

PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

CITY OF DAVENPORT, IOWA

Tuesday, September 30, 2025; 5:00 PM

City Hall | 226 West 4th Street | Council Chambers

- I. Roll Call
- II. Report of the City Council Activity
- III. Secretary's Report
 - 1. Consideration of the September 16, 2025 meeting minutes.
- IV. Report of the Comprehensive Plan Committee
- V. Zoning Activity
 - A. Old Business
 - 1. Case ORD25-02: Request of The City of Davenport to amend Title 17 of the Davenport Municipal Code regarding Solar Farms as a principal use and freestanding Solar Panels as an accessory use. [All Wards]
 - B. New Business
- VI. Subdivision Activity
 - A. Old Business
 - B. New Business
- VII. Future Business
- VIII. Communications
- IX. Other Business
- X. Adjourn

City of Davenport

Department: Development & Neighborhood Services

Contact Info: Matt Werderitch | 563-888-2221

Action / Date

9/30/2025

Subject:

Consideration of the September 16, 2025 meeting minutes.

Recommendation:

Approve the Minutes.

Background:

The September 16, 2025 meeting minutes are attached.

Attachments:

1. Meeting Minutes 9-16-25

MINUTES
PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF DAVENPORT, IOWA
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025; 5:00 PM
CITY HALL | 226 WEST 4TH STREET | COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Roll Call

Present: Dunlop, Eikleberry, Hepner, Johnson, Inghram, Maness, Garrington, Schilling, Thomas, Schneider

Excused: Tallman

Staff: Berkely, Reu, Werderitch

II. Report of the City Council Activity

Staff provided an update of the City Council activity.

III. Secretary's Report

A. Consideration of the September 2, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion by Johnson, second by Garrington, to approve the September 2, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion to approve was unanimous by voice vote (9-0).

IV. Report of the Comprehensive Plan Committee

V. Zoning Activity

A. Old Business

B. New Business

1. Case ORD25-02: Request of The City of Davenport to amend Title 17 of the Davenport Municipal Code regarding Solar Farms as a principal use and freestanding Solar Panels as an accessory use. [All Wards]

Commissioners and staff discussed a proposed amendment to the Davenport Zoning Ordinance regarding solar energy installations. The amendment would clarify regulations to permit both solar farms (utility and community scale facilities) and freestanding solar panels (ground-mounted systems) within the City.

Staff provided an overview of the draft language, noting that the amendment seeks to establish definitions, set location and design standards, and outline appropriate zoning districts for such uses. The intent is to balance the

promotion of renewable energy development with compatibility considerations for surrounding land uses.

Staff recommended the Commission hold further discussion and then table Case ORD25-02 to allow additional time to make revisions based on the feedback received. A formal staff recommendation would then be provided at the September 30, 2025 Plan and Zoning Commission meeting.

Commissioners raised questions about setbacks, screening requirements, impacts on agricultural land, and whether special use review would be necessary for larger facilities. Discussion also included how freestanding solar panels on individual lots would be regulated differently from utility-scale solar farms.

A member of the public, Ryan Kopf (owner of Iowa Solar), spoke in favor of an ordinance amendment if it provided homeowners with more flexibility to install solar panels. As a solar installer, he provided insight on the construction and materials used for freestanding arrays.

Motion by Garrington, second by Johnson, to table Case ORD25-02. Motion to table was unanimous by a roll call vote (9-0).

VI. Subdivision Activity

A. Old Business

B. New Business

VII. Future Business

VIII. Communications

IX. Other Business

X. Adjourn

Motion by Eikleberry, second by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was unanimous by voice vote (9-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.

City of Davenport

Department: Development & Neighborhood Services
Contact Info: Matthew Reu | 563-888-2221

Action / Date
9/30/2025

Subject:

Case ORD25-02: Request of The City of Davenport to amend Title 17 of the Davenport Municipal Code regarding Solar Farms as a principal use and freestanding Solar Panels as an accessory use. [All Wards]

Recommendation:

Staff recommend the Plan and Zoning Commission accept the listed findings and forward Case ORD25-02 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Findings:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and adopted land use policies.
2. The proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.
3. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent and general regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. The amendment reflects a change in policy and development trends.
5. The amendment may create minor nonconformities.

Background:

On May 7th, 2025, Resolution No. 2025-197 placed a moratorium on solar farms and accessory freestanding solar to provide time for staff to evaluate current regulations and propose revisions where necessary. The moratorium was spurred by a non-conforming accessory freestanding solar system installed in a resident's front yard. Additionally, staff asked for the moratorium after fielding questions about large-scale solar farms and recent Iowa State legislative hearings about solar farms. The proposed amendment brings code to meet solar industry terms and prepare a more compressive approach to regulating solar systems.

Project update:

Staff have researched and drafted proposed amendments to Title 17. Background materials and industry trends were presented at the September 2nd Plan and Zoning Commission public hearing. Staff presented a draft ordinance for discussion at the September 16th Plan and Zoning Commission meeting. Based on the discussion, staff have recommended the following amendments included in this report.

The proposed amendments include:

- Added definitions to reflect trends in solar development.
- Created principal use definitions for community-scale and utility-scale.
- Updated use matrix to reflect new principal use categories.
- Revised principal use standards to ensure a balance between solar use and community

needs.

- Refined accessory solar language to clarify the extent allowed in both residential and all other districts.

The current code and proposed code have been attached to this report.

Approval Standards for Text Amendments

1. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan and any adopted land use policies.
2. The extent to which the proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.
3. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Ordinance.
4. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy or change in development trends or technology.
5. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.

Public Input:

A Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Quad City Times informing the community of the September 2, 2025 Plan and Zoning Commission Public Hearing. To date, staff have received public comment in favor of the request. The comment offered adjustments to the language. Staff will apprise the Commission of any further correspondence at the September 30, 2025 Plan and Zoning Commission.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Ordinance Amendment
2. Current Zoning Ordinance
3. Memo to Council - Solar Moratorium
4. Action 2025-197 - Resolution approving moratorium on solar farms and freestanding solar panels
5. Public Comment-Iowa Solar

Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment
September 30, 2025

17.02.030 Definition of General Terms

Battery Energy Storage System

Electrochemical devices of 1 MW capacity or greater that charge or collect energy from the grid or a generation facility and discharge that energy at a later time to provide electricity or other grid services.

Solar Energy System

An aggregation of devices and structures whose boundaries can cross parcel lines designed to collect, store, and distribute solar energy for electricity generation, heating, cooling, or other uses. This definition applies to Solar - Community-Scale, Solar - Utility-Scale, and Accessory Solar Energy Systems and does not apply to solar panels on self-powered devices like decorative lights, pond pumps, or those in the right of way.

17.08.050 Use Definitions

Solar - Community-Scale: A solar energy system occupying less than 10 acres that generates electricity primarily to serve multiple properties, subscribers, or a localized customer base within the community.

Solar - Utility-Scale: A solar energy system occupying more than 10 acres, designed primarily for wholesale electricity generation for sale into the electric grid. Utility-scale systems are not intended to serve on-site or localized users.

PRINCIPAL USE	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-MF	R-MHP	C-T	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-C	C-OP	C-D	C-V	C-E	I-1	I-2	I-MU	AG	OS	IC	USE STAND-
Solar - Community-Scale	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	S				P	P	S	P			Sec. 17.08.030.BB
Solar - Utility-Scale																S	S		S			Sec. 17.08.030.BB

17.09.030 Principal Use Standard

1. General regulations for Solar Energy Systems:

a. Solar energy systems must follow district standards unless mentioned here.

b. Solar energy systems are prohibited within the Special Flood Hazard Area.

c. No grid-tied solar energy systems may be installed until evidence has been provided that the owner has been approved by the utility company to install the system.

d. Solar energy systems shall be built with “anti-reflective coating” or similar language and shown on the specification sheets submitted. The Zoning Administrator may require a third-party glare study and confirmation that glare will be minimized or eliminated from adjacent properties, buildings, and residences.

e. The Zoning Administrator may require a view sheds analysis from residential districts to solar energy systems. Solar energy systems must be screened from view of residential districts using trees, shrubs, and other perennial plants, the locations of the screening shall be derived from the analysis.

f. All components of the solar energy systems shall be maintained in good state of repair and safe condition. Damaged, deteriorated or inoperable solar energy systems components shall be repaired or replaced in 12 months. In the event of those circumstances not considered in this ordinance prevent repair of the solar energy system components by 12 months, communications and presentation of rectifying steps shall be made to The Zoning Administrator.

g. A Site maintenance plan shall be submitted and approved. The plan shall include the repair and replacement of solar energy system equipment, landscaping maintenance, and other agreements not limited to this ordinance shall be submitted.

h. A decommissioning plan shall be submitted and approved. The decommissioning plan shall include steps for the removal of all solar arrays, structures, foundations, private roads or driveways, and any other element constructed by facility owner or operator for the purpose of maintaining or operating the solar energy systems. The plan shall follow demolition requirements per city code to include site finish, drainage, and ground cover. Additional information may be required by the Zoning Administrator.
2. The following additional standards apply to Solar - Community-Scale:

a. The maximum height of the solar energy system shall be 10 feet.

b. The solar energy system shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from any lot line or district standard, whichever is greater.

c. Battery energy storage systems are prohibited as accessory uses to Solar– Community-Scale.
3. The following additional standards apply to Solar - Utility-Scale:

a. Shall include provisions for future growth opportunities including future rights-of-ways, public infrastructure, utilities, subdivisions, and other easements as established within the City Code.

b. Encouraged to co-locate with agricultural uses.

c. All accessory uses and structures shall follow accessory use standards.

d. Battery energy storage systems shall be accessory only to Solar - Utility-Scale systems and subject to these additional standards:

i. Battery energy storage systems shall be setback a minimum of 200 feet from a property line.

ii. Battery energy storage system shall be a minimum of 200 feet from an edge of any natural waterbody to include any water conveyance system, detention or retention facility that openly feed natural waterbodies.

iii. Battery energy storage systems shall be setback a minimum of 500 feet from any building.

iv. Battery energy storage systems shall be secured from the public.

v. Maintenance and decommissioning plan associated solely with the battery energy storage systems to include but not limited to the anticipated life of the battery energy storage systems and the safety steps required for continued use shall be submitted for approval to the Zoning Administrator.

vi. Dilapidated or inoperable battery energy storage systems shall be repaired or replaced within 12 months. In the event of those circumstances not considered in this ordinance prevent repair of the battery energy storage systems within 12 months, communications and presentation of rectifying steps shall be made to Zoning Administrator.
- 1

Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment
September 30, 2025

17.09.030 Accessory Structures and Uses

S. Accessory Solar Energy System

1. General Requirements.

- a. Shall be built with “anti-reflective coating” or similar language and shown on the submitted specifications sheet for the solar energy system.
- b. The solar energy system must be placed so that concentrated solar radiation or glare is not directed onto adjacent properties or roadways.

2. Building Mounted Systems

- a. A building mounted solar energy system may be mounted or applied to the roof, wall, or other architectural feature not included here of a principal building or accessory structure.
- b. On pitched roof buildings, the maximum height of a roof-mounted solar panel may rise is 18 inches.
- c. On flat roofed buildings up to 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar energy system is limited to a maximum height of six feet above the surface of the roof. On flat roofed buildings over 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar panel system is limited to 15 feet above the height of such structure. Roof-mounted solar energy systems are excluded from the calculation of building height.
- d. Wall-mounted solar panels may project up to 2.5 feet from a building facade and must be integrated into the structure as an architectural feature.

3. Freestanding Solar Energy Systems.

- a. Freestanding solar energy systems are prohibited within the Special Flood Hazard Area.
- b. Freestanding solar energy systems shall follow accessory structure regulations in Section 17.09.030.
- c. Freestanding solar energy systems shall be subject to the underlying zoning districts maximum impervious surface and maximum building coverage standards.
- d. In residential districts except for R-MF:
 - i. Freestanding solar energy systems are only allowed in the rear yard.
 - ii. On a double frontage or through lot, the rear yard shall be considered the street frontage adjacent to the street with the higher street hierarchy classification and for which no driveway access is provided. Freestanding solar energy systems are permitted in the designated rear yard and are subject to the principal use setbacks.
 - iii. The maximum height of a freestanding solar energy systems is 10 feet.
 - iv. Shall not be larger than 50% of the building footprint or 720 square feet , whichever is greater. Freestanding solar energy systems of additional sizes will be considered Solar - Community-Scale and subject to principal use standards in Section 17.08.030 .
- e. In all other districts including R-MF:
 - i. Freestanding solar energy systems are allowed in the rear and interior side yard.
 - ii. Freestanding solar energy systems shall not be larger than 50% of the impervious surface. Freestanding solar energy systems of additional sizes will be considered Solar - Community-Scale and subject to principal use standards in Section 17.08.030.
 - iii. Freestanding solar energy systems are permitted in all yards when over an approved parking lot and subject to these additional standards:
 - 1. Shall provide minimum vertical clearance of 8 feet.
 - 2. Shall not remove or cover parking islands or landscaped areas.
 - 3. Shall follow all parking standards.
- g. Battery Energy Storage Systems are prohibited as an accessory use unless granted permission by the Fire Marshal.

Section 17.08.030 Principal Use Standards

Where applicable, principal uses are required to comply with all use standards of this section, whether a permitted or special use, in addition to all other regulations of this Ordinance.

BB. Solar Farm

1. Systems, equipment, and structures are limited to the maximum height of the district.
2. All solar farm structures must meet the district setbacks.
3. No grid tied photovoltaic system may be installed until evidence has provided that the owner has been approved by the utility company to install the system.
4. The facility owner and operator must, at their sole expense, complete decommissioning of the solar farm within one year after the end of the useful life of the solar farm. The solar farm is deemed to be at the end of its useful life if it is abandoned for a period for 180 days or more. Decommissioning includes removal of all solar equipment. Decommissioning includes removal of solar arrays, structures, private roads or driveways, and foundations, and any other element constructed by facility owner or operator for the purpose of maintaining or operating the solar farm.

Section 17.08.050 Use Definitions

All uses within Table 17.08-1 are defined in this section. Certain uses are defined to be inclusive of many uses. When a use meets a specific definition, it is regulated as such and is not regulated as part of a more inclusive use category.

Solar Farm. An energy system operated by a public, private, or cooperative company for the generation, transmission, distribution, storage, or processing of solar energy for the purposes of heating and cooling, electricity generation, and/or water heating.

Section 17.09.030 Accessory Structures and Uses

All accessory structures and uses are subject to the requirements of this section and the permitted encroachment requirements of Section 17.09.040. Additional accessory structures not regulated in this section may be regulated in Section 17.09.040.

S. Solar Panels

1. General Requirements

- a. A solar panel may be building-mounted or freestanding.
- b. Solar panels must be placed so that concentrated solar radiation or glare is not directed onto nearby properties or roadways.

2. Building-Mounted Systems

- a. A building-mounted system may be mounted on the roof or wall of a principal building or accessory structure.
- b. On pitched roof buildings, the maximum height a roof-mounted solar panel may rise is 18 inches.
- c. On flat roofed buildings up to 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar panel system is limited to a maximum height of six feet above the surface of the roof. On flat roofed buildings over 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar panel system is limited to 15 feet above the height of such structure. Roof-

mounted solar energy systems are excluded from the calculation of building height.

d. Wall-mounted solar panels may project up to 2.5 feet from a building façade and must be integrated into the structure as an architectural feature.

3. Freestanding Systems

a. A freestanding system is allowed in all yards. In the front or corner side yard, the system but must be six feet from any lot line.

b. The maximum height of a freestanding system is ten feet, except in the front or corner side yard where it is limited to four feet.

4. Co-Location

Solar panels may be co-located on structures such as wireless communication towers and light poles.

Section 17.08-1: Use Matrix

PRINCIPAL USE	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-MF	R-MHP	C-T	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-C	C-OP	C-D	C-V	C-E	I-1	I-2	I-MU	AG	OS	IC	USE STANDARD
Solar Farm												P				P	P		S		P	Sec. 17.08.030.BB



Date: May 8, 2025

To: City Council

From: Laura Berkley, Development & Planning Administrator

Subject: Moratorium on Solar Farms and Freestanding Solar Panels

Several questions were raised at the Committee of the Whole on May 7, 2025 regarding the proposed moratorium on Solar Farms and freestanding solar panels. I would like to provide further clarification on this matter.

What is the purpose of the moratorium?

Moratoriums are a tool local government can use to pause any new actions or approvals. The City typically places moratoriums for six months to provide staff the necessary time to conduct research and present findings to both the Council and Plan & Zoning Commission for ordinance change consideration. Moratoriums provide the benefit of a clean transition of any potential code changes. It is important to clearly state the date of the end to the moratorium for both staff enforcing the moratorium and the public on when items can be submitted for review and under what codes they will be reviewed.

A similar example of the use of a moratorium within the City of Davenport occurred in late 2023 to allow staff the time to review and propose new regulations associated with billboards. Within the six-month moratorium, the City was able to successfully research and draft new code language, which was adopted in June of 2024.

What caused the request for the moratorium?

The zoning code currently allows for freestanding solar panels as an accessory to a Principal Use. This includes the ability to install the freestanding solar panels in front and corner yards. While freestanding solar panels as an accessory use are rare in the City of Davenport, a recent installation sparked citizen complaints and further discussion between staff, Administration, the Community Development Chair and Co-Chair and a request from the Plan & Zoning Chair to reassess the current code. A photo of the installation has been included in this memo. Please note: The installation was not installed as proposed in the plans and does not meet the required code for both

setbacks and maximum height. This specific violation is currently being addressed. The contractor will be installing the panels on the roof. However, several questions and concerns remain on how freestanding solar panels should be regulated moving forward.



In addition, Planning staff have received multiple requests for information on Solar Farm regulations. This is due to several recent and proposed high energy users developing within the City. Additionally, during this legislative session at the State, there was a bill to make community solar farms more feasible. The increase in interest in solar farms has sparked internal conversations on whether the current code provides the framework necessary to handle multiple large scale solar farm requests. For example, Solar Farms are currently allowed on land zoned Agriculture with a Special Use. There are no specific parameters or directions for the Zoning Board of Adjustment to determine under what circumstances Solar Farms are appropriate in this district or when to grant or deny a special use. Peer communities have regulations on what type of agricultural land can be used for solar farms.

What specifically is subject to the moratorium?

There are two components to the moratorium: Solar Farms as a principal use and freestanding solar panels as an accessory use.

Solar Farm as a principal use is: An energy system operated by a public, private, or cooperative company for the generation, transmission, distribution, storage, or processing of solar energy for the purposes of heating and cooling, electricity generation, and/or water heating.

Solar panels can also be an accessory to another use such as a home or business. The most common form of solar panels as an accessory use are building-mounted panels. This is typically a system installed on a roof. Building-mounted systems are not a part of the moratorium. The moratorium is specific to freestanding systems. This does not include solar panels located within the right-of-way. This also does not impact any existing freestanding solar.

Staff time for research and code review:

Staff will need time to research the solar industry, review state law, and conduct a peer review of solar regulations. The decision to do so is not taken lightly, and the discussion to move forward with this project was not initiated by any one member of the Council. The decision to research this topic area was made jointly by the Development & Neighborhood Services Director, the Development & Planning Administrator, and the Chair and Co-Chair of the Community Development Committee after a request from the Plan & Zoning Commission Chair. The decision was made after consultation with the City Attorney. The City Administrator had been informed of the decision before moving forward with a proposed moratorium.

City of Davenport

2025-197

Department: City Council

Action / Date

Contact Info: Alderman Reinartz and Alderman Gripp

5/14/2025

Subject:

Resolution placing a moratorium upon solar farms as a principal use and freestanding solar panels as an accessory use until November 14, 2025. [All Wards]

Recommendation:

Adopt the Resolution.

Background:

Recent inquiries into solar farms, as a principal use, and freestanding solar panels, as accessory structures, have spurred additional conversations and questions on how best to regulate solar moving forward. A six-month moratorium on new solar farms as a principal use and freestanding solar panels as an accessory use is requested in order to provide staff time to evaluate current regulations and propose any revisions if necessary.

It should be noted that building-mounted solar panels, commonly installed on roofs, are not subject to the proposed moratorium.

Attachments:

1. Resolution

Resolution No. 2025-197

Resolution offered by Alderman Gripp and Alderman Reinartz.

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Davenport, Iowa.

RESOLUTION placing a moratorium upon new solar farms as a principal use and freestanding solar panels as an accessory use until November 14, 2025.

WHEREAS, the City of Davenport regulates the uses, special uses, and accessory uses of its zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, recent freestanding solar panel installation and inquiries into solar farms has spurred additional conversations and questions on how to best regulate solar; and

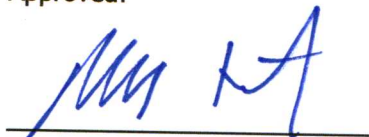
WHEREAS, the City of Davenport wishes to study best practices around the country; and

WHEREAS, this six-month period would allow time for code amendments to be vetted and proposed for adoption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Davenport, Iowa that a moratorium is hereby imposed upon new solar farms as a principal use and freestanding solar panels as an accessory use until November 14, 2025.

Passed and approved this 14th day of May, 2025.

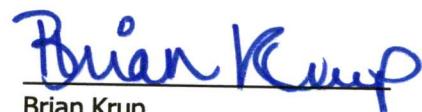
Approved:



Mike Matson
Mayor



Attest:



Brian Krup
Deputy City Clerk

Industry Comments on Proposed Solar Ordinances

My name is Ryan Kopf and I am a Davenport resident, I live on Brady Street. I am writing to you to provide comments on upcoming proposed solar power ordinances.

As both a local resident and the owner of Iowa Solar, I strongly encourage the council to adopt rules that expand, rather than restrict, the opportunities for Davenport families and businesses to access clean energy.

Free-standing solar arrays, when done responsibly, can be an important tool for homeowners who may not have ideal roof conditions, yet still desire clean energy. Limiting them to backyards only, or tying them strictly to building footprints, could make solar impossible for many residents whose homes face the wrong direction, are shaded by trees, or simply lack the roof space to support a sufficient system.

Benefits of Solar

Before we get into ordinance specifics, I would like to highlight some of the key benefits of solar power:

- Solar improves grid stability, especially during summer peaks when air conditioning drives demand. It helps reduce strain and lowers the risk of outages.
- Solar provides real savings for families, lowering monthly electric bills and protecting against utility rate hikes.
- Solar is silent and clean—it produces no noise, no smell, and no pollution. Panels generate power passively for decades with minimal maintenance, without disturbing neighbors.

Addressing Common Misconceptions

There are also some misconceptions about solar that deserve clarification:

- “Solar owners get the grid for free.” In reality, all solar customers pay a monthly service fee (around \$30 with MidAmerican) to remain connected, contributing directly to maintaining electric lines and infrastructure.
- “Solar only benefits wealthy homeowners.” In truth, distributed solar reduces strain on the grid for everyone and improves reliability during peak hours, creating community-wide benefits.
- “Solar hurts property values.” Panels are silent, emission-free, and unobtrusive. In many communities, visible solar has actually improved neighborhood appeal by signaling sustainability and forward progress.

Community-Scale Solar

Davenport also has a chance to lead in community-scale solar. Projects over parking lots, neighborhood gardens, or unused parcels of land make renewable energy accessible to renters, lower-income households, and those who cannot install solar themselves. These projects build resilience, reduce costs, and keep energy dollars circulating locally rather than leaving the community.

Recommendations for the Ordinance

- A 10-foot height limit is reasonable; there is no practical need for taller systems in residential settings. Even 9.5 ft would be reasonable.
- Comments have been made suggesting that solar should go over parking lots. Including an exception to this height limit for parking lot solar may be wise.
- Instead of restricting arrays to “backyards,” which can be difficult to define, consider a 10–20 foot setback from the street as a fairer and more flexible guideline.
- Low-to-the-ground solar systems (under 3.5 feet) are highly efficient and unobtrusive. These pair well with landscaping or gardens and can actually improve curb appeal. We recommend an exemption for these small-scale, low-profile systems. Example: Low-profile solar array - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoENU_3W2Ks
- It's unreasonable to set solar array size based on the home size without also factoring in lot size. If a small home sits on a quarter-acre, there's no sense in not factoring in lot size to the requirement. Especially if people are trying to build tiny-but-fully-efficient homes. People should be allowed the right to power small homes fully with solar, and a home-size-ratio-restriction does not make that possible.

Suggested ordinance language might read:

“Residential free-standing solar arrays shall not exceed 10 feet in height, unless part of an engineered parking-covering structure. Arrays under 3.5 feet in height shall be permitted with no restrictions other than standard setback requirements. Free-standing arrays over 3.5 feet shall be permitted provided they are set back at least 10 feet from the primary street frontage.”

Economic Development

Solar is not just about sustainability—it is about jobs and investment. Every new array means local work in installation, maintenance, and supply. Restrictive rules risk pushing investment to neighboring communities, while supportive rules will allow Davenport to attract clean-energy businesses, innovation, and skilled workers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan
Iowa Solar
info@iowasolar.com