CITY OF CORCORAN

SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

ZONING REVIEW APPLICATION PROCESS

All of the following information must be submitted. Once the application has been submitted with the appropriate fees, staff will review for completeness and return a copy of the signed application with any applicable conditions. The applicant will be notified within 15 business days as to whether or not the application is complete. Once the application is deemed complete, the 60-day statutory review period will begin. The City may extend the review period an additional 60 days if necessary to complete the review process.

This handout is intended to provide a summary of the submittal requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to know the applicable land use regulations. Please see the Corcoran City Code for a complete, detailed listing of requirements. Solar Energy System requirements can be found in Section 1060.110. If you have any questions about these requirements, please contact City Hall to speak with the Planning Staff.

Types of Solar Energy Systems (SES):

- Roof Mounted / Building Mounted
- Building Integrated
- Ground Mounted

Roof/Building Mounted Systems:

1. Zoning Review
   - ☐ a. The following materials are required for a Certificate of Compliance from the Planning and Zoning Department:
     - ☐ i. Completed Land Use Application.
     - ☐ ii. Site layout (with existing buildings and proposed SES locations).
     - ☐ iii. Spec Sheet (including surface type and wiring method).
     - ☐ iv. A completed glare study analysis *(alternatively if surface has not been treated with an anti- glare treatment)*.
2. Building Department Review
   - a. Once a Certificate of Compliance letter has been issued from the Zoning Department, the applicant may proceed to the Building Permit process.
     - ☐ i. Visit www.corcoranmn.gov and click 'Apply for Permit.'
     - ☐ ii. Create an Account or sign into an existing account.
     - ☐ iii. Once account has been linked, proceed with the steps found within the online permit portal. *(Be sure to attach the Certificate of Compliance letter received from the Zoning Review at the '*Step 5: Add Attachments'* page)*

Building Integrated Systems:

1. Building Department Review
   - ☐ a. Visit www.corcoranmn.gov and click 'Apply for Permit.'
   - ☐ b. Create an Account or sign into an existing account.
   - ☐ c. Once account has been linked, proceed with the steps found within the online permit portal.

Ground Mounted Systems:

This type of Solar Energy system is broken down into two categories: Residential & Non-residential.

If the footprint of the Solar Energy System causes the total accessory structure footprint of the property to exceed the allowed amount, a Conditional Use Permit shall be required (contact the Planning & Zoning Department for more information on allowed accessory structure footprint and the Conditional Use Permit application process).

- Residential
  - a. Residential uses of ground mounted systems require a Certificate of Compliance approval. The following materials are required for a Certificate of Compliance application:
    - ☐ i. Completed Land Use Application.
    - ☐ ii. Site layout (system location, setbacks from all property lines and existing buildings)
    - ☐ iii. Spec Sheet (including SES height, surface type, wiring method, etc).
    - ☐ iv. Landscaping Plan that includes a minimum of all of the following:
      - ☐ • Mix of pollinator and native groundcover beneath panel arrays
      - ☐ • 1 tree per 15 lineal feet of security fence or lot line.
      - ☐ • 1 shrub per 10 lineal feet of security fence or lot line.
    - ☐ v. A completed glare study analysis (alternatively, plans may indicate a surface type that has been treated with an anti-glare coating).
- Non-Residential
  - a. Non-Residential uses of ground mounted systems require Site Plan approval. Contact the Planning and Zoning Department for more information on the Site Plan application process.

This handout is intended to provide a *summary* of the submittal requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to know the applicable land use regulations. Please see the Corcoran City Code for a complete, detailed listing of requirements. Solar Energy System requirements can be found in Section 1060.110 of the Zoning Ordinance. Certificate of Compliance requirements can be found in Section 1070.065 of the Zoning Ordinance. Conditional Use Permit procedures can be found in Section 1070.020 of the Zoning Ordinance. Site Plan requirements can be found in Section 1070.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.

1060.110 – SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

Subd. 1. Findings.

The intent of this Section is to allow reasonable capture and use, by households, businesses, and property owners of their solar energy resource, and encourage the development of renewable energy businesses, consistent with community development standards. This is consistent with Chapter 4, Section 8 of the Corcoran 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which states that the "City of Corcoran will protect [solar] access by requiring minimum standards for lot sizes, amounts of open space, yard setbacks, and maximum height of buildings for urban residents that create the opportunity for all building owners to develop solar energy facilities if desired."

The general purpose of this subsection is to regulate the placement, construction and modification of solar energy systems in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, while not unreasonably interfering with the development of the solar energy systems in the City. Specifically, the purposes of this Ordinance are:

A. To regulate the location of solar energy systems.

B. To protect residential areas and land uses from potential adverse impacts of solar energy systems.

C. To minimize adverse visual impacts of solar energy systems and facilities through design, siting, landscaping, and screening.

D. To avoid adverse impacts to adjacent properties caused by solar energy systems by ensuring that those structures are soundly and carefully designed, constructed, modified, maintained and promptly removed when no longer used.

E. To ensure that solar energy systems are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Subd. 2. Development of Solar Energy Systems.

A. Solar Energy Systems shall be permitted in the City of Corcoran according to Table 1 of this section.

Table 1 – Types of Solar Energy Systems			
Type	**District**	**Application Required**	**Special standards**
Building Integrated SES	All Districts	Building Permit	Building-integrated Solar Energy Systems are subject to all required setback, land use, and performance standards for the district in which the building is located.
Building or Roof Mounted SES	All Districts	Certificate of Compliance	Non-residential rooftop systems may be pitched at an angle greater than 5% and shall be screened from the adjacent public right-of-way and adjacent residential structures.
Accessory Ground Mounted Solar Energy Systems	UR, RR	Certificate of Compliance for Residential Uses; Site Plan required for non-residential uses; CUP as required by Section 1030.020, Subd. 4, E	Panel coverage shall conform to the accessory building size requirements of Section 1030.020, Subd. 4, E., except: 1. The total footprint shall be calculated as the area of the solar collector surface. 2. The maximum solar panel coverage allowed for parcels over 10 acres is 3,969 feet.

Subd. 3. General Standards

A. Solar energy systems shall conform to the following standards:

1. **Building Permit.** A building permit shall be required for the erection of solar energy system. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the operator must provide evidence of an agreement with the local utility. Off-grid systems less than 6 square feet in size, such as accent lighting

systems, power supply for traffic control systems, powering a water pump for water gardens, telecommunication systems, backup power systems during power outages, etc. shall be exempt from obtaining a building permit.

2. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to secure any solar energy easements, if applicable, to protect solar access for the system (per MN Statute §500.30 as may be amended).

3. SES Systems shall comply with all applicable building, electric, and plumbing codes. Solar energy system components shall be labeled with the manufacturers name and address, model number, and serial number. Electric solar system components that are connected to a building electric system must have an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) listing.

4. **Glare.** All solar arrays or panels shall be installed or positioned so as not to cause any glare or reflective sunlight that results in potential for permanent eye damage onto neighboring properties or structures. Staff may require a glare analysis that demonstrates compliance with this standard, as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the City.

5. **Power and communication lines**. Power and communication lines running between banks of solar panels and to electric substations or interconnections with buildings shall be buried underground, consistent with Section 945.060 (Other Utilities) of the City Code. Exemptions may be granted by the Zoning Administrator in instances where shallow bedrock, water courses, or other elements of the natural landscape interfere with the ability to bury lines.

6. **Setbacks**. Ground mounted solar energy systems must be located a minimum of 100 feet from a residential dwelling unit not located on the property. Ground mounted systems shall meet the minimum accessory building setback for the zoning district.

7. **Height.** Ground mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed 12 feet.

8. **Required landscaping.** All ground-mounted solar energy systems resulting in panel coverage of more than 100 square feet shall provide:

    a. A mix of pollinator and native groundcover mix beneath panel arrays, that provide native perennial vegetation and foraging habitat beneficial to gamebirds, songbirds, and pollinators and reduces stormwater runoff and erosion at the solar generation site, subject to the standards of Minnesota State Statutes §216B.1642.

b. A mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs shall be provided to buffer the panels from adjacent properties and right-of-way and shall meet the following standards:

i. Plant material shall meet the minimum sizing requirements of Section 1060.070 Subd. 2 D (Landscaping, Minimum Size Requirements).

ii. In areas where panels are visible from adjacent properties or public rights-of-way, the applicant shall provide 1 tree per 15 lineal feet of security fence or lot line to be buffered and one shrub per 10 lineal feet of security fence or lot line to be buffered.

iii. Natural looking and effective screening is desired, consequently, exceptions to buffering standards may be granted if the natural landscape provides screening from adjacent public right of ways and neighboring properties.

9. **Erosion and sediment control** shall meet the requirements of Section 950 of the City Code.

Subd. 4. Application Requirements

A. Persons desiring to construct a solar energy system shall submit an application according to the standards of Table 1 of Subd. 2 (A). Applicants shall also submit the following materials:

B. Glare Study. If required by the Zoning Administrator, the applicant shall submit a glare study that analyzes glare from the adjacent right of way and adjacent residential properties using the Solar Glare Hazard Analysis Tool from Sandia National Laboratories or an equivalent tool.

Subd. 5. Home Owners Association

All new residential developments may create provisions for solar use within the homeowners owners association documents.

(Ord. 328, passed 08-25-16, Ord 355, passed 09-28-17, Ord. 376, passed 08-23-18, Ord. 383, passed 10-25-18)