

DC-22-0002: Accessory Ground-Mounted Energy Systems

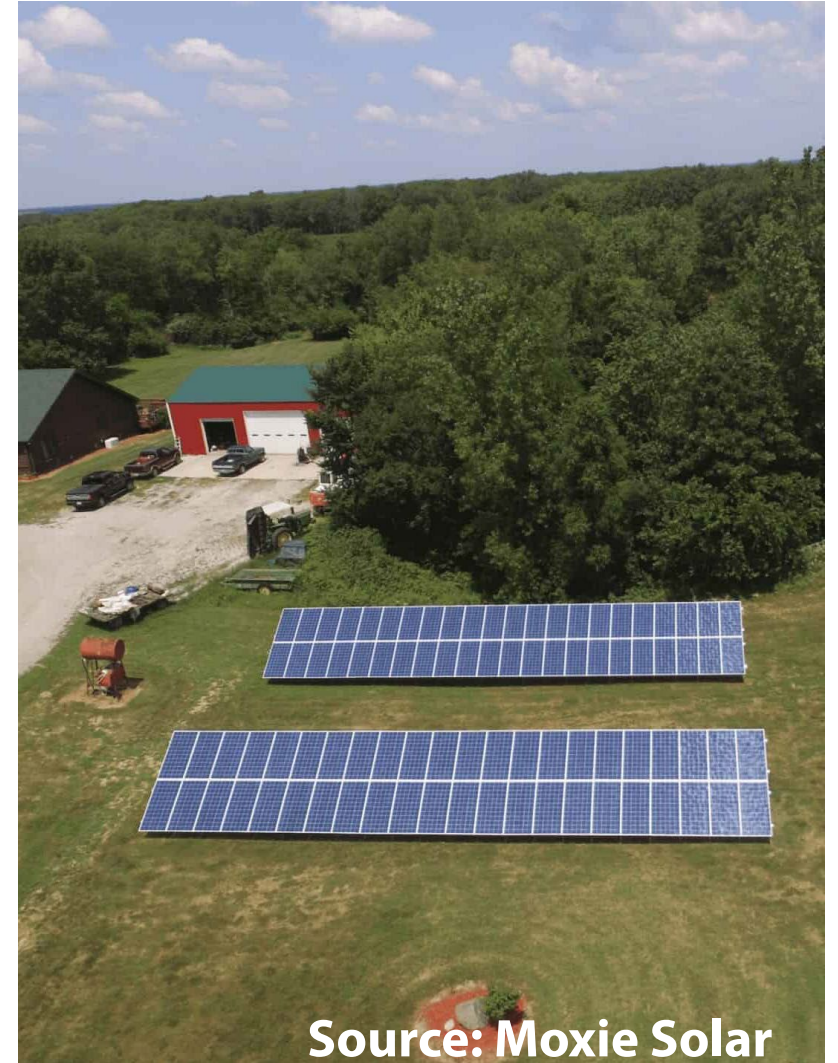


Overview

- Background on ground-mounted solar in Boulder County
- Purpose for the amendment
- Overview on the proposed amendment

background

WHAT IS GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR



GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR IN THE CODE

Two types of uses:

UTILITY

Solar Energy - Ground Mounted System

- A solar energy system mounted on a rack or poles that rests on or is attached to the ground, not including a solar energy system mounted on parking canopies. (4-514.M)
- Energy is used for distribution.

ACCESSORY

Accessory Solar Energy System

- Building-mounted or ground-mounted, and parking canopy solar energy systems primarily designed for serving on-site needs of a Principal Use. (4-516.K)
- Energy is used to serve the needs of the principal use (like a residence).

WHERE IS GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR ALLOWED?

UTILITY

Zoning District	Small < 2.5 acres disturbed area	Medium 2.5 to 10 acres disturbed area	Large 10+ acres disturbed area
MF, MH, MI, SR, H	SPR	Not allowed	Not allowed
A, ER, RR, F	SPR/SU	LU/SU	SU
LI, GI, C, B, T	SPR	SPR	LU

SPR - Site Plan Review

LU - Limited Impact Special Review

SU - Special Use Review

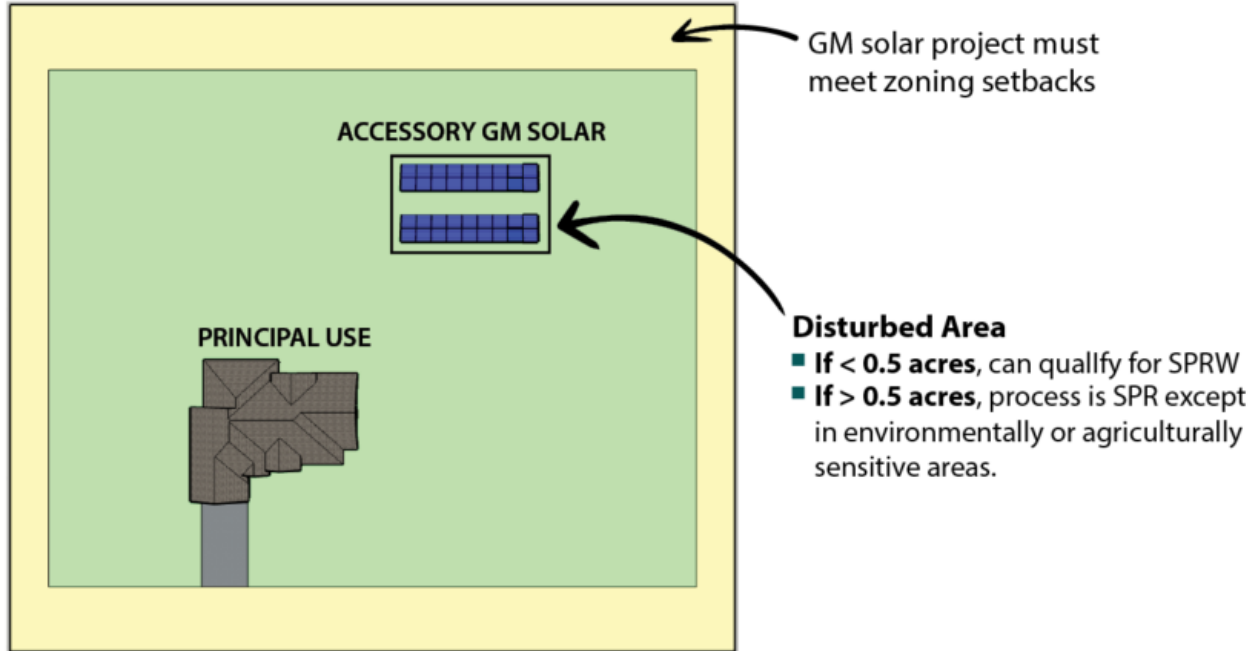
ACCESSORY

- Allowed in all districts by **Site Plan Review** or **Site Plan Review Waiver**, depending on size.
- If the disturbed area is **less than 0.5 acres**, SPR may be waived by the Director.

What is disturbed area?

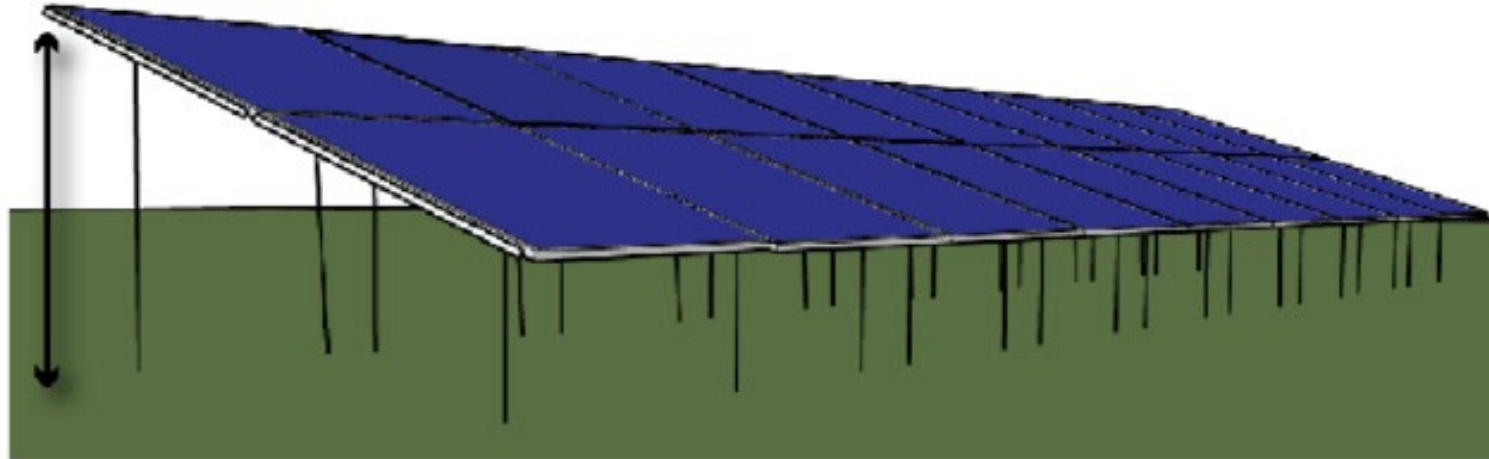
The Code defines disturbed area as "that area of the land's surface disturbed or in any way changed as a result of construction activity, including but not limited to new structures, access and areas used for access or parking during and following the construction process".

RULES FOR ACCESSORY GM SOLAR



Maximum Height: **15'**

*May be taller to accommodate site specific needs, but not taller than **25'***



code amendment

CODE AMENDMENT

GOAL

Update the Land Use Code to reduce the need for SPR/SPRW process for small, accessory ground-mounted solar projects that meet certain parameters.

PURPOSE



Calibrate code language
to reality



Reduce the barriers to
implementing solar energy
projects in the County



Focus planning review
where it is most impactful

CALIBRATING THE CODE

CODE

< 0.5 acres of
disturbed area



REALITY

Median
disturbed
area: 0.03
acres



CALIBRATING THE CODE



CODE

> 0.5 acres of
disturbed area
(21,780 sq ft)

15 ft. maximum
height



REALITY

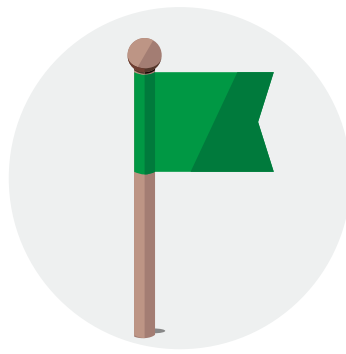
Median
disturbed
area: 0.03
acres (1,307 sq
ft)

Median
height:
8.5 ft

REDUCING BARRIERS

STREAMLINE THE PERMITTING PROCESS

Provide a streamlined process that allow residents to meet their energy requirements, without requiring a planning process



REDUCING BARRIERS

MEETING THE COMP PLAN GOALS



Reducing the barriers to solar installation can help the county meet its goals of **increasing** air quality, **reducing** greenhouse gas emissions and **reducing** resource consumption to **advance** the County's continuing commitment to combating climate change

FOCUSING THE REVIEW

LIMITING IMPACTS

Develop policy to create a streamline review while continuing to limit the negative impacts to environmental resources and visual impacts



DRAFT AMENDMENT

This text amendment creates a new subsection (e) to 4-516k and is intended to create a by-right process for ground-mounted solar arrays



DRAFT AMENDMENT



*The height of the
ground-mounted
system does not
exceed 10 feet in
height*

more than
75% of
approved
systems were
10 ft or less
in height



DRAFT AMENDMENT



The ground-mounted system is located within 100 feet of the principal use ↘

clustering the panels with the structure it will power limits the visual impact to the community, as well as the impacts to natural resources



DRAFT AMENDMENT



*The cumulative panel area
does not exceed 750
square feet*



41% of analyzed
permits were of this size
or smaller

this provision replaces
disturbed area.



DRAFT AMENDMENT

The ground-mounted system complies with applicable zoning setbacks



DRAFT AMENDMENT

*Prior to final inspection,
all areas of exposed or
disturbed soil must be
revegetated.*



DRAFT AMENDMENT

Ground-mounted systems shall remain subject to explicit limitations that were imposed on a property through a prior County land use approval or conservation easement.



DRAFT AMENDMENT



If the proposed measures had been applied to the permits that were analyzed, **26%** of applicants would not require SPRW

Next Steps

Referral & Outreach – Public comment open until **9/28**

Planning Commission – **10/19** *Public Comment will be taken here*

Board of County Commissioners – **TBD** *Public Comment will be taken here*



Q&A

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