

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster, California

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Date: March 11, 2008

To: Mayor Hearn and City Council Members

From: Brian S. Ludicke, Planning Director

Subject: **Introduction of Ordinance No. 898 Solar Electric Generating Plants in the HI (Heavy Industrial) Zone**

Recommendation:

Introduce Ordinance No. 898, amending Title 17 of the Lancaster Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) to allow solar electric generating plants in the HI (Heavy Industrial) zone.

Background:

In October 2007, representatives from a company called e-Solar made a presentation to the City Council on plans for a solar electric generating plant demonstration project that they hoped to construct within the City. City staff had been working for several months with this company to identify potential sites for this demonstration project, including a City-owned site located northwest of Fox Field. The Council indicated its support for this effort, and staff has continued to work with e-Solar to implement this project.

In December 2007, the Planning Commission reviewed and took action to recommend to the City Council approval of a proposed amendment to the Municipal Code to allow solar electric generating plants, subject to a Director's Review, within the LI (Light Industrial) and HI (Heavy Industrial) zones. Staff consulted with the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Department regarding the proposed site northwest of Fox Field, and the consistency of the project with both the operations of the airfield and the adopted Fox Field Airport Land Use Plan, which is administered by Los Angeles County. Several aspects of the proposed project were inconsistent with the current airport plan regulations, most notably the proposed tower height. Review of the proposal by the Federal Aviation Administration, Caltrans Division of Aeronautics, and the Airport Land Use Commission were determined to be necessary for the Fox Field site to proceed.

The e-Solar company, concerned about the viability of the Fox Field site, ultimately acquired a 95-acre site located on the south side of Avenue G between the railroad tracks and Division Street. This site, located within the City's Heavy Industrial zone, is outside the Fox Field Airport Land Use Plan area, and is, therefore, not subject to review by the County Airport Land Use Commission. The e-Solar company formally filed an application for the construction of the demonstration project on February 5, 2008.

In order to ensure that the City's review and approval process can proceed in a timely manner, staff is bringing this ordinance forward with a recommendation that the Municipal Code be amended to allow solar electric generating plants only in the HI (Heavy Industrial) zone, subject to a Director's Review.