

Zoning and Permitting for SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

The installation of solar energy systems must be permitted by the Development Services Department.

First, check to see if your solar energy system permit qualifies for [expedited review](#)...

If so, you do not need any separate zoning review.

If your solar energy system project does not qualify, please follow the formal permitting process.

View the [Building Permit Submittal Checklist](#).

As a part of the permitting process, your submittal will undergo a **zoning review**. This review will also determine if the property is subject to **historic guidelines**. This document will provide helpful information for the zoning review process.

You can also visit the Mayor's Office of Sustainability webpage for [Solar Initiatives](#) to learn more about solar in the City of West Palm Beach.

What type of use is your proposed solar energy system?

- *Solar as a Primary Use*—the use of an energy product, primarily off-site
- *Solar as an Accessory Use*—the use of an energy product, primarily on-site (building integrated, rooftop, ground-mounted)
- **Note:** both primary and accessory uses will be reviewed by Planning and Zoning as a part of the formal permit review process

Solar as a Primary Use:

Zoning for solar as a primary use will consider which category the project fits within. There are three categories based on the Florida Public Service Commission:

Primary Use Tier	Wattage	Size	Description	Zoning
Tier 1	10 kw	One household	Usually a community demonstration project	Permitted by right
Tier 2	10 kw-100kw	Ten homes	Feasible for providing off-site energy	Require more notification and application requirements based on the tier and zoning district capability See Sec. 94-273
Tier 3	100kw-2mw	Two hundred homes	Feasible for providing off-site energy	Require more notification and application requirements based on the tier and zoning district capability See Sec. 94-273

Solar as an Accessory Use:

The accessory use of solar is permitted by right in all zoning districts. However, specific requirements apply based on the type of accessory use as seen below:

Accessory Use Type	Specific Zoning Requirements
Rooftop system (sloped roof)	Installed flush no more than 12 inches above the roof; may not extend past roof peaks
Rooftop system (flat roof)	May extend maximum of 6 feet past the roof
Ground-mounted system (general)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum height of 25' • Requires screening from ROW • Should be located in side, corner, or rear yards
Ground-mounted system (pole mounted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum height of 25' • Does not require screening • Should be located in side, corner, or rear yards