



Small-Scale Solar



Learn more at:
www.townofbethlehem.org/940/Zoning-Update

! Expansion of solar energy use is a priority identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Bethlehem Forward recommends **expanding all scales of solar energy use** as part of its goal to create "Harmony with Nature." Expansion of solar energy will reduce our dependence on non-renewable resources and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. Solar energy expansion is also a critical factor in achieving New York State's Clean Energy Standard (CES), which requires that, by 2030, 70% of New York's electricity must come from renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

What is small-scale solar?

Small-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) systems have a capacity of 25kW or less and generate no more than 110% of the kWh's of electricity consumed over the previous 12-month period by on-site users (e.g. the system generates electricity only for the uses located on the same lot as the system).

Small-scale solar installations can include: building-mounted solar PV systems (such as rooftop solar installations), building-integrated solar PV systems (which design solar installations into building elements like facades, windows, and roofs), and ground-mounted solar PV systems (which are installed on the ground and not attached to any other structure).

Small-scale solar installations have many advantages. They can fit into urban landscapes or be attached to buildings, do not need dedicated lands, and are comparatively easier to install than large-scale systems while also creating more job opportunities than utility-scale solar. For home- and property-owners, small-scale solar is a low-risk, long-term investment that will reduce monthly utility bills, increase home and property values, and provide a steady return on investment.

? We Want to Hear From You!

Should changes be made to the Town's existing small-scale solar regulations?

As a means to encourage and promote the installation of solar PV systems, the Town of Bethlehem permits small-scale solar installations as an accessory use in all zoning districts.

Depending on the type of installation, small-scale solar is subject to certain location restrictions as well as special use permit and site plan review.

The specific requirements for various small-scale solar configurations are identified in the boxes at right and below.



Maximize solar orientation.

Rooftop solar is permitted in all zoning districts.

Should new subdivisions be designed to have a layout that maximizes rooftop exposure to the sun?

Yes! Place a dot in this box. **No!** Place a dot in this box.



Rear/side-yard ground-mounted solar.

Ground-mounted systems in a rear or side yard require a special use permit and site plan review (observing a 10 ft setback).

Should ground-mounted systems be allowed by-right?

Yes! Place a dot in this box. **No!** Place a dot in this box.



Front yard ground-mounted solar.

Ground-mounted systems located in front yards are currently prohibited.

Should ground-mounted solar be permitted in front yards?

Yes! Place a dot in this box. **No!** Place a dot in this box.



Carport solar canopies.

Solar PV systems covering parking facilities currently require special use permit and site plan approvals.

Should carport solar canopies be allowed by-right?

Yes! Place a dot in this box. **No!** Place a dot in this box.



Building-integrated solar.

Solar PV systems designed into the architectural or structural elements of a building are allowed by-right up to 25 kW.

Should building-integrated solar systems over 25 kW be permitted within the Town? (This may be considered with large-scale solar).

Yes! Place a dot in this box. **No!** Place a dot in this box.

? Are there other elements of small-scale solar the Town should consider for regulation? *Use a post-it or comment card to share your thoughts!*