

SOLAR PANEL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOME BUYERS



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When buying a home with solar panels, there are several potential pitfalls and important questions to consider to ensure a smooth transaction and future satisfaction with the solar system.

Potential Pitfalls

Roof Condition and Repair Costs

- Poor roof condition may require removing and reinstalling the solar panels for repairs, leading to additional costs and delays.

Leased vs. Owned Panels

- Leased panels require lease transfer, complicating the closing process and adding monthly payments.
- If there's an outstanding loan on the panels, the seller must pay it off or the buyer must take over, which may not be allowed by the lender.

Weather Dependency

- Solar panel efficiency is affected by weather conditions (e.g., cloudy or rainy days), reducing energy production.

Maintenance and Repairs

- Solar panels need occasional maintenance, such as cleaning and inspections.
- Inverters may need more frequent replacement than the panels.

Financing and Mortgage Implications

- Financing methods (e.g., loans, PACE financing) can impact your mortgage and property taxes.
- PACE financing is repaid through property taxes, which the new homeowner must inherit.

System Age and Efficiency

- Older panels may be less efficient and closer to the end of their useful life (typically 20-30 years).

Questions to Ask

Ownership and Financing

- Are the solar panels owned or leased? If leased, what are the terms and monthly payments?
- If owned, is there an outstanding loan? How is it being repaid (e.g., through property taxes)?

Installation and Maintenance

- Who installed the solar panels, and are they still in business?
- Is there a warranty on the panels and inverters, and can it be transferred to the new owner?
- What is the maintenance history? When were the panels last serviced or cleaned?

System Performance

- What is the age of the solar panels and inverters?
- Can you provide data on the system's energy production and average savings on utility bills?
- Are there performance monitoring systems in place? Can you provide access to the data?

Roof and Property Considerations

- How old is the roof, and what is its condition?
- Are there any trees or obstructions that might affect the panels' efficiency?

Legal and Regulatory

- Are there permits for the solar panel installation? Do they meet local building codes?
- Are there local or state incentives or net metering programs that the system is enrolled in? Can they be transferred to the new owner?

Personal Notes

By addressing these questions and potential pitfalls, you can make a more informed decision when buying a home with solar panels and ensure that the system will meet your energy needs and financial expectations.

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