

AGENDA ITEM: 5.

DATE: 09-19-11

**STAFF REPORT**

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-03**

DATE: September 19, 2011  
TO: Lancaster Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Department  
APPLICANT: Silverado Power, LLC  
LOCATION: 67± gross acres at the southwest corner of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H  
REQUEST: Construction of a 10 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar electric generating facility in the Rural Residential 2.5 (RR-2.5) Zone

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution No. 11-15 approving Conditional Use Permit No. 11-03.

BACKGROUND: There have been no prior hearings before the Planning Commission or City Council concerning this property.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION, EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USE: The subject location is designated NU (Non-Urban Residential) by the General Plan, zoned RR-2.5 (Rural Residential, one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres), and is predominantly vacant. The northwest corner of the project site contains the remains of a former residence/ranch. The General Plan designation, zoning, and land use of the surrounding properties are as follows:

	<u>GENERAL PLAN</u>	<u>ZONING</u>	<u>LAND USE</u>
NORTH	P (Public Use)	S (School)	Del Sur Elementary School
EAST	NU	RR-2.5	SCE Substation/Vacant (approved for solar)
SOUTH	County	A-2-1 (Heavy Agricultural)	Vacant
WEST	County	A-2-1 (Heavy Agricultural)	Vacant/Single Family Residence

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS: The site is bounded to the east by 90<sup>th</sup> Street West, to the north by Avenue H, to the west by 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West, and to the south by Avenue H-8. 90<sup>th</sup> Street West is improved with one travel lane in each direction. The other roadways are all unimproved dirt roads.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Review of pertinent environmental documents has disclosed no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project after mitigation measures have been applied. Potential effects are discussed more fully in the attached Initial Study. The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project was sent to the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2011081047) for public review. This 30-day public review period ended on September 13, 2011. Based on this information, staff has determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration is warranted. Notice of Intent to prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been legally advertised.

Effective January 1, 1991, applicants whose projects have the potential to result in the loss of fish, wildlife, or habitat through urbanization and/or land use conversion are required to pay filing fees as set forth under Section 711.4 of the Fish and Game Code. Pursuant to Section 21089(b) of the Public Resources Code, the approval of a project is not valid, and no development right is vested, until such fees are paid.

LEGAL NOTICE: Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to all property owners within a 1,500-foot radius of the project, posted in three places, posted on the subject property, and noticed in a newspaper of general circulation per prescribed procedure.

ANALYSIS: The applicant, Silverado Power LLC, is requesting a conditional use permit for the construction and operation of a photovoltaic (PV) solar electric energy generating facility in a Rural Residential Zone. The proposed project consists of rows of PV panels, which would either be fixed or on trackers. These panels would generate 10 megawatts (MW) of electricity. According to Section 17.080.70.DD of the Lancaster Municipal Code, a conditional use permit is required for the construction and operation of a solar plant in a Rural Residential Zone.

The City of Lancaster has determined that the development and use of alternative energy is beneficial to the community, and this determination is evident in the decisions made by the City Council. The City Council has implemented several solar and wind energy programs/ordinances, has installed solar panels on City facilities, and has moved to become a provider of solar generated electricity to local school districts and other entities. Additionally, the City's General Plan has several objectives/policies pertaining to alternative energy. These objectives/policies address the need to develop new sources of energy as well as reduce energy consumption. The proposed project is consistent with the City's goals as addressed in Policy 3.6.6, "Consider and promote the use of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar energy" and Specific Action 3.6.6(a), "Work with utility companies and private enterprises in their efforts to incorporate alternative energy resources including...solar energy".

The project site is vacant with the exception of the remains of a former residence/ranch and is zoned RR-2.5. The proposed project would operate year-round, producing a total of 10 MW of renewable electric power during daytime hours. Power generated by the proposed project would be sold to

Southern California Edison. The proposed project consists of rows of photovoltaic panels. These panels would either be fixed or mounted on trackers (single or dual axis), depending upon the chosen technology. These photovoltaic panels would convert sunlight directly into electrical energy without the use of heat transfer fluid or cooling water. An inverter/electrical equipment pad would be located in the center of each block of panels. A substation would be located on the northern portion of the project site, and would feed the electricity to the Del Sur Substation located on the southeast corner of Avenue H and 90<sup>th</sup> Street West, via a gen-tie line. A chain-link fence would surround the project site, and a 10-foot landscaped area would be provided between the fence and property line to screen the development from the surrounding uses. Access to the project site would be provided via two gates on 90<sup>th</sup> Street West.

Irrevocable offers of dedication would be provided for Avenue H, Avenue H-8, 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West. Avenue H and 90<sup>th</sup> Street West would be dedicated at 50 feet from centerline; Avenue H-8 would be dedicated at 42 feet from the centerline; and 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West would be dedicated at 32 feet from centerline.

The proposed project has the potential to impact views from the surrounding roads and nearby residences. The photovoltaic panels would be approximately 10 feet high, with a maximum height of 14 feet. The height of the panels is dependent upon the specific technology chosen by the applicant. While the views of the project site would change, the development would not impede long-range views. Additionally, the project site would be fenced and landscaped around the entire perimeter.

The proposed project would generate environmental impacts during construction with respect to biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards and noise. The construction of the proposed project has the potential to impact nesting birds and burrowing owls during vegetation removal and grading operations. The applicant is required to conduct a pre-construction nesting bird and burrowing owl survey prior to the issuance of any permits. In the event that nesting birds or burrowing owls are encountered on the project site during the survey, the applicant shall coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to determine the appropriate procedures/mitigation. Additionally, Swainson's hawk may utilize the area for foraging. A Swainson's hawk survey shall be conducted on the project site. If Swainson's hawks are observed utilizing the project site, the applicant shall contact CDFG for the appropriate measures. Therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

The project site contains the remains of a residence/ranch. This site (19-001612) was originally recorded in 1974, and has suffered damage since that time. However, it still may be considered historically significant. An evaluation of the cultural site is required in order to determine whether it is historically significant. In the event that the site is determined to be significant, all recommendations in the report shall be followed to ensure impacts to the resource are less than significant.

The applicant is required to prepare and implement a dust control plan in accordance with AVAQMD Rule 403, which would ensure that impacts from dust during construction are minimal. The applicant is also required to properly abandon all water wells on the project sites, which are not

planned for use during project operations to ensure that no impacts from hazardous materials occur.

Construction of the proposed project would generate noise, which has the potential to impact surrounding land uses. Mitigation measures are required, which would reduce noise impacts to a less than significant level. Minimal amounts of noise would be generated by the operation of the proposed project, and only during routine maintenance, as the panels and any tracking system would be silent. Most of the time the facility would be remotely operated, and no noise would be generated.

Therefore, staff is recommending that the Commission approve the conditional use permit subject to the proposed conditions, based on the site having sufficient area to accommodate the proposed development, adequate access and services being available for the use, and the lack of significant adverse effects on the surrounding area.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jocelyn Swain, Associate Planner - Environmental

cc: Applicant  
Engineer

## RESOLUTION NO. 11-15

### A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-03

WHEREAS, a conditional use permit has been requested by Silverado Power, LLC, to allow the construction and operation of a 10 MW photovoltaic solar electric generating facility on approximately 67± gross acres located at the southwest corner Avenue H and 90<sup>th</sup> Street West in the Rural Residential 2.5 Zone as shown on the attached site plan; and

WHEREAS, an application for the above-described conditional use permit has been filed pursuant to the regulations contained in Article I of Chapter 17.32 and Chapter 17.42 of the Lancaster Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, a notice of intent to consider the granting of a Conditional Use Permit has been given as required in Article V of Chapter 17.32 of the Lancaster Municipal Code and in Section 65905 of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, staff has performed necessary investigations, prepared a written report, and recommended approval of this conditional use application, subject to conditions; and

WHEREAS, this Commission hereby certifies that it has reviewed and considered the information in the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the proposed project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the State Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act prior to taking action; and

WHEREAS, this Commission hereby finds, pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the Public Resource Code, that the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the proposed project reflects the independent judgment of the City of Lancaster; and

WHEREAS, this Commission hereby finds that the Initial Study determined that the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment; however, there will not be a significant effect in this case with the implementation of mitigation measures as detailed in Exhibit "A"; and

WHEREAS, public notice was provided as required by law and a public hearing was held on September 19, 2011; and

WHEREAS, this Commission hereby adopts the following findings in support of approval of this application:

1. The proposed use would be located on 67± gross acres at the southwest corner of Avenue H and 90<sup>th</sup> Street West, and will be in conformance with the General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential.

2. The proposed project is a 10-megawatt photovoltaic solar electric generation facility with a conditional use permit, which is consistent with General Plan Policy 3.6.6 that states, “consider and promote the use of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar energy.”
3. The requested use at the location proposed will not:
  - a. Adversely affect the health, peace, comfort, or welfare of persons living in the surrounding area because the proposed use will be screened from the surrounding residential uses by landscaping and the panels and trackers are silent.
  - b. Be materially detrimental to the use, enjoyment, or valuation of property of other persons located in the vicinity of the site because City development standards will be met and adequate parking is provided. The proposed panels are approximately 10 feet in height and would not exceed a maximum of 14 feet, which is under the maximum height regulations of the Rural Residential zones and are designed with adequate setbacks from the adjacent street.
  - c. Jeopardize, endanger or otherwise constitute a menace to the public health, safety, or general welfare because adequate sewer, water, drainage, and improvements will be part of the project.
4. The proposed use will not adversely affect nearby residents because the proposed use would be screened by landscaping, the maximum height of the panels are 14 feet, the panels and trackers are not noise generators, and there is limited vehicle traffic that would occur once construction has been completed.
5. The proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the photovoltaic solar electric generation facility, landscaping, and other development features prescribed in the Zoning Ordinance or as otherwise required in order to integrate said use with the use in the surrounding areas.
6. The proposed site is adequately served:
  - a. By 90<sup>th</sup> Street West which is of sufficient width and improved as necessary to carry the anticipated daily vehicle trips such use would generate; and
  - b. By other public and private service facilities, including sewer, water, fire, and police services as required.
7. The proposed use will not result in a significant effect on the environment because all potential impacts have been found to be less than significant with the inclusion of

mitigation measures as noted in the environmental review section of the staff report prepared for this project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. This Commission hereby approves the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for this project with the finding that although the proposed Conditional Use Permit could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect on the environment after mitigation measures have been applied to the project.
2. This Commission hereby adopts the Mitigation Monitoring Program, Exhibit "A".
3. This Commission hereby approves Conditional Use Permit No. 11-03, subject to the conditions attached hereto and incorporated herein.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September 2011, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

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JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman  
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director  
City of Lancaster

**ATTACHMENT TO PC RESOLUTION NO. 11-15**  
**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-03**  
**CONDITIONS LIST**  
**September 19, 2011**

**GENERAL ADVISORY**

1. All standard conditions as set forth in Planning Commission Resolution No. 10-23 shall apply, except Condition Nos. 47, 48, and 49.
2. Applicant shall comply with the requirements of California Sales and Use Tax Regulation 1699, subpart (h), Regulation 1699.6 and Regulation 1802, subparts (c) and (d), respectively, and shall cooperate with the City regarding their direct and indirect purchases and leases to ensure compliance with the above sections, including, if necessary, the formation and use of buying companies, and the direct reporting of purchases of over \$500,000.
3. Per the direction of the Planning Director, no unscreened outdoor storage of any kind would be allowed on the site.
4. Per the direction of the Planning Director, barbed wire is acceptable on the top of the fence to provide site security, but not razor wire.
5. The applicant shall provide restroom facilities for use by maintenance staff.

**ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS**

6. Per the direction of the Director of Public Works, grant an irrevocable offer of dedication for the following streets:
  - Avenue H at 50 feet from centerline
  - 90<sup>th</sup> Street West at 50 feet from centerline
  - Avenue H-8 at 42 feet from centerline
  - 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West at 32 feet from centerline
7. Per the direction of the Planning Director, the applicant shall install a 10-foot wide landscaped planter along the perimeter of the project site for screening purposes.
8. Per the direction of the Director of Public Works, any public street surfaces damaged by construction traffic shall be restored to its pre-existing condition.

**MITIGATION MEASURES**

9. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If burrowing owls or sign thereof are discovered during the survey, the applicant shall contact the Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements for the species.
10. A pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If nesting birds are encountered, all work in the



- area shall cease until either the young birds have fledged or the appropriate permits are obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game.
11. A Swainson's hawk survey shall be conducted on the project site prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If Swainson's hawks are identified using the site during the survey, the applicant shall contact the California Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements.
  12. Prior to any grading/construction activities occurring on the Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch (APN 3219-018-015) portion of the project site, a cultural resources study needs to be prepared determining whether the recorded site (19-001612) is historically significant. In the event that the site is determined to be historically significant, all recommendations identified in the report shall be followed prior to any disturbance.
  13. A Dust Control Plan in accordance with Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) Rule 403 shall be submitted prior to the start of grading/construction activities.
  14. In the event that the existing well(s) on site will not be utilized during project operation or other wells are found on-site, the applicant shall abandon the wells in accordance with all existing rules and regulations.
  15. Construction operations shall not occur between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays or Saturday, or at any time on Sunday. The hours of any construction-related activities shall be restricted to periods and days permitted by local ordinance.
  16. The on-site construction supervisor shall have the responsibility and authority to receive and resolve noise complaints. A clear appeal process to the owner shall be established prior to construction commencement that will allow for resolution of noise problems that cannot be immediately solved by the site supervisor.
  17. Electrically powered equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment, where feasible.
  18. Material stockpiles and mobile equipment staging, parking, and maintenance areas shall be located as far away as practicable from noise-sensitive receptors.
  19. The use of noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells, shall be for safety warning purposes only.
  20. No project-related public address or music system shall be audible at any adjacent receptor.
  21. All noise producing construction equipment and vehicles using internal combustion engines shall be equipped with mufflers, air-inlet silencers where appropriate, and any other shrouds, shields, or other noise-reducing features in good operating condition that meet or exceed original factory specification. Mobile or fixed "package" equipment (e.g., arc-welders, air compressors, etc.) shall be equipped with shrouds and noise control features that are readily available for the type of equipment.

Mit. / Cond. No.	Mitigation Measure/ Conditions of Approval	Monitoring Milestone (Frequency)	Method of Verification	Party Responsible for Monitoring	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>							
1.	A pre-construction burrowing owl survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If burrowing owls or sign thereof are discovered during the survey, the applicant shall contact the Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements for the species.	Prior to vegetation removal, grubbing, grading, stockpile, or construction, the City must receive a report from a biologist advising that the site is free of nesting birds.	Prior to final approval of grading plan, issuance of a stockpile permit, or any ground disturbing activities.	Planning Department responsible for reviewing report.			
2.	A pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If nesting birds are encountered, all work in the area shall cease until either the young birds have fledged or the appropriate permits are obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game.	Prior to vegetation removal, grubbing, grading, stockpile, or construction, the City must receive a report from a biologist advising that the site is free of burrowing owls.	Prior to final approval of grading plan, issuance of a stockpile permit, or any ground disturbing activities.	Planning Department responsible for reviewing report.			
3.	A Swainson's hawk survey shall be conducted on the project site prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If Swainson's hawks are identified using the site during the survey, the applicant shall contact the California Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements.	Prior to vegetation removal, grubbing, grading, stockpile, or construction, the City must receive a report from a biologist advising that the site is free of burrowing owls.	Prior to final approval of grading plan, issuance of a stockpile permit, or any ground disturbing activities.	Planning Department responsible for reviewing report.			
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>							
4.	Prior to any grading/construction activities occurring on the Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch (APN 3219-018-015) portion of the project site, a cultural resources study needs to be prepared determining whether the recorded site (19-001612) is historically significant. In the event that the site is determined to be historically	Prior to vegetation removal, grubbing, grading, stockpile, or construction, the City must receive a report from an archaeologist	Prior to final approval of grading plan, issuance of a stockpile permit, or any ground disturbing activities.	Planning Department responsible for reviewing report.			

Mit. / Cond. No.	Mitigation Measure/ Conditions of Approval	Monitoring Milestone (Frequency)	Method of Verification	Party Responsible for Monitoring	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	significant, all recommendations identified in the report shall be followed prior to any disturbance.	regarding the historical significance of Site 19-001612.					
<b>GEOLOGY AND SOILS</b>							
5.	A Dust Control Plan in accordance with Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) Rule 403 shall be submitted prior to the start of grading/construction activities.	Prior to vegetation removal, grubbing, grading, stockpile, or construction, the City must receive a copy of the Dust Control Plan.	Prior to final approval of grading plan, issuance of a stockpile permit, or any ground disturbing activities.	Planning Department/ Engineering responsible for reviewing report.			
<b>HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</b>							
6.	In the event that the existing well(s) on site will not be utilized during project operation or other wells are found on-site, the applicant shall abandon the wells in accordance with all existing rules and regulations.	The City must receive a report from a closure letter from the appropriate agency for each well that is abandoned.	Prior to completion of construction activities	Planning Department responsible for reviewing closure letter(s).			
<b>NOISE</b>							
7.	Construction operations shall not occur between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays or Saturday or at any time on Sunday. The hours of any construction-related activities shall be restricted to periods and days permitted by local ordinance.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			
8.	The on-site construction supervisor shall have the responsibility and authority to receive and resolve noise complaints. A clear appeal process to the owner shall be established prior to construction commencement that will allow for resolution of noise problems that cannot be immediately solved by the site supervisor.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			

Mit. / Cond. No.	Mitigation Measure/ Conditions of Approval	Monitoring Milestone (Frequency)	Method of Verification	Party Responsible for Monitoring	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
9.	Electrically powered equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment, where feasible.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			
10.	Material stockpiles and mobile equipment staging, parking, and maintenance areas shall be located as far away as practicable from noise-sensitive receptors.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			
11.	The use of noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells, shall be for safety warning purposes only.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			
12.	No project-related public address or music system shall be audible at any adjacent receptor.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			
13.	All noise producing construction equipment and vehicles using internal combustion engines shall be equipped with mufflers, air-inlet silencers where appropriate, and any other shrouds, shields, or other noise-reducing features in good operating conditions that meet or exceed original factory specification. Mobile or fixed "package" equipment (e.g., arc-welders, air compressors, etc.) shall be equipped with shrouds and noise control features that are readily available for the type of equipment.	During construction	Field inspection	Building and Safety			

CITY OF LANCASTER  
INITIAL STUDY

1. Project title and File Number: Conditional Use Permit 11-03  
Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch  
Rodeo Solar Ranch
2. Lead agency name and address: City of Lancaster  
Planning Department  
44933 Fern Avenue  
Lancaster, California 93534
3. Contact person and phone number: Jocelyn Swain  
(661) 723-6100
4. Applicant name and address: Silverado Power  
John Cheney/Jim Howell  
44 Montgomery Street, Suite 3065  
San Francisco, CA 94104
5. Location: ±67 acres bounded by Avenue H, Avenue H-8, 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West
6. General Plan designation: Non-Urban Residential (NU)
7. Zoning: RR-2.5 (Rural Residential, minimum lot size 2.5 acres)
8. Description of project: The proposed project is a 10 megawatt (MW), photovoltaic solar electric generating facility located on approximately 67 acres of previously disturbed agricultural and fallow land in the City of Lancaster. The proposed project would employ photovoltaic (PV) modules that convert sunlight into electrical energy without use of heat transfer fluid or cooling water. The facility would include a 12.47 kilovolt (kV) generation-tie (gen-tie) line for interconnecting the electrical output of the project to the regional transmission system. This line would connect the project site to the Del Sur Substation at the southeast corner of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H.

The proposed project would be constructed in phases and operated for a period of 35 years. The project facilities would operate year round, producing power during daytime hours. It is anticipated that site preparation and construction would start first quarter of 2014 with construction completed and the facility operational by the fourth quarter of 2014. The proposed project consists of the following elements: PV modules; module mounting system; balance of system and electrical boxes (e.g., combiner boxes, electrical disconnects); electrical inverters and transformers; electrical AC collection system, including switch gear; data monitoring equipment; and access roads and security fencing.

A series of PV module arrays would be mounted on racking systems typically supported by a pile-driven foundation design. The module mounting system or racking system would be a fixed tilt or tracker PV array configuration oriented due south to maximize the amount of incident solar radiation absorbed over the course of the year.

Electrical connections from a series of PV arrays would be channeled to combiner boxes located throughout the solar field. Electrical current would be collected and combined prior to feeding the inverters. The solar field would be laid out in a common PV block design to allow adequate clearance and access roads and adequate access for maintenance. The AC output from the inverters would be routed through an AC collection system and consolidated within system switchgear. The final output from the proposed project would be processed through a transformer to match the interconnection voltage. Electrical safety and protection systems would be provided to meet utility, CAISO (California Independent System Operator) and regulatory codes and standards. The energy would be delivered to the SCE transmission network.

A security perimeter fence with appropriate signage for public protection would be installed. Points of ingress/egress would be accessed by locked gates for facility services and maintenance as required. 10 feet of landscaping would be provided between the edge of the right-of-way and the fencing.

### Photovoltaic Modules

The proposed project would require the installation of approximately 36,000 PV modules. The specific technology has not been determined yet but would include one of the following: PV thin-film technology, PV crystalline silicon technology, stationary fixed-tilt modular configuration, and tracking module configuration. For the tracking configuration, the modules would rotate from east to west over the course of the day. Modules would be nonreflective and highly absorptive.

### Standard Installation, Array Assembly, and Racking

There are a variety of module mounting systems from various manufacturers that are available. The majority can be mounted on a variety of foundations. Fixed-tilt, single-axis trackers, and dual axis trackers provide various levels of energy efficiencies. These systems are under consideration for the proposed project. The module mounting system provides the structure that supports the PV module arrays. The foundations are typically cylindrical steel pipes/pile driven into the soil using pneumatic techniques, similar to hydraulic pile driving. Once the foundation has been installed, the module racking system would be installed to support the PV modules. For a tracking configuration, motors would be installed to drive the tracking mechanism. The module mounting system would be oriented in rows within a PV design block reflecting a standard and uniform appearance across the facility. The module configuration would be uniform in height and width.

### DC Collection, Inverters, AC Collection, and Transformers

Modules would be electrically connected into strings. Each string would be funneled by electrical conduit underground to combiner boxes located throughout the solar field power blocks. The output power cables from the combiner boxes would again be consolidated and feed the DC electricity to inverters which convert the DC to AC. System transformers would step up the AC power to the appropriate interconnection voltage. As required, switchgear cabinetry would be provided where necessary for circuit control.

All electrical inverters, transformers, and gear would be placed on concrete foundation structures. The proposed project, including inverter equipment, would be designed and laid out in MW increments/blocks. Each inverter would be fully enclosed, pad mounted, and stand approximately 90

inches (7.5 feet) in height. The AC output of two inverters would be fed via underground cable into the low-voltage side of the inverter step-up transformer, generally within 20 feet of the inverters.

### Substation

The substation area would be excavated for the transformer equipment, control building foundation, and oil containment area. Reinforced concrete would be used for foundations. Structural components in the substation area include the following: transformers, switchgear and safety systems; and footings and oil containment system for transformers.

The transformers would be approximately 87 inches in height and would be pad mounted and enclosed together with switchgear and a junction box, and stands. The high-voltage output of the transformer would be combined in a series via underground collector cable to the junction box of the transformer in closest proximity. Distances can range from as little as 60 feet to as much as 700 feet throughout the project site. The collector system cables would be tied at underground junction boxes to the main underground collector cables composed of a larger gauge wire, to the location of the generator step-up transformer (GSU). The main collector cables would rise into the low-voltage busbar and protection equipment that is enclosed together with the GSU. The primary switchgear includes the main circuit breaker and utility metering equipment, and would be enclosed separately and pad mounted together with the GSU. Both the GSU and the primary switchgear stand approximately 87 inches in height. The output of the switchgear would be the start of the gen-tie. The three-phase gen-tie would be composed of an overhead conductor and a disconnect switch on 55-foot wood poles.

### Data Collection System

The proposed project would be designed with a comprehensive Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system for remote monitoring of facility operation and/or remote control of critical components. The system would also include a meteorological (met) data collection system with the following weather sensors: a pyranometer for measuring solar irradiance, a thermometer to measure air temperature, a barometric pressure sensor to measure atmospheric pressure and two wind sensors to measure speed and direction.

### Interconnection Plan and Generation-Tie Lines

Electricity would be delivered to the existing SCE Del Sur Substation via a generation tie originating at the DC collection system within the project site.

### Project Construction

Project construction would consist of three phases: 1) site preparation, 2) PV system installation, testing and startup; and 3) site cleanup/restoration.

### Site Preparation

Construction of the PV facility would begin with initial clearing and grading of the staging areas. The staging area would typically include construction offices, a first aid station and other temporary buildings, worker parking, truck loading and unloading facilities, and an area for assembly. Road corridors would be surveyed, cleared, and graded to bring equipment, materials, and workers to the areas

under construction. Buried electrical lines, PV array locations, and the locations of other facilities may be flagged and staked to guide construction activities. The project site would be fenced with security fencing.

### PV System Installation

PV system installation would include earthwork, grading, and erosion control, as well as construction of the plant substation and erection of the PV modules, supports, and associated electrical equipment. System installation would begin with teams installing the mounting and steel/concrete piers support structures. The methods may include (but are not limited to) vibration driven screw piles or above-ground ballast foundations. This would be followed by panel installation and electrical work.

Concrete would be required for the footings, foundations, and pads for the transformers and substation equipment. Concrete would be produced at an off-site location by a local provider and transported to the project site by truck. The enclosures housing the inverters would have a pre-cast concrete base.

The PV modules require a moderately flat surface for installation. Some earthwork, including grading, fill, compaction, and erosion control cultivation may be required to accommodate the placement of PV arrays, foundations or footings, access roads, and drainage features. Control of erosion during construction may include the use of silt fencing, straw bales and temporary catch basins, inlet filters, and truck tire muck shakers. Construction of the PV arrays would include installation of support beams, module rail assemblies, PV modules, inverters, transformers, and buried electrical cables.

### Construction Workers, Hours, and Equipment

The construction activities are expected to be completed in approximately 9 months. Construction would generally occur during daylight hours, Monday through Friday. Weekend and non-daylight hours may be necessary to make up schedule deficiencies or to complete critical construction activities. Construction activities would be conducted consistent with City of Lancaster regulations regarding hours of construction. The project would generate a peak of approximately 75 new jobs during the construction phase.

### Project Operation and Maintenance

For the duration of the operational phase, the proposed project would be operated on an unstaffed basis and monitored remotely, with regular on-site personnel visitations for security, maintenance, and system monitoring. There would be no full-time site personnel on-site during operation. As the proposed project's PV arrays produce electricity passively with minimal moving parts, maintenance requirements would be limited. Any required planned maintenance would be scheduled to avoid peak load periods and unplanned maintenance would be typically responded to as needed depending on the event. An inventory of space components would be readily available from a remote warehouse facility.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: The area surrounding the project site is predominantly vacant land with a mix of agricultural and residential uses. Immediately north of the project site is the Del Sur Elementary School. To the east of the project site are former agricultural fields and SCE's Del Sur Substation. To the west of the project site is vacant desert, agricultural fields, and several single family residences. One of the single family residences is immediately adjacent to the project's boundary along



93<sup>rd</sup> Street West. South of the project site is vacant land followed by a couple of single family residences.

The property to the north is designated as Public Use (P) and is zoned S (School). The property to the east and northeast is designated Non-Urban Residential (NU) and zoned RR-2.5 (Rural Residential, minimum lot size 2.5 acres). The property to the northwest is designated Urban Residential (UR) and zoned R-10,000 (single family residential, minimum lot size 10,000 square feet). The property to the west and the south is located within unincorporated Los Angeles County and is zoned A-2-1 (Heavy Agricultural, 1 acre minimum).

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g. permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)

Approvals from other public agencies for the proposed project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (dust control plan)
- Southern California Edison

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forest Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION - On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared:

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in a earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicant standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jocelyn Swain, Associate Planner - Environmental

August 12, 2011  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated", describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
  - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
  - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. <u>AESTHETICS</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			X	
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	
II. <u>AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:</u> In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in the Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)) or timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526)?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
III. <u>AIR QUALITY</u> -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?			X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			X	
<u>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X
V. <u>CULTURAL RESOURCES</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?		X		
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X



	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. <u>GEOLOGY AND SOILS</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?		X		
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				X
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for disposal of waste water?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS --</b> Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	
<b>VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS --</b> Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably fore-seeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			X	
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?		X		
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?			X	
<u>IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</u> – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			X	
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?			X	
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?			X	

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?			X	
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems?			X	
f) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
g) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
i) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X
X. <u>LAND USE AND PLANNING</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan?				X
<b>XI. MINERAL RESOURCES</b> – Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?				X
<b>XII NOISE</b> -- Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?		X		
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?		X		
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?		X		
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
<b>XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING</b> -- Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
<b>XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>				
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?				X
Parks?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Other public facilities?				X
XV. <u>RECREATION</u> --				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X
XVI. <u>TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC</u> -- Would the project:				
a) Exceed the capacity of the existing circulation system, based on an applicable measure of effectiveness (as designated in a general plan policy, ordinance, etc.), taking into account all relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to, intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X
<b>XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS --</b> Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?			X	
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?			X	
e) Have a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X



	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?			X	
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	
<b>XVII. <u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> --</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		X		
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		X		

**DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

I. a. Views of two scenic areas are available from the roadways and areas surrounding the project site as identified by the General Plan (LMEA Figure 12-1). These scenic vistas include views of the Foothill Area (Scenic Area 1) and Quartz Hill (Scenic Area 3). The Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve is also distantly visible to the west of the project site. Additionally, 90<sup>th</sup> Street West has been

designated by the City's General Plan as a Scenic Route from Avenue K north to the Los Angeles/Kern County line.

With implementation of the proposed project, the available views of the identified scenic resources would not change and would continue to be available from the roadways and surrounding area. The change in the project site would be visible; however, the project site would be fenced and screened with trees along the perimeter. The height of the PV panels would be approximately 10 feet and would not exceed a maximum of 14 feet which is substantially lower than a single family home. The height of the development would not impede views of the mountains to the south and north while traveling on 90<sup>th</sup> Street West. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. The proposed project would remove some scenic resources from the project site including some trees and the remains of an old ranch house. Approximately five existing trees along 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and a couple of trees on the northwest portion of the project site may be removed. However, trees/landscaping would be planted along the perimeter of the project site as part of the proposed project to provide screening. The remains of the ranch house require a Phase II cultural resources survey prior to removal from the site to determine their historical significance (see Section V. for more detailed information). No rock outcroppings would be removed from the site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. The proposed project would change the visual character of the project site in that it would replace old agricultural uses with a photovoltaic solar electric generating facility. While this would change the character of the existing site, the proposed project would be compatible with the other uses in the area. Specifically, the proposed project would be compatible with the large-scale transmission lines in the area, the SCE substation on the east side of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and the approved solar facility at the southeast corner of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H. Additionally, the height of the PV panels and associated structures is less than the height of a typical single family residence. The proposed project would be fenced and perimeter landscaping provided to screen the development from view. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. The proposed project would create new sources of lighting. The area surrounding the project site currently has minimal amounts of ambient light. These light sources are primarily from the SCE Del Sur substation, Del Sur Elementary School, and a scattering of single family homes/ranches in the area. The proposed project would generate light from security and perimeter lighting. This lighting would be shielded and focused downward onto the site. No sources of glare are anticipated on the project site as PV panels are designed to absorb sunlight, no reflect it. Any structures on the project site would be constructed from non-reflective materials to the extent feasible. Therefore, light and glare impacts would be less than significant.

II. a. The California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), tracks and categorizes land with respect to agricultural resources. Land is designated as one of the following and each has a specific definition: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land.

The Los Angeles County Farmland Map was last published in 2008 and was updated in 2010, but has not currently been released. On the 2008 map, the project site was designated as Other Land. Other Land

is defined as “land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than 40 acres.” (CDC 2004) As the project site is not designated as farmland of importance by the State nor is it currently utilized for agricultural purposes, no impacts to agricultural resources would occur.

b. The project site is zoned as RR-2.5 (rural residential, minimum lot size 2.5 acres) which allows for agricultural uses. However, the project site is not utilized for agricultural purposes and does not have a Williamson Act contract. The proposed project is for a photovoltaic solar electric generating facility and would not interfere with agricultural uses (e.g., winery, farming, ranches, etc.) in the area. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

c-d. According to the City’s General Plan, there are no forests or timberlands located within the City of Lancaster. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the rezoning of forest or timberland and would not cause the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest land. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

e. See responses to Items IIa-d.

III. a. Development proposed under the City’s General Plan would not create air emissions that exceed the Air Quality Management Plan (GPEIR pgs. 5.5-21 to 5.5-22). The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code. Therefore, the project itself would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan and no impacts would occur.

b. Construction of the proposed project would generate emissions associated with grading, use of heavy equipment, construction worker vehicles, etc. However, these emissions are not anticipated to exceed the construction emission thresholds established by the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) due to the size and type of the proposed project. Therefore, construction emissions would be less than significant.

The proposed project would generate approximately 1-2 vehicle trips per week for maintenance purposes. Operation of the proposed project would be done remotely and the solar fields do not generate air emissions. Vehicle trips associated with the proposed project would generate emissions; however, due to the minimal number of vehicle trips per week, these emissions would not be sufficient to create or significantly contribute towards violations of air quality standards. Therefore, emissions associated with the operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

c. The proposed project, in conjunction with other development as allowed by the General Plan would result in a cumulative increase in pollutants. However, since the emissions associated with the construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant; its contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

d. The closest sensitive receptors are the elementary school immediately north and the single family residence immediately west of the project site. Based upon the amount of traffic expected to be generated by the proposed project, no significant traffic impacts would be anticipated. Additionally, it is not anticipated that the air emissions from construction or operation of the proposed project would exceed the thresholds established by the AVAQMD. Therefore, substantial pollution concentrations would not occur and impacts would be less than significant.

e. Construction and operation of the proposed project is not anticipated to produce significant objectionable odors. Construction equipment may generate some odors, but these odors would be similar to those produced by vehicles traveling on 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H. Most objectionable odors are typically associated with industrial projects involving the use of chemicals, solvents, petroleum products and other strong smelling elements used in manufacturing processes, as well as sewage treatment facilities and landfills. These types of uses are not part of the proposed project. The proposed project would not generate any odors as it is a photovoltaic solar generating facility and no odorous chemicals would be utilized. Small amounts of dielectric fluid and mineral oil would be utilized in the operation and maintenance of the transformers and electrical components. These materials would not have a noticeable odor. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

IV. a. A biological resources survey was conducted for the proposed project by Chambers Group and documented in a report entitled "Biological Technical Review for the Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch and Rodeo Solar Ranch Project Sites, Los Angeles County, California" and dated June 2011. A survey of the project site was conducted on May 18, 2011 to identify any sensitive plant and animal species that may be present on-site.

A majority of the project site is classified as non-native grassland. Ornamental landscaping exists along Avenue H and some tamarisk scrub is located along 93<sup>rd</sup> Street West in the northern portion of the project site. The following plant species were observed on site during the survey: fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), tumble mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*), spiny saltbrush (*Atriplex confertifolia*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), white mulberry (*Morus alba*), velvet ash (*Fraxinus velutina*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*), fescue (*Vulpia myuros*), and glaucous foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum*).

The survey of the project site did not find any evidence of sensitive plant or animal species. There is no suitable habitat on-site for either desert tortoise or Mohave ground squirrel. However, suitable habitat does exist for burrowing owls and burrowing owl burrows have been found on adjacent properties (e.g., southeast corner of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H). The trees/shrubs along the perimeter of the project site also provide habitat for a variety of nesting birds. Removal of the trees and the installation of a solar electric generating facility have the potential to impact burrowing owls and nesting birds. Therefore, the following mitigation measures identified below are required to ensure impacts remain less than significant.

Swainson's hawk is a State threatened species and a nest has been identified within 5 miles of the project site. Swainson's hawk could potentially forage on the project site; however, suitable nesting habitat is not available on the project site. Removal of 67 acres of potential foraging habitat by the proposed project would be minimal and is considered to be a less than significant impact. However, a preconstruction survey, as identified below, would be conducted prior to the start of project construction activities to ensure any potential impacts remain less than significant.

1. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If burrowing owls or sign thereof are discovered during the survey, the applicant shall contact the California Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements for the species.

2. A pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If nesting birds are encountered, all work in the area shall cease until either the young birds have fledged or the appropriate permits are obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game.
3. A Swainson's hawk survey shall be conducted on the project site prior to the start of construction/ground disturbing activities. If Swainson's hawks are identified using the site during the survey, the applicant shall contact the California Department of Fish and Game to determine the appropriate mitigation/management requirements.

b. The project site does not contain any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

c. There are no federally protected wetlands on the project site as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

d. The project site is not part of an established migratory wildlife corridor. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

e-f. The project site is not located within an area designated under an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved, local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. Additionally, there are no local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources which are applicable to this site. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

V. a-d. A cultural resources survey was conducted for the project site by Bonterra Consulting and documented in a report entitled "Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment, Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch and Rodeo Solar Ranch Project Sites (CUP2B)" and dated July 2011.

A pedestrian survey of the project site was conducted on July 9, 2011. This survey was conducted by walking five-meter transects over the entire site. A previously recorded historic site (19-001612) was relocated. When it was recorded in 1974 it was described as "...a ranch with an early adobe structure. The ranch complex includes a main house (original adobe, added adobe rooms, cellar, and converted two-story pumphouse), bunkhouse (1950s structure), horse stables, corrals, and pens a ¼ mile exercise track". Since the time the site was originally recorded, most of the structures have been heavily damaged. However, it is possible that the site is eligible for listing even in its present state. Therefore, the following mitigation measure is required. With implementation of the listed mitigation measure, potential impacts would be less than significant.

4. Prior to any grading/construction activities occurring on the Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch (APN 3219-018-015) portion of the project site, a cultural resources study needs to be prepared determining whether the recorded site (19-001612) is historically significant. In the event that the site is determined to be historically significant, all recommendations identified in the report shall be followed prior to any disturbance.

Development of the project site would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource, site or geologic feature. No human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries, were discovered on the project site. Therefore, no impacts to these resources would occur.

However, in the event that cultural resources are encountered during the course of construction activities, all work shall cease until a qualified archaeologist determines the proper disposition of the resource.

VI. a. The project site is not identified as being in or in proximity to a fault rupture zone (LMEA Figure 2-5). According to the Seismic Hazard Evaluation of the Lancaster East and West Quadrangles, the project site may be subject to intense seismic shaking (LMEA pg. 2-16). However, the proposed project would be constructed in accordance with the seismic requirements of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) as adopted by the City, which would render any potential impacts to a less than significant level. The site is generally level and is not subject to landslides (SSHZ).

Liquefaction is a phenomenon in which the strength and stiffness of a soil is reduced by earthquake shaking or other events. This phenomenon occurs in saturated soils that undergo intense seismic shaking typically associated with an earthquake. There are three specific conditions that need to be in place for liquefaction to occur: loose granular soils, shallow groundwater (usually less than 50 feet below the ground surface) and intense seismic shaking. In February 2005, the California Geologic Survey updated the Seismic Hazard Zones Maps for Lancaster (SSHZ). Based on these maps, the project site is not located in an area at risk for liquefaction. No impacts would occur.

b. The project site is rated as having a none to slight risk for soil erosion (USDA SCS Maps) when cultivated or cleared of vegetation. However, there remains a potential for water and wind erosion during construction. The proposed project would be required, under the provisions of the Lancaster Municipal Code (LMC) Chapter 8.16, to adequately wet or seal the soil to prevent wind erosion. Additionally, the following mitigation measure shall be required to control dust/wind erosion.

5. A Dust Control Plan in accordance with Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) Rule 403 shall be submitted prior to the start of grading/construction activities.

Water erosion controls must be provided as part of the proposed project grading plan to be reviewed and approved by the City's Engineering Division. These provisions, which are a part of the project, would reduce any impacts to less than significant levels.

c. Subsidence is the sinking of the soil caused by the extraction of water, petroleum, etc. Subsidence can result in geologic hazards known as fissures. Fissures are typically associated with faults of groundwater withdrawal, which results in the cracking of the ground surface. According to Figure 2-3 of the City of Lancaster's Master Environmental Assessment, the closest sinkholes and fissures to the project site are located at Avenue I/55<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue G/50<sup>th</sup> Street West. These are approximately 2.5 miles east of the project site. The project site is not known to be within a area subject to fissuring, sinkholes, or subsidence (LMEA Figure 2-3) or any other form of soil instability. For a discussion of potential impacts regarding liquefaction, please refer to Item VI.a. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

d. The soil on the project site is characterized by a low shrink/swell potential (LMEA Figure 2-3); which is not an expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code. A soils report on the property within the project site shall be submitted to the City by the project developer prior to grading of the property and the recommendations of the report shall be incorporated into the development of the property. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. No sewer or septic connections are proposed as part of the proposed project. The proposed project is a photovoltaic solar electric generating facility and there are no structures on the project site that would be occupied. Most activities with respect to operation of the proposed project would be conducted remotely. A portable restroom facility would be provided on-site during maintenance activities. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

VII. a-b. The proposed project involves the construction and operation of a photovoltaic solar electric generating facility. This facility would consist of two separate solar fields that would tie into the SCE Del Sur Substation. As discussed in Item III.b, the proposed project would generate air emissions during construction activities, some of which may be greenhouse gases. These emissions are anticipated to be less than the thresholds established by the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District and would not prevent the State from reaching its greenhouse gas reduction targets. Operation of the proposed project would generate minimal amounts of emissions, primarily from vehicles when site maintenance is required. The actual photovoltaic facility would not generate emissions during operation and would therefore help to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted during the production of electricity. It is estimated that approximately 17,025 tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases would be offset annually by producing electricity via solar than through fossil fuels. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project would be in compliance with the greenhouse gas goals and policies identified in the City of Lancaster's General Plan (pgs 2-19 to 2-24). Therefore, impacts with respect to conflicts with an agency's plan, policies, or regulations would be less than significant.

VIII. a-b. The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a 10 MW solar facility on approximately 67 acres. The proposed project would use minimal amounts of hazardous materials during construction activities. During operation, the only hazardous materials that would be utilized are dielectric fluid and mineral oil. Use of all materials would be in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. The proposed project is not located along a hazardous materials/waste transportation corridor (LMEA Figure 9.1-4). The project site is predominantly vacant except for the remains of agricultural uses and residential structure (see discussion under Item V). These remains would be removed from the project site during construction but would not expose individuals or the environment to asbestos containing materials, lead-based paint or other such materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c. The project site is located within a quarter mile of an existing school. Specifically, Del Sur Elementary is located at 9023 West Avenue H which is immediately north of the project site. The proposed project may utilize some hazardous materials during construction of the solar generating facility. Small amounts of dielectric fluid and mineral oil would be utilized in the operation and maintenance of the transformers and electrical components. All hazardous materials would be handled in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. The proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

d. Two Phase I Environmental Site Assessments were prepared for the project site by Tetra Tech EC, Inc. The findings of these studies are documented in two reports entitled "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Rodeo Solar Ranch, Lancaster, California" and "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch, Lancaster, California". Both of these reports are dated July

2011. A site visit to the project site was conducted on July 5, 2011. The following describes the conditions on each of the parcels.

#### Lancaster Dry Farm

The northern parcel of the project site (APN 3219-018-015) is generally flat with former agricultural fields and various remnants from farming, residential structures and the former equestrian facility. A significant amount of debris and refuse remain on the site, mostly concentrated around the northwest corner. A large transmission line enters the site along the northeast property line and heads southwest.

The only structure that exists on the project site is a dilapidated wooden shack located at the northwest corner of the property and the remnants of a former residence. Debris near the residential structure includes the concrete foundation, basement/pit area, cinderblock walls, and other refuse. The basement/pit area contained large amounts of trash and tumbleweeds. Several agricultural remnants include old concrete irrigation pipes, and a topographic depression from an old irrigation pond. The existing well had no cap or surface cover and was observed to be bridged with what appeared to be rocks and other debris. Slight staining was noted on the concrete surface around the well and is likely from the former well pump motor and power generation pad that would have been located next to the well. There was no visible evidence of staining on the inside portion of the well and no evidence of contamination (beyond soil stain conditions in *de minimis* quantities) in the surrounding areas.

Outside of the former residential area and irrigation area, there was mostly vacant land with scattered debris, jumping and hitching posts from the former equestrian facilities and transmission lines. There was no sign of stressed vegetation, staining, discoloration, or odors that suggested a chemical or petroleum release.

#### Rodeo Solar

The southern parcel of the project site (APN 3219-018-024) is generally flat with a slight slope to the southeast. There are no buildings on this portion of the project site; however, there is a transmission line that transects the parcel from the northeast to the southwest. The southern portion of the site contains debris and refuse from farming and brush clearing activities. This includes former concrete irrigation standpipes, wood, miscellaneous construction debris (plastic sheeting, burlap sacks, ropes, concrete), and landscaping debris. No evidence of stained soil, stressed vegetation or hazardous materials was found on the project site.

6. In the event that the existing well(s) on site will not be utilized during project operation or other wells are found on-site, the applicant shall abandon the wells in accordance with all existing rules and regulations.

In addition to the site visit, a regulatory records review was conducted for the project site. The database search was conducted using publicly available regulatory records detailed in the Environmental Data Resources, Inc., (EDR) report dated June 24, 2011. The project site and property within standard distances of the project site were reviewed to identify adjacent and surrounding sites that might potentially impact the soil and/or groundwater conditions beneath the property. The project site was not identified on any of these listings. However, underground storage tanks (USTs) were identified within 0.25 miles of the project site at the Del Sur School/Westside Union School District. Since no evidence of



leaks or releases was identified, these USTs would not present an environmental concern to the project site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e-f. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport, public use airport, or private airstrip. The closest airport is the General William Fox Airfield, which is located approximately 3 miles east of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard for people working in the project area and no impacts would occur.

g. Access to both solar fields on the project site would be taken from 90<sup>th</sup> Street West. This roadway is already paved and the access gates would be set back approximately 40 feet from the edge of the property to allow vehicles to pull off of the roadway while the gate is opening. 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H have been designated as evacuation routes within the City of Lancaster. However, traffic generated by the proposed project is not sufficient to cause impacts at any of the area intersections. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact or physically block any identified routes and would not interfere with any adopted emergency response plan. No impacts are anticipated.

h. The property surrounding the project site is predominantly undeveloped, though surrounding uses include a substation, planned solar development, an elementary school, ranches, and a scattering of single family residences (see Surrounding Land Use description). It is possible that these lands could be subject to a grass fire. However, the project site is located within the boundaries of Fire Station 130, located at 44558 40<sup>th</sup> Street West, which would serve the project site in the event of a fire. The project site could also be served by units at Station 112, located at 8812 Avenue E-8, and Station 84, located at 5030 Avenue L-14. Therefore, impacts from wildland fires would be less than significant.

IX. a. The project site is not located in an area with an open body of water or watercourse and is not in an aquifer recharge area. Additionally, the proposed development would be required to comply with all applicable provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The NPDES program establishes a comprehensive storm water quality program to manage urban storm water and minimize pollution of the environment to the maximum extent practicable. The reduction of pollutants in urban storm water discharge through the use of structural and nonstructural Best Management Practices (BMPs) is one of the primary objectives of the water quality regulations. BMPs that are typically used to manage runoff water quality include controlling roadway and parking lot contaminants by installing oil and grease separators at storm drain inlets, cleaning parking lots on a regular basis, incorporating peak-flow reduction and infiltration features (grass swales, infiltration trenches and grass filter strips) into landscaping and implementing educational programs. The proposed project would incorporate appropriate BMPs as applicable, as determined by the City of Lancaster Department of Public Works. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project involves the construction and operation of a PV solar generating facility. This facility would not utilize large quantities of hazardous materials and would not be tied into the public sewer system or septic system. As such, the proposed project does not have the potential to introduce industrial discharge into a public water system and potentially violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. The proposed project would utilize existing wells located on the project site to provide water for the occasional washing of the PV panels. Washing would occur approximately twice a year. No employees would be located on site. During site maintenance employees would bring drinking water

with them and portable restroom facilities would be provided on-site. However, the project site would not be tied to a public water, sewer or septic system. Additionally, as indicated in IX.a, the proposed project would not impact any groundwater recharge areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge and impacts would be less than significant.

c-e. Development of the proposed project would increase the amount of surface runoff as a result of impervious surfaces associated with some portions of the facility. Most of the project site would be developed with PV panels mounted on tracking systems on steel support structures. The project site would be graded to accommodate the support structures but would not be paved, leaving the site in a predominantly pervious condition. Additionally, the proposed project would be designed to accept current flows entering the property and to handle any additional incremental runoff from the site. Therefore, impacts from drainage and runoff would be less than significant.

f-g. The project site is designated as X and X-shaded per the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel No. 060672 (2008). The very northern of the project site long Avenue H is designated as Zone X-shaded. This area is outside of the 100-year flood zone, but within the boundaries of the 500-year flood zone. The remainder of the project site is designated as Zone X which is outside both the 100- and 500-year flood zones. Additionally, no structures which would be occupied are proposed for the project site. Therefore, no flooding impacts would occur as a result of placing housing or structures on the project site.

h. The project site does not contain and is not downstream from a dam or levee. Therefore, no impacts would occur from flooding as a result of the failure of a dam/levee.

i. The project site is not located within a coastal zone. Therefore, tsunamis are not a potential hazard. The project site is relatively flat and does not contain any enclosed bodies of water and is not located in close proximity to any other large bodies of water. Therefore, the proposed project would not be subject to inundation by seiches or mudflows. No impact would occur.

X. a. The proposed project is not of the scale or nature that could physically divide an established community. The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a photovoltaic solar electric generating facility. The area surrounding the project site is predominantly vacant with a SCE substation, school, ranches, and a scattering of single family homes in the area. Access to the proposed project would be from 90<sup>th</sup> Street West. No new roadways would be constructed. The proposed project would not block a public street, trail, or other access route or result in a physical barrier that would divide the community. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

b. The proposed project is consistent with the City's General Plan and must be in conformance with the Lancaster Municipal Code. The project will be in compliance with the City-adopted UBC (Item VI.a) and erosion-control requirements (Item VI.b). Therefore, no impacts would occur.

c. As noted under Item IV.e-f, the project site is not subject to and would not conflict with a habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

XI. a-b. The project site does not contain any current mining or recovery operations for mineral resources and no such activities have occurred on the project site in the past. According to the LMEA (Figure 2-4 and page 2-8), the project site is designated as Mineral Reserve Zone 3 (contains potential

but presently unproven resources). However, it is not considered likely that the Lancaster area has large, valuable mineral and aggregate deposits. Therefore, no impacts to mineral resources would occur.

XII. a-b, d. The City's General Plan (Table 3-1) establishes an outdoor maximum CNEL of 65 dBA for rural and residential uses. The current noise level in the area is approximately 50.4 dBA at Avenue H between 60<sup>th</sup> Street West and 70<sup>th</sup> Street West (the western most reading available on Avenue H) (LMEA Table 8-11). The loudest phases of construction would involve earth moving equipment and vibratory pile driving. The total construction time for the entire project is estimated to be 9 months. The loudest phases of construction would occur over a portion of this 9-month period. Construction activities associated with earth-moving equipment and other construction machinery would temporarily increase noise levels for adjacent land uses. Noise levels would fluctuate depending upon construction activity, equipment type and duration of use, and the distance between noise source and receiver.

The closest noise sensitive receptors are the school immediately north and the single family residence immediately west of the project site. Noise levels at these receptors may reach between 75 dBA and 85 dBA depending upon the location of the work and the type of equipment being utilized. These noise levels could cause interference with conversations or other normal daytime activities. However, with implementation of the mitigation measures identified below, these impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

7. Construction operations shall not occur between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays or Saturday or at any time on Sunday. The hours of any construction-related activities shall be restricted to periods and days permitted by local ordinance.
8. The on-site construction supervisor shall have the responsibility and authority to receive and resolve noise complaints. A clear appeal process to the owner shall be established prior to construction commencement that will allow for resolution of noise problems that cannot be immediately solved by the site supervisor.
9. Electrically powered equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment, where feasible.
10. Material stockpiles and mobile equipment staging, parking and maintenance areas shall be located as far away as practicable from noise-sensitive receptors.
11. The use of noise producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells shall be for safety warning purposes only.
12. No project-related public address or music system shall be audible at any adjacent receptor.
13. All noise producing construction equipment and vehicles using internal combustion engines shall be equipped with mufflers, air-inlet silencers where appropriate, and any other shrouds, shields, or other noise-reducing features in good operating condition that meet or exceed original factory specifications. Mobile or fixed "package" equipment (e.g., arc-welders, air compressors, etc.) shall be equipped with shrouds and noise control features that are readily available for the type of equipment.

With implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts from construction noise would be less than significant.

c. Operation of the proposed project would generate very minimal noise levels. The photovoltaic solar generating facility would generate electricity with PV panels mounted on fixed or slow moving, silently rotating trackers. A handful of employees would be necessary to run the proposed project with most of the work being done remotely. Periodic maintenance would primarily consist of cleaning the PV panels, as necessary, and vegetation removal. Because of the passive nature of the on-site operations, the likelihood of noise disturbance at the neighboring receptors is minimal. Therefore, noise impacts would be less than significant.

e-f. The project site is not in proximity to an airport or frequent overflight area and would not experience noise from these sources (also see Item VIII.e-f). Therefore, no impacts would occur.

XIII. a. The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a photovoltaic solar generating facility which would not directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth. The construction of the proposed project is anticipated to employ approximately 75 individuals, most of whom would come from the local area. Operation of the proposed project would occur remotely with occasional maintenance needs being conducted by a handful of people. While the facility would generate additional power to go into the grid, it would help to achieve State mandates which require 33% of electricity to be derived from renewable sources by 2020. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

b-c. The project site is currently vacant. No housing or people would be displaced necessitating the construction of replacement housing else. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

XIV. The proposed project would increase the need for fire and police services; however, the project site is within the current service area of both these agencies and the additional time and cost to service the site is minimal. The proposed project would not induce substantial population growth and therefore, would not substantially increase demand on parks or other public facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

Development of the proposed project would not result in an incremental increase in population and would not increase in the number of students in either the Antelope Valley Union High School District or the Westside School District. Therefore, no impacts to schools would occur.

XV. a-b. The proposed project involves the construction and operation of a solar power generating facility. As discussed in Item XIV.a, it is anticipated that a maximum of 75 construction workers would be present on the project site at one time. These workers are expected to come from the local area and would not create an additional demand on recreational facilities. Once the proposed project is operational, most of the operations would be handled remotely and would not generate employees who would potentially be utilizing recreational facilities. Therefore, no impacts to recreational facilities would occur and no construction of new facilities would be necessary.

XVI. a. The proposed project would generate construction traffic in the form of worker vehicles and delivery trucks. These trips would only occur during construction and would most likely occur at off-peak hours of the day. Adequate access to the project site exists to handle the trips that construction would generate. Most of operation activities associated with the proposed project would be handled remotely. Occasional maintenance activities would be required and it is anticipated that approximately 1

to 2 trips per week would occur. This number of trips would not impact the surrounding street system. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. There are no county congestion management agency designated roads or highways in the vicinity of the project site. No impacts would occur.

c. The project site does not contain any aviation related uses and the proposed project would not include the development of any aviation related uses. The proposed project is a photovoltaic project and the panels are designed to absorb light, not reflect it. Therefore, the proposed project would not interfere with small aircraft flying overhead. The proposed project would not have an impact on air traffic patterns.

d. No roadway improvements are required as part of the proposed project. No hazardous conditions would be created and no impacts would occur.

e. The proposed project would have adequate emergency access from 90<sup>th</sup> Street West. Interior circulation would be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Los Angeles Fire Department; therefore, no impacts would occur.

f. The proposed project does not conflict with or impede any of the General Plan policies or specific actions related to alternative modes of transportation (Lancaster General Plan pgs 5-18 to 5-24). Therefore, no impacts would occur.

XVII. a. The proposed project would not generate any wastewater that would be disposed of in a sewer or septic system. Some wastewater would be generated from the occasional washing of the PV panels. This water would be disposed of on-site in accordance with any requirements from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. As no hazardous materials would be utilized in conjunction with the PV panels, the wastewater is not expected to exceed any established standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b. No wastewater would be generated by the proposed project. The site would not be connected to the sanitary sewer system and there would be no septic system on-site. Therefore, no construction of new water or wastewater facilities would be required and no impacts would occur.

c. See Items IX.c and IX.d.

d. The proposed project has minimal needs for water as there will be no employees routinely on the project site and no structures which would be occupied by individuals are proposed. The only water needs the project has are for the occasional washing of the solar panels. It is estimated that the operation of the proposed project would require approximately 0.48 acre feet of water a year or approximately 156,409 gallons. This water will come from existing on-site wells or will be trucked in. No new or expanded entitlements would be necessary. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e. See Item XVII.b.

f-g. The proposed project would generate solid waste during construction which would contribute to an overall impact on landfill services (GPEIR pgs 5.13-25 to 5.13-28 and 5.13-31); although the project's contribution would be minimal. During operation of the project, no solid waste would be

generated for disposal in the landfill. All materials generated by the repair of equipment would be recycled by appropriate facilities. Therefore, no trash collection services would be necessary and impacts would be less than significant.

XVIII.a-c. Other solar projects have been approved or are undergoing review in the City of Lancaster and in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. These projects, if constructed, would result in a large number of acres being converted to solar generating facilities which could generate cumulative impacts. Most of the impacts generated by these projects are site specific and generally do not influence the impacts on another site. Additionally, all projects undergo environmental and have required mitigation measures to reduce impacts when warranted.

Construction of the solar projects throughout the Antelope Valley would lead to a cumulative loss of habitat for a variety of plants and animals. The project site contains suitable habitat for burrowing owls/nesting birds which would be lost as a result of implementing the proposed project. Mitigation measures have been identified to reduce these impacts to a less than significant level. As such, the proposed projects contribution to cumulative impacts with respect to biological resources would not be cumulatively considerable. Additionally, the City requires the payment of a biological impact fee to address the cumulative loss of biological resources within the Antelope Valley. This fee is put in to a separate account which is utilized to acquire conservation habitat.

The remains of a former ranch/equestrian facility are located on the northwest corner of the project site and may be historically significant. An additional study is required to determine the site's relative significance. However, the impacts at this project site are not related to potential cultural impacts at other proposed developments and no cumulative impacts to cultural resources would occur.

Mitigation measures are required to reduce noise impacts to the nearby sensitive receptors. Another solar development was approved in November 2010 on the southeast corner of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue H. The same mitigation measures are required of both projects in order to ensure that noise impacts are less than significant. It is not anticipated that construction of the two projects would occur at the same time. Therefore, construction noise impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. All other mitigation measures that were identified are a statement of regulatory requirements. Therefore, any potential cumulative impacts are less than significant and would not be cumulatively considerable.

List of Referenced Documents and Available Locations\*:

BRR:	Biological Technical Review for the Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch And Rodeo Solar Ranch Project Sites, Los Angeles County, California, Chambers Group, Inc., June 2011	PD
CDC	A Guide to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, 2004	PD
CRS:	Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment, Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch and Rodeo Solar Ranch Project Sites (CUP2B), Bonterra Consulting, July 2011	PD
ESA1:	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Lancaster Dry Farm Ranch, Lancaster, California, Tetra Tech EC, Inc., July 2011	PD
ESA2:	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Rodeo Solar Ranch, Lancaster, California, Tetra Tech EC, Inc., July 2011	PD
FIRM:	Flood Insurance Rate Map	PW
GPEIR:	Lancaster General Plan Environmental Impact Report	PD
LGP:	Lancaster General Plan	PD
LMC:	Lancaster Municipal Code	PD
LMEA:	Lancaster Master Environmental Assessment	PD
SSHZ:	State Seismic Hazard Zone Maps	PD
USGS:	United States Geological Survey Maps	PD
USDA SCS:	United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service Maps	PD

\* PD: Planning Department  
 PW: Department of Public Works  
 Lancaster City Hall  
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