Renewable Energy and Conservation Element – material below taken from the LUS slide Presentation to the Board of Supervisors on August 8, 1017. Pat Flanagan comments in italics.

Key Themes of March 2015 Framework of Guiding Principles

• Encourage small scale local Renewable Energy (RE) production to meet local energy demands.
• Minimize impacts on the natural environment by siting large scale RE projects on disturbed lands.
• Avoid siting large scale RE projects in locations that would conflict with the character and development potential of existing rural communities.
• Monitor RE development to ensure adequate dust control, protect scarce water supplies, and maintain visual quality of communities and scenic vistas.
• Require financial guarantees to ensure responsible decommissioning of RE projects.

1. Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Policy direction to promote energy conservation and efficiency through

• Continued implementation of the County's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan.
• Ensuring energy efficiency in the built environment through implementation of CBC.
• Encouragement of energy efficiency retrofits and conservation tracking.

2 Renewable Energy Systems

Policy direction to support Renewable Energy Systems and Programs

• Appropriate for the character of the proposed location.
• Open to emerging renewable energy technologies.
• Cost-effective to encourage universal access to renewable energy.

3 Community-Oriented Renewable Energy

Policy direction for community-oriented renewable energy (CORE) facilities

• Promote distributed energy infrastructure to improve energy resiliency.
• Meet local energy needs with a primary focus on rooftop and parking lot solar energy systems.
• Require local sponsorship of CORE projects (by a community group or local end-users).
• Encourage local employment and local training programs.

CORE vs Utility-Oriented Definitions

CORE:
Energy generated primarily (more than 50% of output) for direct local consumption or benefit.

UTILITY-ORIENTED:
Energy generated primarily (more than 50% of output) for use outside the local area, by connection to the energy grid.

4 Environmental Compatibility

Policy direction for environmental impact avoidance

• Protection of sensitive biological, cultural, and scenic resources.
• Protection of air quality and water supplies.
• Minimizing visual impacts of light, glare and obstruction of scenic views.
• Requiring code enforcement and sustainable project decommissioning.

5. RE Project Siting

RE facilities will be located in areas that address County standards, local values, community needs and environmental priorities.

6. County Government Systems

County regulatory systems will ensure that renewable energy facilities are designed, sited, developed, operated and decommissioned in ways compatible with our communities, natural environment, and applicable environmental laws.

Policy direction for RE regulatory systems, including

- Establishment of a clear and consistent permitting process
- Streamline and simplify permitting for on-site/accessory RE systems
- Programs to ensure monitoring and decommissioning guarantees
- Utilization of the County web site to publicize RE benefits and opportunities

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 3, 2016 to consider the Renewable Energy and Conservation Element. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors, subject to final refinements being incorporated by staff to clarify and emphasize certain aspects of the element discussed in public comments.

Staff inserted refinements in a red-line Final Public Hearing Draft in April of 2017 and posted the document on the County web site for additional review and comment. *See page 33 of the April draft.*

REFINEMENTS FOLLOWING PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING

The Final Public Hearing Draft REC Element

- Adds clarification of protection of cultural resources
- Adds emphasis to the application of standards-based analysis even on recommended site types for utility-oriented RE development
- **Adds specific exclusion areas to amplify policies protecting rural communities (***This is Policy 4.10 and subsections that prohibit utility scale solar in Rural Living zones and within boundaries of existing and future communities with Community Plans. Since the PC had not seen this addition to the RECE, the BOS directed LUS to bring Policy 4.10 and subsections to the PC for study, after which the BOS would adopt the Findings of the PC.)*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Key Themes of Comments Received on the Draft REC Element

- The REC Element should go further and be more restrictive in requirements for siting utility-oriented RE development to protect communities and the environment.
- Map locations designated for development of utility-oriented renewable energy.
- Limit RE development to what can be consumed locally/within the County.
- Provide for projects already under review to be grandfathered under policies and regulations in effect when applications were accepted as complete.
- Allow for existing RE project sites to be upgraded in the future to incorporate new technologies and design improvements.
- The REC Element is too restrictive to allow RE development required to meet needs.

(*The final 3 points support the Staff Recommendation Policy 4.10, which specifically addresses the concerns of developers. There are no areas prohibited from utility-scale development nor must communities benefit from the energy produced. In exchange for a CUP the developer must concoct a Community Compatibility Report (CCR) that identifies the enhancements that are incorporated to make the project compatible with surrounding properties and community interests. If you accept the CCR at face, or any other, value the developers have a boatload of stuff to sell you at a greatly reduced price. The effects of utility-scale solar on surrounding properties and communities can be seen in Joshua Tree, Lucerne Valley and Newberry Springs.)*

MAPPING OF OPPORTUNITY AREAS AND EXCLUSION AREAS

San Bernardino County – 20,000 square miles (over 12,000,000 acres) mostly public lands.
Only 12% of the County is subject to County land use policies and regulations…yet this 12% is spread over the entire 20,000 square miles.

Precise selection of sites suitable for utility-oriented RE requires site-specific analysis. The Renewable Energy and Conservation Element identifies opportunity areas for standards-based evaluation and exclusion areas.

Opportunity Areas
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Agriculture, Commercial and Industrial Districts
- Five Development Focus areas supported by Board Resolution 2016-20

Exclusion Areas
- Rural Living Districts
- 14 Existing Community Plan Areas