

TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

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Solar Systems and Panels

The Town supports solar energy sources as abundant, renewable and nonpolluting energy resources that reduce dependence on nonrenewable energy while reducing air and water pollution resulting from fossil fuel-based sources. Previously installations of new solar systems were subject to the Town's Design Review process because panels had the potential for visual impacts if they were not located with sensitivity.

A formal design review process is no longer required. However, the Town hopes that applicants will continue to be sensitive in the placement of panels to not only achieve an efficient system, but to also help preserve the Town's unique residential character.

Building Permits are required for the installation of solar energy systems. Before a Building Permit application is submitted, the Hillsborough Municipal Code requires that homeowners who plan to install solar systems meet with a staff planner to review their preliminary plans and the Town's advisory Design Guidelines which relate to solar panels. Hopefully, working together, an optimum solution for the placement of the system can be determined.

Please keep in mind the following Design Guidelines when designing a system:

- If possible, solar collectors should not be installed on a roof surface that faces the street.
- A solar energy system should not extend beyond the ridge or other edges of the roof.
- Exposed pipes and other material for the system should be of an integral color that does not contrast with the color of the adjacent roof or wall surface. Should integral color not be feasible, it is recommended that the pipes are painted.
- Any tree trimming and/or removal that is performed to make the system more efficient should be kept to a minimum.
- Applicants should consult with neighbor(s) regarding the planned location, size and appearance of the solar panels.
- Unless a hardship exists and a Variance is granted, solar panels should comply with the setback requirements of the Hillsborough Municipal Code and the State Solar Shade Control Act.

Preliminary plans should include:

- A location map showing surrounding properties, including across the street(s), and which neighbors have been contacted about the proposed panels
- A roof plan and/or site plan clearly showing, to scale, the proposed panels and any supporting equipment
- The size, type and location of any trees to be removed or trimmed to facilitate solar access to the system
- Good quality photos of the house and the roofing material
- A manufacturer's brochure showing what the panels look like
- If the panels are ground-mounted, the required setback areas and dimensions to property lines must be identified on the site plan

Please call **650/375-7411** to arrange to meet with a planner for the required review of your plans or with any questions. There is no cost for this plan review and consultation. Although the contractor may be present, the homeowner is required to attend the meeting.