



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF MILTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
525 CANTON AVENUE
MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186**

TEL 617-898-4847

The following items have been reviewed by the Planning and Community Development Department staff to determine whether the current Zoning Bylaw addresses solar installations and what the zoning implications are for residents seeking to install a solar energy system on their property.

Accessory use Solar PV By Right in All Major Zones and Special Districts.

Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 3, solar installations cannot be prohibited by zoning ordinance or bylaws. Specifically, “No zoning ordinance or by-law shall prohibit or unreasonably regulate the installation of solar energy systems or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of solar energy, except where necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare.” Since M.G.L. c. 40A, section 3 precludes prohibitions on solar development, solar development is allowed by right in all zones.

Roof-Mounted Solar Installations and Dimensional Zoning Regulations

Section V, Height Regulations, of Milton’s Zoning Bylaw limits the heights of buildings and structures within the town. However, section V.A.1 specifies that solar energy systems are excluded from height calculations, and in section V.A.2, provides additional clarity on that exemption, as follows: “Chimneys and solar energy systems shall not exceed the height of a building by more than eight (8).” This language is consistent among all zoning districts in the Town of Milton.

Therefore, roof-mounted solar installations can be installed on a building or structure up to eight feet above the height of the building. There are no other dimensional zoning restrictions or regulations applicable to roof-mounted solar installations.

Review of Planning Goals and Solar Infrastructure

The Town's 2015 Master Plan includes a specific goals to advance sustainability, including providing information to homeowners regarding how they can convert to solar energy and to implement practices to conserve energy and use renewable energy. Planning and Community Development staff, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, developed a webpage to keep residents informed about alternative energy and energy conservation opportunities and initiatives, available at: <https://www.townofmilton.org/department-public-works/pages/energy-and-conservation-initiatives>. Milton has been a Green Communities member since 2011 and has equipped all of Milton's Public Schools and Town Hall with rooftop solar panels. In addition, the Town is working with MAPC on a microgrid feasibility project that involves expanding the capacity of key buildings in town, including Town Hall and Milton PD, to have local solar power in the case of grid disruptions. The Planning Department has been involved in the ongoing efforts to develop a Climate Action Plan and has taken the lead in the aggregation of emissions and energy data for a Greenhouse Gas Inventory as well as the lead partners in a Community Compact grant-funded effort to develop climate planning tools for Milton.

Training Planning Staff on Best Practices in Planning and Zoning for Solar PV.

To advance solar planning education for Planning and Community Development staff, staff members reviewed the SolSmart Best Practices in Solar Planning and Zoning Webinar on December 18, 2022.