solar panels installed in a sloped roof shall not project vertically above the peak of the roof.
- iii. Solar panels attached to a flat roof shall not project vertically more than 10 feet above the roof.
- iv. Solar panels shall not cover more than ½ of wall or roof area.

B. **Level 2 System** – Defined as ground mounted or free standing small scale systems (Under five (5) acres in size).

*Table: Level 2 - Zoning District locations and requirements*

	<b>RR-1,RR2, RRP, SD &amp; OS</b>	<b>R-1, R-2, R-3, MH-1, MH-2, LR, C-1, C-2, I-1 &amp; I-2</b>
<b>Permit</b>	Permitted Use (Zoning Compliance Permit)	Conditional Use
<b>Allowable footprint</b>	Up to 5 Acres	Up to ½ Acre
<b>Requirements</b>	1. Shall comply with all regulations, including ground coverage, height restrictions and setbacks for accessory structures in the district in which they are located.  2. Shall have year round screening along the back panel of the solar collection device(s).	

- C. **Level 3 System** – Defined as systems with a footprint of 5 acres or more, or that do not meet the requirements of a Level 1 or 2 system
- i. Conditional Use in C-1,C-2,I-1,I-2,RRP & OS
  - ii. System shall meet all existing height limit and set back requirements for the district in which they are located, except ground coverage ratios, but in all cases shall be set back at least 100 feet from non-participating property boundaries, excluding any security fencing, poles and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electrical grid.
  - iii. When the Solar Energy System is not accessory to a residential living structure, all mechanical equipment, including any structure for batteries or storage cells, shall be completely enclosed by a minimum 6 foot high fence, with locking gate.

## II. APPLICATION AND GENERAL REGULATIONS

- A. A Zoning Compliance Permit shall be required before installing a Solar Energy System in either Level 1, 2, or 3.
- B. Site Plan Review shall be required for any ground mounted Solar Energy System which is not accessory to a residential living structure.
- i. The site plan shall include all requirements as outlined in article IX and must also include the following.
    - a. Proposed number, location, and spacing of the solar panels, proposed height of the panels, location of access roads and driveways and planned location of all overhead and underground electrical lines connecting panel to the substation.

Part of Forsyth Twp Zoning Ordinance - ARTICLE VII, REGULATIONS

- C. Solar energy systems shall be constructed and operated in compliance with any applicable local, state and federal regulatory requirements.
- D. Solar energy systems shall be constructed and operated in compliance with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines and regulations.
- E. Solar energy systems shall be subject to storm water management, erosion and sediment control best practices and shall obtain required permits from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Transportation and any other required governmental approvals.
- F. The Planning Commission may require landscaping, buffering, screening, or impose other conditions in its discretion to make the solar energy system compatible with nearby land uses.