



ALAMEDA COUNTY
Community Development Agency

Large Commercial Solar/Battery Storage Policy Development

Community Meeting

February 8th, 2022

Purpose



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- On-going interest in locating projects in the unincorporated County, primarily East County
- Board of Supervisors deadline to bring forward policies – March 2022
- Asking for community input within policy areas
- 5 principal topic areas being discussed tonight
- May have follow up meeting, depends on need

What to Expect



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- Hear a variety of presentations:
 - EBCE
 - Mapping
 - Set context for Break-Out rooms
- Break-Out Rooms
 - Select reporter and timekeeper/moderator
 - Bulk of the time tonight

Topic Areas



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- Agrivoltaics and Photovoltaics
- Williamson Act lands
- Prime Soils/Important Farmland
- Trade-offs- what should County get in return?
- Limits on development, (e.g. a maximum cap)

Agrivoltaics



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Agrivoltaics (AVs), the co-located production of solar energy and crops, is an emerging technology that can reduce competition for land, and provide climate-smart solutions to improve land use efficiency (combined crop and electricity yield), crop water-use efficiency, profitability and the economic resilience of farmers.

Agrivoltaics cont.



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- Potential synergetic food-energy-water benefits
- More of an emerging land use type, limited specific local examples

Photovoltaics



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Photovoltaic power, also known as a solar park, solar farm, or solar power plant, is a large-scale grid-connected photovoltaic power system (PV system) designed for the supply of merchant power. They are different from building-mounted and other decentralized solar power because they supply power at the utility level, rather than to a local user.

Photovoltaics cont.



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- Most common application type received by County
- None currently operating
- Height, rotation and spacing can vary

Battery Storage



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- Small container-like equipment
- Interest in Alameda County – one application filed
- Land intensive
- Appear to be located near existing substations to feed grid

Williamson Act



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- The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

Williamson Act cont.



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- County has 1,000s of parcels under contract, most of it in remote areas used for cattle grazing.
- Contracts run in 10-year periods, renewed each year
- Uniform Rules - Principles of Compatibility
 - Don't impair the long term primary agricultural use
- County adopted a 10/10 rule. 10 acres or 10%, whichever is less – could be changed but principles of compatibility remain.

Prime Soils/Important Farmland



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- Alameda County has placed a high value on its agricultural history, including soil quality.
- Mitigation of 1:1 replacement is common.
 - Some underutilized soils/farmland – perhaps due to lack of irrigation (could be PO choice).
 - Does a solar/battery project represent a temporary use of land, or permanent?
- If some of these areas are utilized for Solar or Battery Storage, what should the County ask for in return?

Is there a compromise?



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- Given conflicts between open space/ag and desire for local solar – what is a reasonable compromise the County should consider?

Are there limits?



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- What limits should be placed on projects, should there be a total limit in total acreage or megawatts devoted to these projects?
- As an example, our Wind Resource Area does have a limited established through an EIR.
 - Concern with bird mortality
 - Limit was a way to create some certainty for wind energy developers, while offering protection from unfettered development.

Break-Out Rooms



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- # of rooms will depend on number of attendees
- Basic ground rules
- Select moderator and reporter
 - Will get a prompt for each question when time is up.
- Quick introductions are ok, but keep mind of time
- Reporter should capture essence of points raised, not looking for everyone to agree.