



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County

Program Title: SolarApp+

Program Category: Technology

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Mandi Spina

Title: Director of Development Services

Department: Development Services

Telephone: 703-792-7455

Website: www.pwccgov.org

Email: mospina@pwccgov.org

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Christopher J. Shorter

Title: County Executive

Signature: 

## **Prince William County – SolarApp+**

### **Executive Summary: Prince William County – SolarApp+ Implementation**

Prince William County has experienced a dramatic rise in residential solar permit requests, increasing from just 14 in 2016 to 1,087 in 2022, with a 192% spike in approved solar building plans in early 2023 alone. In response, the Department of Development Services (DDS) formed a Residential Solar Working Group—composed of county staff and industry representatives—to address the growing demand and improve the permitting process.

This collaborative group initiated several key improvements, including a standardized County Typical Solar Plan and a streamlined Code Modification process. The centerpiece of their innovation was the adoption of SolarApp+, a cutting-edge, web-based platform enabling same-day, automated permitting for residential solar projects.

Through a year-long, cross-departmental effort involving extensive research and inter-jurisdictional collaboration, DDS piloted SolarApp+ with three local solar contractors in early 2024. Following its success, the platform was fully launched in October 2024. As of April 2025, six contractors have been approved, and 165 permits issued via the system—significantly reducing review time, costs, and staff workload.

This innovative initiative not only enhances customer experience and operational efficiency, but also sets the stage for broader use of same-day permitting across other development services in the County.

**Challenge: Solar Permitting Request Surge**

The Residential Solar Industry has seen exponential growth in Prince William County, from 14 total applications in calendar year 2016 to 1,087 in calendar year 2022. In the first quarter of calendar year 2023, the Department of Development Services (DDS) saw a 192% increase in the number of residential solar building plans approved compared to the same time-period in 2022. Faced with the surge in demand for processing permits for these projects, DDS created a Residential Solar Working Group (Working Group) with the aim to enhance customer experience through innovation and streamlining the residential solar permitting process.

**Collaboration: The Working Group**

The Working Group, comprised of county staff and residential solar industry members, met monthly from November 2022 to August 2024 to focus on process improvements and industry needs based on the fast-paced growth and demand for residential solar installations. The result of the Working Group was multiple process improvements, including a County Typical Solar Plan that allowed for expedited review, as well as the ability to submit County-Wide Code Modifications, allowing all residential solar contractors to utilize the Code Modification form. The Working Group also focused on a product called SolarApp+, a system designed to offer same-day instantaneous residential solar permitting. County staff then began conducting research on how to implement the program into Prince William County's permitting process.

**Solution: SolarApp+**

SolarApp+ is a system designed to automate the residential solar permitting process. The integrated web portal allows approved contractors to submit their projects through the SolarApp+

system, which will check for jurisdiction-required criteria such as system designs for safety and code compliance and issue a same-day instantaneous permit. DDS staff worked in collaboration with the Working Group prior to the pilot and implementation, ensuring that all members of the process had input and buy-in prior to launch. DDS staff also conducted fact-finding calls to the other Virginia localities (Culpeper and the City of Richmond) using the SolarApp+ platform to learn the successes and challenges of the platform in order to incorporate other localities' lessons learned.

### **Implementation: From Pilot to Launch**

After a year-long research, development, and implementation phase, which included collaboration and partnership with the Prince William County Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to ensure system compatibility and integration efforts, DDS launched a pilot program of SolarApp+ in February 2024. The pilot program included three (3) residential solar companies and was a resounding success. DDS fully implemented the SolarApp+ permitting software in October 2024, offering same day permitting to applicable residential solar projects and approved contractors. SolarApp+ offered time and cost savings to the in-demand residential solar installation projects.

Implementing SolarApp+ resulted in:

- Streamlined residential solar permitting process
- Cost/time savings for contractors and citizens installing residential solar
- Education for contractors on jurisdiction-specific requirements, as there is a mandatory meeting with county staff prior to becoming an approved user of SolarApp+

- Decrease in plan review staff time, as there is no longer a formal plan review for SolarApp+ submitted projects (compliance checks and building permit approvals are processed via SolarApp+).

Specifically, as of April 2025, six (6) residential solar contractors have received approval to use the system, and 165 total permits have been issued using the same day permitting system. The other added benefit to SolarApp+ is the requirement for contractors who would like to be an approved system user to enroll and participate in a required Prince William County Jurisdiction Requirement course with the Prince William County Construction Inspections Team. The course serves as an educational opportunity for contractors to learn the Prince William County inspections requirements.

SolarApp+ is a groundbreaking project for Prince William County. At the time of implementation, only three (3) other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia offered SolarApp+, with Prince William County being the largest, and only one (1) additional jurisdiction on the East Coast offering SolarApp+.

## **Conclusion**

Deploying SolarApp+ was a cross-departmental and multi-sector collaboration where process improvements were made with the partnership of and input from the development community, internal departments, as well as frequent communication with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure best practices were captured. The success of SolarApp+ has also led to discussions on other permitting processes that may be able to use same day permitting to ensure efforts to save time and money during the permitting process are carried over outside of the realm of the solar permitting requests.

The implementation of this monumental and innovative program was spearheaded by Prince William County's Building Official, Eric Mays, as well as the following members of the Department of Development Services and Department of Information Technology:

- Chad Roop, Deputy Building Official
- Tom Clark, Construction Inspections Branch Manager
- Sylvanus Amevor, Structural Plan Review Supervisor
- Tread Willis, Electrical Plan Review Supervisor
- Brian Byrne, Structural Plan Reviewer
- Mark Curtis, Residential Inspections Supervisor
- George Clough, Electrical Inspections Supervisor
- Laura Foltz, Building Plan Intake Supervisor
- Jordan Raines, Residential Combination Inspector
- Rosa Moran, Development Services EnerGov Specialist
- Rajib Das, IT Analyst
- Syed Ali, Senior IT Analyst

- Mandi Spina, Director of Development Services

Additional Information:

Prince William County Launches SolarAPP+ for Home Solar Energy Systems