IN THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

A RESOLUTION authorizing the County to join Solar Ready KC, a partnership with the Mid-America Regional Council, several city and county governments, Kansas City Power & Light, and solar industry experts to respond to the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Rooftop Solar Challenge.

RESOLUTION #17977, September 17, 2012

INTRODUCED BY Scott Burnett, Theresa Garza Ruiz, and Crystal Williams, County Legislators

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Energy has created the SunShot Rooftop Solar Challenge grant to assist communities in the advancement of solar power projects by fostering improved planning, installation, and permit-granting processes; and,

WHEREAS, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has formed a partnership with a consortium of city and county governments, Kansas City Power and Light, and solar industry experts to further this process; and,

WHEREAS, the demand for solar power in the United States is at an all-time high, with the U.S. on track to install 85 percent more solar panels in the first quarter of 2012 compared to the first quarter of 2011; and,

WHEREAS, the Solar Ready KC initiative will provide local government representatives with the latest information and best practices to prepare for policy and market changes and to position communities and the region for this new renewable energy economy; and,

WHEREAS, consistent policies and streamlined permit-granting and planning processes implemented throughout the region will have a lasting positive impact and make the metropolitan Kansas City region solar ready; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the County Legislature of Jackson County, Missouri, that the Legislature endorses the objectives of the Solar Ready KC initiative and is willing to join the consortium of local governments to prepare for policy and market changes for the new renewable energy economy; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Jackson County is willing to review its current permit-granting and planning processes and make revisions, where necessary, that align with the best management practices identified in the Solar Ready KC initiative; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Jackson County is willing to participate in ongoing discussions with other partners on topics of solar permitting and zoning ordinances in the hopes to make region-wide consistent policies and processes.

Effective Date: This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its passage by a majority of the Legislature.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Chief Deputy County Counselor

County Counselor

Certificate of Passage

I hereby certify that the attached resolution, Resolution #17977 of September 17, 2012, was duly passed on September 24, 2012 by the Jackson County Legislature. The votes thereon were as follows:

Yeas 9 Nays 0

Abstaining 0 Absent 0

9.24.12
Date

Mary Jo Spino, Clerk of Legislature

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Solar Ready KC | Kansas City, Mo. | Lee's Summit, Mo. | Olathe, Ks. | Clay County, Mo. | Johnson County, Ks.

Dear Mike/Fred:

I would like to invite Jackson County to join MARC's Solar Ready KC initiative. Our goal is to foster local government solar process and planning improvements in the greater Kansas City region.

In 2011, MARC formed an initial partnership with a consortium of five city and county governments, Kansas City Power & Light and solar industry experts to respond to the Department of Energy's Rooftop Solar Challenge. The greater Kansas City metro was one of 22 regional teams selected nationally. We have spent the first six months of the grant conducting research and identifying best management practices in permitting, planning and zoning processes. It is now time to expand the consortium and build a region-wide, consistent approach to solar installations.

Current consortium members in the Solar Ready KC initiative are:

- City of Kansas City, Mo.
- City of Olathe, Kan.
- City of Lee's Summit, Mo.
- Johnson County, Kan.
- Clay County, Mo.
- Kansas City Power & Light (KCP&L)

For your information, I have attached an overview of the Solar Ready KC project and an executive summary of the best management practices. I have also attached a resolution that describes how the county can participate.

Please let me know if the county is interested in joining the Solar Ready KC consortium and when you might forward the resolution to your governing body for consideration. We would like to report our expanded consortium membership to the DOE by December 1, 2012.

Thank you for your consideration.

Georgia

Georgia Nesselrode, Ed.D.
Director of Local Government Services | Mid-America Regional Council | 600 Broadway, Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105-1659
ph 816.701.8207| fax 816/421-7758 | gnessel@marc.org | www.marc.org

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Best Management Practices for Solar Installation Policy in Kansas City and Beyond

Overview

In 2012, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) formed a partnership with a consortium of city and county governments, Kansas City Power & Light (KCP&L) and solar industry experts to respond to the Department of Energy's Rooftop Solar Challenge. The goal of the Challenge is to achieve measurable improvements in market conditions for rooftop photovoltaics (PV) across the United States, with an emphasis on streamlined and standardized permitting and interconnection processes. MARC, with its partners, is one of 22 groups nationally that have received the Rooftop Solar Challenge grant.

The Solar Ready KC project has sought to further DOE's grant goals by fostering the solar installation process and planning improvements in the greater Kansas City region through collaboration, education and outreach. Participants in the Solar Ready KC initiative include:

- City of Kansas City, Mo.
- City of Olathe, Kan.
- City of Lee's Summit, Mo.
- Johnson County, Kan.
- Clay County, Mo.
- KCP&L

The demand for solar power in the United States is at an all-time high. In the first quarter of 2012, developers installed 85 percent more solar panels compared to the first quarter of 2011. Total U.S. installations may reach 3,300 megawatts this year – putting the country on track to be the fourth largest solar market in the world. The rapidly declining price for solar technologies, in combination with federal, state and local policy changes are bringing increasing amounts of solar energy into the mainstream. The national trend toward renewable energy and the reduction in costs of solar power is currently being seen in the Kansas City region. During 2012, KCP&L anticipates an unprecedented level of 600 requests for net metered and interconnected solar systems.

The Solar Ready KC initiative will provide local government representatives with the latest information and best practices to prepare for policy and market changes and to position their communities and the region for this new renewable energy economy.

Background

For the first six months of the grant, MARC and its partners have worked diligently to identify best management practices (BMPs) in the area of solar permitting and planning and to investigate which practices would aid and improve local government processes currently in place in the Kansas City region.

Improvements in the permitting and planning process are one of the fastest and most effective means to facilitate solar installations. They can make the process clear and seamless by offering a centralized location for up-to-date information, standardizing permit fees, coordinating utility notification and establishing a process to pre-qualified plans and installers.

The BMPs highlighted in this document fall into two categories: **process improvements** and **planning improvements**. They are also presented in a step-by-step process to guide the reader through the proposed adoption strategy.

Conclusion

Consistent policies and streamlined permitting and planning processes implemented throughout the region will have lasting positive impact and make the metropolitan Kansas City region solar ready.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy under Award Number DE-EE0005694/000.

August 2012

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

WHY? Permitting process improvements are one of the fastest and most effective means to facilitate solar installations. Offering a centralized location for information that clearly explains the process, standardizing permit fees, incorporating utility notification and pre-qualifying plans and installers make the process clear and seamless.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Step 1

STREAMLINE PERMITS

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Provide central information source for potential solar customers	Provide centralized location, preferably web-based, for solar information: how it works, frequently asked questions, contact and other relevant details.	• Creates a single reference. • Reduces staff time answering questions.	Template language provided for jurisdiction customization	Solar San Antonio: www.solarsanantonio.org
Create a permit checklist summarizing the process to obtain all necessary permits.	Provide a list that documents the steps and necessary items for securing a permit to install solar. The optimal checklist applies to both residential and commercial installations.	• Clearly defines items needed for permit. • Reduces staff time answering questions. • Helps contractors submit complete and consistent permit applications.	Hybrid checklist/permit application developed by MARC	City of Dallas, Texas: Solar Panel Water Heater or Other Photovoltaic Systems Application Checklist: http://dallascityhall.com/pdf/Building/SolarHotWaterSystemChecklist.pdf
Develop permit criteria outlining thresholds for "standard" installations and streamline permitting processes accordingly	Provide a template that fosters the quick permitting of installations that do not require additional permit review.	• Concentrates permit review on those installations that need it. • Doesn't slow permitting of standard installations.	Hybrid checklist/permit application developed by MARC	City of Philadelphia, Penn.: Solar PV System Installations with an Electric Permit Only: www.phila.gov/green/PDFs/Streamlined%20Solar%20Standards.pdf

STANDARDIZE PERMIT FEES

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Establish a fixed fee based on cost recovery for residential PV permit applications	A stated fee list for PV permits.	• Removes permit cost surprises for installers. • Easy for staff to provide.	Example fee list based on $50/hour internal cost.	Silicon Valley, Calif.: www.SolarPermitFees.org/NorCalPVFeeReport.pdf
Adopt the PV Permit Fee Calculator for commercial rooftop systems	Excel spreadsheet that quickly calculates commercial PV permit fees based on project parameters and jurisdiction hourly rates.	• Easy for staff to use. • If provided online, installers can better budget for permit fee.	Excel template provided for jurisdiction customization.	Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter: www.solarpermitfees.org/PVFeeCalcConimercial.xls

NOTIFY UTILITY

Notify utility when permit applications are received and electrical inspections are complete	Jurisdiction contacts utility once electrical inspections are completed.	• Makes installation process seamless. • Removes possibility of miscommunication between contractor and utility.	Process case studies	San Diego Gas & Electric: http://sdge.com/sites/default/files/documents/nem-30kw-interconnection_appl_0.pdf
Conduct joint inspections with local utility and jurisdiction (municipal utilities only)	Allows municipal utilities and their jurisdictional body to eliminate redundancy.	• Streamlines process. • Eliminates redundancy. • Reduces costs for jurisdiction.	Process case studies	City of Santa Clara, Calif.: http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?recordid=558&page=50

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Develop a process for pre-qualification of standard plans	Standard electrical permit plans outlining system design and components become "pre-qualified" for installation. The permitting department immediately issues the electrical permit and the inspector confirms the system conforms to the approved design.	• For straightforward PV installations, pre-qualification reduces staff time for permitting. • Allows staff to focus on evaluating permit applications from installers that do not have a proven track record.	Process case studies	City of Honolulu, Hawaii: www.fsec.ucf.edu/en/certification-testing/index.htm
Develop a process for pre-qualification of installers	Utilize either the National America Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) or an installer's successful installation record to pre-qualify an installer and simplify their submittal process.	• Reduces staff time required on applications from installers who have proven track record with the jurisdiction. • Streamlines process for installer, reducing time and costs. • A national certification establishes a known and equitable means of guaranteeing installation safety and quality.	Process case studies	City of Portland, Ore.: www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/47394

PLANNING IMPROVEMENTS

WHY? **Planning improvements codify and emphasize a jurisdiction's support of a building owner's right to use solar. Removing local ordinance barriers, adopting facilitating code, encouraging solar readiness and incentivizing solar acceptance in new developments fosters a community supports individual choice.**

Step 1
- **Improve Solar Access**

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Step 1

IMPROVE SOLAR ACCESS

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Incorporate solar access priorities in comprehensive plans	The incorporation of policies addressing solar siting in land use and landscaping considerations facilitate access to solar and its use.	• Clarifies importance of solar in the community. • Reduces future challenges concerning solar rights.	Model language provided for jurisdiction use	City of Shakopee, Minn.: 2030 Comprehensive Plan: www.ci.shakopee.mn.us/pages/2030CompPlan/12%20Solar%20Access.pdf
Adopt a solar access ordinance	A clear definition of unreasonable restrictions and the types of structures that will be covered by the solar ordinance. This should also include a coordinated review of other local ordinances to address conflicting policies.	• Establishes the importance of solar access to developers, builders and property owners. • Reduces the potential for future conflicts about solar access.	Model language provided for jurisdiction use	City of Kansas City, Mo.: Proposed Zoning and Development Code Amendment to Promote Sustainable Development Practices: www.kcmo.org/CKCMO/Depts/CityPlanningandDevelopment/Resources/EnergyCalculator/SUSTAINDEVTTRPT_050912

EDUCATE DEVELOPERS

Provide tools for new developments	Solar education materials can help create awareness of the issues regarding solar energy, tree growth, and access to sunlight.	• Enables developers to incorporate solar-friendly policies in CC&Rs before construction starts.	Model CC&R language provided for jurisdiction use.	South Carolina Energy Office Solar-Friendly Communities: www.energy.sc.gov/index.aspx?m=6&t=93

EDUCATE HOMEOWNERS

Provide homeowners and HOAs with recommended strategies	Recommended strategies may include adoption of a green mission statement, sustainability audit, covenant language for adoption.	• Provides homeowners and their associations with guidelines to improve solar access.	Model language provided for jurisdiction use	Creekside, Ore.: HOA Solar Guidelines http://lohrman.com/blogimage/ApprovedGuidelines.pdf

IMPROVE SOLAR READINESS

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Develop a solar ready buildings checklist for new construction	A checklist that outlines a building's site, physical characteristics and electrical specifications that minimize the future cost of solar system installation.	• Reinforces jurisdiction's support of solar energy. • Creates desirable building stock for owners interested in solar energy.	Template language provided for jurisdiction customization	City of Boston, Mass.: Department of Neighborhood Development Solar Ready Guidelines: www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/PDFs/D_2010_DND_DESIGN_STANDARDS-112010.pdf
Adopt new ordinances or building codes to promote solar ready construction	The inclusion of either a solar system or electrical conduit for later installation on all new building projects.	• Reinforces importance of solar in the jurisdiction. • Insures design of new construction is solar ready.	Model language provided for jurisdiction use	Tucson, Ariz.: Citywide Residential Solar Readiness Ordinance No. 10549: http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/files/agdocs/20080617/june17-08-311.pdf

Action	Description	Benefits	Solar Ready KC Resources	Example
Create incentives for the adoption of best practices	Incentives, such as tax breaks or credits, are utilized to encourage new development that includes solar access regulations in covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) and homeowners' association bylaws.	• Fosters community adoption of solar standards. • Protects residents' right to install solar.		Exemption for Renewable Energy Systems: www.dsireusa.org/documents/Incentives/CO50F.htm