



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

January 29, 2015

TO: Esther L. Valadez, Chair
Laura Shell, Vice Chair
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Jay Lee, AICP *JL*
Community Studies North Section

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RENEWABLE ENERGY ORDINANCE – PROJECT NO. R2014-01160-(1-5) – FEBRUARY 11, 2015 DISCUSSION – AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

BACKGROUND

On November 5, 2014, the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission (“Commission”) held a discussion regarding the proposed Renewable Energy Ordinance (“Ordinance”) (please see Attachment 1 for Staff Memo dated October 23, 2014). The proposed Ordinance is a Countywide ordinance that amends Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County (“County”) Code to establish provisions for solar and wind energy facilities.

During the November 5, 2014 discussion, the Commission requested a field trip to be arranged to provide the Commission the opportunity to see utility-scale renewable energy projects both established and under construction within Los Angeles County.

PROPOSED FIELD TRIP AND POSSIBLE PUBLIC HEARING

While the proposed Ordinance is countywide, the existing and proposed utility-scale solar energy projects are currently located within the Antelope Valley. The Commission field trip is proposed to view approved solar energy facilities in place and under construction within the County as well as City of Lancaster, and include views of wind energy facilities in Kern County.

Staff recommends this field trip be scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015. A draft itinerary with possible points of interest is attached as Attachment 2.

The proposed Ordinance will also be ready for public hearing before the Commission. As these projects are located in the Antelope Valley, staff also recommends that the public hearing be scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at the Antelope Valley Transit Authority headquarters. The public hearing may be scheduled to begin at 12pm after the Commission field trip and lunch break. The public hearing may then also be continued to downtown Los Angeles for any other stakeholders on the proposed Ordinance.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECT STAFF TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP ON THE RENEWABLE ENERGY ORDINANCE ON MARCH 18, 2015, STARTING AT THE ANTELOPE VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS AT 9:00 AM.

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECT STAFF TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE RENEWABLE ENERGY ORDINANCE ON MARCH 18, 2015 AT THE ANTELOPE VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS AT 12:00 PM.

Attachment 1: Staff Memo dated October 23, 2014
Attachment 2: Field Trip Itinerary

MC:SMT:JL/CN



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

October 23, 2014

TO: Esther L. Valadez, Chair
Laura Shell, Vice Chair
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Jay Lee, AICP *JL*
Community Studies North Section

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RENEWABLE ENERGY ORDINANCE – PROJECT NO. R2014-01160-(1-5) – NOVEMBER 5, 2014 DISCUSSION – AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

INTRODUCTION

The Renewable Energy Ordinance (“Ordinance”) is a Countywide ordinance that amends Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County (County) Code to establish provisions for renewable energy facilities. These include solar and wind facilities generating energy for on-site or off-site use (utility-scale) as well as temporary meteorological towers. The Ordinance will help the State of California (“State”) accomplish its established goals for meeting energy demand using renewable resources.

Background

In 2002, the State passed a requirement of procuring 20 percent of total energy procurement from eligible renewable energy resources by 2017. In 2006, the 20 percent deadline was accelerated to 2010. In 2011, the State established a new goal of 33 percent by 2020.

Since 2010 utility-scale solar and wind facilities have been proposed within the County, and specifically within the Antelope Valley. County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) staff heard concerns from local communities about these projects, and in 2011, developed a suitability map for renewable energy development as part of the draft Antelope Valley Area Plan. Due to concerns from various stakeholders regarding the proposed map, DRP staff shifted focus to a separate renewable energy ordinance.

In June 2013, the County received a grant from the California Energy Commission to complete the Ordinance and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In October 2013 and May 2014, public drafts of the Ordinance were released for public review and comment.

Current Regulations

Currently, wind facilities for on-site use as well as **temporary meteorological towers** are regulated in the Code. **No** specific regulations exist **for utility-scale wind facilities, or solar facilities generating energy for on-site or off-site use.** Applying the closest use of "electric generating plant," utility-scale solar and wind facilities are generally processed through the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Purpose

The Ordinance will establish provisions regulating solar and wind renewable energy in a manner that supports and facilitates these facilities while minimizing impacts to the environment.. This is necessary as the State relies increasingly on renewable energy, and yet renewable energy projects have unique issues that warrant more specific permitting and development standards than exist today.

The Ordinance will also provide a more consistent approach for processing utility-scale solar and wind facilities. As mentioned previously, utility-scale solar and wind facilities are generally processed through a CUP, depending on the property zoning. On a project-by-project basis, the County uses project conditions to minimize impacts to the surrounding environment. With the Ordinance, established development standards will provide more guidance to staff, applicants and the public.

The Ordinance also encourages the development of renewable energy facilities that generate energy for on-site use as well as structure-mounted facilities, such as on rooftops or over parking lots. There is great potential throughout the County for renewable energy facilities to generate energy using existing structures and built areas, which has less impact on the surrounding environment.

Key Areas

Based on past renewable energy projects and concerns heard from the community, staff has identified several key areas of focus for the Ordinance:

- **Aesthetics:** The Ordinance includes provisions to minimize visual impacts to local communities, such as minimum setbacks and height limit requirements. These help preserve scenic resources and the visual character of the surrounding area.
- **Biota Impacts:** The Ordinance includes provisions to minimize biota impacts to the surrounding environment, such as wildlife-permeable fencing and water quality protection requirements. Additionally, the Ordinance will prohibit utility-scale solar and wind facilities within Significant Ecological Areas as they are where the County's most valuable resources have been identified.

Key Areas (Cont.)

- **Dust Control:** The Ordinance includes requirements related to dust control, such as prohibiting removal of vegetation root systems except where necessary, and using ground-protection practices such as construction mats and soil stabilizers. These minimize site disturbance and fugitive dust.

SCHEDULE

Status

The Ordinance is currently being revised to incorporate comments received from the public and address concerns raised by local communities. Environmental review for the Ordinance is also underway and the Draft EIR is currently being prepared.

Next Steps

DRP staff will continue to conduct outreach to interested town councils in the Antelope Valley and other stakeholders in November and December of 2014. The Draft EIR is scheduled to be released early 2015. The Ordinance is tentatively scheduled for Regional Planning Commission public hearing in January 2015, and to the Board of Supervisors tentatively in March 2015.

MC:SMT:JL

DRAFT

Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission
Field Trip for the Renewable Energy Ordinance
March 18, 2015 (Wednesday), 9 am

9:00 am **Assembly**
Antelope Valley Transit Authority Headquarters Lobby
42210 6th Street West, Lancaster, CA 93534

9:00-11:00 am **Field Trip**

REMINDER:
In compliance with Brown Act regulations, participants in the Field Trip are advised to refrain from discussing the proposed Ordinance and any matter related to it.

| Itinerary | Approx Time | Map Point (See p. 2) | Points of Interest |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Depart AVTA | 9:15 | A | |
| Arrive at 110 th Street West/Avenue J | 9:40 | B | Canadian Solar [County] to the west (left) and other solar projects [City of Lancaster] to the east (right) |
| Arrive at 110 th St West/Avenue F | 9:45 | C | Community of Antelope Acres [County] /City of Lancaster to the east (right) |
| Turn left on West Avenue D (CA-138) | 9:50 | D | Looking north (right): Panoramic view of wind turbines in Kern County |
| Arrive at West Avenue D and 170 th Street West | 9:55 | E | AVSR1 [County] |
| Arrive at West Avenue A and 155 th Street West | 10:05 | F | Sun Power [County] |
| Arrive at 15101 Lancaster Road, Lancaster, CA 93536 | 10:25 | G | Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve |
| Arrive at Sierra Highway/Avenue G | 10:50 | H | To the south (right): Sierra Sun Tower [Lancaster] |
| Return to AVTA | 11:00 | A | |

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Itinerary Map Points:

- A. Antelope Valley Transit Authority Headquarters
- B. Intersection of 110th Street West and West Avenue J
- C. Intersection of 110th Street West and West Avenue F
- D. West Avenue D (CA-138)
- E. Intersection of West Avenue D and 170th Street West
- F. Intersection of West Avenue A and 155th Street West
- G. Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve
- H. Intersection of West Avenue G and Sierra Highway

