

## Solar App Webinar Questions: Counties & Cities 2.2.2023

1. Shannon YAUCHZEE San Bernardino: San Bernardino County is one of the largest Counties in square miles in the USA. It sounds like a great idea, but we have at least 5 different snow load zones. I understand Solar APP+ can only handle one snow load. How can we then comply with State Law.
  - a. During the SolarAPP+ onboarding process, please provide snow load details for the zone with the heaviest load. This will cause installers using SolarAPP+ in any part of a jurisdiction to design the solar system as if it was in the most stringent snow load zone. Installers can generally comply with the additional structural requirements to accommodate large snow loads without significant additional costs.
2. J. Kerrigan: It is frequent that 3 contractors apply for solar for the same permit. Solar estimators visit property owners and then apply for permits. Then they request refunds when ultimately they lose the "bid". Does this bill address the costs associated with less than scrupulous contractors?
  - a. The Solar Access Act (SB-379) does not address permit fees. Jurisdictions can continue to charge permit fees to cover their costs. If an installer uses SolarAPP+ to apply for a permit on a project that is never built, the jurisdiction has discretion on to what degree to reimburse the installer.
3. Arlen Eskandari: Can you please elaborate a little more on SolarAPP+ and what it does in terms of electronic plan review, permitting, etc.? Cause our jurisdiction currently has electronic plan check and permitting system where applicant can submit application and plans electronically.

SolarAPP+ automates the plan review, and there is no human review. SolarAPP+ produces a simple inspection checklist highlighting the elements that should be verified during inspection, accompanied by the SolarAPP+ long form, which captures all inputs and calculations done by the program. For more details on how SolarAPP+ works see our demonstration: [https://youtu.be/xKhX\\_UAT8YQ](https://youtu.be/xKhX_UAT8YQ).

4. Carolyn: How does this software address the issue of a contractor placing solar panels on an unpermitted structure?
5. Mike Jenkins City of Lakewood Los Angeles: What about installations on illegal structures? Who checks for that?

Since SolarAPP+ cannot verify code compliance for projects that involve trenching, solar panels installations approved by SolarAPP+ must be located on the structure with the main service panel, which is permitted. SolarAPP+ cannot verify code compliance for solar panels on shade structures, whether permitted or unpermitted, attached to the house. Those projects must go through traditional plan review. Additionally, we advise jurisdictions to inspect all SolarAPP+ projects.

6. Rick Caro: how about seismic requirements? SolarAPP+ can only intake one seismic design category so the most stringent should be used, similarly to snow load requirements outlined previously in this response document.
7. Sam Wong Pomona: The auto approval happens all within SolarAPP and it is expected that residents will then take their approval to the city for a permit. Is compliance based on just automating the approval process (i.e. SolarAPP suffices) or does compliance also require permit issuance to be automated (no staff involvement to validate SolarAPP approval)?
  - a. To comply with the Solar Access Act (SB-379), the jurisdiction must have a process for automating plan review and issuing the permit automatically. SolarAPP+ conducts plan

## Solar App Webinar Questions: Counties & Cities 2.2.2023

review and will either issue the permit or connect with the jurisdiction's GovTech software platform to issue the permit.

8. Ctatlou: Our jurisdiction also has our own electric utility. We require approval from electric utility prior to submitting to our building department. Will we be able to continue this process? and after electric approval, would the applicant have to apply and obtain the permit/site card through the building department? **Some communities require a signed interconnection agreement to be uploaded at time of permit submittal. This agreement must be reviewed/accurate before the contractor can schedule inspection.**
9. Matt Wirz City of Highland: the bill doesn't discuss the complexity of the system? does it believe its tied to size. so how does solar app+ meet SB379 requirements 38.4KW systems **SolarAPP+ can approve systems up to 38.4 kW provided they meet certain installation characteristics.**
10. 107057: Please confirm, can jurisdictions still issue solar permits in person for customers who elect to visit the jurisdiction in person. This would not be in violation of the law after September 2023.

**For a jurisdiction to comply with the Solar Access Act (SB-379), it must adopt SolarAPP+ or an equivalent platform. The law does not preclude jurisdictions from offering permitting via SolarAPP+ (or the equivalent) and traditional permitting services.**

11. Arlen Eskandari: What about local amendments to codes? For example, in our City, panels must be of class-A (minimum) **All local amendments must be discussed on a case-by-case basis to understand the public, health, and safety justification for the change and how that can be accommodated in SolarAPP+.**
12. Alex Yaskeb City of Watsonville: Is there a way to combine instant permitting - for example EV charger installation, battery storage, and building electrification in general - all in one system?

**SolarAPP+ can only be used for residential PV and PV+Storage systems. The current version of SolarAPP+ cannot issue permits for standalone batteries or EV chargers, although these features may be added in future updates.**

13. jkerrigan: Does SB1222 still apply?

**SB-1222 was updated by AB-1414 in 2017, which still applies.**

14. jkerrigan: Does this apply to energy storage systems (ESS) only permits?

**No, currently SolarAPP+ can only be used for PV and PV + Storage projects**

15. 107057: How does Solar App+ handle revisions to the system that result from field changes? Does the system allow for revisions to an existing permit?

**SolarAPP+ allows up to three project revisions free of charge, and contractors must pay \$25 for the fourth revision and each revision thereafter. SolarAPP+ is able to process any revisions as long as the new project design adheres to the SolarAPP+ Eligibility Checklist. Depending on the jurisdiction's process and their particular government permitting software, the permit with revisions may be issued automatically to the contractor. In other cases, the contractor may have to directly contact the jurisdiction's permitting office to notify them that project revisions have been made.**

## Solar App Webinar Questions: Counties & Cities 2.2.2023

16. JoReiSchnailbe City of Pomona: Does that mean that we are going to have two systems. Is there a way to export the data from solar app so we can load it into our system?

SolarAPP+ has two adoption pathways, the integrated version and the standalone version. Using the integrated version an installer would still input their project into SolarAPP+ and receive their approval documents. They would then be directed to your jurisdiction's portal to complete the process. In your existing portal, they would pay your permitting fee and upload all SolarAPP+ documentation. This concludes with your portal instantly issuing the permit. For more information on SolarAPP+ adoption methods, see [this article](#).

17. Joseph Contreras: City of Santa Monica: Will this pitch deck be provided via email? **Yes.**
18. Shannon YAUCHZEE San Bernardino: So if we require a 100 psf snow load and 120 mph wind load on every project, even when no snow load is required and a much lesser wind load exists, doesn't this drive up costs for those systems? **Contractors have informed us that higher snow and wind load requirements don't always result in higher install costs. If that was the case, contractors could consider submitting these projects the traditional way.**
19. JoReiSchnailbe City of Pomona: Is it account per person or per agency?

NREL recommends creating one SolarAPP+ account per installer or local government. Rather than having multiple employees at the same company/local government creating accounts, there would be one universal SolarAPP+ account with shared login credentials that would be used.

jkerrigan: Is commercial solar exempt? Or ground mounted?

SolarAPP+ is for residential PV and residential PV and Storage systems only. Ground mounted projects are not eligible. For detailed eligibility requirements, check [here](#)

20. Vinny Tam (Pomona): So if you integrate SolarAPP+ into an existing software do you fall under option 2? Are does the alternative system have to stand alone with NO integration with SolarAPP+?

Using SolarAPP+ with an existing electronic permitting system would fall under the integrated method. For more details, check [here](#)

21. Rudy Marengi Humboldt: If we choose to use SolarAPP stand alone version, get grant funding for implementation of that, and then later decide to integrate with our system, can we keep track of expenditure and still get grant funding for expenditures a second time at time of integrating with our system?

The grant funds can be used to adopt the stand-alone version of SolarAPP+ and then the integrated version of SolarAPP+. Funds spent adopting the integrated version would need to be covered by the initial grant.

22. Franc Moufarrej, CBO City of Livermore CA: Which design criteria is customizable vs not?

For details on SolarAPP+ customization, see [this article](#).

23. Matt Wirz, City of Highland: Is there a check on the contractor to verify they are currently licensed and authorized to do work in California or have the correct qualifications to pull the permit. (lets say their license if suspended)

## Solar App Webinar Questions: Counties & Cities 2.2.2023

Yes. SolarAPP+ verifies that all contractors have valid and unexpired State contractors licenses and applicable local licenses.

24. starnes : does Solar App take into account existing rafter size and spacing for roof loading (wind/snow) and if rafters are currently overspanned, how does this avoid human intervention and automatic approval?
  - a. SolarAPP+ can verify for code compliance for uses that are less than 4 lbs per sq foot. Since systems of this weight would not negatively impact the structural integrity of the building, SolarAPP+ does not evaluate roof loading.
25. James Verdugo (CBO) - City of Moreno Valley: Does Solar App provide a roof layout plan for the roof top solar install thereby showing compliance with panel orientations and roof access requirements?
  - a. No layout is provided by SolarAPP+, but fire setback diagrams are provided, and setbacks must be verified at time of inspection. Panel orientation is a requirement under the California Energy Code for new construction, and SolarAPP+ is only capable of verifying code compliance for existing construction at this point.
26. Mark McClain, City of King: When you say adopt, do you mean getting City Council to formally adopt a resolution?

Adoption refers to the City beginning to use SolarAPP+. We are not aware of any communities that have required City Council approval to pilot or adopt SolarAPP+.

27. Mike Jenkins, City of Lakewood, Los Angeles County: Is there a kW size cap for using the app?

SolarAPP+ is for rooftop residential solar systems. While SolarAPP+ does not specify a limit for the system's total rated wattage capacity, there are technical limits on the power rating of service panel equipment, and these are enforced by SolarAPP+. Projects may be permitted to interconnect to a maximum main service rating of 400A, and service disconnects and busbars rated for a maximum of 225A. If any project components exceed the above specification thresholds, the project will be designated as ineligible by the SolarAPP+ platform. See the [Eligibility Checklist](#) for more information. Depending on the design of the system, SolarAPP+ could in theory approve a project as large as 38.4 kW.

28. Jkerrigan: SolarApp account for setbacks (zoning)?
  - a. SolarAPP+ accounts for rooftop setbacks related to fire safety. SolarAPP+ does not account for rooftop setbacks related to zoning, which would be in violation of Section 65850.5(b) of the CA Government Code. SolarAPP+ does not have the capability to verify code compliance for systems that are ground mounted.
29. Matt Wirz, City of Highland, CA: how about limitations for property restrictions (red tagged properties) (historic regulations) (vacant parcels). SolarAPP+ is only for residential properties, for what is eligible see this [article](#). For information on historic district eligibility see: <https://help.solar-app.org/article/235-how-are-historic-districts-or-special-zoning-requirements-addressed-in-solarapp>.
30. Rodney Horton, City of Reedley : What happens if a city is not compliant by the deadline?

The city would be exposed to civil liability. Property owners, solar companies, the Attorney General, or other interested parties could possibly sue for damages and to bring the jurisdiction into compliance.