

**ORDINANCE NO. 2025-**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE SO AS TO ESTABLISH USES, PROCEDURES, STANDARDS, AND REGULATIONS FOR SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS WITHIN GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP, ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Greenfield Township, in the County of Erie, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, ordained and enacted the Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance, effective July 14, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance has been amended from time to time so as to further carry out the Statement of Community Development Objectives set forth in Section 105 of the Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Greenfield Township desire to add provisions to the Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance so as to establish uses, procedures, standards and regulations for Solar Energy Systems; and

WHEREAS, after giving consideration to the character of Greenfield Township and the needs of the citizens and the suitabilities and special nature of the particular parts of Greenfield Township, the Board of Supervisors of Greenfield Township believes this addition to the Zoning Ordinance reflects the policy goals set forth in the Statement of Community Development Objectives set forth in Section 105 of the Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance and the purposes set forth in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (53 P.S. § 10101, et seq.).

NOW, THEREFORE, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Greenfield, in the County of Erie and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, enacts and ordains:

**ORDINANCE NO. 2025-**

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**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE SO AS TO ESTABLISH USES, PROCEDURES, STANDARDS, AND REGULATIONS FOR SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS WITHIN GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP, ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.**

The Greenfield Township Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

FIRST: Section 602 of Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance shall have the following defined words and phrases added thereto:

1. **ACCESSORY SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM or "ASES"** shall mean a Building-Integrated Solar Energy System and/or a Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System intended for personal use or business use, which is an accessory use to a principal residential or commercial use on the property (i.e., secondary to the principal use), and which is used to capture sunlight, convert into electricity and supply those converted energies for onsite consumption purposes as an accessory to the principal use.
2. **BUILDING-INTEGRATED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM** shall mean an ASES with a combination of Solar Panels and Solar Energy Equipment integrated into any Building and/or Structure, which produce electricity for onsite consumption.
3. **GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM** shall mean a Solar Energy System that is anchored to the ground via a pole or other mounting system and is not attached to any Building or Structure, that generates electricity for offsite consumption.
4. **ROOF-MOUNTED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM** shall mean Accessory Solar Energy System or ASES located on the roof of any legally permitted Building or Structure that produces electricity for onsite consumption.
5. **SOLAR ENERGY EQUIPMENT** shall mean electrical material, hardware, inverters, conduit, storage devices, and/or other electrical and photovoltaic equipment associated with the production of electricity.
6. **SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM** shall mean the equipment components and subsystems required to convert solar energy into electric energy suitable for use. The term includes, but is not limited to, Solar Panels and Solar Energy Equipment. The area of a Solar Energy System includes all the land inside the perimeter of the Solar Energy System, which extends to any innerconnection equipment.

7. **SOLAR PANELS** shall mean photovoltaic devices capable of collecting and converting solar energy into electricity.

SECOND: Article 4 of the Zoning Ordinance entitled "Regulations and Criteria for Conditional Uses, Special Exceptions and Certain Permitted Uses and Accessory Uses" shall have a new Section 401.44 added thereto entitled "Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems" that reads as follows:

**Section 401.44: Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems.** Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems are permitted in M-1 Commercial/Manufacturing Districts and in R-R Rural/Resource Districts as a Conditional Use. They are subject to the following regulations and criteria:

- A. Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems must be constructed and/or installed on a vacant parcel of land or adjoining parcels of vacant land totaling more than five (5) acres.
- B. Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall require a Zoning Permit and Building Permit issued for construction, installation, expansion, modification, alteration or demolition pursuant to Applications and payment of fees required by the Township.
- C. The layout, design, and installation of Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall conform to applicable industry technical standards, including those of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), or other similar certifying organizations, and shall comply with the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act (Act 45 of 1999), as amended, and with all other applicable fire and life safety standards, requirements and regulations. The manufacturer specifications shall be submitted as part of the Application for Conditional Use.
- D. All on-site utility and transmission lines extending to and from the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System shall be placed underground.
- E. All Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall be designed and located in order to prevent reflective glare toward any inhabited Residences and Buildings on adjacent properties, as well as adjacent street or road rights-of-way.
- F. The surface area of Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems, regardless of the mounted angle of any portion of the system, is considered impervious surface and shall be calculated as part of the lot coverage limitations for the Zoning District in which it is located, and for storm water management purposes.
- G. A clearly visible warning sign concerning voltage shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations. Except for the said warning sign, no other signage or graphic content may be displayed on the Solar Energy System,

except the manufacturer's badge, safety information, and equipment specification information. Said information shall be depicted within an area not less than 36 square inches in size nor more than 72 square inches in size.

H. Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall have and shall meet the following setback requirements:

1. Front Property Lines – 100 feet from the adjoining public road or street or non-owned or non-leased parcel of real estate, as applicable
2. Side Property Lines – 100 feet from the adjoining public road or street or non-owned or non-leased parcel of real estate, as applicable
3. Rear or Back Property Lines – 100 feet from the adjoining public road or street or non-owned or non-leased parcel of real estate, as applicable

All Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems, including all Solar Energy Equipment, Solar Panels and the entire Solar Energy System, shall be completely enclosed by a 7-foot high fence with a self-locking gate to prevent unauthorized access, which fence shall be built and installed either on the 100 foot setback line or within 10 feet thereof.

I. Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall be buffered and screened from adjacent residential zoning districts, residential uses on surrounding properties, residential lots, and public roads or streets in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Vegetative buffering shall be planted to screen and buffer adjacent residential zoning districts, residential uses on surrounding properties, platted residential lots and public roads or streets from the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System. Greenfield Township may waive or modify this requirement in areas where it determines that the retention of existing trees within the vegetative buffering area may constitute the required vegetative buffer or where Greenfield Township determines that the solar panels cannot be viewed from adjacent residential zoning districts, residential uses on surrounding properties, platted residential lots, and public roads or streets.
2. The vegetative buffering shall be planted along the exterior side of the fencing and shall be located within forty (40) feet of the required fencing.
3. Vegetative buffering should be designated to emulate the mix of native species and appearance of existing tree lines, hedge rows, and wooded areas already in existence within the landscape where the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System is proposed. The Applicant shall assess the species mix and characteristics found in existing tree lines, hedge rows, and wooded areas surrounding the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System and document that the vegetative buffering is designed to emulate these characteristics.

4. Vegetative buffering shall be selected to provide year-round buffering and shall be of sufficient height, density, and maturity to screen the Solar Energy System from ground level visibility, as set forth herein within twelve (12) months of the installation of the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System.
  5. A combination of natural topography and vegetation may serve as a buffer, provided that the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System will not be visible from adjacent residential zoning districts, residential uses on surrounding properties, platted residential lots, and public roads or streets. Earthen berms shall not be sufficient to serve as a buffer.
- J. At the time of issuance of the Zoning Permit and Building Permit for the construction and/or installation of the Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System, the owner of the Solar Energy System and/or the owner of the land or lot(s) on which the Solar Energy System is to be constructed shall provide financial security in form and amount acceptable to the Township to secure the expense of dismantling and removing said Solar Energy System. If a Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System is or is going to be vacated, abandoned, and/or de-commissioned, then:
1. The Ground-Mounted Solar Energy System owner is required to notify the Township immediately upon cessation or abandonment of the operation.
  2. Solar Energy Systems that have been abandoned and/or not producing electricity for a period of six (6) continuous months or more shall be removed at the Owner and/or Operators sole expense, which at the Owner's option may come from any security made with the Township of Greenfield. Discontinuation/abandonment is presumed when a Solar Energy System has been disconnected from the net metering grid for a period of six (6) continuous months or has not produced electricity for a period of six (6) continuous months. The burden of proof in the presumption of discontinuation/abandonment shall be upon the Township.
  3. A decommissioning plan signed by the Owner and/or Operator of the Solar Energy System shall be submitted by the Applicant, addressing the following:
    1. The cost of removing the Solar Energy System.
    2. The time required to decommission and remove the Solar Energy System and any ancillary structures.
    3. The time required to repair any damage caused to the property by the installation and removal of the Solar Energy System.
  4. The Solar Energy System and all related equipment must be removed within twelve (12) months of the date of discontinuation or abandonment or upon the termination of the useful life of the Solar Energy System.

5. For Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems, removal includes removal of all structural and electrical parts of the Solar Energy System and any associated facilities or equipment and removal of all net metering equipment.
6. If the owner of the Solar Energy System and/or owner of the land or lot(s) fails to remove the vacated, abandoned, or decommissioned Solar Energy System within the twelve (12) month period outlined above, the Township reserves the right to enter the property, remove the system, and charge the landowner and/or Solar Energy System owner and operator for all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, and to pursue other legal action to have the Solar Energy System removed at the operator's and land owner's expense.
7. Any unpaid costs resulting from the Township's removal of a vacated, abandoned, or decommissioned Solar Energy System shall constitute a lien upon the property against which all fees and costs were charged. Each such lien may be continued, recorded, and released in the manner provided by the general statutes for continuing, recording, and releasing property tax liens.

THIRD: Article 4 of the Zoning Ordinance entitled "Regulations and Criteria for Conditional Uses, Special Exceptions and Certain Permitted Uses and Accessory Uses" shall have a new Section 401.45 entitled "Accessory Solar Energy Systems" ("ASES") that reads as follows:

**Section 401.45 Accessory Solar Energy Systems ("ASES").** Accessory Solar Energy Systems that are a Building-Integrated Solar Energy System and/or a Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System are a permitted use in all zoning districts, but shall be subject to the following regulations and criteria for each type of Building-Integrated Solar Energy System and/or Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System:

- A. Building-Integrated Solar Energy Systems and/or Roof-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall require a Building Permit and Zoning Permit issued for construction, installation, expansion, modification, alteration or demolition pursuant to Applications and payment of fees required by the Township.
- B. Roof-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall incorporate, when feasible, the following design requirements:
  1. Solar Panels on pitched roofs shall be mounted with a maximum distance of eight (8) inches between the roof surface and the highest edge of the Solar Energy System.
  2. Solar Panels on pitched roofs shall be installed parallel to the roof's surface on which they are mounted or attached.
  3. Solar Panels on pitched roofs shall not extend higher than the highest point of the roof's surface on which they are mounted or attached.

4. Solar Panels on flat roofs shall not extend above the top of the surrounding parapet, or more than 24 inches above the flat surface of the roof, whichever is higher.
5. All Solar Panels shall have anti-reflective coatings to lessen glare.
6. All Roof-Mounted Solar Energy Systems shall comply with the height limitations of the zoning district in which they are located and/or the maximum height regulations specified for principal and accessory buildings within the underlying zoning district.
7. The owner of the Building and/or Structure on which a Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System is to be constructed and installed shall provide evidence in the form of a letter and/or stamped plans from a professional engineer that the roof of the Building and/or Structure on which the Solar Energy System is being constructed and installed is structurally sound and can withstand the weight of the Solar Energy System.

C. Building-Integrated Solar Energy Systems shall incorporate, when feasible, the following design requirements:

1. Plans for Building-Integrated Solar Energy Systems shall be submitted with the Building Permit Application and Zoning Permit Application for the Building and Structure containing the Solar Energy System.
2. A Building-Integrated Solar Energy System must be integrated to the Building and/or Structure itself on the property, including vertical facades (made of glass and/or other façade materials, semi-transparent skylight systems, roofing materials and window shading elements).
3. Solar Energy Systems shall be regulated in the same manner as the Building or Structure of which it is a part pursuant to the Pennsylvania Construction Code and, accordingly, the Building-Integrated Solar Energy System shall be shown on the plans submitted with the Building Permit and Zoning Permit Applications.
4. For a Building-Integrated Solar Energy System installed on a sloped roof that faces the front yard, the system must be installed at the same angle as the roof on which it is installed with a maximum distance, measured perpendicular to the roof, of eighteen (18) inches between the roof and the highest edge of the Solar Energy System. For a Building-Integrated Solar Energy System installed on a sloped roof, the highest point of the system shall not exceed three (3) feet above the highest point of the roof line to which it is attached.
5. Building-Integrated Solar Energy Systems mounted on a flat roof shall not be visible from the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to the property at ground level. System components can be screened with architectural treatments,

such as a building parapet walls or other screening, or by setting the system back from the roof edge in such a way that it is not visible from the public right-of-way at ground level. For a Building-Integrated Solar Energy System installed on a flat roof, the highest point of the system shall not exceed six (6) feet above the roof to which it is attached.

Duly enacted and ordained on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, by the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Greenfield, County of Erie, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

WITNESS/ATTEST:

**GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Renee Wagner, Secretary

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Kevin Bartlett, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Brown, Supervisor

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Travis Clabbatz, Supervisor