

Memorandum

TO: City Council
FROM: Allison Eddins , Senior planner
DATE: February 18, 2025
SUBJECT: Text amendment to Sections 101.2 and 107.67 of the Shoreview Municipal Code related to Solar Arrays
ITEM NUMBER: 10.a
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

To approve Ordinance No. 1049, and ordinance summary for publication, for the amendments to Sections 101.2 and 107.67 of the Shoreview Municipal Code in order to create a definition for *ground mounted solar array* and standards for ground mounted solar arrays in the R1 - Detached Residential zoning district.

INTRODUCTION

As solar energy systems have become more efficient and less costly, Shoreview is anticipating an increasing interest from property owners. Roof mounted solar systems are already popular and are currently regulated with building and electrical permits. Certain buildings, however, are not suitable for roof mounted solar systems due to factors like roof condition, excessive shade from nearby trees or buildings, roof orientation or complex roof design. For situations like this, ground mounted solar is a viable alternative. Due to the potential size of a ground mounted solar array (some can be up to 10 feet in height), city staff is proposing a text amendment that would regulate the placement of this type of energy system similar to an accessory building.

The proposed ordinance would establish a definition for ground mounted solar arrays and would restrict the installation of ground mounted solar arrays in front yards of non-riparian lots in the R1 zoning district without a variance. City staff used the [Minnesota Solar Model Ordinance](#) from the Great Plains Institute as a guide for crafting the proposed text amendment.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Text Amendments

Section 101.2 Definitions

Ground mounted solar array means a solar energy system mounted on a support system that rests or is attached to the ground. Ground mounted systems must be accessory to the principle use.

Section 107.67 Detached Residential District (R1) - (proposed text is red and underlined and text proposed for removal is ~~stricken~~)

(e) Required Conditions. In addition to the conditions of section 107-65 (d), the following conditions apply:

(8) No ground mounted solar arrays shall be located in the front yard of any lot, except for a riparian lot which shall comply with the provisions of section 103-96.

(9)(8) Buildings housing non-domestic animals: 100 feet from all property lines except as permitted by the city's licensing provisions.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

The planning commission held a public hearing on January 28, 2025 to review and make a recommendation on the proposed ordinance. The commission voted 4 to 2 to recommend approval of Ordinance No. 1049.

The commissioners would voted against the motion stated the following reasons for their "no" vote:

- Does not want solar arrays to be allowed in the front yard on riparian lots.
- Wants the city to allow small solar arrays in front yards of R1 lots.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending that the city council adopt Ordinance No. 1049, and ordinance summary for publication, amending Sections 101.2 and 107.67 of the Shoreview Municipal Code in order to create a definition for *ground mounted solar array* and standards for ground mounted solar arrays in the R1 - Detached Residential zoning district.

ATTACHMENTS

[Ordinance 1049](#)

[Ordinance Summary](#)