Office of the City Manager

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Jordan Klein, Director, Planning and Development Department

Subject: Grant Funding Application for SolarAPP+ integration

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager or their designee to submit a grant application in the amount of $80,000 to The California Energy Commission, to receive technical assistance to integrate the SolarAPP+ web software to the City of Berkeley Permit Service Center operations, and to accept grant funds and execute a resulting grant agreement.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The City of Berkeley would be reimbursed for up to $80,000 in eligible expenses including staffing costs, software integration consultants, internal training, public outreach, required hardware, and maintenance. Funds would be deposited to account 336-53-585-632-0000-000-000-432110- and expended for consultant services from account 336-53-585-632-0000-000-441-612990-.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Integration of SolarAPP+ or a similar software tool to enable quick permitting of small rooftop solar projects is a mandatory requirement of California Senate Bill 379. It also advances the City's Strategic Plan Priorities to:

- be a customer-focused organization that provides excellent, timely, easily-accessible service and information to the community.
- be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

The California Energy Commission is providing financial assistance to jurisdictions for SolarAPP+ integration. At the time of writing, this grant program has already made a Notice of Proposed Award (NOPA) for 72 CA jurisdictions.

Financial assistance from this grant will allow Berkeley to work with vetted information technology (IT) integration partners to assist internal IT staff. This will expedite the SolarAPP+ software integration, and supplement both internal and public training.

SolarAPP+ is an automated platform which verifies compliance with all applicable building, electrical, and other City codes, based on the information a permit applicant submits, and issues permits in real time for small residential solar PV systems.

BACKGROUND
A $19 million funding pool became available to CA municipal governments in amounts up to $100,000, based on population and on a first come, first served basis, with an application deadline of May 1, 2023. Based on its population, Berkeley's award eligibility is $80,000. The City of Berkeley is obliged by the SB-379 legislative mandate to implement the Solar APP+ or equivalent service delivery by September 30, 2023. These grant funds would help defray associated implementation expenses for the City, thereby reducing internal compliance costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS
Increased ease of obtaining rooftop solar PV building permits will accelerate PV adoption and the transition to reduced emissions electricity. Live permitting will improve the City's service delivery to private individuals, businesses, and institutions within the Berkeley community while maintaining the safety standards of currently adopted building codes.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION
The State funding awards would help defray software integration costs, which Berkeley will incur regardless of this grant application, in order to comply with SB-379.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED
There are no known alternative state or federal funding sources to defray SolarApp+ integration costs for the City of Berkeley.

CONTACT PERSON
Kurt Hurley, Planning & Development Department, Green Building Program Manager, 510-981-7501

Attachments:
1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR THEIR DESIGNEE TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF $80,000 TO THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION, TO RECEIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INTEGRATE THE SOLARAPP+ WEB SOFTWARE TO THE CITY OF BERKELEY PERMIT SERVICE CENTER OPERATIONS, AND TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS AND EXECUTE A RESULTING GRANT AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, California is accelerating the installation and interconnection of roof top solar PV and increasing the distributed generation of clean electricity; and

WHEREAS, California may require up to 6 gigawatts of new renewable and storage resources annually to achieve it renewable energy goals; and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Senate BIll 100 Joint Agency Report suggests rooftop PV installations must increase dramatically to achieve 100% Clean Electricity; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill SB 379 mandates that jurisdictions implement live solar permitting by September 30, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the required online, automated platform will verify code compliance and issue permits in real time for small residential solar PV systems up to 38.4 kW AC nameplate rating, optionally linked to an energy storage system up to 38.4 kW AC nameplate rating; and

WHEREAS, the platform will verify compliance to all applicable building, electrical, and other City codes employing applicant inputs during the permit application session; and

WHEREAS, The California Energy Commission has made available nineteen million dollars to local jurisdictions to defray implementation costs of real-time solar PV permitting; and

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley is eligible for up to eighty thousand dollars of project cost reimbursement.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager or their designee is authorized apply for said California Energy Commission GFO-21-402 grant funds in the eligible amount of $80,000, to accept the grant if awarded, and to execute any resulting grant agreement. A record signature copy of said agreements and any amendments to be on file the office of the City Clerk.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any funds awarded shall be used for staff costs for software integration and maintenance, professional services costs for software

integration and maintenance, costs related to internal software training, costs related to public software training, and any ongoing maintenance costs.