



City Manager News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Subject : San Carlos Receives "SolSmart Gold" Award

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SAN CARLOS, October 11, 2016 – [SolSmart](#), a program funded by the [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative](#), has awarded the City of San Carlos a Gold designation to recognize the City as a national leader in advancing solar energy.

As a SolSmart Gold designee, San Carlos is receiving national recognition for adopting programs and practices that make it faster, easier and less expensive to go solar. A SolSmart designation is a signal that the community is "open for solar business," helping to attract solar industry investment and generate economic development and local jobs. San Carlos is part of the first group to receive national recognition from SolSmart, and one of just over a dozen cities in the U.S. to achieve a Gold designation.

To achieve designation, the City took steps to reduce solar "soft costs," which are non-hardware costs that can increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system. Examples of soft costs include planning and zoning; permitting; financing; customer acquisition; and installation labor. Soft costs now represent roughly two-thirds of the total price of an installed residential system. Reducing these costs leads to savings that are passed on to consumers.

The City of San Carlos has taken several actions to reduce the "soft costs" associated with installing solar in the community. The permitting pathway for small photovoltaic (PV) systems has been streamlined. This includes offering solar permitting application submittal and review online, providing information about different solar PV financing options, keeping residential and commercial solar permitting fees low and providing a checklist for expedited permitting. These actions have reduced the solar permitting review turn-around time, which is between one and three days.

Mayor Cameron Johnson stated, "The City of San Carlos has been working toward streamlining the solar permitting process for some time. We wanted to make this process fast, easy and transparent. By reducing the "soft costs", we are doing our part to help make solar more affordable for our residents and business owners. Achieving SolSmart recognition demonstrates our leadership and commitment to bringing solar power to our community."

The SolSmart designation team, led by the [International City/County Management Association \(ICMA\)](#), evaluates communities and awards them points based on the actions they take to reduce soft costs and other barriers to solar. Communities that take sufficient action are designated either Bronze, Silver or Gold.

As part of the SolSmart program, the City of San Carlos is offered no-cost technical assistance from a team of national solar experts who can assist the City with additional steps it can take expand solar. The SolSmart technical assistance team is led by [The Solar Foundation](#).

Launched in April 2016, SolSmart aims to designate 300 communities during the three-year, federally funded program.

About SolSmart

SolSmart is a national designation and technical assistance program that recognizes leading solar communities and empowers additional communities to expand their local solar markets. Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, SolSmart strives to cut red tape, drive greater solar deployment and make it possible for even more American homes and businesses to access solar energy to meet their electricity needs. Learn more at [SolSmart.org](#).

About the SunShot Initiative

The [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative](#) is a collaborative national effort that aggressively drives innovation to make solar energy fully cost-competitive with traditional energy sources before the end of the decade. Through SunShot, the Energy Department supports efforts by private companies, universities and national laboratories to drive down the cost of solar electricity to \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour. Learn more at [energy.gov/sunshot](#).

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