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City of Sonoma Implements Automated Permitting Tool to Lower the Cost of Installing Residential Rooftop Solar PV

Sonoma, CA – October 5, 2023 – This week, the City of Sonoma became the second jurisdiction in Sonoma County to launch SolarAPP+, an automated application available to licensed contractors for permitting new residential rooftop solar photovoltaics (PV) and associated energy storage systems (ESS) that results in almost instantaneous review and permitting. SolarAPP+ lowers the costs and expedites solar installations, thereby encouraging property owners to invest in generating renewable and sustainable energy.

Developed by the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory \(NREL\)](#) under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy, SolarAPP+ provides a web-based portal that streamlines and automates permit reviews.

Increasing the speed of rooftop solar PV installations has a significant impact on a system's cost by lowering installation and permitting costs incurred while waiting for applications to be processed. [For a solar customer, these added expenses can amount to as much as \\$5,000 for a typical residential solar system](#) (PDF).

Reducing the overall cost of installing solar power on one- and two-family dwellings is one of the key strategies identified in the City's recently released [Draft Climate Action Strategies](#) which aim to reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions. The [draft document](#) highlights the importance of increasing affordability to drive the installation of PV solar on existing buildings.

"The launch of SolarAPP+ will provide an opportunity for contractors installing solar PV systems in the City of Sonoma to significantly shorten permitting timeframes and reduce costs for new residential rooftop solar PV and associated ESS installations. These cost savings can then be passed on to their customers, making solar PV more accessible to more residents." said Wayne Wirick, City of Sonoma Development Services Director/Building Official.

For more information, instructions, and to apply online, go to the Expedited Solar Permitting for One & Two-Family Dwellings page on the City of Sonoma's web site at <https://www.sonomacity.org/expedited-solar-permitting-one-two-family-dwellings/>.

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