



Staff Report Item 19

TO: East Bay Community Energy Board of Directors

FROM: Annie Henderson, Vice President of Marketing & Account Services;
Theresa McDermit, Head of Brand

SUBJECT: New Brand Name Proposal

DATE: June 21, 2023

Recommendation

Approve a Resolution authorizing the use of Ava Community Energy as the market-facing brand name for our agency and directing staff to use the new name in all marketing materials starting October 2023 or as determined by direction of the CEO.

Background and Discussion

In recent years, EBCE has dramatically increased its focus on actively promoting and enabling electrification, decarbonization, and efficiency initiatives while maintaining its ongoing commitment to the delivery of clean power at low prices. Since early 2022, staff have led an effort to define and articulate an updated brand strategy in support of this broadening mandate.

In December of 2022, an RFP was issued for a partner to support the evolution of our brand identity. And in February of this year, the Board approved the request to move forward with a preferred supplier. Since that time, we have worked swiftly to build out our evolved brand identity, beginning with the recommended brand name.

To arrive at this naming recommendation, we followed this detailed process:

Strategic Alignment and Naming Criteria: We established a framework for evaluating potential names to guide subsequent steps in the process. These guardrails helped ensure that an eventual name fulfill our objectives for a name change which broadly fall into two categories:

- 1) Ease of use, memorability; ability to support our expanded engagement efforts
- 2) Inclusivity; welcoming to all constituents including those outside of the “East Bay.”

Ideation: In the initial phase, over 150 names were generated and reviewed. Promising candidates were screened for availability at a high level.

Feedback: In an iterative process, the most promising candidate names were shared with agency leadership, select staff, and members of the ad hoc committees of the Board of Directors and Community Advisory Committee. Several rounds of feedback and review yielded a small set of finalist names.

Clearance and Protection: We’ve taken care to ensure the appropriateness and availability of our recommended name with the following actions:

- A full trademark search was conducted by our counsel, DWT. They found no relevant competing claims on the name
- Native speakers of the most frequently spoken languages in our territory are reviewing the name to ensure there are no unintended linguistic or cultural associations
- Relevant URLs and social media handles were secured
- A placeholder trademark filing was prepared to signal our intent to use and protect the recommended name upon approval.

At this time, staff is proposing that Ava Community Energy be adopted as a “DBA” and that the agency use the new name in marketing materials. Resolutions, contracts, and legal filings would still be done under the agency’s legal name, East Bay Community Energy Authority. If the Board desires to legally change the name of the agency for all purposes, it may authorize staff to conduct further research and take necessary actions to accomplish this goal. It is anticipated that the Joint Powers Agreement would have to be amended to achieve this and individual approval of all of the member agencies may be required.

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal impact is driven by the need to communicate any changes to our brand identity and the creation / recreation of branded materials. Actual costs will be determined once the full extent and timing of changes are known. The funding for implementation and outreach on a new brand identity is included in the amount presented to the board for approval as part of the FY23/24 budget.

Committee Recommendation

Ad hoc committees of the Board of Directors and CAC have stated their support for adoption of the recommended name for marketing purposes. The Executive Committee discussed this proposal on June 7, 2023. Feedback was generally supportive. Comments from board members and members of the public centered on focusing the name and messaging on our role as a public agency and regions served, while avoiding personification. The name proposal was also presented for feedback to the Marketing, Regulatory, and Legislative Committee on June 16th. The MRL Committee provided positive feedback and there were no comments from members of the public.

Attachments

- A. Resolution
- B. New Name Proposal ppt.

RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-XX
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE EAST BAY COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY
TO APPROVE THE BRAND NAME OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY

WHEREAS The East Bay Community Energy Authority (“EBCE”) was formed as a community choice aggregation agency (“CCA”) on December 1, 2016, Under the Joint Exercise of Power Act, California Government Code sections 6500 *et seq.*, among the County of Alameda, and the Cities of Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Piedmont, Oakland, San Leandro, and Union City to study, promote, develop, conduct, operate, and manage energy-related climate change programs in all of the member jurisdictions. The cities of Newark and Pleasanton, located in Alameda County, along with the City of Tracy, located in San Joaquin County, were added as members of EBCE and parties to the JPA in March of 2020. The city of Stockton in San Joaquin County was added as a member of EBCE and party to the JPA in September of 2022.

WHEREAS the agency will soon serve a larger portion of San Joaquin County and residents of that region do not broadly identify as being from the “East Bay”,

WHEREAS the agency is expanding its engagement with customers and would like to position itself as an influencer of individual consumer decisions that advance decarbonization efforts, and

WHEREAS a short, easy to say, memorable, and warm name will increase inclusivity and customer engagement.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EAST BAY COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Board of Directors approves the use of “Ava Community Energy” as the market facing brand name for the agency.

Section 2. Staff is hereby directed to use Ava Community Energy for all marketing materials related to the agency starting October 2023 or as determined by direction of the CEO.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 21st day of June, 2023.

Elisa Márquez, Chair

ATTEST:

Adrian Bankhead, Clerk of the Board

New Brand Name Proposal

Board of Directors

JUNE 21, 2023



Overview

- Background & Rationale
- Insights
- Stakeholder Engagement & Timelines
- Process & Considerations
- New Brand Name Proposal

Background & Rationale

EBCE Brand Evolution



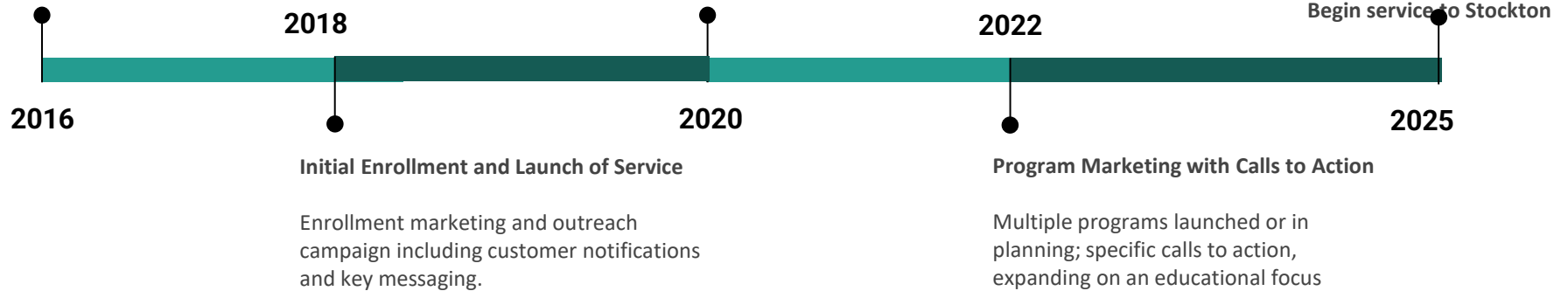
Original Brand and Logo Development

County hired consultants to develop initial website, collateral, and logos.

Updates to Look & Feel

Website update to give a more modern look and feel to the brand. Logo and key messaging remain unchanged.

First customer program offering.



In the Beginning...

When we launched EBCE, our primary objective was to educate:

- What is a CCA?
- How does your bill work?
- EBCE is not a scam...

CLEANER ELECTRICITY. LOWER RATES. LOCAL BENEFITS.

Residents and businesses in Alameda County and 11 of its cities* now have a new, greener choice for the electricity that powers our homes and businesses.

East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) is our new local power supplier, committed to providing our community with electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind.

BENEFITS

- LOWER RATES**
EBCE purchases cleaner energy at lower rates for residents and businesses.
- SUSTAINABILITY**
You will reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, an easy and economical way to reduce your carbon footprint.
- RELIABILITY**
EBCE procures cleaner electricity for our customers, and PG&E delivers that electricity to your home or business.
- LOCAL INVESTMENT**
Net revenues will help fund local green energy projects and programs.

*Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Oakland, Piedmont, San Leandro and Union City

LAUNCH SCHEDULE

EBCE began providing service to municipal and business accounts in June 2018. Residential customers will be enrolled in November 2018. Customers with rooftop solar will be enrolled in 2019 around the time of their annual true-up with PG&E.

Year	Month	Event
2018	June	Municipal & Business Accounts Enrolled
	September-December	Enrollment Notices
	November	Residential Accounts Enrolled
	January-December	Solar Customer Enrollment
2019	Jan	
	Feb	
	Mar	
	Apr	
	May	
	Jun	
	Jul	
	Aug	
	Sep	
	Oct	
	Nov	
	Dec	

CONTACT US

- ebce.org
- /EastBayCommunityEnergy
- @PoweredbyEBCE
- customer-support@ebce.org
- 1-833-699-EBCE (3223)

EAST BAY COMMUNITY ENERGY

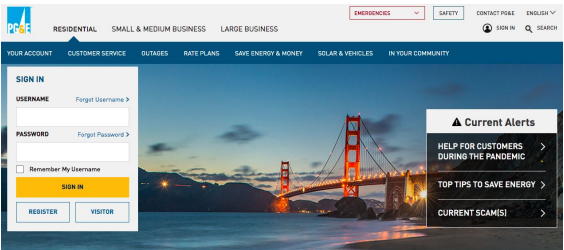
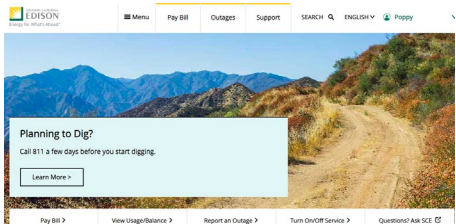
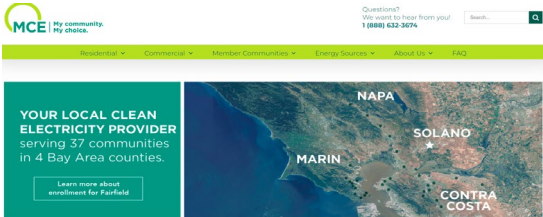
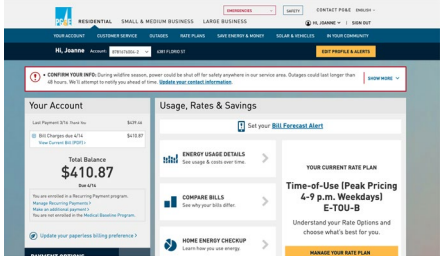
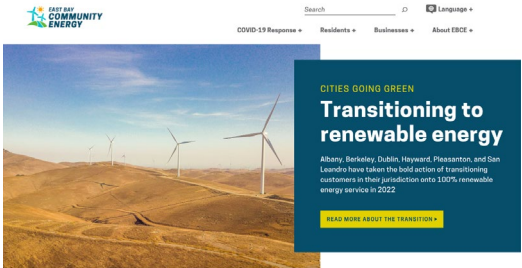
CREATING A BRIGHTER, CLEANER FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

A BRIGHT CHOICE

A Brand Expression to Support Education and Trust

Our brand expression is:

- Very literal; we have a highly descriptive name and logo
- Self-referential; our messaging has traditionally focused on what we do (as opposed to what that means for the consumer)
- Familiar; our “look” is similar to many other CCAs or IOUs



We've Been Successful

On track to implement the strategy for **100% clean by 2030**

95% average retention rate across our service area

Steady expansion of our service area; Pleasanton, Newark + Tracy 2022; Stockton 2024



2022 National Notable Achievement Award for Land Revitalization Team Excellence

\$21 million spent on local programs like battery energy storage, induction cooking, and electric heat pump water heaters

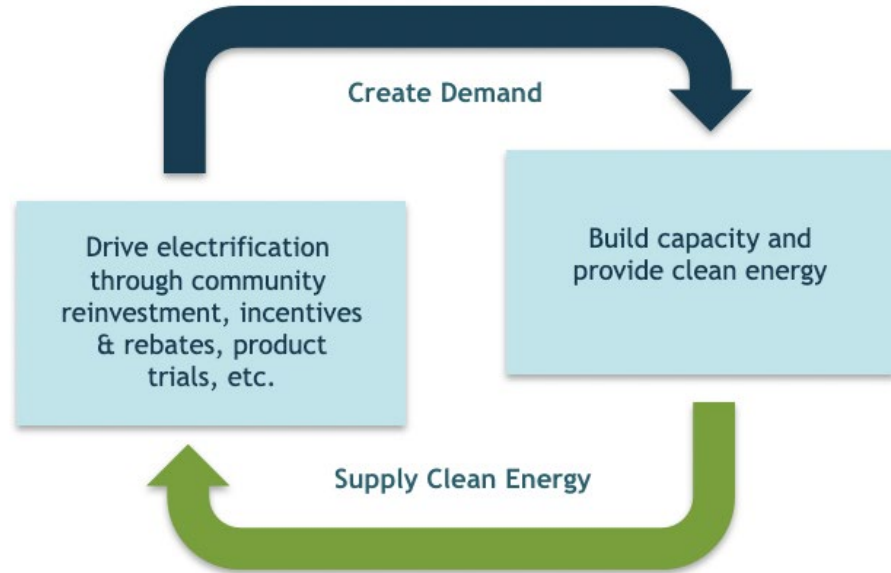
\$19 million annual customer savings vs. what would have been paid for PG&E service

1,015 megawatts of new wind, solar, and battery storage, including projects in Alameda County



We Continue to Mature and Evolve to Better Serve our Communities

- We are moving from simply filling demand to creating it
- Growing capacity and expertise to stand up consumer- and commercial-facing programs that expose customers to electric alternatives and speed their adoption, accelerating decarbonization

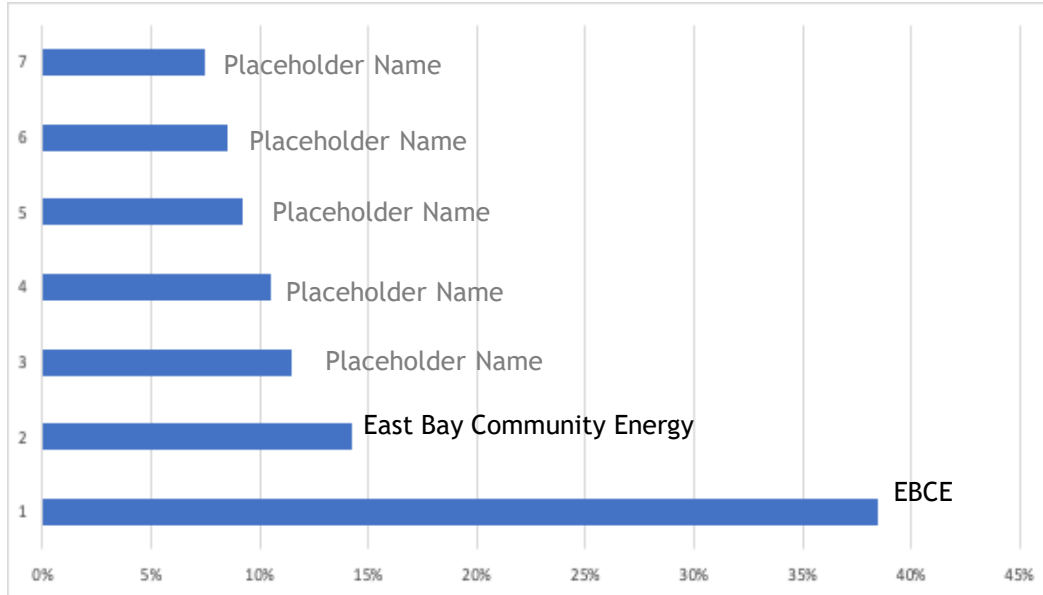


Insights

Our Name is a Barrier to Success in San Joaquin County*

Attachment Staff Report Item 19B

Q12. Which one of these names is your least favorite?



Q13: Why?

EBCE

- Acronyms are off-putting; hard to remember

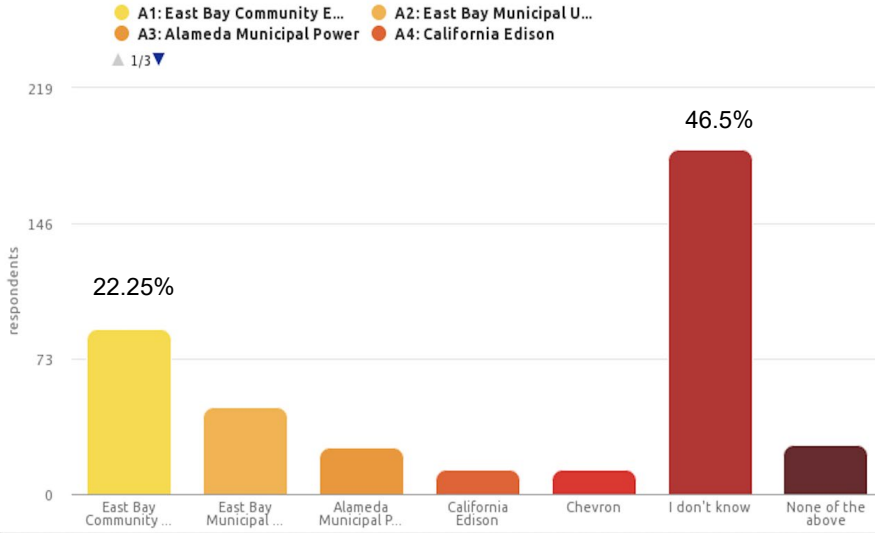
East Bay Community Energy

- San Joaquin County not part of East Bay; East Bay too expensive / doesn't represent my values

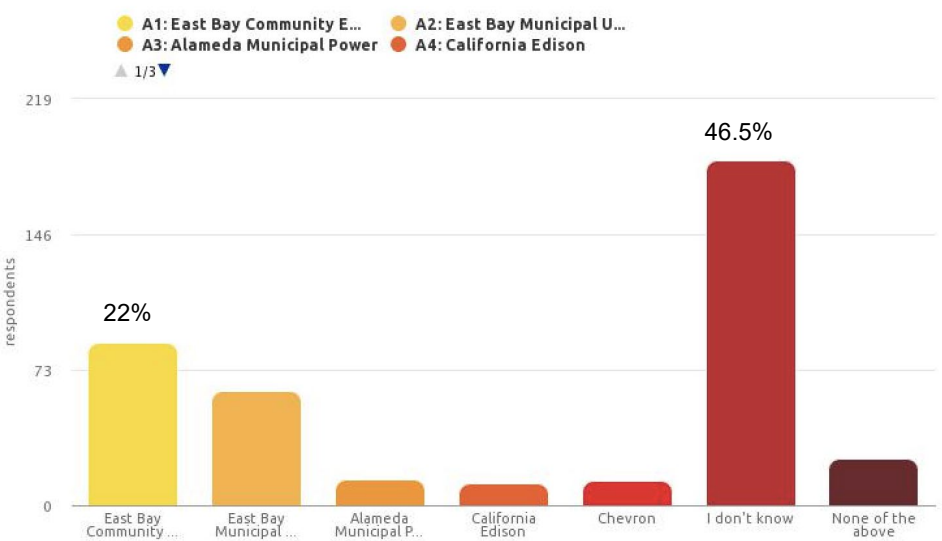
*n=400; 57.5% of sample from Stockton

Unaided Awareness

Question: PG&E manages the electricity system in your area. You also have an option for generation service (power plants). Is that...



May 2022



October 2022

Stakeholder Engagement & Timelines

Meetings and Public Information - 2022 to early 2023

- 4/1/22 - Presented [brand refresh concept](#) to MRL Subcommittee
- 10/19/22 - BOD meeting [CEO Report](#) notes hiring of Head of Brand
- 12/14/22 - BOD meeting [CEO Report](#) provides update on brand efforts
- 12/15/22 - [RFP](#) posted for partner to support Brand Identity Evolution
- 2/15/23 - BOD meeting consent agenda for [approval of contract](#) for Brand & Visual Identity Services

Winter/Spring 2023

- **February**
 - Ad Hoc Committees of the Board and CAC established; initial meetings
- **March**
 - Survey of stakeholders, customers, and staff
 - Presentation to MuniPals
- **April**
 - Ad Hoc Committee meetings
 - Presentation to Exec Comm, CAC, and Board
- **May**
 - Ad Hoc Committee meetings
 - Update in CEO Report to Board
 - Presentation on brand at Marketing & Account Services Special Board Retreat
 - Special meeting of the MuniPals

June 2023

Info and discussion

- **June 7**
 - Executive Committee
- **June 16**
- Marketing, Regulatory, & Legislative Committee
- **June 20**
 - Community Advisory Committee

Discussion and vote

- **June 21**
 - Board of Directors Meeting

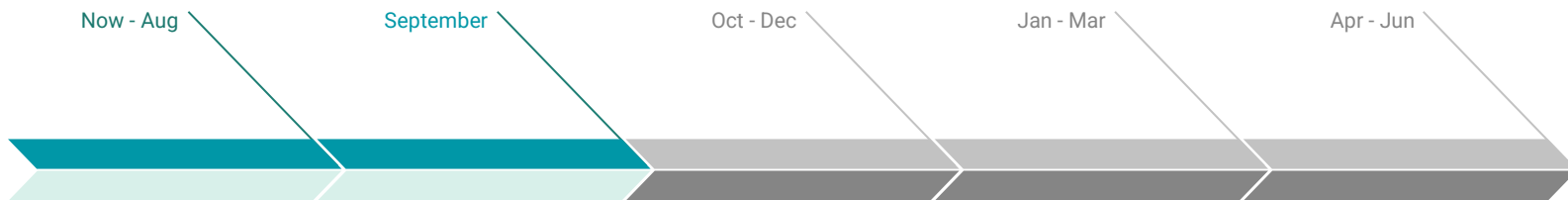
Reference: Ad Hoc Committees

Name	EBCE Role	Jurisdiction Role
Elisa Márquez	Current Chair	Supervisor, Alameda County
Dan Kalb	Former Chair	Councilmember, Oakland
Jaime Patiño	Former Chair of MRL Subcommittee	Councilmember, Union City
Matt Bedolla	Director	Councilmember, Tracy
Dan Wright	Director	Councilmember, Stockton
Anne-Olivia Eldred	Chair of CAC	Oakland resident
Ed Hernandez	Vice Chair of CAC	San Leandro resident
Jim Lutz	At-Large Member of CAC	Oakland resident

Committee Feedback

Ad Hoc Committees	Support from both Board and CAC members for new name
Executive Committee	Feedback was generally supportive. Comments from board members and members of the public centered on focusing the name and messaging on role as a public agency and regions served, while avoiding personification.
Marketing, Regulatory, & Legislative Committee	Feedback was positive. No public comments were given.

Ahead: Implementing our Evolved Name & Brand (Attachment (Staff Report Item 19B))



Plan, Prepare, Build

- Catalog / update all branded assets
- Build launch plan x audience
- Create toolkits x audience (e.g. logo, guidelines, FAQ, messaging, social posts, newsletter content)

Stakeholder Enablement

- Communications and training for internal and external stakeholders (e.g. all employees, MuniPals, sponsored entities, program partners)

Soft Launch

- Notice customers
- Reskin website
- Apply brand to external touchpoints
- Social media campaign
- Outreach at events

Robust Comms

- Integrated campaign to inform and build excitement among our constituents (e.g. radio, buses, BART, OOH)
- Launch evolved website
- Measure awareness

Transition to Steady State*

- Begin messaging shift from introduction to steady state
- Continue elevated level of outreach with programs focus
- Integrate tracking data and stakeholder input to drive additional activities

* Timing influenced by results of tracking survey

Process & Considerations

3CE - Central Coast Community Energy
AVCE - Apple Valley Choice Energy
CEA - Clean Energy Alliance
CCA - Community Choice Aggregation
CPA - Clean Power Alliance

EBCE - East Bay Community Energy



Opportunity to evolve our name

LE - Lancaster Energy
MCE - Marin Clean Energy
OCPA - Orange County Power Authority
PG&E - Pacific Gas & Energy
RCEA - Redwood Coast Energy Authority
RMEA - Rancho Mirage Energy Authority
SCE - Southern California Edison
SCP - Sonoma Clean Power
SDCP - San Diego Community Power
SJCE - San Jose Clean Energy
SJP - San Jacinto Power
SVCE - Silicon Valley Clean Energy

- From locally descriptive and limiting to evocative and flexible for expansion
- From a complex, forced acronym to a short and memorable name that energizes our customers, employees, and partners

East Bay Community Energy

(EBCE)

- Descriptive of single region
- Generates local identity
- In-line with CCA category
- Descriptive, adds context
- Anchors the category
- Increases trademark-ability

↓

Descriptive name limits regional expansion
Lengthy acronym EBCE is used throughout but lacks meaning



Newname

Community Energy

- Evocative of progress
- Generates inclusion
- Short & stands apart
- Primary, customer-facing brand name (DBA)
- Descriptive, adds context
- Anchors the category
- Increases trademark-ability
- Secondary-level messaging, where needed

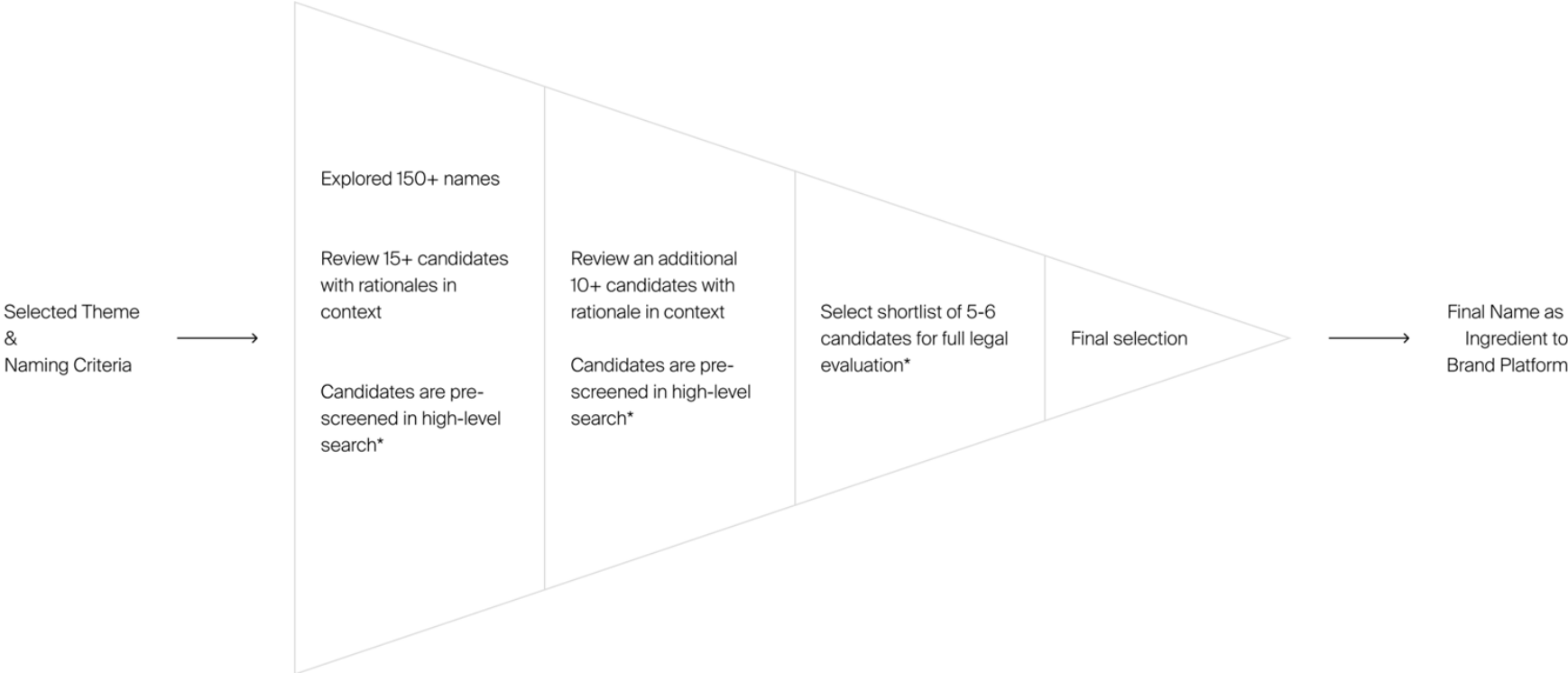
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Evocative name is flexible for service & geographic expansion
DBA (Doing Business As) name is customer & employee-facing
Registered company name can remain different

Naming Criteria

1. Signals energy, community, or progress
2. Evokes momentum, positivity, and togetherness
3. Flexible for business and service area expansion
4. Balances uniqueness with reliability
5. Based on easy-to-understand words
6. Sounds and looks interesting; ideally also wearable
7. Stands out from clean tech/smart home innovators
8. Works in connection with “Community Energy” but without creating negative acronyms
9. Ownable as URL and available as trademark

Naming Process



Name Proposal

Considerations

- Legal check is complete and clear - name is available for use
 - Other top contenders did not pass initial legal review, presenting risk of litigation
- Trademark registration submitted
- Cultural / Linguistic search completed; no conflicts found
- Social media handles and URLs have been secured in advance of revealing the name publicly
- Name proposal is the outcome of many months of working with the ad hoc committees, public engagement, consultant engagement, internal staff analysis, and legal review

Ava

Ava Community Energy

Origin

Coined from Alameda County + Valley

Rationale

Signals approachability
Evokes humanity and optimism
Short, warm, and memorable

Language

“East Bay Community Energy is now **Ava**”

“We’d like to thank **Ava Community Energy** for being the Climate Justice Sponsor of the Oakland Roots.”

“The next speaker is from **Ava Community Energy**, servicing Alameda County to the Central Valley.”

We are Ava Community Energy

Ava is powering better living with clean, affordable energy.

[Learn More](#)

Attachment Staff Report Item 19B



We are Ava Community Energy

Ava is powering
better business
with clean,
affordable energy.

[Learn More](#)

Attachment Staff Report Item 19B



Ava

Ava Community Energy