

Solar Panel Guidance for Tahoe Meadows

Recognizing the environmental benefits and potential electricity cost savings for TM members, the TM Building Committee and Board looked for ways to incorporate this important technology without damaging the appearance and character of the Tahoe Meadows Historic District.

The visual impact of solar equipment could compromise the Historic District if not thoughtfully located and installed. Tahoe Meadows members are sensitive to the need to preserve TM's historic character.

Tahoe Meadows follows the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#). The Secretary and the National Park Service have guidelines on sustainability with recommendations for [placement on historic resources](#) including putting solar on additions or auxiliary, non-contributing structures, using flush mounts and placing panels out of the public view.

The California Energy Commission notes that battery storage may reduce the size of the solar array required for the home. ([Calif Energy Commission FAQ](#)).

California has enacted laws to encourage, and in some cases require, solar installations.

With all of the above in mind, Tahoe Meadows offers the following guidance on the placement of solar arrays:

To protect the historic district's character, guidance for all buildings:

- Analyze whether the placement of solar technology will compromise the surrounding historic district.
- Install the solar device in a location on the site where it will have minimal impact on the character of the historic district.
- Install a low-profile solar device so that it is not visible or only minimally visible from the public right of way.
- Install solar roof panels horizontally—flat or parallel to the roof—to reduce visibility. No panels installed at an angle to the roof plane.

For contributing structures, follow these additional NPS technical guidance recommendations:

- Analyze whether solar technology will benefit a historic building without compromising its character or the surrounding historic district.
- Install the solar device in a compatible location on the site or on a non-historic building or a non-historic addition where it will have minimal impact on the historic building and its site.
- Install the solar device on the historic building only after other locations have been investigated and determined infeasible.
- Install the solar device on the historic building in a manner that does not damage historic roofing material or negatively impact the building's historic character and is reversible.

Installation of solar technology requires TM approval as an exterior modification. If you are considering a solar energy system, please contact the TM Building Committee.