

PRC Meeting
November 7, 2024
Written Communications

Item #4

Capital Improvement
Program Photovoltaic
Systems Design and
Installation project

From: [Santosh Rao](#)
To: [City of Cupertino Parks and Recreation Commission](#); [Rachelle Sander](#); [Chad Mosley](#)
Subject: Urgent Request to Downscope the Photovoltaic Project Due to Cost, Limited Return, and Emerging Risks
Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024 6:58:53 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Subject: Urgent Request to Downscope the Photovoltaic Project Due to Cost, Limited Return, and Emerging Risks

Dear Chair Stanek, Parks and Rec Commissioners, Rachelle, Chad,

I am writing with deep concerns about the photovoltaic (PV) project and urge immediate reconsideration and downsizing of its scope. Initially pitched as a \$6 million project, it has now ballooned to a **\$10 million** Capital Improvement Project (CIP) — a substantial and unanticipated cost increase. This was never transparently presented to the Council or the public, raising significant issues around fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Furthermore, the project hinges on an uncertain \$4 million grant from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which may now be in jeopardy. With the recent results of the November 2024 federal election, there is a real possibility that the incoming administration will revoke or reallocate funding previously granted by the IRA. This looming risk makes it reckless to rely on a grant that may no longer exist, pushing the full \$10 million cost burden onto the city if the grant is rescinded.

Given the project's projected April 15, 2026, deadline to connect to the grid and begin accruing savings, this timeline is tight and poses an additional risk of failing to recoup costs even if the project were completed.

Key Requests and Concerns:

1. **Downscope Project to Only the Top Energy-Consuming Sites:** The energy usage breakdown clearly shows that the library is the primary heavy user, with the Quinlan Community Center as a secondary consideration. Installing PV systems solely at these two facilities would focus investment where it can have a meaningful impact,

aligning with our sustainability goals while respecting fiscal constraints.

2. **Cancel PV Installations at BlackBerry Farm and Community Hall Due to Negligible Usage:** The energy usage at BlackBerry Farm (BBF) and Community Hall is minimal and does not justify the cost of PV installations. Proceeding at these locations offers negligible financial returns, undermining the value of these investments.
3. **Avoid Disruptive Closures and Reflected Glare at the Cupertino Sports Center (CSC):** Installing PV systems at the CSC would require extensive construction and likely closures, inconveniencing residents who rely on this facility. Past maintenance work has led to closures due to liability issues, and further closures would strain community access. Additionally, PV panels at the CSC would reflect sunlight onto the adjacent tennis courts, impairing visibility and negatively impacting players during serves and gameplay.

Given these issues, I strongly urge the Council to remove the Cupertino Sports Center (CSC) from this project list entirely. Eliminating CSC from the project would prevent unnecessary downtime, preserve community access, and avoid the significant impact of reflected glare on the tennis courts.

This project's drastic cost increase, uncertain grant funding, and limited impact at certain facilities warrant a responsible and immediate response. I urge the Council to downscope this project to only the library and Quinlan Community Center, where energy consumption justifies the investment. Eliminating PV installations at BBF, Community Hall, and CSC would bring the project in line with fiscal responsibility, community access, and our city's actual needs.

Thank you for your attention to these critical concerns.

Sincerely,

San Rao

From: [Rhoda Fry](#)
To: [City of Cupertino Parks and Recreation Commission](#); [City Clerk](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment 11/7/2022 Agenda Item #4 EV & Solar
Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024 10:15:48 AM

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Dear Parks and Recreation Commission,

The subject of EV has been brought up in the past at Blackberry Farm. At the time, the Parks and Rec Department had not been informed of this.

There is a residence within Blackberry Farm that limits access to the driveway. Consequently, EV is not a good idea there.

Additionally, please also note that our former public works director, Ralph Qualls, described the access area to Blackberry Farm as a choke point and safety issue. Inviting more traffic into Blackberry Farm would be adding to a known public safety problem.

WRT solar, we have no idea what the rebates will be from PG&E moving forward. Please consider the ROIs accordingly.

Please also analyze EV and Solar separately during your meeting.

Below is my commentary to City Council when this idea came up in the past.

Regards,
Rhoda Fry
Recipient CREST public safety award

From: Rhoda Fry [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 4:28 PM
To: 'City Clerk' <CityClerk@cupertino.org>; 'citycouncil@cupertino.org' <citycouncil@cupertino.org>; 'manager@cupertino.org' <manager@cupertino.org>
Subject: Public Comment 11/1/2022 Agenda Item #11 EV Parking

Dear City Council,

I have 2 general comments on this item.

1. Procurement
2. Locations

1. Procurement

I think that the City needs to be completely transparent in its business dealings.

I was surprised to see that the City is proposing that this project not go out for bid.

If the City were to award this project to Chargepoint it could appear that there was some sort of favoritism going on because former Mayor Lowenthal is a co-founder of the company. Conversely, if it didn't go to Chargepoint, it could appear that there had been discrimination.

There are easily 15 to 20 different EV companies.

We should be putting projects out to bid whenever possible.

And – even consider getting paid to place these stations :)

2. Locations

Given that the City Hall is about to be remodeled and we have yet to understand the details, I think that it is premature to place an EV where it could interfere with construction. I'm also puzzled by the Blackberry Farm location. So I phoned the Parks & Rec department and they were unaware of this proposal. I think that Public Works needs to consult with Parks & Rec (and vice versa) so they can share best practices. Contrary to the report, the Blackberry Farm parking lot is not open 24x7 (the gate broke years ago). Like other parks, it officially closes 1 hour after sunset. In the off-season, there are very few cars. Our former public works director, Ralph Qualls, described the access area as a choke point and safety issue. My recollection of the 2006 MND was that there should not be lighting there at night in order to protect wildlife (so that would include vehicles driving through). You might recall that just a few years ago, a mountain lion ate a goat at McClellan Ranch, so we do know that they frequent the area. If there is a desire to have an EV station on this side of town, the Monta Vista Rec Center, where there is year-round programming and is more accessible, would be a superior location.

Regards,
Rhoda Fry

From: [Rhoda Fry](#)
To: [City of Cupertino Parks and Recreation Commission](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: RE: Public Comment 11/7/2022 Agenda Item #4 EV & Solar
Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024 11:44:44 AM

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Please also include in comments for today

In addition to my previous comments –

The Blackberry Farm driveway has further limitations with opening times only during daylight hours.

Blackberry Farm is not suitable for EV.

Also, EV create light.

And will the PV create light? Others that I have seen do.

Blackberry Farm is in a wildlife area and the City Documents state that there is to be no night lighting.

The riparian creek habitat needs to be dark at night.

There are owls and coyotes and more on the golf course at night.

Please abide by the City's rules and reject EV and PV at Blackberry Farm.

Thanks,
Rhoda