

YOUR RIGHTS: Solar Energy Systems

Did you know...?

Solar energy systems are allowed as an accessory use in all zoning districts in the City of Lakeland. However, you do need a permit to install a photovoltaic panel system and it must meet minimum safety standards.

The right to solar is in Lakeland’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) ...



Policy FLU-1.14C: The City will continue to pursue energy efficiency programs within its management of the Lakeland Electric utility including smart grid technology, solar water heating, solar energy, energy efficient construction standards consistent with the Florida Building Code, and LDC incorporated incentives for pursuit of green building certifications.

Policy FLU-1.14D: The City shall not prohibit the appropriate placement of photovoltaic (solar) panels or comparable technology.

And in Article 5 of Lakeland’s [Land Development Code](#) ...

5.21.1 SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

5.21.1.1 Intent

It is the intent of this section to establish standards for solar energy systems as an accessory use to any principal use in all zoning districts.

5.21.1.2 Definitions

Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System: A solar energy system in which the components that collect solar energy are placed on freestanding supports, masts or poles on the ground.

Rooftop Solar Energy System: A solar energy system in which the components that collect solar energy are placed on the roof of a building or structure. Ancillary equipment used for the purposes of storing solar energy or converting the solar energy to electricity may be located on the ground.

Solar Energy System: A set of components that can collect, store and convert solar energy for the purpose of providing electric generation, water heating, pool/spa heating, space heating or space cooling as an accessory use to a permitted principal use. This definition allows for net metering of any surplus energy to an electric utility provider. A rooftop solar energy system as defined by this section shall allow for the interconnection of the system with an electric utility provider whereby all or part of the electric power that is produced is consumed off-site and is distributed and sold by the electric utility provider.

5.21.1.3 Specific Standards

a. Residential Districts

Solar energy systems shall be permitted as an accessory use in all residential zoning districts and within any Planned Unit Development that allows residential uses, subject to the provisions in this section.

1. Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems.

Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be installed in accordance with the setbacks of principal buildings and within required side yards and rear yards subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Minimum street side setback: 20 feet
- (b) Minimum interior or rear setback: 5 feet
- (c) Maximum height: 10 feet
- (d) Ground-mounted solar systems are prohibited within front yards except where the lot depth allows for the placement of the solar system a minimum of 100' from the front lot line.

2. Rooftop Solar Energy Systems.

Rooftop solar energy systems shall be installed on principal and accessory structures in accordance with the setback and height limitations of such structures except that the components of the system may exceed the maximum height up to a maximum of 3 feet. In no case shall the solar energy system extend more than 3 feet above the roof or, when placed on a pitched (gable, hip and gambrel) roof, cover more than 50 percent of the roof area of the structure.

b. Non-Residential Districts

1. Solar energy systems shall be permitted as an accessory use in all zoning districts that are not residential districts, subject to the provisions in this section.

2. Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be installed in accordance with the setbacks of principal buildings and within required side yards and rear yards subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Minimum interior side and rear setback from non-residential lot line: 15 feet
- (b) Minimum interior side and rear setback from residential lot line: 30 feet
- (c) Minimum street side setback: 30 feet
- (d) Maximum height: 15 feet
- (e) Ground-mounted solar systems are prohibited within front yards except where the lot depth allows for the placement of the solar system a minimum of 100' from the front lot line.

3. Rooftop solar energy systems shall be installed on principal and accessory structures in accordance with the setback and height limitations of such structures except that the components of the system may exceed the maximum height up to a maximum of 5 feet. In no case shall the solar energy system extend more than 5 feet above the roof.

c. Historic Districts and Other Special Districts

Solar energy systems that are installed within a designated local historic district and within the Lakeland Downtown Development Authority special taxing district, shall be subject to design review by the board or authority designated to perform such design review.