

Request to the Ava Community Energy Board regarding the Customer Programs Strategic Roadmap process and Request for Proposals

From: The Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

By: LDBP ad-hoc for presentation at the Community Advisory Committee on Monday, September 15

We appreciate the thoughtful and diligent efforts of Annie Henderson and the Local Development team to create a comprehensive process to develop the next strategic roadmap for Ava. However we do believe the customer programs strategic roadmap RFP process has several serious shortcomings which are discussed below.

We have four serious concerns regarding the process described in the following documents:

- [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) for Customer Programs Roadmap](#)
- [Customer Programs Strategic Roadmap](#)
Item 5. Executive Committee Meeting – 9/3/25
- [Local Development and Customer Programs Strategic Roadmap Development Overview](#)
Item C5. Community Advisory Committee Meeting – 7/14/25
- [Local Development and Customer Programs Strategic Roadmap Development Overview](#)
Item 7. Executive Committee Meeting – 7/2/25

The **first concern** is that it explicitly excludes commodity supply, which is the vast majority of Ava's expenses, and focuses solely on customer programs, a much smaller part of the budget.

The **second major concern** is that it assumes the primary goal of Ava customer programs is decarbonization.

We acknowledge and fully support that clean energy is a foundational reason for the creation of Ava, but it is not the only one, nor was it intended to be realized in a manner isolated from the other primary reasons articulated in the JPA establishment contract.

It is important to note the multi-year process leading to Ava's creation was coincident with the idea of a "Green New Deal" which calls for public policy to address climate change, along with achieving other social aims like job creation, economic growth, and reducing economic inequality.

These first two concerns conflict with the intent of the founding documents of Ava Community Energy. And we risk missing the key opportunities by ignoring the results of the extensive stakeholder engagement leading to its founding.

- [Ava Community Energy Authority - Joint Powers Agreement](#)

The 3rd recital of the JPA states

"The purposes for ... entering into this Agreement include securing electrical energy supply for customers in participating jurisdictions, addressing climate change by reducing energy related greenhouse gas emissions, promoting electrical rate price

stability, and fostering local economic benefits such as jobs creation, community energy programs and local power development."

- [Final Local Development Business Plan July 18, 2018.](#)

The vision laid out in the LDBP is:

"EBCE seeks to deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits to the communities of Alameda County by providing cleaner electricity at competitive rates, developing local resources that drive new investments, and creating increased demand for high-paying jobs. EBCE will offer carbon-free energy with solar, wind, and hydropower sources. Over time, EBCE will increase the amount of solar and wind in the power mix as the community moves towards 100% renewable energy."

The history of the extensive research and the intent of the broad stakeholder coalition is contained in the 71 study reports, public comments, letters of support, presentations from webinars and community engagement symposiums that lead up to the creation of Ava (EBCE at the time) and the LDBP.

- [Previous Drafts LDBP and Background Documents](#)

Here are some important excerpts from those documents to give a sense of what is contained.

A compelling survey uncovered more than 650 MW of solar siting potential in EBCE territory as noted in the [East Bay Community Energy Solar Siting Survey Draft Final Summary Report by Clean Coalition](#)

A quote from the [Energy Efficiency Assessment by The Offset Project](#) expresses the reason for forming a CCA.

"As public agencies established to serve local energy needs and provide enhanced community benefits, they [CCAs] are free to view the provision of energy services as a public good rather than a simple commodity. Providing valued services to customers that help lower their utility bills, increase comfort in their homes and offices, and enhance their overall customer experience can support long-term customer satisfaction and retention and ultimately fulfills a core part of any CCA's mission. ... In other words, CCA's are not businesses seeking to maximize profits, but rather public agencies seeking to maximize community benefit by leveraging the local market for energy services."

Our **third concern** is the lack of early meaningful community engagement contained in the scope of work. *Task 4: Community & Stakeholder Engagement Support* of the [Scope of Work](#) describes key activities that include:

- Stakeholder mapping,
- Advising on a comprehensive engagement approach and timing,
- Facilitating engagement activities that align with key phases of the roadmap process

- Hosting engagement activities that provide information early in the roadmap development process to consolidate an understanding of stakeholder priorities across Ava's service areas
- Hosting program concept and portfolio informational sessions with stakeholders.

However, there is no guidance on the number and geographical distribution of stakeholder engagement activities. Nor is there guidance on which phases of the roadmap process provide stakeholder engagement activities, or when they might occur.

No public engagement requirements are included in:

- Task 2: Refine Customer Programs Roadmap Objective,
- Task 5: Market Assessment on External Landscape,
- Task 6: Develop Program Concepts, or
- Task 7: Program Metrics Development

The workshops in Task 8: "Program Concepts and Program Concept Metrics Workshop(s)" include only Ava's internal subject matter experts, and do not include public stakeholders.

Task 10: Portfolio Development includes convening one or more forum(s) with Ava staff, but there is no mention of public forums.

The **fourth major concern** is there was no early and meaningful Board or CAC engagement in the creation of the RFP. The full Board will not get a presentation on the RFP process until the October meeting. This is after the staff have completed the finalist selection and interviews of the submitting teams. No Board or CAC participation occurred in developing or even reviewing the criteria to evaluate submissions. At this time, no Board or CAC participation is planned in the evaluation of proposals.

To remedy these shortcomings:

Local Development ad-hoc committee makes a motion to request the Board to direct staff to:

- Undertake an additional roadmap process, with early meaningful community engagement, to include; a) the entirety of Ava's operations and b) strategic plans to address regulatory, legislative, market, and technological opportunities; as well as risks to Ava Community Energy
- Require public workshops precede, or be the first step, in each of the Market Assessment, Program Concepts Development, and Program Metrics Development tasks listed in the Scope of Work for the Customer Programs Roadmap;
- Require the public workshops be geographically (spread out over Ava territory including Stockton, Tri-Valley, South County, and North County) and virtually accessible
- Include selected Board and CAC members in the review and selection of the consultant in the RFP process.