

CHAPTER 11 DEFINITIONS:

ACCESSORY USE

A subordinate use, which is incidental and customary in connection with the principal building or use and is located on the same zoning lot as the principal building or use.

MAJOR ENERGY FACILITIES

Transmission lines, power plants, and substations; gas processing plants, and related storage areas providing fossil fuels, manufactured gas, or other petroleum derivatives; microwave installations; and pipelines above ground in excess of one (1) mile in length.

POWER PLANT

Any electrical energy generating facility and appurtenant facilities which utilize a substation prior to distribution to a consumer, or any addition thereto, increasing the existing design capacity, except portable generators used in emergency situations and except solar energy systems.

PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE OR USE

The main or primary purpose for which a structure or land is used, and to which all other uses on the property are accessory.

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM

Any device or structural design feature whose primary purpose is to provide daylight for interior lighting or provide for the collection, storage, or distribution of solar energy for space heating, space cooling, electricity generation, or water heating.

Roof-mounted solar energy system: A solar energy system that is structurally mounted to the roof of a building or structure not solely designed to support the solar energy system.

Ground-mounted solar energy system: A solar energy system that is structurally mounted to the ground and is not roof-mounted. Ground-mounted systems include parking lot or parking canopy solar.

UTILITY PRODUCTION OR PROCESSING FACILITY

See “Major Energy Facilities”.

CHAPTER 4 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM, PRINCIPAL

1. Large-scale

a. *Site Plan:* A site plan review is required for large-scale solar energy systems prior to building permit approval. Site Plan documents shall include:

- i. Setback and height limitations;
- ii. Applicable performance standards such as landscaping and screening;
- iii. Property lines and physical features, including roads, for the project site;
- iv. Proposed changes to the landscape of the site, grading, vegetation clearing and planting, exterior lighting, screening vegetation or structures;
- v. Blueprints or drawings of the solar energy system showing the proposed layout of the system, the distance between the proposed solar collector and all property lines, and the tallest finished height of the solar collector;
- vi. Name, address, and contact information for proposed system installer;
- vii. Name, address, phone number and signature of the project proponent, as well as all co-proponents or property owners, if any;
- viii. Zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site;
- ix. Documentation that the owner has submitted notification to the utility company of the customer’s intent to install an interconnected customer-owned generator. Off-grid systems are exempt from this requirement.
- x. Other items as determined by the Director of Community and Economic Development.

b. *Minimum Parcel Area:*

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- i. Ground-mounted solar energy systems: 5 acres;
 - ii. Roof-mounted solar energy systems: no minimum.
- c. *Lot Coverage:* The area covered by ground-mounted solar energy systems, where the ground beneath is permeable or pervious, shall not be included in calculations for lot coverage for purposes of zoning.
- d. *Location:* All solar panels and equipment (excluding fencing, poles, and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall meet the minimum setbacks for the applicable zone district. Additional setbacks may be required to mitigate noise and visual impacts, or to provide for designated road or utility corridors, as identified through the review process.
- e. *Maximum Height:*
- i. Ground-mounted: The height of ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.
 - ii. Roof-mounted: The height of roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the maximum permitted height of the structure type by more than five (5) feet.
- f. *Signage:* Clearly visible warning signs shall be placed on the fence, barrier, or facility perimeter to inform individuals of potential voltage hazards.
- g. *Security:* All solar panels and equipment (excluding poles and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall be totally enclosed by a security fence or wall at least six (6) feet high.
- h. *Visibility:* Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be constructed with required landscaping as described below. A bufferyard shall be required depending on the distance of the solar energy system from the property line.
- i. Landscape Requirements for Ground-mounted solar from property lines:

Distance from Property Line	Bufferyard Name	Required Landscaping
0' and up to 50'	S-B	Fifteen (15) foot minimum bufferyard width with one (1) ornamental tree and ten (10) shrubs per twenty (20) linear feet. *
More than 50' and up to 150'	S-A	Ten (10) foot minimum bufferyard width with one (1)

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		ornamental tree and 10 shrubs per forty (40) linear feet. *
More than 150'	None	None

*Where a property has an existing solid screen fence on the property line, a buffer may not be required as determined by the Director of Community and Economic Development.

- i. *Fire Code:* The solar energy system shall conform to all requirements of the currently adopted fire code.
- j. *Lighting:* If lighting is provided at the site, lighting shall be shielded and downcast such that the light does not spill onto the adjacent parcel. Motion sensor control is preferred.
- k. *Decommissioning:* Any solar energy system which has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned shall be removed. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify the Adams County Community & Economic Development Department by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of:
 - i. Physical removal of all solar energy systems, structures, and equipment from the site.
 - ii. Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
 - iii. For ground-mounted solar energy systems, stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. Adams County may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.

2. Medium-Scale

- a. *Site Plan:* A site plan review is required for medium-scale solar energy systems prior to building permit approval. Site Plan documents shall include:
 - i. Setback and height limitations;
 - ii. Applicable performance standards such as landscaping and screening;

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- iii. Property lines and physical features, including roads, for the project site;
 - iv. Proposed changes to the landscape of the site, grading, vegetation clearing and planting, exterior lighting, screening vegetation or structures;
 - v. Blueprints or drawings of the solar energy system showing the proposed layout of the system, the distance between the proposed solar collector and all property lines, and the tallest finished height of the solar collector;
 - vi. Name, address, and contact information for proposed system installer;
 - vii. Name, address, phone number and signature of the project proponent, as well as all co-proponents or property owners, if any;
 - viii. Zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site;
 - ix. Documentation that the owner has submitted notification to the utility company of the customer's intent to install an interconnected customer-owned generator. Off-grid systems are exempt from this requirement.
- b. *Minimum Parcel Area:*
- i. Ground-mounted solar energy systems: 0.5 acres;
 - ii. Roof-mounted solar energy systems: no minimum.
- c. *Lot coverage:* The area covered by ground-mounted solar energy systems, where the ground beneath is permeable or pervious, shall not be included in calculations for lot coverage for purposes of zoning.
- d. *Location:* All solar panels and equipment (excluding fencing, poles, and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall meet the minimum accessory structure setbacks for the applicable zone district or shall meet the minimum structure setbacks for the applicable zone district when an accessory structure setback is not specified. Additional setbacks may be required to mitigate noise and visual impacts, or to provide for designated road or utility corridors, as identified through the review process.
- e. *Maximum Height:*
- i. Ground-mounted: The height of ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be measured from the highest grade below each

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solar panel. Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.

- ii. Roof-mounted: The height of roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the maximum permitted height of the structure type by more than five (5) feet.
- iii. Parking Lot or Parking Canopy: The height of systems will be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. Parking lot cover solar panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Parking lot cover solar panels shall be no less than fourteen (14) feet in height to allow clearance for emergency vehicles.
- f. *Signage*: Clearly visible warning signs shall be placed on the fence, barrier, or facility perimeter to inform individuals of potential voltage hazards.
- g. *Security*: Except parking lot or parking canopy solar systems, all ground-mounted solar panels and equipment (excluding poles and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall be totally enclosed by a security fence or wall at least six (6) feet high.
- h. *Visibility*: Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be constructed with required landscaping as described below. A bufferyard shall be required depending on the distance of the solar energy system from the property line.
 - i. Landscape Requirements for Ground-mounted solar from property lines:

Distance from Property Line	Bufferyard Name	Required Landscaping
0' and up to 50'	S-B	Fifteen (15) foot minimum bufferyard width with one (1) ornamental tree and ten (10) shrubs per twenty (20) linear feet. *
More than 50' and up to 150'	S-A	Ten (10) foot minimum bufferyard width with one (1) ornamental tree and 10 shrubs per forty (40) linear feet. *
More than 150'	None	None

*Where a property has an existing solid screen fence on the property line, a buffer may not be required as determined by the Director of Community and Economic Development.

- i. *Lighting:* If lighting is provided at the site, lighting shall be shielded and downcast such that the light does not spill onto the adjacent parcel. Motion sensor control is preferred.
- j. *Decommissioning:* Any solar energy system which has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned shall be removed. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify the Adams County Community & Economic Development Department by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of:
 - i. Physical removal of all solar energy systems, structures, and equipment from the site.
 - ii. Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
 - iii. Stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. Adams County may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.

3. Small-Scale

- a. *Site Plan:* A site plan shall be submitted with the building permit which demonstrates compliance with setback and height requirements.
- b. *Minimum Parcel Area:*
 - i. Ground-mounted solar energy systems: no minimum;
 - ii. Roof-mounted solar energy systems: no minimum.
- c. *Lot Coverage:* The area covered by ground-mounted solar energy systems, where the ground beneath is permeable or pervious, shall not be included in calculations for lot coverage for the purposes of zoning.
- d. *Setback:* Ground-mounted solar energy systems (excluding fencing, poles, and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall meet the minimum accessory structure setbacks for the applicable zone district or shall meet the minimum structure setbacks for the applicable zone district when an accessory structure setback is not specified.

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- e. *Maximum Height:*
 - i. *Ground-mounted:* The height of ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. In residential zone districts, solar panels shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height. In all other zone districts, solar panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.
 - ii. *Roof-mounted:* The height of roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the maximum permitted height of the structure type by more than five (5) feet.
 - iii. *Parking Lot or Parking Canopy:* The height of systems will be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. Parking lot cover solar panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Parking lot cover solar panels shall be no less than fourteen (14) feet in height to allow clearance for emergency vehicles.
- f. *Decommissioning:* Any solar energy system which has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned shall be removed. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify the Adams County Community & Economic Development Department by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of:
 - i. Physical removal of all solar energy systems, structures, and equipment from the site.
 - ii. Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
 - iii. Stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. Adams County may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM, ACCESSORY

1. *Site Plan:* A site plan shall be submitted with the building permit which demonstrates compliance with setback and height requirements.
2. *Lot coverage:* The area covered by ground-mounted solar energy systems, where the ground beneath is permeable or pervious, shall not be included in calculations for lot coverage for purposes of zoning.

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3. *Location:* All solar panels and equipment (excluding fencing, poles, and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall meet the minimum accessory structure setbacks for the applicable zone district or shall meet the minimum structure setbacks for the applicable zone district when an accessory structure setback is not specified. Additional setbacks may be required to mitigate noise and visual impacts, or to provide for designated road or utility corridors, as identified through the review process.
4. *Maximum Height:*
 - a. *Ground-mounted:* The height of ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. In residential zone districts, solar panels shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height. In all other zone districts, solar panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.
 - b. *Roof-mounted:* The height of roof-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the maximum permitted height of the structure type by more than five (5) feet.
 - c. *Parking Lot or Parking Canopy:* The height of systems will be measured from the highest grade below each solar panel. Parking lot cover solar panels shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Parking lot cover solar panels shall be no less than fourteen (14) feet in height to allow clearance for emergency vehicles.
5. *Signage:* For ground-mounted solar energy systems, clearly visible warning signs shall be placed on the fence, barrier, or facility perimeter to inform individuals of potential voltage hazards.
6. *Security:* Except parking lot or parking canopy solar systems, all ground-mounted solar panels and equipment (excluding poles and wires necessary to connect to facilities of the electric utility) shall be totally enclosed by a security fence or wall at least six (6) feet high.
7. *Lighting:* If lighting is provided at the site, lighting shall be shielded and downcast such that the light does not spill onto the adjacent parcel. Motion sensor control is preferred.
8. *Decommissioning:* Any solar energy system which has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned shall be removed. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify the Adams County Community & Economic Development Department by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of:

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- i.* Physical removal of all solar energy systems, structures, and equipment from the site.
- ii.* Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
- iii.* Stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. Adams County may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.

CHAPTER 3 USE TABLES:

Zone District	Permitted (P), Conditional (C), or Prohibited (-)
A-1	-
A-2	C
A-3	P
R-E	-
R-1-C	-
R-2	-
R-3	-
R-4	-
M-H	-
C-0	-
C-1	-
C-2	-
C-3	-
C-4	C
C-5	C
I-1	C
I-2	C
I-3	C

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CO	-
PL	-

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