

Ortega Park Community Outreach Meeting  
March 10, 2014

Community Member Comments

23 community members in attendance

Concerns Raised

- Impact to parking and sidewalk access
- Loss of living things (trees, vegetation)
- Reduced visibility and increased potential for accidents due to children hiding behind solar carport posts
- Additional shading cast on houses near picnic area site (site 4,5)
- Increased drug dealing as a result of solar structures providing cover and reducing visibility
- Teens and older children will “act up” around the picnic area structures – potential vandalism of the solar panels
- Children and their balls will damage solar panels
- Carport lighting creating an unappealing glow in the area throughout the night
- Would it be better to wait 5-6 years when the park undergoes Master Planning Process
- Overall negative aesthetic impact on the park

Supportive comments

- Car port/structure posts are not bigger than tree trunks; reduced visibility would be minimum
- Cost saving measure
- Progressive
- Wonderful idea

Additional Considerations

- Request aesthetically pleasing panels/structures
- Consider adding EV charging stations
- Encourage larger trees (rather than saplings) if replacements are necessary
- Relocate trees within the park
- Opportunity to remove some of the nuisance trees such as African Sumac and Liquidamber trees and replace with more desirable trees

Poll of Community Members Present

Community members present asked if they could take a vote as to whether the City should even consider solar panels at Ortega Park.

Community members in favor of solar structures: 10

Community members not in favor: 0

Several members did not vote because they were undecided on the issue and some members left prior to the vote.



Green AP <green@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

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## Photovoltaic in the parks

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Don Eagleston [REDACTED]

To: "green@sunnyvale.ca.gov" <green@sunnyvale.ca.gov>  
[REDACTED]

Wed, Feb 26, 2014 at 4:14 PM

Sunnyvale Environmental Program:

Although photovoltaic will eventually pay for itself, the problem that the state has recognized is that renewable energy is use it or lose it. In the case of pumps and well pumps, the additional problem is that the sun does not shine at night. I would like you to consider talking with a local company that is pioneering the storage of photovoltaic and wind electricity right here in Sunnyvale. The Mayor and four of our City Council members were at our annual award banquet where Enervault of Sunnyvale was given an award for just this type of energy storage. Please pass this information on to your Sustainable Commission and hopefully Enervault can be part of your nighttime solution.

Don Eagleston

President and CEO

Sunnyvale Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce

260 S. Sunnyvale Ave., Suite 4

Sunnyvale, CA 94086

[408-736-4971](tel:408-736-4971)

The City of Sunnyvale is evaluating the potential for deploying solar photovoltaic at City utility sites to reduce the City's energy costs. Both Ortega Park and Baylands Park were identified as potential locations suitable for this type of project due to its proximity to the Ortega well and a stormwater pump station. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the placement of solar panels within Ortega Park and Baylands Park for the purpose of powering the well and pump station and park facilities. The feedback gathered will advise the Sustainability Commission who will make recommendations to the City Council.

### **Ortega Park Community Meeting:**

Ortega Park Recreation Building  
636 Harrow Way

Monday, March 10, 6 p.m. – 7:00 pm

### **Baylands Park Community Meeting:**

SMaRT Station  
301 Carl Road

Wednesday, March 12, 6 p.m. – 7:00 pm

For more information or to give feedback, call Sunnyvale Environmental Services Department at **(408) 730-7260**,  
**TDD (408) 730-7501**, or email [green@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:green@sunnyvale.ca.gov).



## Ortega Park Solar Panel Proposal

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
To: green@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Tue, Mar 18, 2014 at 1:21 PM

Ms. Marshall,

I am writing with concerns about installing solar panels at Ortega Park.

I am concerned that we, as a city, are losing sight of the purpose of a park. The residents want open space, grass, trees, children, walkers, bikers, birthday parties, relaxation. We do not want a power station.

I am concerned about the number of trees to be removed, the safety of the solar arrays over the parking lots and picnic areas, and general aesthetics.

The fact twenty or so trees would be removed is troubling, as this is a very high number. Most of the trees would be removed along the parking lots. This includes the young trees between the playground and parking lot. The large, 40+ year old tree in the middle of the playground would require trimming to prevent it from shading the solar panels. The result would be less shade on the playground itself. Other large trees could also shade the solar panels and may have to be trimmed. This park has suffered a significant loss of green space lately, and it seems to be happening again (or proposed to happen again).

To where would the trees be moved? Simply moving the trees to another location in the park may impact the grass areas further and will not provide the same shade or atmosphere of the playground area. There is not a lot of open grass at the park, so losing grass areas to replant trees should be evaluated. Even if the trees are moved or replaced, the character of the park would be diminished.

With the solar arrays over the parking lots, visibility would be decreased, both for cars driving in the parking lots, and for parents trying to keep an eye on their kids.

The neighbors across the street from the park may not appreciate that their view of the park has become a view of solar panels. The park will end up looking like a power station.

Cost savings and using green technology are to be commended, but preserving safe, shaded, actually green (with grass and trees) parks affects the community in ways that may not be visible on the city's bottom line. The impact to the community should not be minimized.

Please reconsider the option of including Ortega Park as a solar project and remove it from consideration.

Thank you,

Mary Brunkhorst

[REDACTED]



Green AP <green@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

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## Ortega Park Solar Project - Feedback

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jean Batryn [REDACTED]

To: green@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Tue, Mar 18, 2014 at 2:48 PM

Hi Elaine,

My understanding is that this email is going to Elaine Marshall, the Environmental Programs Manager ... hope this is you! I live across from Ortega Park, and I wanted to send a few comments regarding the proposed solar project at Ortega Park.

While I think solar is a good idea, I would like to keep Ortega Park as open and natural feeling as possible, and would prefer that a lot of new structures NOT get added.

(1) With this in mind, I would suggest that it might be a good idea to look into renovating the gazebo earlier than is planned. Then the solar panels would have an already existing structure to be placed on.

(2) I am very much against trees getting removed and/or trimmed for the purpose of allowing more sun to get to the solar panels. I understand that some significant tree trimming and/or removal will happen near the playground. This playground needs all the natural shade it can get. Please, please, please keep our shade trees there. While solar can be good, it is not so good on our children's skin (and adults at the playground as well).

(3) I noticed that no consideration was made about placing any solar panels on the fields to the west of the playground. It seems like this might be a good place for solar ... an opportunity to provide some needed shade (maybe over the stands where people are sitting) while still collecting the sun's powerful rays. I'm not sure what protection you will need for the solar panels from stray balls, but that same protection would be needed in the other locations as well.

(4) I would hope that you do not put solar panels by the picnic tables on the east side of the park, next to the water channel. This is where older teens tend to hang out (and drink or do drugs) when it is dark, and I could see vandalism happening fairly regularly there to the panels.

I look forward to hearing future proposals before they are cast in stone, so that the community can give input again.

Thanks,

Jean



Green AP <green@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

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## Re: [OPNA] Ortega Solar Panel Meeting

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Paul Family [REDACTED]

Thu, Mar 13, 2014 at 3:03 AM

Cc: [REDACTED] green@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Hello,

Not captured below at the very end of the meeting there was a straw poll and a brief presentation by Jim, Head of the Parks Department. Jim presented succinctly the city's policy regarding park tree population. The policy as related by Jim is that any park changes are required to maintain the tree population at least constant. It could improve depending on circumstance. I'm not certain whether the policy was a reaction to any study or advocacy of Ms. Marks. That is the current standard operating procedure for the Parks Department according to Jim. He said they have access to equipment that has the ability to move fairly large healthy trees, up to 30 or 40 feet tall if required in the approved plan. Most, if not all, of the affected trees in the Ortega Park proposal are much smaller than that. In any event Jim assured that any tree removal would be followed with relocation evaluation for healthy desired species and replacement for any non-healthy or non-desired species with the required outcome of at least a constant overall population.

Interestingly, the straw poll indicated overall favorable support for solar panels which surprised me based on the impression left from the questions and concerns raised. In any event, I was pleased that we had the forum for questions and to give input into the process because I am concerned about preserving the essential features of the park as a park, as Mary B. is, and not a power substation. Overall my opinion is that the proposal to add solar is being done in as sensitive a way as possible to balance minimizing impacts to the park and achieve a worthwhile project scale.

In the interest of full disclosure we have a solar photovoltaic array on our second story roof. It was installed in 2007 as a long term investment with the goal of providing a net financial return. For the Ortega Park proposal the greater potential savings profile is provided when the project is taken on as a capital investment as opposed to a power purchase agreement with a third party. The savings profile was outlined as between \$367,000 and \$700,000 over 25 years with the wide range being explained by the financing options and inherent cost assumptions. The acceptable payback period is 10 years. The city well which is part of the local water supply system on the southeast corner of the park is a real energy pig. It accounts for approximately 85-90% of the 227,000 kWh annual usage in the park and is the reason the park is a good site candidate.

I have copied Elaine Marshall, the Environmental Programs Manager who made the Community Outreach Meeting presentation at Ortega Park on Tuesday evening. Elaine, please let us know if I haven't represented any relevant facts correctly.

Sincerely,

David Paul

---Original Message---

From: Holly Lofgren

Sent: Mar 11, 2014 10:31 AM

Subject: Re: [OPNA] Ortega Solar Panel Meeting

Mary B,

Thank you for attending and taking minutes. I was interested in this meeting, but I had a conflict. I wonder what the cost is and what the payback period is.

The solar panels at the high schools in their parking lots seemed to have worked well, but they had no nearby neighbors.

FYI - A tree canopy advocate in Sunnyvale is Deborah Marks. She says Sunnyvale has half the tree canopy of Palo Alto and it seems we are on a path to go to 1/3.

Holly

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From: [REDACTED]

Subject: [OPNA] Ortega Solar Panel Meeting

Hi,

I also attended the solar panel meeting last night. I did not get the impression that most people were in favor of this. While the concept of solar is noble, the placement of the panels and the effect on the park are not insignificant.

Five areas were outlined for installation of solar panels. The plan is to include all five structures. It was presented in such a way that they would not simply move forward with the parking lot structures without the structures over the picnic areas. All five structures would be required to meet the goals of the project.

Concerns raised included the number of trees to be removed, the safety of the solar arrays over the parking lots and picnic areas, and general aesthetics.

With the solar arrays over the parking lots, visibility would be decreased, both for cars driving in the parking lots, and for parents trying to keep an eye on their kids.

The neighbors across the street from the park may not appreciate that their view of the park has become a view of solar panels.

The proposal to add shade structures with solar panels over the picnic areas near the creek raised concerns about providing too much cover for the teenagers who gather (and misbehave) in that corner of

the park.

The fact that a number of trees would be removed is worth noting. The number of trees to be removed would be 20 or more, mostly along the parking lots. This includes the young trees between the playground and parking lot. The large, 40+ year old tree in the middle of the playground would require trimming to prevent it from shading the solar panels. The result would be less shade on the playground itself. This park has suffered a significant loss of green space lately, and it seems to be happening again (or proposed to happen again). Simply moving the trees to another location in the park may impact the grass areas further and will not provide the same shade or atmosphere of the playground area.

Cost savings and using green technology are to be commended, but preserving safe, shaded, actually green (with grass and trees) parks affects the community in ways that may not be visible on the city's bottom line. The impact to the community should not be minimized.

Mary B.

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Elaine Marshall <emarshall@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

# **solar at Ortega**

3 messages

Holly

Reply-To: Holly

To:

Tue, Mar 11, 2014 at 11:22 AM

Elaine,

ESD spoke to neighbors at Ortega Park last night and unfortunately, I had a conflict and could not attend. Thank you for speaking with me briefly this morning.

You said the department was open to all alternatives, including partial solutions. You stated that the electricity generated would be roughly the amount needed to run the park and the water well without generating excess. If panels went in only over the parking lot, it would not cover the total electric need.

We spoke about my concerns and this is what I asked for in the upcoming process: 1) depictions of solar over picnic areas, 2) feedback from neighbors in these areas where this has been done, 3) tree evaluation and tree plan (moving/replacing), 4) aesthetic depictions 5) feedback from nearby neighbors regarding crime, 6) an analysis from public safety regarding visibility and their assessment of the impact (if any) on crime and 7) a clear statement that alternatives and partial solutions are fully conceivable and acceptable.

I would also like to know the pay back period and where funding for the project would come from (which budget). Thank you.

As always, I remain a great supporter of solar energy and am excited about win win solutions at Ortega park.

Holly

Wed, Mar 12, 2014 at 9:39 AM

Hi Holly,

Thank you for your email. We will work on addressing the points you raise as we continue with this study.

In regards to payback period and funding for the project, that is dependent the purchasing approach. As part of this study, we are looking at two common financing approaches for solar projects. A "Power Purchase Agreement" would require essentially no upfront funding from the City. A third party, private company, would install and operate and maintain the panels and the City would have a 20-year agreement to purchase power from that entity, presumably at a lower rate than what PG&E charges, and the City would save in electricity costs. The second approach would be for the City to directly purchase and install the solar panels and the City would assume responsibility for operations and maintenance of the panels. With City direct ownership, we

have not yet identified where the initial capital funds would come. The estimated pay back period is about 10 years for the direct purchase. As this is a "Study Issue" there is no funding approved for the installation of solar projects at this time. We are evaluating the pros/cons of each approach and will be including that information in our report, along with the community feedback we are receiving.

Please let me know if you have additional questions or feedback.

-Elaine

On Tue, Mar 11, 2014 at 11:22 AM, [REDACTED] wrote:

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Holly [REDACTED]

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Elaine Marshall  
Environmental Programs Manager  
City of Sunnyvale | Environmental Services Department  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Holly [REDACTED]  
Reply-To: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]

Wed, Mar 12, 2014 at 9:58 AM

Elaine,

Thank you for the information.

Holly

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**From:** [REDACTED]

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2014 9:39 AM

**Subject:** Re: solar at Ortega

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