

To: EUC And RMC Commissioners
From: Cyrus Reed, Vice-Chair RMC

Re: Status of solar-ready energy code amendments
May 13, 16

Dear All,

Wanted the RMC and EUC to know work has continued on the proposed solar-ready provisions of the energy code. First, the working group composed of Michael Wong, Kaiba White and myself of the RMC looking at the language met with staff from Austin Energy in late April and made several tweaks to the language.

Subsequently, in early May, Cyrus Reed of the RMC met with Austin Energy staff and the Development Services Department, which oversees plan review and inspection of all commercial and residential buildings, to review the language and as a result, several more changes were made in response to concerns made by DSD over enforceability.

Separately and apart from the solar-ready language itself, DSD members in both plan review and inspections did express general concern that they are understaffed and having a hard time keeping up with construction in Austin, and that the new energy codes being implemented will create additional work. I would propose that both the EUC and RMC at some point consider recommending that city council increase the budget for DSD and hire at least one inspector specifically dedicated to reviewing energy codes, and at least one additional plan review FTE to review construction plans and designs for compliance with energy code provisions. It is clearly a need for the city that is not being served presently.

Then, this week, copies of the draft Commercial and Residential solar-ready language were sent to stakeholders in the building community.

While I believe these solar-ready provisions are now ready for prime-time, in order to give some more time to stakeholders to comment on the latest draft, I would propose that we give an additional month, and take this up for a vote in June. We have told stakeholders they have until May 27th to provide any feedback.

Approval of solar-ready language then would still give time to incorporate the amendments into the energy code, which is slated to go into effect on September 1, 2016, assuming council approval. So at this point, I am happy to discuss these provisions with members of the EUC and RMC, but would ask that we delay a vote for one more month to give the building community additional time to review the latest drafts.

Thank you

Cyrus Reed