

November 22, 2005

RE: City Policy regarding Fee Waivers for Solar Energy Systems

The City Council of the City of Mill Valley would like to encourage installation of solar energy systems. On November 21, 2005, the City of Mill Valley City Council adopted a resolution that waives certain building permit fees for solar energy systems that meet certain design guidelines.

The City of Mill Valley will waive the building permit fees (except the California Seismic Tax and any outside plan check consultant fee) associated with the installation of solar panels that meet the following guidelines:

1. Solar panels and accessory equipment should be integrated into the design of the building when possible.
2. Solar panels should be placed on roofs or other locations that are the least visible from public streets, public facilities and neighboring properties.
3. Accessory equipment located on the ground should be screened from off-site view through careful placement and/or the use of landscaping or fencing.
4. Roof mounted solar collectors should match the roof pitch and be placed in close proximity to the surface of the roof below them. When possible, panels should be installed at the same angle as the roof and the top of the solar panel should not be more than eight inches higher than the surface of the roof below it.
5. Ground-mounted solar collectors and accessory equipment shall comply with setback requirements and should be screened from off-site view through careful placement and/or the use of landscaping or fencing.

The solar energy system must comply with City regulations for the zoning district in which it is located, including height limits, setbacks, lot coverage, etc. (contact Planning Department for more information).

Process: Applicants shall apply for a building permit with the Building Department. The Planning Department will review the plans to determine if they comply with the criteria listed above. The Building Department will process the application following their standard procedures. Certain permit fees will be waived if the Planning Department has indicated that the project complies with the design guidelines, otherwise full fees will be charged for the application. The project is not exempt from inspections associated with the building permit or any other requirements of the Building Department.

Many of the solar energy system installations are part of a larger project. The permit fee waivers only apply to the work directly associated with the renewable energy source. To assist the Building Department, if the project involves work other than the solar energy system, we request that you submit for a separate building permit for the work associated with the solar energy system.

We look forward to working with you!

If you have questions about the Solar Rebate Fee Reduction please contact:
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