

## Docket Optical System - Comments on the Proposed Renewable Planning and Permitting Program Grants

# DOCKET

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**Date:** 2/15/2011 3:49 PM

**Subject:** Comments on the Proposed Renewable Planning and Permitting Program Grants

The City of San José is pleased to offer input on the California Energy Commission's Request for Comments on the Proposed Renewable Planning and Permitting Program Grants. San José has long been a leader by encouraging the adoption of renewable energy use and continues to pursue ambitious community-wide goals.

For your consideration, we have provided a copy of the question with the City's response beneath each question.

### Questions:

1) What are the key challenges with planning, permitting and environmental issues in your local jurisdiction related to renewable energy development?

Response: The City of San José has worked hard to streamline permitting and inspections in order to facilitate wide spread adoption of solar, which has resulted in the installation of over 27MW of solar electricity, more than any City in California. The key challenges the City faces are associated with the need for staffing resources to implement additional streamlining measures such as online permitting for residential and commercial systems, and linking the online permitting with other renewable energy installation activities (inspections and PG&E notification).

2) What steps, information, tools, resources, etc. are necessary to revise the current land use plans and/or General Plans of your local jurisdiction to expedite the permitting process for renewable energy projects?

Response: The City is close to completing its Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan Update which includes the goal and policy framework to facilitate permit streamlining for renewable energy projects. Resources would be needed to implement these goals.

3) Does your local jurisdiction currently have best practices in place for permitting renewable energy projects?

Response: The City currently provides over-the-counter streamlined permitting and inspections for residential systems that meet certain criteria and also provides for next day inspection scheduling. With recent changes to the fire code, the process for commercial permitting and inspection has become more challenging by adding additional review time and cost to permittees.

4) What additional funds, resources, or tools would be required to develop new plans, policies or ordinances to expedite renewable energy development in your local jurisdiction?

Response: The city would need additional funding for staffing to implement measures such as online permitting of all systems and environmental review of utility-scale systems. The City anticipates needing funding in the future to develop municipal code updates to facilitate the permitting of new renewable energy generation technologies as these technologies become available.

5) Will your local jurisdiction be able to contribute match funds for an RP3 grant to develop the needed new plans, policies, or ordinances to expedite renewable energy development? If so, how much? Has your local jurisdiction already begun the process to develop such plans, policies, or ordinances?

Response: San José has been experiencing budget reductions for 10 straight years. It is very unlikely that the City would be able to contribute a General Fund match, other than in-kind resources. The City would likely need to rely on existing grant funds to meet a match requirement however, with a significant number of State and Federal grants ending over the next 12-18 months, it is unlikely that the City could rely on this match funding source.

6) Does your current local jurisdiction's renewable energy development plan integrate with regional or statewide energy plans such as; Desert Renewable, Energy Conservation Plan, Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative, a Natural Community Conservation Plan, or a Habitat Conservation Plan?

Response: The City's Strategic Energy Plan and Green Vision goals to reduce per capita energy use and receive 100 percent electricity from renewable sources guide the City as it moves forward with encouraging more renewable energy development.

7) How will your local jurisdiction's planning effort help it reach state renewable energy procurement goals (Renewables Portfolio Standard – 33 percent by 2020), and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (AB 32)?

Response: The City has a goal of reducing per capita energy use by 50 percent as well as receiving 100 percent of electrical power from clean renewable sources by 2022. We believe these goals are in alignment with State goals. Additionally, the City's proposed Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan contains strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting the development of green buildings, renewable energy generation and the reduction of vehicle miles traveled through a land use and transportation fabric that improves access to jobs, housing, and services, and promotes walking, bicycling and transit.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this important topic and look forward to continuing this meaningful dialogue. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (408) 975-2581 or [mary.tucker@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:mary.tucker@sanjoseca.gov)

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