



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Planning and Building



Date: September 14, 2015
Board Meeting Date: September 22, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director

Subject: Ordinance Relating to Expedited Permitting Procedures for Small Residential Rooftop Solar Systems

RECOMMENDATION:

Adoption of an ordinance amending Chapter 3, Article 10 of the San Mateo County Building Regulations to provide an expedited, streamlined, permitting process for small residential rooftop solar systems, previously introduced on September 1, 2015, and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

Section 65850.5(a) of the California Government Code provides that it is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the installation and use of solar energy systems by limiting obstacles to their use and by minimizing the permitting costs of such systems. In furtherance of that objective, Section 65850.5(g)(1) of the California Government Code requires that, on or before September 30, 2015, every city, county, or city and county must adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems.

DISCUSSION:

The ordinance meets and codifies the requirements of Section 65850.5(g)(1), such as accepting and approving applications electronically, directing the County's Building Official to develop a checklist of all requirements with which small rooftop solar energy systems shall comply to be eligible for expedited review, and authorizing the Building Official to administratively approve such applications. The County will work cooperatively with Fire Agencies serving unincorporated areas in the development of the checklist of requirements, and to coordinate inspections.

Two minor non-substantive changes have been made to the ordinance since it was introduced on September 1, 2015. Specifically, Section 9263(b) of the ordinance now contains the clarification that only those fire district requirements that have been ratified

by the County will be imposed. This minor clerical change is necessary in order to make the ordinance consistent with both the intent of the provision and State law which requires that only fire district requirements ratified by the County will apply in the unincorporated areas. Section 9264(a) has been modified by removing a second reference to fire district requirements because the reference to fire requirements is both redundant and not appropriate for that section, which deals only with development of the expedited review process.

This action furthers the Shared Vision 2025 Livable Communities outcome by promoting and encouraging the use of small residential rooftop solar energy systems.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact, as the costs would be recovered through existing building permit fees.