

MARSHALLTOWN

IOWA

PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

Notice of Special Meeting

Thursday, January 30, at 5:00 pm

City Council Chambers, City Hall

10 West State Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

- o Boston
- o Brodin
- o Casady
- o Medina
- o Gruendler
- o Isom
- o Valbracht

3. Election Of Officers

4. Conduct A Public Hearing And Consider Making A Recommendation On A Zoning Text Amendment Relating To Maximum Height For In-Ground Solar Array (Accessory Use)

Documents:

[PZ Memo - In Ground Solar Array \(Accessory Use\) Zoning Text Amendment.pdf](#)
[Draft Ordinance.pdf](#)

5. Conduct A Public Hearing And Consider Making A Recommendation On A Special Use Permit For In-Ground Solar (Accessory Use) At 421 East Merle Hibbs Boulevard

Documents:

[PZ Memo - 421 E Merle Hibbs Blvd Special Use Permit.pdf](#)
[McFarland Clinic Solar Array Site Plan Commentary.pdf](#)
[McFarland Clinic Solar Array Site Plan.pdf](#)

MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Marshalltown collaborates to provide a welcoming, safe, vibrant and growing community.

MARSHALLTOWN

I O W A

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Deb Millizer, Director
Clayton Ender, Assistant Director
24 North Center Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158-4911
Tel - (641) 754-5756
Fax - (641) 754-5717

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Clayton Ender, Assistant Housing & Community Development Director
DATE: January 27th, 2025
RE: In-Ground Solar Maximum Height Zoning Text Amendment

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval and provides the following motion for the Commission's consideration:

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommends approval of Ordinance 15098 – A zoning text amendment to increase the maximum height for in-ground solar array (accessory use) to ten (10) feet as detailed in the draft ordinance.

Description/Background:

McFarland Clinic has submitted a special use permit application for installation of an accessory use in-ground solar array at their facility located at 421 E Merle Hibbs Blvd. As submitted the proposed solar array exceeds the current maximum height of an accessory use in-ground solar array which is six feet. McFarland Clinic is desiring to install a solar array with a maximum height of ten feet. A zoning text amendment to increase the maximum height is necessary in order for installation to occur as desired. The proposed amendment would revise the maximum height of in-ground solar arrays (accessory use) to a maximum of ten (10) feet and would establish the manner in which the height of an array is measured. The proposed language is as follows:

1. Shall not exceed a height of ten feet.
 - A. When located over land the measurement shall be taken from ground level at the solar panel.
 - B. When located over a body of water or within an area designed to be subject to regular inundation by water, such as a stormwater management facility, the measurement shall be taken from an elevation which is one foot above the designed 100-year storm event water level.

CITY COUNCIL

Melisa Fonseca, Barry Kell, Mike Ladehoff,
Mark Mitchell, Greg Nichols, Jeff Schneider, Gary Thompson



ORDINANCE 15098

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA, CHAPTER 156: ZONING, GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAYS

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Marshalltown, Iowa, has adopted Chapter 156 (Zoning); and

WHEREAS, the City Council has identified various provisions of Chapter 156 requiring amendment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds the following amendments to Chapter 156 to be in the best interest of the City and the public in general.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA:

Section 1. Amendment. Section 156.C.007(G)(2)(a) shall be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following language:

(a) Ground-mounted solar arrays.

1. Shall be located in the interior side or rear yard and screened from adjacent residential property and all public rights-of-way with Type B bufferyard (see § 156.F.004, Buffering).
2. Shall meet the setback requirements for detached accessory buildings in the zoning district in which the solar array is located.
3. Shall not exceed a height of ten feet.
 - A. When located over land the measurement shall be taken from ground level at the solar panel.
 - B. When located over a body of water or within an area designed to be subject to regular inundation by water, such as a stormwater management facility, the measurement shall be taken from an elevation which is one foot above the designed 100-year storm event water level.
4. An application for ground-mounted solar panels shall be presented with site specifications, dimensions, and landscaping plan.
5. Not allowed on residential use properties regardless of zone.

Section 2. Severability Clause. If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, provision or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 3. When Effective. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its final passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

Passed this _____ day of _____ 2025 and signed this _____ day of _____ 2025.

CITY OF MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA

Joel Greer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alicia Hunter, City Clerk

I, Alicia Hunter, City Clerk of the City of Marshalltown, Iowa, do hereby certify that the foregoing ORDINANCE was passed and approved by the City Council of the City of Marshalltown, Iowa, on the _____ day of _____ 2025, and was published in the Marshalltown Times-Republican, a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Marshalltown, Iowa, on the _____ day of _____ 2025.

Alicia Hunter, City Clerk

MARSHALLTOWN

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HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Deb Millizer, Director
Clayton Ender, Assistant Director
24 North Center Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158-4911
Tel - (641) 754-5756
Fax - (641) 754-5717

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Clayton Ender, Assistant Housing & Community Development Director
DATE: January 27th, 2025
RE: McFarland Clinic In-Ground Solar Special Use Permit

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval and provides the following motion for the Commission's consideration:

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommends approval of the special use permit for McFarland Clinic In-Ground Solar Array (Accessory Use) at 421 E Merle Hibbs Blvd, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to Board of Adjustment consideration of the special use permit the City Council shall have first successfully amended the maximum height for in-ground solar (accessory use) to allow for a maximum height of ten (10 feet).

Description/Background:

McFarland Clinic has submitted a special use permit application for installation of an accessory use in-ground solar array at their facility located at 421 E Merle Hibbs Blvd. Attached to this staff report is a commentary regarding the project proposal as submitted by the applicant.

At present the proposal is not in compliance with the maximum height regulations for in-ground solar arrays (accessory use), but the Planning and Zoning Commission is considering a zoning text amendment to allow for increased height (reference agenda item #4 on the January 30th agenda) which would resolve this deficiency in the application. If this text amendment, as presently proposed, is successfully approved by the City Council following recommendation by the planning and Zoning Commission then the special use permit would be in full compliance with the zoning ordinance. Staff recommends that a motion to recommend approval of the special use permit include a condition that before Board of Adjustment consideration of the special use permit that the City Council shall have first successfully approved a zoning text amendment regarding maximum height.

CITY COUNCIL

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Special Use Permit Application - Marshalltown, Iowa

Clinic Building Company
McFarland Clinic Marshalltown, IA

Project Description

The proposed project is a 1.15 MW ground-mounted solar array placed within 2.3 acres south of the recently completed McFarland Clinic. The project will tie into the electrical utility service for the clinic building and will be designed and built to reduce the energy use of the facility.

The PV modules will be installed in the standard design of a commercial fixed-tilt array; 2 modules in portrait orientation facing south at approximately 30 degrees and placed on driven pier racking. The leading edge of the modules would be approximately 2' 6" from the ground and approximately 10' on the back of the array. The solar arrays will follow the topography of the site and will drop off and away to the south from the building.

There will be a 6' chain link fence with a privacy screen surrounding the project with gates for access. Trees will be planted on the North side of the project. The inverters for the project will also be mounted on the driven pier racking.

The installation will be completed by Current RE, an Iowa based solar design and installation company with over 15 years of renewable energy experience.

Attached documents

1. Site Plan and Electrical one-line drawing submitted with permit

Full Legal Description of the property

Parcel ID 8318-11-426-011

Property Address 421 E Merle Hibbs Blvd. Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

Sec/Twp/Rng 11-38-18

Surrounding Properties

There will be little to no impact on the surrounding properties. The land directly south and east of the project is currently farmland that has a drainage area and a creek. The land west of the project is a future development area. Once the solar is installed there will be no ongoing sound, light, or construction vehicles on the site due to the solar.

Hours of Operation and Site Improvements

Proposed construction would take place in the summer and the hours for construction would fall between 7:00am to 7:00pm as allowed. During construction there would be loading and unloading of equipment as well as staging areas for the materials.

Once the site is complete and functioning, there will be occasional site visits during normal business hours for inspection and maintenance. There will be a gate and a path created for maintenance vehicles to access the array.

For site improvements, there will be a 6' fence with a privacy screen surrounding the solar array. Additionally, the clinic plans to plant trees along the north side of the project. There will be signage placed on the fence as required for safety and utility guidelines. No additional signage, lighting, or parking will be necessary for this project.

Public Services Available

Adequate public services are currently available for this project without disruption to existing uses.

Nuisance

There is no existing or potential of a nuisance generated by this project.

Design Features

Due to the location of the project, there will not be nearby traffic or pedestrian travel. The project will incorporate a fence and signage to prevent unauthorized access to the area.

Compatibility

The proposed project will be compatible with the adjacent uses which are currently vacant space for future development. Once the project is complete there will be no additional noise or lighting created by the solar array. There will be normal construction noise during the project installation and based on the proposed construction timeline there will not be any nearby traffic or structures on any of the surrounding properties.

Location

For the space available to the McFarland Clinic, the proposed location is the only practical area for this project.

Added comments: 01 15 2025

- The property is owned and used by McFarland Clinic and is not intended to be a reseller of electric power. The system is designed as net metering with Alliant Energy.
- Decommissioning will occur if the system is no longer to be utilized by property owners which is McFarland Clinic Company. Typical life span exceeds 25 years and is modular so components can be updated to maintain full operations for decades.
- If the solar system fails and is no longer functional, the site owners have 12 months to remove the solar array by a licensed contractor. The removal shall consist of all above mounted solar panels as part of this specific zone includes solar panel support structures holding them. This expense will be paid for by the property owner. This will include the removal of underground wiring removed back and terminated approved National Electrical codes termination disconnects boxes. All buried on site owner installed electrical conduits shall remain in place for owner discretion for on future site utilization.
- Site contours will be graded as needed to address and remove equipment tracks with seeding.

- Decommissioning plans can be updated as requested. *(This question is directed to a renting party of the property.)*

Site property setbacks:

- As discussed, the site setbacks for solar on our property is seven feet on both the east and west sides and ten feet on our south. North there is our facility.
- The current plan is to install fencing at least one foot from the property line.

Detention basin:

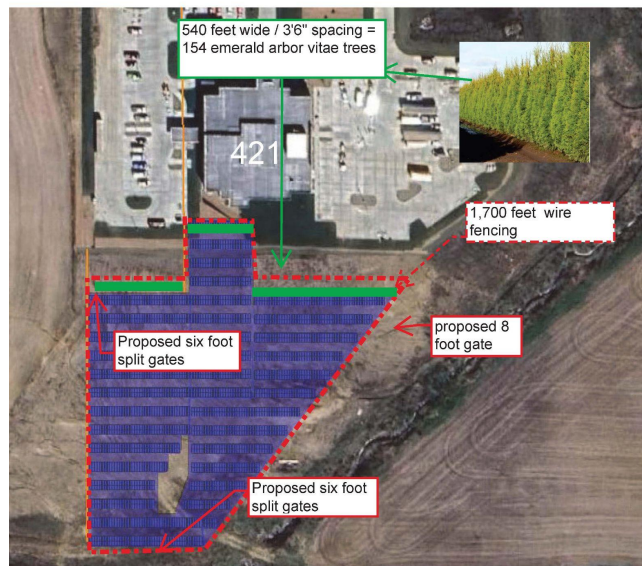
- The solar array is designed to be steel beam pile driven and is laid out extending above the retention basin high water level and will not affect the basin capacity. Solar panels are designed to be sealed water tight for the outside elements and can be submerged in water without failure.
- Due to the height of the solar array the storm water basin will be mowed and maintained like the rest of the property.
- If inflow or outflow areas need preventive maintenance, Panels can be temporarily removed for site work to be completed

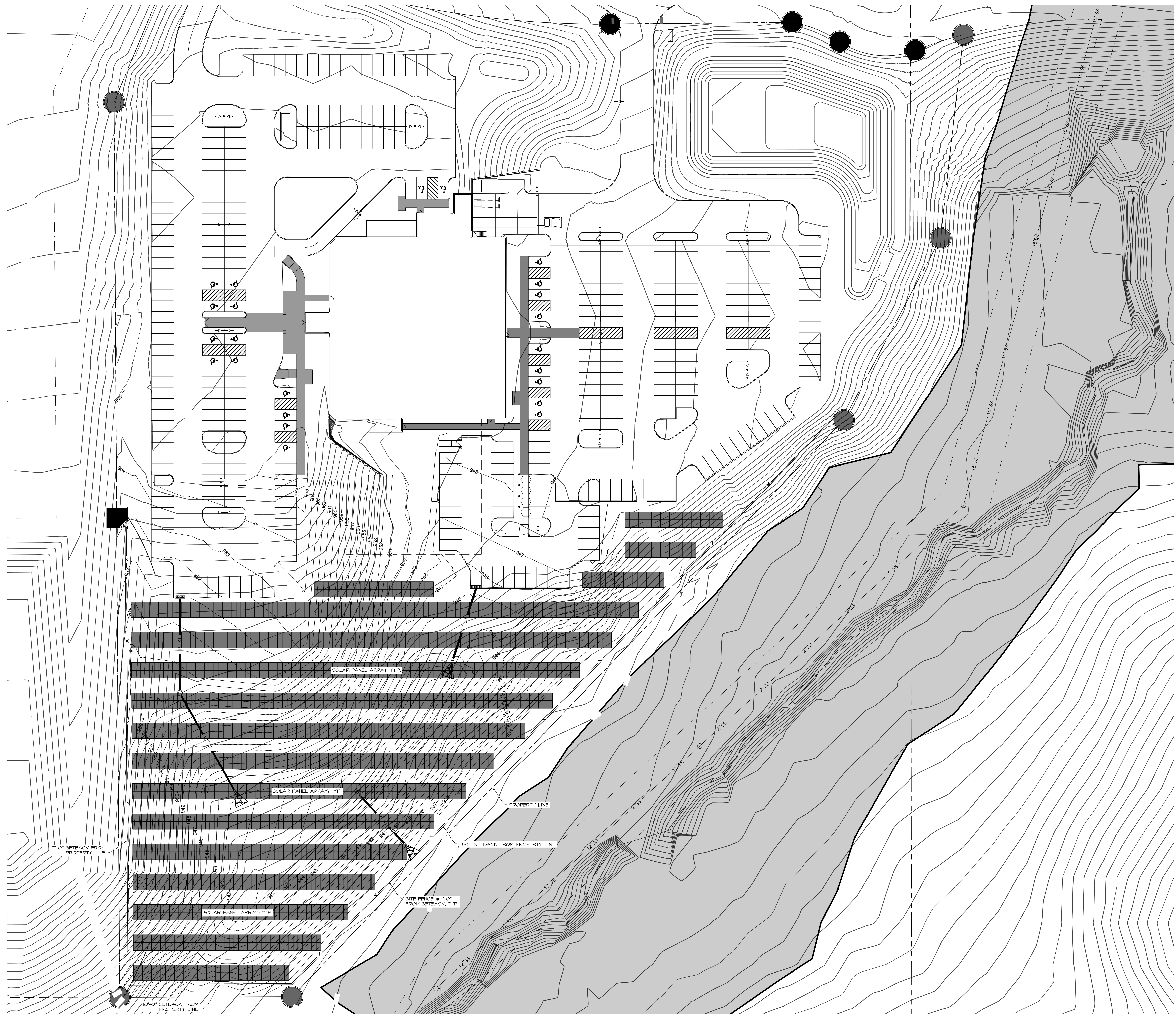
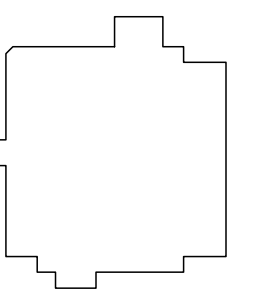
Site plan:

- I can provide the site grading plan as approved by the City Planning department when we install the new additional parking lots in 2024. This is the current grading plan for this site. We are not changing the existing contour lines.
- West to east slope closer to the building. Panels will face south and follow the existing contour of grade from west to east. See example of this view.



- The design and layout has been provided. The owner understands fencing is required as shown below. Landscaping is planned as shown on image below on north exposure. Fencing is shown in red as the approximate location once the solar array is installed.





1 SITE PLAN - SOLAR
SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0" N ↑

