

## **TEXAS SOLAR COLLABORATION PERMITTING & INTERCONNECTION PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

### **SAN ANTONIO-SPECIFIC:**

- 1. Investigate feasibility of using electronic signatures**
- 2. Investigate feasibility of enabling other online permitting processes (e.g., commercial)**
- 3. Assess need for future document management and workflow/notification IT improvements**
- 4. Update Information Bulletin 153 regarding City requirements and processes for PV**
- 5. Educate contractors and public on CPS Energy's new 2013 solar program processes**
- 6. Continue to discuss "downtown grid" interconnection issues and identify potential solutions**
- 7. Consider renaming Distributed Energy Resources (DER)**
- 8. Continue to participate in collaborative actions**

### **AUSTIN-SPECIFIC:**

- 9. Continue to investigate feasibility of simplifying permit processes for solar installations**
  - Currently need to go in person to get a building permit for all installations
  - Review times can vary widely based on reviewer assigned
  - Continue to investigate possibility of expedited process for installations on existing structures and new construction (e.g., electrical permit only)
  - Would alleviate burdens on already backlogged staff
- 10. Continue to investigate permit department website improvements and possibility of an online permit application system**
  - Very difficult to find solar-specific forms or procedures; could create process document or guide like other municipalities
- 11. Investigate ways to publicize energy efficiency requirements and expired permit requirements prior to solar application/installation**
  - Resolve these issues now so they do not slow down solar installations later
- 12. Continue to discuss "downtown grid" interconnection issues and identify potential solutions**
- 13. Continue to participate in collaborative actions**

**HOUSTON-SPECIFIC:**

- 14. Identify additional methods to better synchronize City of Houston and utility processes**
  - Contractors might not contact CenterPoint Energy (CNP) until after a system has been installed and completely through the City process; if something will not pass utility inspection, this could require significant re-work
  - Much of detailed information about the installation and its components may be lost by the time CNP is contacted in those situations
  - City could ask contractors if design plans have been submitted to CNP during permit application, for example; if not, contractor could begin to fill out those forms while waiting for permit approval
- 15. Continue to investigate IT solutions that could enable electronic submission of documents to the City permitting office and would allow online permit applications**
  - Could help resolve issues with incomplete/incorrect documentation and eliminate multiple (or any) trips to permit office
- 16. Investigate methods that would allow multiple City plan reviewers to look at applications simultaneously at One-Stop**
  - Currently is a sequential process using hard copies of plans
- 17. Release simplified/harmonized version of CenterPoint Energy DG application forms**
- 18. Continue to harmonize City of Houston and CenterPoint Energy applications and forms**
- 19. Continue to participate in collaborative actions**

**ALL:**

- 20. Continue communication between grant partners on city permitting requirements and procedures**
- 21. Continue communication between grant partners on utility interconnection processes and commissioning/inspection requirements**
- 22. Continue communication between grant partners on rebate application procedures**
- 23. Continue communication between grant partners on IT solutions and proposed upgrades**
  - As more applications are put on-line, will try to harmonize online processes and look/feel as feasible so harmonization progress is not lost
- 24. Continue to move towards common terminology**

- 25. Continue to harmonize forms as feasible**
- 26. Continue to offer trainings and working sessions for permit officials, installers, etc.**
- 27. Continue communications and workshops with surrounding municipalities**
- 28. Monitor homeowners association willingness to allow solar installations**
- 29. Continue to move to processes that are less reliant on individual knowledge and more process-based (to minimize impact of potential turnover issues on process efficiency)**