



# Interoffice Memo

**DATE:** July 28, 2016

**PHONE:** 387-4431

**FROM:** **TERRI RAHHAL**, Planning Director  
Land Use Services Department

**TO:** **HONORABLE PLANNING COMMISSION**

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**SUBJECT: RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT WORKSHOP**

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The Land Use Services Department is pleased to transmit for the Commission's review a Draft Renewable Energy and Conservation Element (REC Element). This new draft General Plan Element concludes three years of extensive study and public involvement, assisted in large part by California Energy Commission renewable energy (RE) planning grants. This planning process has been known as the SPARC Forum, with related information exchanged on the project web site: [www.sparcforum.org](http://www.sparcforum.org). An introductory presentation of the Draft REC Element will be given at the upcoming Planning Commission Workshop on August 4, 2016.

The Workshop will be held to provide an overview of the Draft REC Element, to initiate public review of the document, which is now posted on SPARC Forum. The purpose of the Planning Commission workshop is for staff to provide an initial introduction of the Draft REC Element. No action or decision will be recommended. The Workshop will also initiate a public review period of at least 60 days. Staff anticipates a Planning Commission hearing in October. The hearing date will be scheduled later.

The purpose of the REC Element is to:

- Identify the collective community, environmental, and economic values for RE development and energy conservation.
- Articulate priorities for energy conservation, energy efficiency, and RE development.
- Establish goals and policies to manage RE development and energy conservation.
- Set a framework for Development Code standards to implement REC Element policies.

Core Values and Guiding Principles are discussed in the document (pages 4-6) to provide a foundational premise for the goals and objectives, focusing on key community, environmental, and economic values.

The Element's Goals, Objectives, and Policies are organized by the following key topics:

1. **Energy Conservation and Efficiency** –Reducing the need for energy generating facilities. (p 17-20)
2. **Renewable Energy Systems** – Integrating RE technologies and organizational options to best serve the county. (p 21-24)
3. **Community-Oriented Renewable Energy (CORE)** – Enabling our unincorporated communities to benefit from RE systems. (p 25-30)

4. **Environmental Compatibility** – Optimizing renewable energy output while minimizing negative effects to the natural environment. (p 31-34)
5. **Siting** –Criteria for the siting of RE facilities in the county. (p 35 – 38)
6. **County Government Systems** – Emphasizing the County’s role as regulator over RE permitting, development, operations and decommissioning to ensure implementation of REC goals. (p 39-42)

A key supportive document used to help inform the REC Element’s policies is the REVEAL Initiative Report, prepared by Aspen Environmental Group under direction of County Planning staff over this past year. This document is available via the following link:

<http://www.sbcounty.gov/uploads/LUS/SPARC/REVEALFinalInitiativeReport.pdf>

Staff looks forward to the upcoming Workshop. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.