

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster, California

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MVB

Date: January 26, 2010

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Brian S. Ludicke, Planning Director

Subject: **Co-Located Small-Scale Wind Energy Systems in Commercial/Industrial Zones and Solar Electrical Generating Plants in Rural Residential Zones**

Recommendation:

Introduce **Ordinance No. 941**, amending Title 17 of the Lancaster Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) to establish regulations for co-located small wind energy systems in the commercial and industrial zones, and to allow solar electrical generating plants in rural residential zones subject to a conditional use permit.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Background:

The City continues to receive inquiries and interest about various approaches to alternative electrical energy production, both for on-site use and for larger scale commercial production facilities. Policy 3.6.6 of the Lancaster General Plan states that the City will promote programs designed to reduce energy consumption and utilize alternative energy sources, and the City is pursuing this through its overall “green energy program”. This proposed ordinance would provide additional opportunities to accommodate alternative energy facilities as part of this overall City effort.

Several months ago, the City adopted regulations allowing for increased use of small-scale wind turbines in the residential zones. However, no provisions have been adopted to allow for small-scale wind energy systems in commercial or industrial areas. This proposed ordinance would add provisions into the Zoning Ordinance to permit small-scale wind turbines to be co-located with parking lot light fixtures in commercial and industrial zones. The ordinance would establish limits on height, size of turbines, maximum noise levels, and setbacks from any adjacent residential zones to minimize potential visual or noise impacts.

Commercial solar electrical generating plants are also being proposed within the Antelope Valley. Most of the commercial production sites are located in either unincorporated Los Angeles or Kern Counties because of the need for large acreage sites. However, there are potential sites within the incorporated boundaries of the City in outlying areas that could accommodate such facilities. Currently, much of this land is designated as non-urban by the

General Plan and zoned as rural residential; solar electrical generating plants are only permitted at the present time within the City's industrial zones. This ordinance would modify the rural residential zones to allow solar electrical generating plants with approval of a conditional use permit. This would allow for review of any individual proposals through a Planning Commission hearing to ensure that they did not create visual or other adverse effects on adjacent property or uses.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed ordinance at their regular meeting of December 21, 2009. The Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval of the ordinance to the City Council.

BSL/jr

Attachments:

Ordinance No. 941

Planning Commission Staff Report dated December 21, 2009