

FINDINGS: POLICY PLAN AND LAND USE ZONING DISTRICT AMENDMENT

A POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT TO AMEND THE LAND USE CATEGORY DESIGNATION FROM VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (VLDR) TO RURAL LIVING (RL) AND A ZONING AMENDMENT TO AMEND THE LAND USE ZONING DISTRICT DESIGNATION FROM BEAR VALLEY/SINGLE RESIDENTIAL-1 ACRE MINIMUM (BV/RS-1) TO RURAL LIVING (RL) (COLLECTIVELY REFERRED TO AS THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT) PROPOSED IN CONJUNCTION WITH A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A 5-MEGAWATT (MW) ALTERNATING CURRENT COMMUNITY SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) POWER GENERATING FACILITIES (PROJECT) ON APPROXIMATELY 29.53-ACRE VACANT PARCEL LOCATED AT 2151 ERWIN RANCH ROAD IN THE COMMUNITY OF BIG BEAR, 3RD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT; APN: 0314-401-29 (PROJECT SITE); PROJECT NUMBER PROJ-2025-00036

The following are findings, per the San Bernardino County Development Code (Development Code) Section 86.12.060, and supporting facts for **DENIAL** of the Proposed Amendment:

1. THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT IS NOT INTERNALLY CONSISTENT WITH ALL OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE RESPECTIVE PLAN, THE POLICY PLAN OR AN APPLICABLE SPECIFIC PLAN.

The Proposed Amendment is inconsistent with the unique community identity of the surrounding neighborhood of the Project Site within Bear Valley.

Policy LU-4.5 of the Policy Plan (General Plan) requires the County ensure that new development is consistent with and reinforce the physical and historical character and identity of an unincorporated community planning area. To assist the County in determining the consistency of new development with a community's character, Table LU-3 identifies key characteristics and features that new development should reinforce and/or not detract from in order to maintain and protect the identity and character of the community planning areas.

As a mountain community, Table LU-3 reinforces that Bear Valley is characterized as having a rural lifestyle with low density neighborhoods oriented around commercial or recreational nodes with the prevalence of the forest and mountain landscapes and natural resources. Features key to the community character of Bear Valley include abundant views of open spaces, natural features, and dark skies. Scenic, natural, and recreational features serve as the foundation of the community's local economy and attract tourists.

Policy LU-4.5 also provides that the physical and historical character and identity of an area is determined by the County's review of the values section of Community Action Guides (CAG). The values statement of the Bear Valley CAG reinforces that the community values include, in part, a) small-town mountain lifestyle, which means valuing the beauty and tranquility of living in a small mountaintop environment where connections to community and nature are both strong and family oriented; and, b) quality environment, which means valuing clean air, dark skies, breathtaking views, natural habitats, and well-managed recreational resources.

The Proposed Amendment is inconsistent with the physical and historical character and identity of the area. The intended purpose of the Proposed Amendment is to facilitate the development of

an approximate 21-acre solar PV facility on the 29.9-acre Project Site. As shown on LU-1 Land Use Map, the general area of the Project Site is adjacent to Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) and Low Density Residential (LDR) properties to the immediate East, South, and West of the Project Site that require implementing zoning districts (single residential (RS)) that prohibit “renewable energy generation facilities” proposed by the Project. (See Table 82-7 of Subsection 82.04.040(b) of the Development Code.) The prohibition of renewable energy generation facilities in single residential (RS) zones evidence the incompatible nature of the use with the intended purpose of single residential (RS) zones, which are to “provide sites for single-family residential uses, incidental agricultural and recreational uses, and similar and compatible uses.” (See, Subsection 82.01.020(c)(2)(B).)

The Proposed Amendment would alter the established land use pattern of the area by introducing a Rural Living (RL) zoning district adjacent to an established residential, ranch-like neighborhood for the purpose of authorizing an otherwise incompatible solar generation facility. Buffers and screening of the use between zoning districts would not preserve or reinforce the physical and historical character of the area taking into consideration the proximity of existing residences, characteristics of the mountain-top area, and scenic and natural features of the area. The Project would alter the rural lifestyle of the neighborhood by introducing features of a land use that detract from the beauty and tranquility of a small-town neighborhood environment in the Bear Valley community.

The written and oral testimony received at the public hearing are incorporated herein by reference as additional facts and evidence in support of the determination of the Board of Supervisors.

FINDINGS: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

The following are findings, per the San Bernardino County Development Code (Development Code) Section 85.06.040, and supporting facts for **DENIAL** of the Conditional Use Permit:

2. THE PROPOSED USE AND MANNER OF DEVELOPMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS, MAPS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS OF THE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AND ANY APPLICABLE COMMUNITY OR SPECIFIC PLAN.

For the same reasons discussed in Finding No. 1, the Project is inconsistent with the unique community identity of the surrounding neighborhood of the Project Site within Bear Valley.

The written and oral testimony received at the public hearing are incorporated herein by reference as additional facts and evidence in support of the determination of the Board of Supervisors.