

city of saint paul  
planning commission resolution  
file number 11-77  
date September 16, 2011

**Solar Energy Systems Text Amendments**

WHEREAS, in 2008 the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis received a U.S. Department of Energy Solar America Cities grant to identify strategies that will result in solar-friendly policies, practices and regulations; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2010, the City Council adopted Policy LU-3.19 in the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan calling for study of “tools, techniques, and regulations to facilitate increased usage of solar energy systems, either as standalone systems or as supplements to conventional energy sources;” and

WHEREAS, Section 60.103(k) of the Zoning Code states that a purpose of the Zoning Code is “to promote the conservation of energy and the utilization of renewable energy resources;” and

WHEREAS, Section 61.801(b) of the Zoning Code authorizes the Saint Paul Planning Commission to initiate amendments to the code; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2011, the Planning Commission initiated a study to consider Zoning Code text amendments to facilitate the increased usage and viability of solar energy systems; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2011, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on draft solar energy systems text amendments to clarify and add some detail to regulations that apply to solar energy systems; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission referred the draft solar energy systems text amendments to the Neighborhood Planning Committee for consideration, review of the public hearing testimony, and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on September 7, 2011, the Neighborhood Planning Committee forwarded its recommendations to the Planning Commission;

moved by Wencl  
seconded by \_\_\_\_\_  
in favor Unanimous  
against \_\_\_\_\_

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the following text amendments to the Saint Paul Zoning Code:

**Sec. 63.110. Building design standards.**

- (e) The ~~visibility~~ visual impact of rooftop ~~mechanical~~ equipment shall be reduced through such means as location, screening, or integration into the roof design. Screening shall be of durable, permanent materials that are compatible with the primary building materials. Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork shall not be located on primary building facades.

**Sec. 65.921. Solar energy system.**

Standards and conditions:

- (a) Building mounted systems shall be subject to the dimensional standards that apply to the building, provided that the height standards for building mounted systems in residential districts shall be as follows:

- (1) The system shall extend no more than three (3) feet above the surface of a roof at its exterior perimeter, and shall be set back at least one (1) foot from the exterior perimeter for every additional foot that the system extends above the height of the roof at its exterior perimeter;
- (2) The system shall not extend above the ridge of a gable, gambrel, hip or mansard roof, except that it may extend up to three (3) feet above the ridge of an accessory building, and may extend up to three (3) feet above the ridge of a principal building when not readily visible from the front property line.

For systems mounted on a commercial or industrial building within five (5) feet of a commercial or industrial building on an adjoining lot, a system that does not conform to the height standards that apply to the building may extend up to fifteen (15) feet above the surface of a flat roof along the common property line.

- (b) Freestanding systems shall be treated as accessory buildings for the purpose of maximum height, maximum lot area coverage, and location requirements; provided that freestanding systems in residential districts shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height within ten (10) feet of an interior property line, except for a property line along an alley, with additional height equal to additional setback from property lines permitted to a maximum height of twenty-five (25) feet.

**Sec. 65.9224. Support services in housing for the elderly.**