

PZD-1a: Review zoning requirements and identify restrictions that intentionally or unintentionally prohibit solar PV development. Compile findings in a memo. (Required)

To assist your community, the national solar experts at SolSmart have conducted a review of your community’s zoning code to assess possible barriers (i.e. height restrictions, set-back requirements, etc.) and gaps related to solar PV development. Below, please find the outcome of their review. By reading the narrative, reviewing the example code language provided, and signing the statement at the bottom of the page, your community will satisfy PZD-1a and be one step closer to achieving SolSmart designation.

Potential barriers in current code language

Section(s)	Element	Reviewer Comments	Example(s) from other codes	Priority level
	Ex. Setbacks, Height Restrictions, Definition, etc.			
9-101(C)(13)(a)	Glare/Reflection	<p>The zoning ordinance states that “each solar panel must be located so it does not reflect light onto abutting residential lots.” Solar panels are designed to absorb, not reflect sunlight. Glare restrictions are considered to be inconsistent with solar best practices.</p> <p>The best practice is for glare regulations to only be applicable when the FAA regulations or rules kick in for projects on or around airports.</p>	<p>Most permissive option: N/A</p> <p>Less permissive option: “For solar farms located within 500 feet of an airport or within approach zones of an airport, the applicant must complete the provided results of the Solar Glare Hazard Analysis Tool (SGHAT) for the Airport Traffic Control Tower cab and final approach paths, consistent with the Interim Policy, FAA Review of Solar Energy Projects on Federally Obligated Airports, or most recent version adopted by the FAA.” (Grow Solar Illinois Toolkit)</p>	Low (Glare policies are considered restrictive. Not only is the causation of glare hard to prove, but PV systems are designed to absorb radiation, not reflect it.)
9-101(C)(13)(b)	Height	<p>The zoning ordinance does not permit solar energy systems to be exceed the maximum roof height.</p> <p>It is a best practice to either exempt solar energy systems from height limits or permit</p>	<p>Most permissive option: “For a roof-mounted system installed on a flat roof, the highest point of the system shall be permitted to exceed the district’s height limit of up to fifteen (15) feet above the rooftop to which it is attached.” (Renewable Energy Ordinance)</p>	Medium (Allowing the solar energy system to exceed the district’s maximum height limit is critical, especially to allow for solar

		<p>solar energy systems to exceed the maximum building height in all applicable districts. For buildings that are already built to the maximum height limit – especially buildings with flat roofs - this may limit their ability to install solar. This is particularly critical on flat buildings, because solar installations on these structures are typically done at an angle to maximize system efficiency (generally at the same angle as the latitude at which the system is installed). Therefore, additional height is often necessary.</p>	<p><u>Framework, DVRPC)</u></p> <p>Less permissive option: Municipalities can be more restrictive than this, though it is not recommended that they limit to less than six (6) feet above the rooftop surface.” (<u>Renewable Energy Ordinance Framework, DVRPC)</u></p>	<p>energy systems to be installed where buildings may have already met the maximum building height. It is also important for system efficiency, as discussed in the column to the left.)</p>
9-101(C)(13)(c)	Aesthetics /Visibility	<p>The zoning ordinance stipulates that “No solar panel may be mounted facing or within a 60-degree angle of the front lot line.” While the ordinance does contain an exception for situations where the front lot line is the southernly lot line, it is not a best practice to restrict the visibility or placement of a solar energy system.</p>	<p>Most permissive option: N/A</p> <p>Less permissive option: Current language in</p>	<p>Medium (Limiting solar energy systems from being seen from the public right-of-way is not a best practice. It can limit locating a solar energy system where it is most efficient which can decrease a system’s viability.).</p>

Potential gaps in current code language

Element	Reviewer Comments	Example(s) from other codes	Priority level
Ex. Setbacks, Height Restrictions, Definition, etc.			
Setbacks	It is a best practice to allow ground-mounted solar energy systems a modest encroachment into the setback.	More permissive option: (1) Small- and medium-scale ground-mounted solar energy systems accessory to principal use may be located no closer	Low (The Village may want to consider reducing the setback

		<p>than [1/2 of the setback that would otherwise apply] from the front, side or rear lot line. All ground-mounted solar energy systems in residential districts shall be installed either in the side yard or rear yard to the extent practicable (Massachusetts Dept. of Energy Resources, <u>Model Zoning for the Regulation of Solar Energy Systems</u>)</p> <p>Less permissive option: (2) Small- and medium-scale ground-mounted solar energy systems accessory to a principal use may be located no closer than [twenty (20) feet] from the front, side or rear lot line. All ground-mounted solar energy systems in residential districts shall be installed either in the side yard or rear yard to the extent practicable. (Massachusetts Dept. of Energy Resources, <u>Model Zoning for the Regulation of Solar Energy Systems</u>)</p>	<p>requirements for solar energy systems and/or allow them to encroach reasonably into the setback so that they can receive adequate sunlight to make them efficient.)</p>

Additional notes

I, _____, as _____ of _____, _____, have received the zoning review and read its findings.

Signature _____

Date _____

