

# CONSENT ITEM – 8R



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**DATE:** March 9, 2026

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
Jessica Jagoe, City Administrator

**FROM:** Jake Reilly, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Resolution 2026-011 Authorizing the grant application to Minnesota Department of Commerce

Budgeted Amount:	Actual Amount:	Funding Source:
\$60,000	\$	State of MN

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## **Council Should Consider**

Motion to approve, table, or deny the following:

- Resolution 2026-011 Authorizing grant application to the State of Minnesota’s Department of Commerce SolarAPP+ Permitting Incentive

## **Background/Discussion**

In 2024, the Minnesota legislature established the SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive (Minn. Stat. § 216C.48). The purpose of this incentive is to help streamline the residential solar permitting process by providing financial incentives and technical support for local governments adopting the free, web-based SolarApp+ online solar permitting platform developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

The State of Minnesota Department of Commerce began accepting applications for grant funds in February 2025 and is administering the distribution of \$2M in total incentives to local units of government across Minnesota. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis each month. The incentive is available until June 30, 2028, or until funds are fully expended.

The Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus (SolarAPP+) software is an online platform that provides plan review and instantly issues permits for code-compliant residential photovoltaic (PV) systems SolarAPP+ is available to authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs) at no cost to use for plan review, approval, and fee payments. SolarAPP+ can be customized to fit a community’s needs and conditions.

The base funding is set by municipal population and the amount available to the City of Arden Hills is \$5,000. Additional bonus funds are available. The City of Arden Hills is eligible for up to an additional \$5,000 based on permits issued for residential solar or solar plus energy storage system between 2023 – 2024. The City is eligible for up to an additional \$5,000 for being enrolled in the

GreenStep Cities program and up to an additional \$5,000 for adopting a Community Development planning and permitting software that is compatible with the Solar App+ system. Most of the potential community development software programs being evaluated qualify for this additional incentive. The total potential grant funds available to the City of Arden Hills is \$20,000. There is no match required.

Staff verified that the software vendors considered as part of the Community Development permitting software upgrades all have the capability of connecting to SolarAPP+. Applying and using the grant funds towards our permitting software upgrades does not limit our options for potential software vendors. This integration merely creates a more streamlined process for solar projects in Arden Hills.

### **Budget Impacts**

The City has carried over to 2026 a budgeted amount of \$60,000 for Community Development software permitting upgrades. Staff have begun meeting with software vendors and are narrowing down our criteria for selection. Initial price estimates received from software vendors range from \$60,000 to \$80,000 for the software conversion.

### **Attachments**

- Attachment A – Fact sheet about SolarAPP+
- Attachment B – Solar APP+ Adoption Guide
- Attachment C – Resolution 2026-011