

SOLAR PERMIT ANALYSIS & NATIVE TREE AND PLANT PROGRAM RESEARCH

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Solar Permit Analysis Project Background



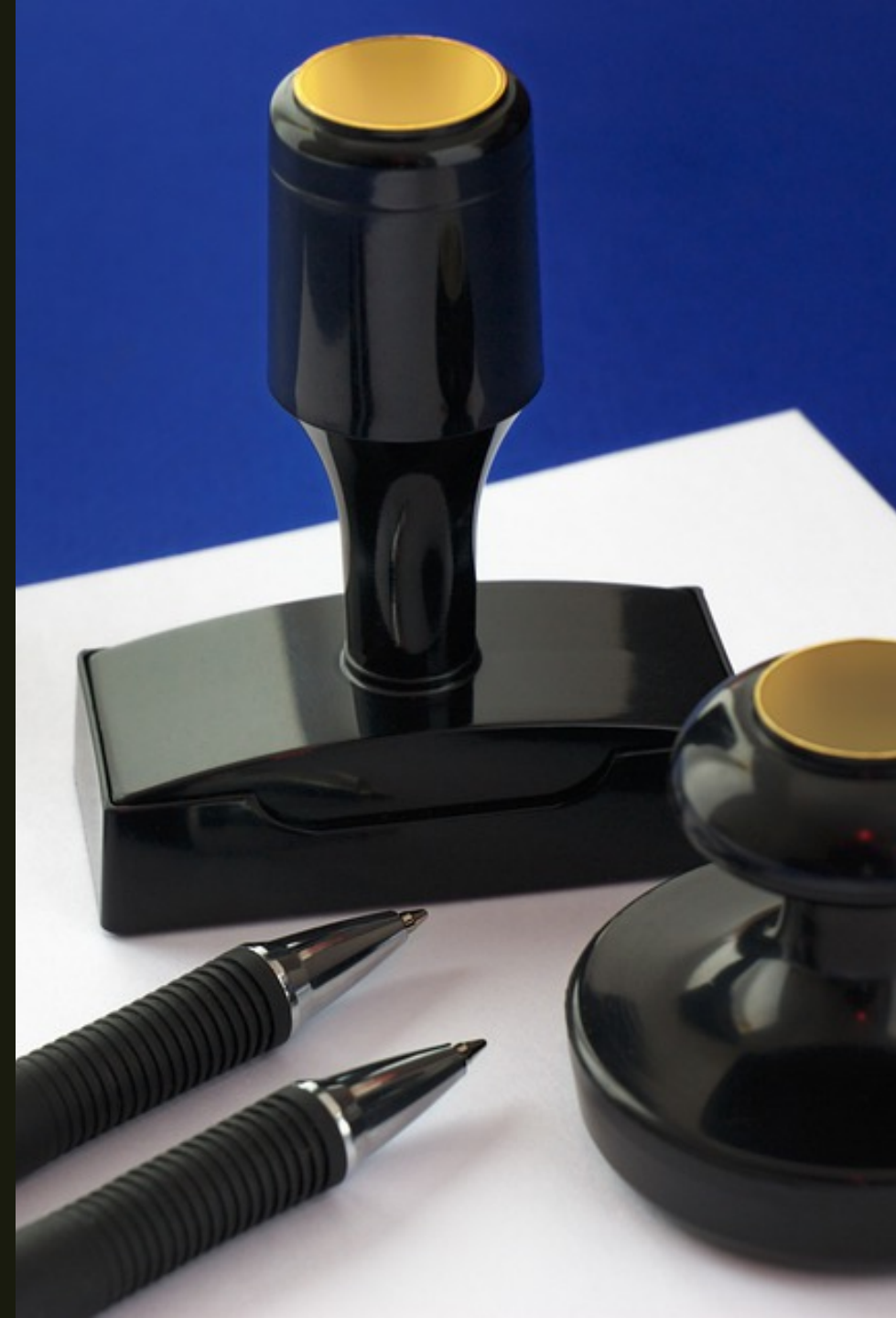
- Lake County currently has SolSmart Silver designation
 - *In order to achieve SolSmart Gold designation, a three (3) business day permit review turnaround time for residential roof-mounted solar energy systems must be achieved*
- In order to reduce barriers to solar, explore the option of standardizing the solar permit fee
 - *Not necessary for SolSmart Gold, but would benefit residents*

Solar Permit Analysis Process

1. Analyze the County's historical solar permit data which includes total permit fees, value of the project, and the number of days to review each permit.

Findings:

- Determine the average permit fee for a residential solar permit and number of days to review the permit.
- Determine the range of solar permit fees, project values, and days to review permit.
- Identify relationships between variables, if any.





Solar Permit Analysis Process

2. Conduct best practice research of solar permit fee schedules for municipalities in the greater Chicago region.

Findings:

- Gathered the solar permit fee schedule of 20 municipalities.
- 16 out of the 20 municipalities charged a standardized fee for the solar permit.
- Determined fiscal impacts if Lake County were to adopt a standardized solar fee.

Solar Permit Analysis Process

3. Create solar permit fee recommendations based on best practice research and historical solar permit analysis.

Findings:

- Presenting recommendations to departmental leadership (PB&D) in the coming weeks.



Solar Permit Analysis Process

4. Analyze the average number of days it takes for Lake County staff to process a solar permit.

- *Created a time tracking tool for the project manager, plan reviewer, and inspector.*

Findings:

- Data collected will help departmental leadership determine if solar permits can be processed within three days, and if not, what barriers are preventing the County from achieving that timeline.



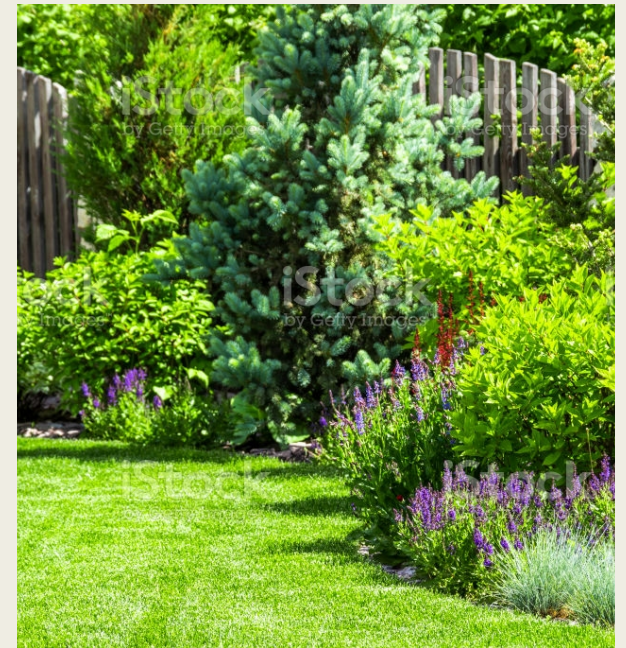


Native Tree and Plant Programs Project Background

- Explore options for a native plant and/or tree program to increase biodiversity and assist with stormwater management for unincorporated residents.
 - *Example of a native tree and plant program: A co-pay program where a municipality covers 50% of the cost (up to \$200) for a native tree or plants.*
- Evaluating existing native plant and tree programs operating within Lake County.

Native Tree and Plant Program Research Process

1. Conduct best practice research of native plant and tree programs offered by municipalities within Lake County.
 - *Identify the budget impacts, residential interest-level, staff time, and departmental affiliation for each program.*
 - *Determine if partnering with any other units of government or local nonprofit could be beneficial*



Native Tree and Plant Program Research Findings

- Seven (7) municipalities in Lake County offer their residents native tree and plant programs and incentives
 - *1 program provides residents with a free tree with a one-time grant through the Chicago Region Trees Initiative.*
 - *2 programs partner with Openlands through their Conservation@home program.*
 - *3 programs have a 50/50 cost share program.*
 - *1 municipality offers residents an array of co-pay programs (native seeding program, invasive shrub removal, native tree and shrub planting, etc.).*



Native Tree and Plant Program Research Findings

- Residential interest level of programs:
 - *Varied municipality to municipality.*
 - *Best represented through budget allocated to program.*
- Various department affiliation, dependent on size of municipality.
 - *Limited staff time appears to be required.*
- Other than grants, programs appear to be funded through municipality's budget.
 - *Program funds changed yearly depending on residential interest level.*

Native Tree and Plant Program Next Steps



- Present analysis to Planning, Building, and Development Department (PB&D) stakeholders for input.
 - *Work to identify if partnering with another unit of government or nonprofit organization would be beneficial.*
- Dependent on outcome of PB&D discussion, report findings to the Energy & Environmental (E&E) Committee.

Questions?