



City Hall
555 Israel Road SW
Tumwater, WA 98501-6515
Phone: 360-754-5855
Fax: 360-754-4138

April 20, 2023

City of Tumwater
Zoning Administrator
555 Israel Road SW
Tumwater, WA 98501

RE: ADVISORY DETERMINATION OF USE – Accessory use solar photovoltaic systems

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The City of Tumwater wishes to encourage the use of accessory photovoltaic systems and confirm for property owners that such systems are allowed in all zoning districts when conforming to certain requirements. Solar photovoltaic systems are included in the Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC) as “energy systems” which is defined in TMC 18.04.050.

The City of Tumwater controls the use and placement of buildings and structures on land through the establishment of zoning districts, as identified in Chapter 18 of the TMC. Each zoning district has a list of uses permitted by right. In all districts accessory uses are by right use. Accessory use is defined in Chapter 18.04.10 as follows:

“the use of land, a subordinate building or structure, or a portion of a principal building or structure, such as being secondary or incidental to a permitted use, building, or structure.”

The Permit Manager and Community Development Director have confirmed that solar panels are an accessory use to dwelling units and commercial buildings which would be considered the primary use on properties within the City of Tumwater.

With this advisory determination, I am confirming, in writing, the previous interpretation that solar panels are an accessory use to a permitted primary use, building, or structure and permitted by right in all zoning districts. A zoning amendment is not needed to allow solar panels in all zoning districts.

Mike Matlock
Community Development Director