

FINDINGS

- A. The proposed amendments are consistent with the Land Use Element and other adopted elements of the general plan because the Renewable Energy Streamlining Program (RESP) will: 1) implement policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) to encourage and streamline the development of distributed generation renewable energy projects; 2) create a Renewable Energy Combining Designation as directed by implementation strategies of the COSE; and 3) remove obstacles to the development of distributed generation renewable energy projects, consistent with balancing the development of renewable energy projects with the protection of natural resources as directed by the COSE.
- B. The proposed amendments will streamline the permitting and development of certain renewable energy projects by:
1. Providing for a ministerial Site Plan Review permitting process for distributed generation renewable energy projects that meet rigorous performance standards that ensure protection of natural resources;
 2. Providing a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report that can be used to evaluate environmental effects of renewable energy projects in place of individual, time consuming environmental review of projects; and
 3. Allowing renewable energy projects subject to streamlining in areas where these projects were previously not allowed by planning area standards.
- C. The proposed amendments will protect the public health, safety and welfare of the area residents by:
1. Providing for rigorous performance standards in order for renewable energy projects to be approved through a streamlined permit process;
 2. Protecting agricultural resources while at the same time allowing small renewable energy projects to be considered on contracted land, consistent with the Land Conservation Act; and
 3. Providing for adequate screening of proposed renewable energy projects from public views, and protecting important biological, cultural and soil resources while encouraging the development of distributed generation renewable energy projects.