

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2023

SUBJECT: TWO YEAR MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE'S SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RESEARCH INITIATIVE FOR SOLAR ENERGY/SOLAR VALLEY CONSORTIUM

ISSUE:

Consider recommending the City Council continue participation with Southern California Research Initiative for a two-year term with Solar Energy (SC-RISE)/Solar Valley Consortium of the University of California Riverside through Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board of Public Utilities recommend the City Council:

1. Approve the City's Membership Agreement with University of California Riverside Southern California Research Initiative for a two-year term with Solar Energy (SC-RISE)/Solar Valley Consortium in the annual amount of \$5,000 through FY 2024/25;
2. Designate Public Utilities General Manager or their designee to represent the City of Riverside at meetings of the SC-Rise/Solar Valley Consortium meetings; and
3. Authorize the City Manager, or their designee, to sign and execute all necessary membership documents, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

BACKGROUND:

The SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium was created by the University of California Riverside Center for Environmental Research & Technology (CE-CERT). The mission of the organization is to:

- Establish a valuable source of data on solar projects and installations.
- Advocate and support public policies for residential, commercial, and utility-scale solar projects.
- Promote the creation of local clean energy jobs, job training programs and attraction of solar energy and storage companies to the region.
- Contribute to education as to the value of solar energy as part of the region's sustainable energy future.

All memberships held in the name of the City of Riverside must be approved by the City Council. Since this association is directly related to the mission of the Public Utilities Department, a recommendation is also sought by the Board of Public Utilities supporting RPU's participation.

The City has been a member of the SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium for the past two years. The Board of Public Utilities (Board) and City Council, on May 10, 2021, and May 18, 2021, respectively, approved a Membership Agreement to the Southern California Research Initiative for Solar Energy (SC-RISE)/Solar Valley Consortium of the University of California Riverside through FY 2022/23.

DISCUSSION:

SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium formed in 2020. The City of Riverside, through the Public Utilities Department, was approached to join and participate in the organization. Members of the organization include participants from the public sector (County of San Bernardino), a private utility (Southern California Edison), private corporations, and industry associations (Inland Economic Growth & Opportunity). The membership provides the City one appointee position on the Leadership Council of the organization which was held by the RPU General Manager for the last two years. It has provided the City with a voice in the advocacy of local and regional solar energy public policy research. It also provides sponsorship to Consortium events, and member publications.

The development of solar resources in California and more locally in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties is important for the City and, specifically, for RPU. The State of California has mandated that zero-carbon resources provide 100% of the electricity sold to customers by 2045 and established a goal to achieve economy-wide carbon neutrality by the same year. Additionally, the City Council adopted the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan in October 2020 that included the same goals for the City but with a target year of 2040 – five (5) years earlier than the State. It is imperative that local and regional policies be developed to help support these aggressive goals in a way that does not burden our community with unnecessary costs.

Leveraging the collective advocacy and collaboration of the SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium will benefit the City and utility ratepayers by allowing us to advocate consistent with City policies against unfunded mandates that are part of many State policies and to support cost-effective methods of generating solar energy for RPU customers.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium membership and agreement contributes to **Priority 4 - Environmental Stewardship** and the following goals:

Goal 4.1: Rapidly decrease Riverside's carbon footprint by acting urgently to reach a zero-carbon electric grid with the goal of reaching 100% zero-carbon electricity production by 2040 while continuing to ensure safe, reliable, and affordable energy for all residents.

Goal 4.6: Implement the requisite measures to achieve citywide carbon neutrality no later than 2040.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium and Riverside’s membership will provide the City with advocacy and collaboration opportunities that will benefit residents and businesses in the City of Riverside through the support of cost-effective methods of generating solar energy for customers.
2. **Equity** – The SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium will help the City evaluate how solar can assist the City to achieve carbon neutrality minimizing impacts to all customers, specifically considering affordability, access, and equity.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Leveraging the collective advocacy and collaboration of this organization, the membership will benefit the City and its utility ratepayers by allowing us to advocate against unfunded mandates that are part of many State policies and support the most cost-effective methods of generating solar energy for customers.
4. **Innovation** – The SC-RISE/Solar Valley Consortium partners with UCR to provide cutting edge technology and policy innovation for expansion of solar opportunities.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Membership provides RPU and the City to participate in regional discussions of solar energy and how it can be effectively developed and used to support future carbon neutrality.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact is the annual cost of membership, which is \$5,000 per year for a total of \$10,000 for this two-year membership. Sufficient funds are available in Management Services Dues Account No. 6000000-425200 for the cost of the two-year membership.

Prepared and

Approved by: Todd M. Corbin, Utilities General Manager

Certified as to

availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Membership Agreement
2. Presentation