

## Solar Installations in Hallowell

### Current Standards

- Grid-tied solar installations of any size would be classified as a “public utility”. These facilities are conditional uses in R1, R2, R3, RF, BC, and BD. Planning board approval is required.
- Buffering is required between these uses and adjacent lots. If residential lots are adjacent the buffering standard is stricter.
- Our ordinances do not regulate public utilities based on size. No matter how big, they’re treated the same. However, if 3 or more acres of land are disturbed the project will also have to undergo site plan review.
- Our ordinances allow for requiring a performance bond from developers, but don’t require it. These bonds can take several forms, and can be used to ensure that the project is completed as approved and/or for decommissioning/dismantling once the useful life of the project is passed.
- Our fees do not address solar installations since they have no “floor area”. Some municipalities are basing their fees on total kW, number of panels, or other quantifiable items. Fees can quickly get into many thousands of dollars for some projects.
- Residential solar is not addressed in our ordinances at all. These are treated just like adding a heat pump or similar device. We don’t charge a fee for the installation of these, and there is no inspection done. This is because we don’t require local electrical permits or inspections, and we don’t require permits for roofing or reroofing.

### Issues to consider

- Stay with what we have?
- What do our current conditional use and site review standards miss in terms of these projects?
- Create a separate use category for grid-tied solar installations?
- Rework the districts in which such facilities are allowed?
- Require a decommissioning bond or other instrument?
- Create a tiered fee structure based on kW generated? Number of panels? Acreage?
- Develop a fee for residential solar even though we don’t require project reviews or inspections? However, we could require a fee for plan review by the CEO to make sure the installation is done by a licensed contractor and state electrical inspections are done.
- Our ordinances treat the transmission and distribution of power as “essential services”. Do our ordinances provide protection against unsightly transmission lines? Is the relationship/distinction between generation and distribution clear?