

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)**