

Quality and Productivity Commission
27th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Saluting County Excellence"

35.0

2013 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: ENHANCED SOLAR POWER INSTALLATION FEES/PROCEDURES

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: SEPTEMBER 30, 2011
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2012)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

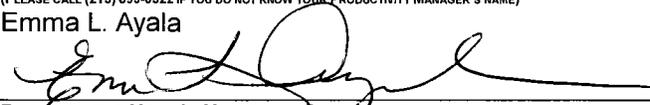
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner

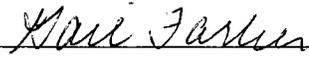
1 As solar power systems sweep throughout California in exponential numbers, the
 2 challenge of streamlining the plan review process, educating design professionals on
 3 code provisions, and reducing permitting fees coupled with State and local rebate
 4 deadlines intensified the importance of this task. Faced with this challenge, LA County
 5 Public Works' Mostafa Kashe quickly and effectively developed a standard electrical
 6 guide for the design and review of residential solar panel installations that helped design
 7 professionals and Building and Safety's staff to expedite the design and review process.
 8 Mr. Kashe's tireless efforts to train County staff and Code Officials of other jurisdictions
 9 helped standardize and spread the use of the standard electrical guide across several
 10 other jurisdictions. Mr. Kashe also assisted in formulating a reasonable flat fee for the
 11 review and permitting costs for the provided service. Mr. Kashe's responsiveness and
 12 unsurpassed knowledge of the electrical design of solar power systems played an
 13 integral part in streamlining the plan review phase and reduction of fees associated with
 14 the permitting process while maintaining the effectiveness of code review and
 15 inspection services needed to safeguard the public's wellbeing.

(1) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ESTIMATED/ACTUAL BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$ 0	X

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works 900 S. Fremont Ave., Alhambra CA 91803	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 458-4093
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PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Hassan Alameddine Building & Safety Division	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 458-6372 EMAIL halamedd@dpw.lacounty.gov
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PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Emma L. Ayala 	DATE 6/26/13	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 458-4093 EMAIL eayala@dpw.lacounty.gov
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DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Gail Farber 	DATE 6/27/13	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 458-4002
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Challenge: On December 12, 2005, the California Public Utilities Commission approved the California Solar Initiative setting stage for the largest publicly supported solar energy program in the world. Soon after, the Building Departments throughout the State began to experience an increase in building applications to install solar photovoltaic systems to single family dwellings. The increase in demand for solar power installations was due to rising energy costs, concerns about the environment, and State rebate incentives.

Additional legislation amending the California Solar Rights Act such as AB 2473 had provisions requiring permitting solar systems without delay and without restrictions due to aesthetics. Also, the intent of AB 2473 was to provide a reasonable cost for the review and permitting service instead of the standard methodology based on the monetary valuation of the system, which could potentially discourage the installation of solar power systems.

In addition, on June 10, 2009, the motion by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, in response to the Sierra Club’s [Non-Profit Organization] concerns of permitting fees and time delays, was to “eliminate unnecessary or duplicative regulatory review processes that add time delays and additional costs to the approval process for solar energy facilities.” The challenge was to determine a reasonable permitting cost that would cover the permitting services and congruently streamline the review and inspection process without minimizing code oversight.

Solution: The LA County Public Works Department, Building and Safety Division, responded promptly by analyzing various methods for adjusting the plan review and permitting fees based on the time involved for the review and inspection service. As such, Mr. Kashe, Head of Building & Safety’s Electrical Section, reviewed various alternatives and recommended that a plan review fee and permitting fee be based on the number of electrical components that any given size of solar power system would normally include. This creative method of determining fees is linear and scalable and would serve as a basis for larger scaled commercial solar power systems too.

For the installation of solar power systems on residential structures, two fixed fees were determined based on the size of the electrical inverters. The fees for inverters less than or equal to 10kw and inverters greater than 10kw but less than or equal to 50kw are \$388.20 and \$727.80, respectively. This simplified method of determining the fee made it easier and more efficient for both the contractors and our processing of the review/permit fees.

Moreover, Public Works proactively adjusted the fees long before it was mandated by Senate Bill SB 1222 that was filed with the Secretary of State on September 27, 2012. In fact, the fees adjusted by Public Works are lower than those mandated by SB 1222 by more than 30%.

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In addition, Mr. Kashe was instrumental in developing an electrical diagram for the review of residential photovoltaic systems wiring to ensure compliance with the electrical code. This method standardized the review of photovoltaic systems throughout the County and enabled Building and Safety staff to effectively review these proposed designs over the counter. In addition, contractors began to use the electrical diagram as part of their design concept and this diagram soon became well known to the industry and was used throughout other counties too. Eventually, this standard was recognized by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and became part of the California Solar Permitting Guidebook.

In addition, Mr. Kashe worked tirelessly to train all of the Building and Safety staff and other Code Officials on the review of photovoltaic systems by coordinating and planning numerous seminars that are offered by local organizations.

Benefits: Mr. Kashe’s can-do attitude in developing a standard electrical guide for the design and review of the residential solar panel installations helped expedite the design and review process. This electrical guide sheet was a creative way of increasing the review efficiency without jeopardizing the effectiveness of code review.

Mr. Kashe also assisted in formulating a reasonable flat fee for the plan review and permitting process. These fees are lower than what the State mandates for all city and counties by more than 30%.

In summary, Mr. Kashe’s responsiveness and unsurpassed knowledge of the electrical design of solar power systems played an integral part in the streamlining of the plan review phase and in reducing the fees associated with the permitting process without jeopardizing the effectiveness of code review and inspection services needed to safeguard the public’s wellbeing.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):

The Enhanced Solar Power Installation Fees/Procedures meets the County Strategic Plan goal of Operational Effectiveness and Integrated Services Delivery. By developing a review fee and permitting fee based on the number of electrical components that any given size of solar power system would normally include, the process is linear and scalable. The permitting process was streamlined without jeopardizing the effectiveness of code review and inspection services needed to safeguard the public’s wellbeing.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY

N/A