

# BEAVER COUNTY RENEWABLE ENERGY



Generating energy from renewable resources is becoming increasingly important and need to be fully considered with the rise in conventional energy prices and population growth. Furthermore, changes have been made to the County's Land Use Bylaw to make it as efficient as possible to install renewable and alternate energy systems. This handout outlines new land uses and permit requirements in the County.

## LAND USES

### Definitions

**Solar Collector** means a device or combination of devices used to collect solar energy. The solar energy is absorbed and then converted into thermal or electrical energy. The different types of solar collector systems can be mounted to the roof, wall, or ground.

**Solar Farm** means a large number of solar collectors set up to gather solar energy with a total combined area of 0.40 ha (1.0 ac) or more. These are stand-alone assemblies mounted on racking on the ground.

**Renewable and Alternate Energy Facility** means a building or development that generates energy using natural or renewable resources (e.g. wind, geothermal, bio-fuels) or generates energy using a process that reduces the amount of harmful emissions to the environment. Examples include district heating and cogeneration.

### Permit Requirements

No development permit is required for solar collectors that are installed primarily for private or on-site use (although contribution to the grid may be possible). These include panels mounted to the roof, wall, and ground (with a floor area of 10m<sup>2</sup> or less). For all other uses, a permit is required. Any development regulations (e.g. setbacks) will apply to all land uses regardless of permit requirements.

Approvals may be required from a provincial or federal agency prior to the operation of any renewable energy system. These may include approvals from Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), Safety Codes (e.g. electrical permit) and your utility service provider (e.g. Fortis Alberta).

In addition, under *Section 619 of the Municipal Government Act*, any license, permit, or approval granted by AUC will prevail over any development decisions made by the County. Moreover, a permit issued by the County is only for compliance with the use, size and setback regulations. The actual design and operation of these systems are regulated provincially, and beyond the control of the County.



Photo: Roof mounted solar panels in New Hampshire, <https://www.revisionenergy.com/solar-projects/wilmot-new-hampshire/>



Photo: Wall mounted solar panels outside an arena in Iqaluit, NU, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/iqaluit-arena-has-new-solar-panels-1.3499877>



Photo: Ground mounted solar panels in the Boreal Bird Centre for Bird Conservation in Slave Lake, AB, <https://solaralberta.ca/case-studies>



Photo: Solar farm in Essex, ON, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/ontario-budget-toronto-hinterland-1.3463848>

# RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS



The chart below provides a brief overview of where these land uses apply in each land use district.

Please refer to Beaver County's Land Use Bylaw for additional development regulations.

LAND USE DISTRICTS	LAND USES			
	Solar Collectors* (mounted to roof, wall, ground (floor area 10m <sup>2</sup> or less))	Solar Collectors (mounted to ground (floor area greater than 10m <sup>2</sup> ))	Solar Farms	Renewable and Alternate Energy Facility
Agricultural	P	D	D	D
Country Residential	P	D	X	X
Urban General	P	D	X	X
Rural Commercial	P	D	X	X
Rural Industrial	P	P	P	P
Landfill and Composting	P	P	P	P
Low Impact Eco-Friendly District	P	P	P	D

**P** Permitted use: permit is granted when application meets the required Land Use Bylaw regulations in that district.

**D** Discretionary use: application is reviewed and assessed on a case by case basis before a decision is made. The decision will be advertised for 2 weeks followed by a 14 day appeal period.

**X**: Use is not allowed.

\*No development permit is required if installed primarily for private or on-site use, provided it meets all regulations outlined in the Land Use Bylaw.

For more information, please visit:

**Solar Energy Society of Alberta**  
<https://solaralberta.ca/>

**Beaver County**  
 780-663-3730  
<https://www.beaver.ab.ca>