2019039084

County Operations Center Solar Farm Project

ED17-307 (3500557)

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION & INITIAL STUDY

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
ENVIRONMENTAL & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

County File Number: ED17-307 (3500557) SCH Number: tbd

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
COUNTY OPERATIONS CENTER SOLAR FARM

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION & INITIAL STUDY

Abstract
A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and issued for the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works County Operations Center Solar Farm. The proposed approximately 8-acre facility would consist of up to 2,900 solar modules arranged in 50 rows. In addition to the solar arrays, a switchboard, transformer, and meter and monitoring equipment would be installed on an equipment pad on the northwest corner of the installation. The County would implement a landscape plan for the site which would screen substantial portions of the new facility from motorists on Highway 1. The project is located at the end of Oklahoma Road, on the south side of Highway 1, east of Kansas Avenue, at the County Operations Center in the San Luis Obispo Planning Area (North sub area).

Comments on this document should be sent to Keith Miller, County Department of Public Works Room 206, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Keith Miller, Environmental Programs Division
or
Annie Secrest, Project Manager
County Department of Public Works
County Government Center, Room 206
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
(805) 788-2185

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration has been issued by:

3/12/19
Date

Ellen Carroll, Environmental Coordinator
County of San Luis Obispo

The project proponent, who agrees to implement the mitigation measures for the project, is:

3/12/19
Date

John Diodati, Deputy Director of Public Works
County of San Luis Obispo

Initial Study Summary – Environmental Checklist

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
976 OSOS STREET • ROOM 200 • SAN LUIS OBISPO • CALIFORNIA 93408 • (805) 781-5600

Project Title & No. **Department of Public Works - County Operations Center Solar Farm ED17-307 (3500557)**

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for at least one of the environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

☒ Aesthetics	☐ Geology and Soils	☐ Recreation
☐ Agricultural Resources	☐ Hazards/Hazardous Materials	☐ Transportation/Circulation
☒ Air Quality	☐ Noise	☐ Wastewater
☒ Biological Resources	☐ Population/Housing	☐ Water /Hydrology
☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Public Services/Utilities	☐ Land Use

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Coordinator finds that:

☐ The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ 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.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ 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.

☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable 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.

Keith Miller — Prepared by (Print) | Signature | 3/11/19 — Date

Ellen Carroll — Reviewed by (Print) | Signature | Ellen Carroll, Environmental Coordinator (for) | 3.11.19 — Date

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The County Planning Department uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Planning Department, 976 Osos Street, Rm. 200, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5600.

A. PROJECT

DESCRIPTION: The County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works is proposing a new solar farm at the County Operations Center. The proposed approximately 6-acre facility would use a single-axis tracker system and consist of up to 2,900 solar modules arranged in 50 rows. Each tracker row would be approximately 200 feet long. Each tracker row would be oriented on a north-south axis. In addition to the solar arrays, a switchboard, transformer, and meter and monitoring equipment would be installed on an equipment pad on the northwest corner of the installation. Six-foot-tall chain-link fencing would surround the installation. A compacted gravel road would be constructed between the solar farm and the current end of Oklahoma Avenue. The total footprint would be approximately 8 acres.

The project would include a connection to the existing electrical infrastructure at the Honor Farm, adjacent to the project site. The County would implement a landscape plan for the site which would screen substantial portions of the new facility from motorists on Highway 1. The project is located at the end of Oklahoma Road, on the south side of Highway 1, east of Kansas Avenue, at the County Operations Center in the San Luis Obispo Planning Area (North sub area).

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): 073-331-033

Latitude: 35 degrees 19' 7 " N Longitude: 120 degrees 42 ' 48 " W **SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT** # 2

B. EXISTING SETTING

PLAN AREA: San Luis Obispo **SUB**: San Luis Obispo(North) **COMM:**

LAND USE CATEGORY: Public Facilities

COMB. DESIGNATION: Small portions of the parcel in Geologic Study, Visual, and Renewable Energy areas

PARCEL SIZE: 35.04 acres, Project Site: 8.0 acres

TOPOGRAPHY: Nearly level

VEGETATION: Grasses

EXISTING USES: Dryland farming, grazing ; Woods humane societyUndeveloped

SURROUNDING LAND USE CATEGORIES AND USES:

North: Public Facilities; state highway , Prison	*East:* Public Facilities; vacant , scattered residential
South: Public Facilities; open space Military	*West:* Public Facilities; County operations center

C. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

During the Initial Study process, at least one issue was identified as having a potentially significant environmental effects (see following Initial Study). Those potentially significant items associated with the proposed uses can be minimized to less than significant levels.

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

1. AESTHETICS *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Create an aesthetically incompatible site open to public view?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Introduce a use within a scenic view open to public view?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Change the visual character of an area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create glare or night lighting, which may affect surrounding areas?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Impact unique geological or physical features?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The information that follows was taken from the *San Luis Obispo County Operations Center Solar Facility Visual Impact Assessment* (Visual Assessment; SWCA, 2018).

The proposed project is located within the highly scenic Chorro Valley, which runs from San Luis Obispo northwest to Morro Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The valley is generally defined by the Santa Lucia hills and the Cuesta Ridge to the northeast, and the Morros, a series of distinct mountain peaks rising up from the valley to the southwest. The Morros are recognized in County of San Luis Obispo planning documents as highly scenic visual resources that should be protected (County of San Luis Obispo 2010).

Much of the visual setting of the region is established by the combination of the dramatic topography and mountain peaks along with the existing vegetative patterns. Somewhat dense stands of oak trees and pines are visible on many of the adjacent hills and slopes.

The most visible developments include Cal Poly, Cuesta College, Camp San Luis Obispo, the County Operations Center and Woods Humane Society, the California Men's Colony, the County Office of Education, and a gun club and shooting range. Dairy Creek Golf Course and El Chorro Regional Park are also seen along the route. Residences can be seen on the hillsides closer to San Luis Obispo. Each

of these developments are located along Highway 1 within the valley floor, and although they are mostly large in size, the adjacent mountain peaks rising up behind them tend to dominate the views and define the scenic character.

Highway 1 through the Chorro Valley and continuing north to the county line is both a Designated State Scenic Highway and an All-American Road in the National Scenic Byway system. Each of these designations indicate a high degree of scenic quality within the highway's view corridor. Highway 1, which passes immediately north of the project site is a four-lane highway with a narrow median, widening out north of Cuesta College.

The project site is approximately 8 acres and is located south of Highway 1. The project site occupies portion of a larger, approximately 25-acre undeveloped area that extends between Highway 1 and the foothills to the south. The topography of the site is relatively flat. The parcel is bounded by post and wire fencing, and wooden power poles and overhead utilities cross the site in an east-west direction.

The project site is primarily used for livestock grazing, and low, nonnative, annual grasses are the predominant ground cover. A stand of mature eucalyptus trees is located along the northern perimeter of the parcel, near Highway 1. An oak-covered hillside rises up just south of the project site, and rock outcroppings can be seen on the adjacent hillside.

Immediately west of the project area are several institutional uses including Woods Humane Society, Animal Control Services, the County Jail and Honor Farm. Development continues west with Camp San Luis and Cuesta College. Northeast of the project site across Highway 1 is the California Men's Colony. Open space and scattered residences are part of the landscape south and southeast of the project site.

The project site contributes to the high visual quality of the Highway 1 corridor through the Chorro Valley. The site is part of an open space buffer south of Highway 1 between the developed area of Kansas Avenue area to the west, and the City of San Luis Obispo to the east. As seen from both east and westbound directions of Highway 1, the project site serves as part of the foreground to the scenic hillside views to the south. The pastoral land use visually supports the agricultural and rural history of San Luis Obispo County. The Department of Public Works is not subject to Title 22, the County Land Use Ordnance; however, there are numerous General Plan policies related to aesthetic resources that are relevant to the project. These are described in the Visual Assessment. Photographic simulations of the proposed project are included in Exhibit C.

Impact.

Scenic Vistas

Scenic vistas related to the viewing experience associated with this project include views of the Morros, the Santa Lucia Mountains and foothills, Cuesta Ridge, important rock outcroppings, patterns of natural vegetation, and predominant pastoral land. As seen from Highway 1 or other public viewpoints, the project would not block or reduce existing views of the Morros or other important landforms. The tallest point of the photo-voltaic panel arrays would be approximately 12 feet above the ground plane and the elevation of the highway. In addition, the closest public viewing distance to the project would be approximately 85 feet from Highway 1. The elevation of the highway in the vicinity of the project ranges from approximately 345 to 360 feet above sea level. The foothills immediately south of the project reach elevations ranging from approximately 500 to 600 feet. Cerro Romauldo Peak which rises up to the southwest reaches a height of approximately 1,250 feet. Due to these factors, the project would not block views to the Morros or other hills rising up in the background.

Although the overall views of the background hills and Cerro Romauldo would remain intact, the project would dominate the foreground view and would therefor result in a degradation of the scenic vista's

compositional value. The project proposes screen planting along the northern and possibly eastern sides of the project. Although no planting plan is available at this time, the project description mentions that approximately 1,700 linear feet of a 10 to 20-foot-wide landscaping buffer between Highway 1 and the project security fencing. The effectiveness of this screening would depend on the specific planting location, configuration, density, and other factors. Given the environmental variables and uncertainty of natural and supplemental water, there is no assurance that the proposed amount of planted vegetation would provide adequate screening for the project. In addition, planting primarily along the project's northern perimeter would only offer partial screening benefit for the eastern and western sides of the site.

The proposed development would degrade the foreground views to the Cerro foothills and Cerro Romauldo Peak and associated scenic vistas as seen from Highway 1. As a result the project would cause potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to scenic vistas in the area.

Scenic Resources

A scenic resource is a specific feature or element with a high degree of memorability or landmark characteristics that contributes to the high visual quality of the corridor. From along Highway 1 through the Chorro Valley, the Morros, Cuesta Ridge, unique rock outcroppings, significant groupings of trees, and certain old ranch buildings are considered the primary scenic resources. The project would result in a significant impact if it were to damage or have a substantial negative effect on views of any of those specific resources as seen from Highway 1, an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway.

Although the various project elements such as the photo-voltaic panel arrays, fencing, the equipment building and other features would be clearly visible from Highway 1, they would not directly block views of the Morros, unique rock outcroppings, significant groupings of trees, or any historic-looking ranch buildings. Direct views of the Morros and the surrounding hills and other scenic resources would be largely unaffected; however, the project would occupy the foreground context for those views and would result in a reduction in the compositional value of the scenic resource setting.

The proposed development would occupy and change the foreground of views to the Cerro foothills and Cerro Romauldo Peak as seen from Highway 1, a State Scenic Highway. As a result, the project would cause potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to views of scenic vistas as seen from a State Scenic Highway.

Effect on the Existing Visual Character

The visual character of the project site and its surroundings is defined by the balance of built and natural elements. Much of the visual setting of the area is established by the combination of the dramatic topography and mountain peaks along with the existing vegetative patterns. The Highway 1 corridor between the City of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay is mostly rural, however development can be seen in the vicinity of the project site and throughout the valley. Although these developments are generally visible from the highway, the adjacent hills and mountain peaks rising up behind them tend to dominate the views and define the scenic character.

Institutional-type development is also present along the Highway 1 corridor and in the project vicinity. Although some of that development is set back from the highway and visually subordinate to the rural and natural character of the overall landscape, other development in the area is easily seen and visually competes with the surrounding natural visual setting.

Introducing approximately 8 acres of an industrial utility to this pastoral site would permanently alter the visual character of the site and would also the reduce the visual quality of this identified community greenbelt area. The project would range from approximately 85 to 150 feet away from Highway 1, and would be highly noticeable because of the distinctive forms of its elements and its unique purpose. The presence of a solar facility at this location would be visually notable because of its unique appearance

and proximity to the highway, and as a result it would increase the public's visual awareness of the other existing development located in the vicinity.

As mentioned previously the project proposes approximately 1,700 linear feet of a 10 to 20-foot-wide landscaping buffer between Highway 1 and the project security fencing. The success of this screening would depend on the specific planting location, configuration, density, and other factors. Given the environmental variables and uncertainty of natural and supplemental water, there is no assurance that the proposed amount of planted vegetation would provide adequate screening for the project. Even under ideal horticultural conditions, effective screening of the project could take many years to achieve.

The project proposes a 6-foot tall chain-link security fencing surrounding the perimeter of the facility. Visibility of this type fencing would reinforce the industrial character of the site and would contribute to the degradation the site's visual quality. Removal of the existing power poles and overhead lines would partially reduce the visual clutter of the project and the overall loss of visual character.

The project would cause a noticeable change to the visual character of the site and its surroundings due to the inherent change from pastoral open space to an industrial utility facility. As a result, the project would cause potentially significant direct long and short-term impacts to the visual character of the site and its surroundings.

It should be noted that since completion of the Visual Assessment, the proposed project has been reduced by approximately 1,000 panels and shifted an additional approximately 100 feet to the south (away from Highway 1), reducing the project visibility from public view points.

Mitigation/Conclusion. The Visual Assessment recommend four mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level. These measures include for example, implementing a robust landscape screening plan, limiting the types of materials that can be used for fencing, and using darker colors for the racks and related support equipment. These measures are included in Exhibit B and are applicable to the original project as well as the reduced project currently proposed. No further mitigation is required.

2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES *Will the project:*	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Convert prime agricultural land, per NRCS soil classification, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Impair agricultural use of other property or result in conversion to other uses?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or Williamson Act program?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Agricultural Resources

Setting. Project Elements. The following area-specific elements relate to the property's importance for agricultural production:

Land Use Category: Public Facilities

State Classification: Prime Farmland if irrigated, and Not Prime Farmland

Historic/Existing Commercial Crops: Periodic grazing

In Agricultural Preserve? Yes, Chorro Valley AG Preserve Area

Under Williamson Act contract? No

The soil type(s) and characteristics on the subject property include:

Gaviota fine sandy loam (15 - 50 % slope). This moderately to steeply sloping, shallow coarse loamy soil is considered very poorly drained. The soil has high erodibility and low shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock. The soil is considered Class VII without irrigation and Class is not rated when irrigated.

Salinas silty clay loam (0 - 2 % slope). This nearly level fine loamy bottom soil is considered not well drained. The soil has moderate erodibility and moderate shrink-swell characteristics, as well as having potential septic system constraints due to: slow percolation. The soil is considered Class III without irrigation and Class I when irrigated.

The project will be located on approximately 8 acres of a 34-acre parcel. Approximately 11.2 acres underlying the parcel currently qualify as prime soils. The County currently leases approximately 21 acres of the parcel for cattle grazing. Grazing occurs sporadically to the north and south of the project location within Camp San Luis Obispo as well. The County is currently developing a new Animal Services facility on the same parcel, within the 21-acre area leased for grazing. The County is currently working with the solar farm designer to allow for low-intensity grazing (most likely sheep) to occur within the solar farm.

Impact. The project would effectively preclude the use of the parcel for any commercial agricultural use; however, some grazing may still be able to continue following the installation/project completion. In 2000, an Environmental Assessment for the County Operations Center Master Plan was prepared. That assessment included a discussion of potential agricultural resources impacts to the parcel where the project is proposed. After review by the United States Department of Agriculture and the County Agricultural Commissioner, it was determined that approximately 15.5 acres of the parcel qualified as prime farmland (this was prior to the conversion resulting from the development of the Woods Humane Society facility). Due to the small area of prime soils, the irregular shape of the parcel, it's zoning (Public Facilities) and the surrounding land uses (non-agricultural uses on three sides), it was determined at that time that the loss of the prime soils underlying the parcel was less than significant.

Therefore, the proposed project, while it would convert approximately eight acres of potentially prime soils, would have a less than significant impact to agricultural resources. Grazing to manage the fuel load onsite would potentially continue to some degree within the project footprint.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No significant impacts to agricultural resources are anticipated and no mitigation measures are required.

3. AIR QUALITY

Will the project:

	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Violate any state or federal ambient air quality standard, or exceed air quality emission thresholds as established by County Air Pollution Control District?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Expose any sensitive receptor to substantial air pollutant concentrations?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Create or subject individuals to objectionable odors?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be inconsistent with the District's Clean Air Plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant either considered in non-attainment under applicable state or federal ambient air quality standards that are due to increased energy use or traffic generation, or intensified land use change?	☐	☐	☒	☐
GREENHOUSE GASES				
f) *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has developed and updated their CEQA Air Quality Handbook (2012) to evaluate project specific impacts and help determine if air quality mitigation measures are needed, or if potentially significant impacts could result. To evaluate long-term emissions, cumulative effects, and establish countywide programs to reach acceptable air quality levels, a Clean Air Plan has been adopted (prepared by APCD). The adjacent Wood's Humane Society and Honor Farm would be sensitive receptors when considering potential dust emissions and odors. The project is within an area where asbestos may occur naturally.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions are said to result in an increase in the earth's average surface temperature. This is commonly referred to as global warming. The rise in global temperature is associated with long-term changes in precipitation, temperature, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system. This is also known as climate change. These changes are now thought to be broadly attributed to GHG emissions, particularly those emissions that result from the human production and use of fossil fuels.

In March 2012, the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) approved thresholds

for GHG emission impacts, and these thresholds have been incorporated the APCD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook. APCD determined that a tiered process for residential / commercial land use projects was the most appropriate and effective approach for assessing the GHG emission impacts.

Impact. As proposed, the project site is approximately 8 acres; however, because the site is flat, minimal grading is required. Construction will result in the creation of dust, as well as short term vehicle emissions. The project will be moving less than 1,200 cubic yards/day of soil and will disturb less than 8 acres of area total, and therefore will be below the general impact thresholds triggering construction-related mitigation. The project is near sensitive receptors, including at Woods, and that may trigger nuisance complaints related to dust generation. Animal Services facility indicate that naturally-occurring asbestos is unlikely to be encountered onsite.

New emissions from the project would result from occasional vehicle use for maintenance at the site. The solar farm would produce zero emission power, more than offsetting any periodic vehicle emissions.

Mitigation/Conclusion. Mitigation measures to reduce potential dust impacts have been included in Exhibit B. These measures include using water or chemical dust suppressants to minimize dust generation. No other impacts have been identified and no further mitigation is required.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES *Will the project:*	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**
a) Result in a loss of unique or special status species or their habitats?*	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Reduce the extent, diversity or quality of native or other important vegetation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Impact wetland or riparian habitat?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere with the movement of resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or factors, which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any regional plans or policies to protect sensitive species, or regulations of the California Department of Fish & Wildlife or U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

*** Species – as defined in Section15380 of the CEQA Guidelines, which includes all plant and wildlife species that fall under the category of rare, threatened or endangered, as described in this section.**

Setting. The 35-acre parcel is located in the upper Chorro Valley and is surrounded by open space, ranchland, the California Men's Colony, and Camp San Luis Obispo. Vegetation on the parcel includes approximately 23 acres of non-native annual grassland that is routinely grazed. An additional 5 acres of the southernmost portions of the parcel contains a mix of oak woodland and chaparral. The remaining portions of the parcel are developed as part of the Woods Humane Society facility. No wetlands or riparian features exist on the parcel. An unnamed tributary to Chorro Creek exists approximately 300 feet from the project site. A few scattered eucalyptus trees exist on the northern portion of the parcel along Highway 1, and Wood's Humane Society has been landscaped primarily with ornamental landscaping.

The project site is approximately 8 acres and is located entirely within the non-native annual grassland portion of the underlying parcel. The southernmost portions of the site are adjacent to oak woodland and chaparral vegetation communities. The grassland community is separated from the chaparral and oak woodland by a barbed wire fence.

The California Natural Diversity Database (or other biological references) identified the following species potentially existing within approximately one mile of the proposed project:

Vegetation

Blochman's dudleya (*Dudleya blochmaniae ssp. blochmaniae*) List 1B

This California endemic perennial herb is found in valley grassland, coastal sage scrub and rocky areas often with clay or serpentinite substrates. It blooms from April to June. Blochman's dudleya is considered rare by the CNPS (List 1B, RED 2-3-3). The Cal Flora Occurrence Database catalogs 7 historical occurrences of this species within the county, with the majority located in the Chorro Valley.

Cambria morning-glory (*Calystegia subacaulis ssp. episcopalis*) List 4

This perennial herb is a California and a San Luis Obispo County endemic, is found in chaparral and foothill woodland communities at elevations between 60 and 500 meters (200 to 1,640 feet). This species blooms from April to May. Cambria morning glory is listed as rare by the CNPS (List 1B, RED 3-2-3).

Dwarf soaproot (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum var. minus*) List 1B

The potential for the dwarf soaproot (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum var. minus*) has been identified about 0.921 miles to the north. This perennial herb is generally found on serpentinite soils in chaparral areas at elevations ranging from 305 to 1000 meters (1,000 to 3,280 feet). It has a blooming period of May-August. The dwarf soaproot is considered rare by CNPS (List 1B, RED 2-2-3).

Obispo indian paintbrush (*Castilleja densiflora var. obispoensis*) List 1B

The potential for the Obispo indian paintbrush *(Castilleja densiflora var. obispoensis)* has been identified about 0.366 miles to the south, and 0.836 miles to the northeast. This annual herb is found in valley and foothill grasslands at elevations between 10 to 400 meters (30 to 1,315 feet). The blooming period is April. The Obispo indian paintbrush is considered rare by CNPS (List 1B, RED 2-2-3).

Wildlife

California red-legged frog *(Rana draytonii)* Federally threatened

The potential for the California red-legged frog *(Rana draytonii)* has been identified about 0.25 mile to the east, 0.27 mile to the northwest, and 0.4 mile to the north. The California red-legged frog is considered federally threatened. This species typically inhabits shorelines with extensive vegetation.

Impact. The project site does not support any sensitive native vegetation, significant wildlife habitats, or special-status species. The project site is non-native annual grassland that is regularly disced and grazed, most recently in May 2018. There are no permanent or ephemeral hydrologic features onsite. During reconnaissance surveys in March of 2017 and April 2018, no sign of special-status species was observed within the project site. The grassland areas are marginally suitable habitat for special-status plant species; however, the grazing and periodic discing of the site likely preclude their establishment. Potentially suitable habitat for special-status wildlife exists south of the project site. The project is expected to avoid these areas. There is marginally suitable habitat for nesting birds within the parcel in the adjacent mature trees, and on the utility poles that would be removed. American badger and western burrowing owl may temporarily utilize the site for foraging or refuge.

Mitigation/Conclusion. Mitigation measures have been recommended that require nesting bird surveys and general wildlife reconnaissance surveys be conducted prior to construction if it occurs

during nesting bird season, typically February to September. No additional measures are required to address impacts to biological resources.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Disturb archaeological resources?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Disturb historical resources?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Disturb paleontological resources?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Cause a substantial adverse change to a Tribal Cultural Resource?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Cultural Resources

Setting. The project is located in an area historically occupied by the Obispeno Chumash. No historic structures are present and no paleontological resources are known to exist in the area.

In order to meet AB52 Cultural Resources requirements, outreach to eight Native American contacts has been conducted. Comments were received from two contacts. They each requested to be included when further assessments of the potential resources onsite are conducted. Correspondence between the County and the tribal representatives is available for review in the project file.

Impact. Numerous cultural resources are known to exist near the project site. These resources were described in a report prepared in support for the Wood's Humane Society facility (Bertrando and Bertrando, 2002). The surface survey conducted included the entire Wood's site as well as approximately three quarters of the proposed project site. No resources were observed on the surface; however, it was noted that the there is a potential for buried prehistoric or historic resources (due to the site proximity to Camp SLO and Highway 1) to be encountered. Department of Public Works' archaeologist Kate Ballantyne surveyed the remaining portion of the parcel not included in the 2002 survey, in 2017, as well as an area to the north that could be used for staging equipment during construction and did not observe any cultural resources.

Mitigation/Conclusion. Due to the potential for buried resources to be present onsite, it is recommended that a qualified geoarchaeologist and Native American monitor be present during initial activities. Based on observations of subsurface soils, the geoarchaeologist will recommend the level of additional monitoring, if any, that may be required during construction. In the unlikely event that significant buried cultural resources are present onsite, the Environmental Coordinator Office will be contacted. These measures are included in Exhibit B. No additional measures are required.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Result in exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions, such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, ground failure, land subsidence or other similar hazards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Be within a California Geological Survey "Alquist-Priolo" Earthquake Fault Zone", or other known fault zones?*	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in soil erosion, topographic changes, loss of topsoil or unstable soil conditions from project-related improvements, such as vegetation removal, grading, excavation, or fill?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Include structures located on expansive soils?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Be inconsistent with the goals and policies of the County's Safety Element relating to Geologic and Seismic Hazards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Preclude the future extraction of valuable mineral resources?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

* **Per Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication #42**

Setting. The following relates to the project's geologic aspects or conditions:

Topography: Nearly level

Within County's Geologic Study Area?: No

Landslide Risk Potential: Low

Liquefaction Potential: High

Nearby potentially active faults?: No Distance? Not applicable

Area known to contain serpentine or ultramafic rock or soils?: Unlikely, although a geotechncial engineering report for the adjacent Animal Services project noted that naturally-occurring asbestos could be encontered if deep foundations are used. It is unlikely that any naturally occurring asbestos would be encountered during any typical earthmoving activities.

Shrink/Swell potential of soil: Moderate to high

Other notable geologic features? None

The project site is not within the County Geologic Study Area, and the risk of landslide is low. The potential for liquefaction is considered high. The project site is nearly level, which typically minimizes the need for significant earthwork.

A geotechnical engineering and infiltration testing report was prepared for the adjacent Animal Services facility project (Earth Systems Pacific 2017). The report noted that the soils were prone to differential settlement and are expansive.

Impact. As proposed, the project will result in the temporary disturbance of about eight acres on a nearly level parcel. The solar arrays would be supported on individual piers/supports. Deep or complicated foundation systems are not required. Trenching and other tasks required to relocate the electrical distribution lines as well as the construction of the solar field arrays would be conducted in accordance with standard engineering and building requirements. There is no indication that the project would result in impacts to geologic or soils conditions onsite or that atypical measures are required.

Mitigation/Conclusion. Standard engineering and construction practices, implementation of a SWPPP, and the recommendations of a geotechnical engineer, would reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level. No additional measures are required.

7. HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼-mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on, or adjacent to, a site which is included on a list of hazardous material/waste sites compiled pursuant to Gov't Code 65962.5 ("Cortese List"), and result in an adverse public health condition?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Impair implementation or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) If within the Airport Review designation, or near a private airstrip, result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

7. HAZARDS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
g) Increase fire hazard risk or expose people or structures to high wildland fire hazard conditions?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Be within a 'very high' fire hazard severity zone?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Be within an area classified as a 'state responsibility' area as defined by CalFire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
j) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The project is not located in an area of known hazardous material contamination. The project is not within a 'high' or 'very high' severity risk area for fire. The project is not within the Airport Review area. The closed Kansas Avenue Landfill is located approximately 600 feet from the western side of the project. A review of the Geotracker database indicates that there are no active hazardous waste sites within 2,000 feet of the project area.

Connecting the solar farm to the existing utility infrastructure onsite involves working with high voltage electrical equipment. These tasks would be completed by contracting crews trained specifically to work in this environment.

Impact. The project does not propose the use of hazardous materials, nor the generation of hazardous wastes. The proposed project site is not found on the 'Cortese List' (which is a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5). The project does not present a significant fire safety risk. The project is not expected to conflict with any regional emergency response or evacuation plan.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No significant impacts because of hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

8. NOISE *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Expose people to noise levels that exceed the County Noise Element thresholds?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generate permanent increases in the ambient noise levels in the project vicinity?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Cause a temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise in the project vicinity?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people to severe noise or vibration?	☐	☐	☒	☐

8. NOISE *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
e) If located within the Airport Review designation or adjacent to a private airstrip, expose people residing or working in the project area to severe noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Conclusion. The project would not introduce sensitive noise receptors to the project site, nor would it produce noise after it is constructed. No significant noise impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

9. POPULATION/HOUSING *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly (e.g., construct new homes or businesses) or indirectly (e.g., extension of major infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace existing housing or people, requiring construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Create the need for substantial new housing in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Conclusion. The project involves the installation of solar panels. It will not result in a need for new housing and will not displace existing housing. No significant population and housing impacts are anticipated. No mitigation measures are necessary.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/UTILITIES *Will the project have an effect upon, or result in the need for new or altered public services in any of the following areas:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Police protection (e.g., Sheriff, CHP)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/UTILITIES *Will the project have an effect upon, or result in the need for new or altered public services in any of the following areas:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
d) Roads?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Solid Wastes?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The project area is served by the following public services/facilities:

Police: County Sheriff — Location: San Luis Obispo (Kansas Ave.) (Approximately 0.88 miles to the southeast)

Fire: Cal Fire (formerly CDF) — Hazard Severity: Moderate — Response Time: 0-5 minutes

Location: Highway 1/Santa Rosa, approximately 3 miles to the east.

School District: San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

Impact. No significant impacts to utilities or public services were identified. This project will replace undeveloped grazing land and therefore will not result in any new demands for public services. The project will require relocating a portion of an electrical distribution line underground; however, this is not expected to affect service or otherwise impact the existing utility infrastructure.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No impacts were identified and no mitigation measures are necessary.

11. RECREATION *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Increase the use or demand for parks or other recreation opportunities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Affect the access to trails, parks or other recreation opportunities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The County's Parks and Recreation Element shows the parcel is within the SLO to Cuesta College Trail Corridor. It is also located within the Chorro Valley Trail Corridor (SLOCOG 2014).

Impact. The proposed project will not create a significant need for additional park, Natural Area, and/or recreational resources. Based on preliminary review it appears that there is at least a 100 feet to locate a 12-foot-wide trail corridor between the Highway 1 right-of-way and the proposed project, including the landscape screening area.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No significant recreation impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

12. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Increase vehicle trips to local or areawide circulation system?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Reduce existing "Level of Service" on public roadway(s)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Create unsafe conditions on public roadways (e.g., limited access, design features, sight distance, slow vehicles)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Provide for adequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with an established measure of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system considering all modes of transportation (e.g. LOS, mass transit, etc.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
h) Result in a change in air traffic patterns that may result in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. The proposed project is estimated to have no impact on traffic. Construction traffic would use the exisitng signal at Kansas Avenue and Highway 1. Periodic maintenance of the solar arrays will be required; however, this activity would likely not generate more than a few trips per month. The project does not conflict with adopted policies, plans and programs on transportation.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No significant traffic impacts were identified, and no mitigation measures above what are already required by ordinance are necessary.

13. WASTEWATER *Will the project:*	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
a) Violate waste discharge requirements or Central Coast Basin Plan criteria for wastewater systems?	☐	☐	☒	☐

13. WASTEWATER

Will the project:

	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
b) Change the quality of surface or ground water (e.g., nitrogen-loading, day-lighting)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Adversely affect community wastewater service provider?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. This project will not require or produce any wastewater.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No mitigation measures are necessary.

14. WATER & HYDROLOGY

Will the project:

	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
QUALITY				
a) Violate any water quality standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Discharge into surface waters or otherwise alter surface water quality (e.g., turbidity, sediment, temperature, dissolved oxygen, etc.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Change the quality of groundwater (e.g., saltwater intrusion, nitrogen-loading, etc.)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Change rates of soil absorption, or amount or direction of surface runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Change the drainage patterns where substantial on- or off-site sedimentation/ erosion or flooding may occur?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Involve activities within the 100-year flood zone?	☐	☒	☐	☐
QUANTITY				
h) Change the quantity or movement of available surface or ground water?	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) Adversely affect community water service provider?	☐	☐	☒	☐

14. WATER & HYDROLOGY

Will the project:	Potentially Significant	Impact can & will be mitigated	Insignificant Impact	Not Applicable
j) Expose people to a risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding (e.g., dam failure,etc.), or inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow?	☐	☐	☒	☐
k) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting. The project would require water during construction and over the first 5-10 years of operations for landscape irrigation. Based on available information, the proposed water source is not known to have any significant availability or quality problems.

The topography of the project is nearly level. A poorly defined tributary to Chorro Creek is located approximately 300 feet from the project site. Projects involving more than one acre of disturbance are subject to preparing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to minimize on-site sedimentation and erosion. When work is done in the rainy season, the County installs temporary erosion and sedimentation measures.

DRAINAGE – The following relates to the project's drainage aspects:

Within the 100-year Flood Hazard designation? Area is in an "undetermined" flood hazard zone

Closest creek? tributary to Chorro Creek Distance? Approximately 300 feet

Soil drainage characteristics: Not well drained

SEDIMENTATION AND EROSION – Soil type, area of disturbance, and slopes are key aspects to analyzing potential sedimentation and erosion issues. The project's soil types and descriptions are listed in the previous Agriculture section under "Setting". As described in the NRCS Soil Survey, the project's soil erodibility is high.

The Department of Public Works prepares and implements sedimentation and erosion control plans for all construction and grading projects to minimize these impacts. The plan is prepared by a civil engineer to address both temporary and long-term sedimentation and erosion impacts. Projects involving more than one acre of disturbance are subject to the preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which focuses on controlling storm water runoff. The Regional Water Quality Control Board is the local extension who monitors this program. In addition, this project is subject to post-construction stormwater requirements of the State. When applicable, these requirements may include retaining stormwater in vegetated infiltration basins onsite, for example.

Impact.

With regards to project impacts on water quality the following conditions apply:

- ✓ Approximately 8 acres of minor grading/grubbing is proposed for installation;
- ✓ The project will be subject to standard County requirements for drainage, sedimentation and erosion control for construction and permanent use;
- ✓ The project will be disturbing over an acre and will be required to prepare a SWPPP, which will be implemented during construction;
- ✓ The project is more than 100 feet from the closest creek or surface water body;
- ✓ All hazardous materials and/or wastes will be properly stored on-site, which include secondary containment should spills or leaks occur; and

- ✓ The project will not add fill or any new habitable structures, or change the onsite drainage patterns.

Mitigation/Conclusion. As specified above for water quality, existing regulations and/or required plans will adequately address surface water quality impacts during construction and permanent use of the project. Based on County maps, the project is not within a designated 100-year flood hazard zone; nevertheless, because the project does not include adding fill and structures are limited to supports for the solar panels, no impacts to potential floodways or flood zones would result. No mitigation is required. structures other than the support for the Portions of the No additional measures above what are required or proposed are needed to protect water quality. Based on the proposed amount of water to be use and the water source, no significant impacts from water use are anticipated.

15. LAND USE *Will the project:*	**Inconsistent**	**Potentially Inconsistent**	**Consistent**	**Not Applicable**
a) Be potentially inconsistent with land use, policy/regulation (e.g., general plan [County Land Use Element and Ordinance], local coastal plan, specific plan, Clean Air Plan, etc.) adopted to avoid or mitigate for environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Be potentially inconsistent with any habitat or community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be potentially inconsistent with adopted agency environmental plans or policies with jurisdiction over the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be potentially incompatible with surrounding land uses?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Setting/Impact. Surrounding uses are identified on Page 2 of the Initial Study. The proposed project was reviewed for consistency with policy and/or regulatory documents relating to the environment and appropriate land use (e.g., County Land Use Ordinance, Local Coastal Plan, etc.). Referrals were sent to outside agencies to review for policy consistencies (e.g., CAL FIRE for Fire Code, APCD for Clean Air Plan, etc.). The project was found to be consistent with these documents (refer also to Exhibit A on reference documents used).

The project is not within or adjacent to a Habitat Conservation Plan area. The project is consistent or compatible with the surrounding uses as summarized on page 2 of this Initial Study.

Mitigation/Conclusion. No inconsistencies were identified and therefore no additional measures above what will already be required were determined necessary.

16. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE *Will the project:*	**Potentially Significant**	**Impact can & will be mitigated**	**Insignificant Impact**	**Not Applicable**

a) ***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 pre-history?*** ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

b) ***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)*** ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

c) ***Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*** ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

For further information on CEQA or the County's environmental review process, please visit the County's web site at "www.sloplanning.org" under "Environmental Information", or the California Environmental Resources Evaluation System at: http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/ for information about the California Environmental Quality Act.

Exhibit A - Initial Study References and Agency Contacts

The County Planning Department has contacted various agencies for their comments on the proposed project. With respect to the subject application, the following have been contacted (marked with an ☒) and when a response was made, it is either attached or in the application file:

Contacted	Agency	Response
☒	County Planning and Building Department	In File
☐	County Environmental Health Services	Not applicable
☒	County Agricultural Commissioner's Office	In File
☐	County Airport Manager	Not Applicable
☐	Airport Land Use Commission	Not Applicable
☒	Air Pollution Control District	In File
☐	County Sheriff's Department	Not Applicable
☐	Regional Water Quality Control Board	No Response
☐	CA Coastal Commission	Not Applicable
☐	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife	Not Applicable
☒	CA Department of Forestry (Cal Fire)	In File
☒	CA Department of Transportation	In File
☐	Community Services District	Not Applicable
☒	Other Camp San Luis Obispo	In File
☐	Other _____	Not applicable

*** "No comment" or "No concerns"-type responses are usually not attached*

The following checked ("☒") reference materials have been used in the environmental review for the proposed project and are hereby incorporated by reference into the Initial Study. The following information is available at the County Planning and Building Department.

☒ Project File

County documents

- ☐ Coastal Plan Policies
- ☒ Framework for Planning (Coastal/Inland)
- ☒ General Plan (Inland/Coastal), includes all maps/elements; more pertinent elements:
  - ☒ Agriculture Element
  - ☒ Conservation & Open Space Element
  - ☐ Economic Element
  - ☒ Housing Element
  - ☒ Noise Element
  - ☐ Parks & Recreation Element/Project List
  - ☒ Safety Element
- ☒ Land Use Ordinance (Inland/Coastal)
- ☐ Building and Construction Ordinance
- ☐ Public Facilities Fee Ordinance
- ☐ Real Property Division Ordinance
- ☐ Affordable Housing Fund
- ☐ Airport Land Use Plan
- ☐ Energy Wise Plan
- ☒ San Luis Obispo Area Plan
- ☐ Design Plan
- ☐ Specific Plan
- ☐ Annual Resource Summary Report
- ☐ Circulation Study

Other documents

- ☒ Clean Air Plan/APCD Handbook
- ☐ Regional Transportation Plan
- ☐ Uniform Fire Code
- ☐ Water Quality Control Plan (Central Coast Basin – Region 3)
- ☒ Archaeological Resources Map
- ☒ Area of Critical Concerns Map
- ☒ Special Biological Importance Map
- ☒ CA Natural Species Diversity Database
- ☒ Fire Hazard Severity Map
- ☒ Flood Hazard Maps
- ☒ Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey for SLO County
- ☒ GIS mapping layers (e.g., habitat, streams, contours, etc.)
- ☐ Other

In addition, the following project specific information and/or reference materials have been considered as a part of the Initial Study:

Crawford, Multari, Clark, and Mohr. *Environmental Assessment for the County Operations Center Master Plan*. August 2002.

Earth Systems Pacific. *Findings of Research and Exploratory Trenching, Former Kansas Avenue Landfill Oklahoma Avenue Extension Master Plan*. 2015.

Earth Systems Pacific. *Geotechnical Engineering Report and Results of Lid Infiltration Testing San Luis Obispo County Operations Center Animal Services Facility*. 2017.

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. *Chorro Valley Trail Study*. 2014.

SWCA. *San Luis Obispo County Operations Center Solar Facility Visual Impact Assessment*. 2018.

Exhibit B - Mitigation Summary Table

AR-1 Screen Planting: The project shall include vegetative screen planting including the following:

a. Screen planting shall be placed along the northern, western, and eastern perimeters of the security fencing. Plant material shall consist of either native to the immediate area or considered compatibles and non-invasive with nearby vegetation.
b. Screen planting area shall be a minimum width of 30 feet with an undulating outside edge.
c. Screen planting shall achieve a minimum 80 percent screening of the project as seen from Highway 1 within ten years of completion of construction.
d. Trees shall be planted in random-appearing groupings so not to visually "wall-off" distant views along Highway 1.
e. Trees and shrubs within the screen planting area shall be maintained throughout the life of the project.

AR-2 Fencing: All fencing for the project shall conform to the following:

a. Barbed-wire shall not be used.
b. Chain-link fencing shall include slats. Slats shall be either medium-brown or natural wood colored.

AR-3 Photo-Voltaic Arrays and Associated Elements: All frames, racks, supports, stands, brackets, tracking apparatus, connectors, rods, motor and equipment cabinets, and other metal components shall be darkened by painting, powder-coating, anodizing, acid etching or other methods to reduce reflectivity and visually recede. Elements shall be darkened to near-black or a dark-grey.

AR-4 Equipment Cabinets: The exterior of all equipment cabinets shall be colored a dark earth-tone color to reduce reflectivity and noticeability.

AQ-1 The County shall implement the following mitigation measures to significantly reduce fugitive dust emissions, to manage fugitive dust emissions such that they do not exceed the APCD 20% opacity limit (APCD Rule 401) and minimize nuisance impacts:

a. Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible;

b. Use water trucks, APCD approved dust suppressants (see Section 4.3 in the CEQA Air Quality Handbook), or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site and from exceeding the District's limit of 20% opacity for greater than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible. Please note that since water use is a concern due to drought conditions. the contractor or builder shall consider the use of an APCD-approved dust suppressant where feasible to reduce the amount of water used for dust control. For a list of suppressants, see Section 4.3 of the CEQA Air Quality Handbook;

c. All dirt stock-pile areas should be sprayed daily and covered with tarps or other dust barriers as needed;

d. All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible, and building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding, soil binders or other dust controls are used;

e. All of these fugitive dust mitigation measures shall be shown on grading and building plans; and,

f. The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons to monitor the fugitive dust emissions and enhance the implementation of the measures as necessary to minimize dust complaints, reduce visible emissions below 20% opacity. Their duties shall include holidays and weekend periods when work may not be in progress.

BR-1 If construction activities are conducted during the typical nesting bird season (February 1 – September 1) pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by the County or its designee prior to any construction activity or vegetation removal to identify potential bird nesting activity, and:

a. If active nest sites of bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are observed within the vicinity of the project site, then the project shall be modified and/or delayed as necessary to avoid direct take of the identified nests, eggs, and/or young;

b. If active nest sites of raptors and/or bird species of special concern are observed within the vicinity of the project site, then CDFW shall be contacted to establish the appropriate buffer around the nest site. Construction activities in the buffer zone shall be prohibited until the young have fledged the nest and achieved independence.

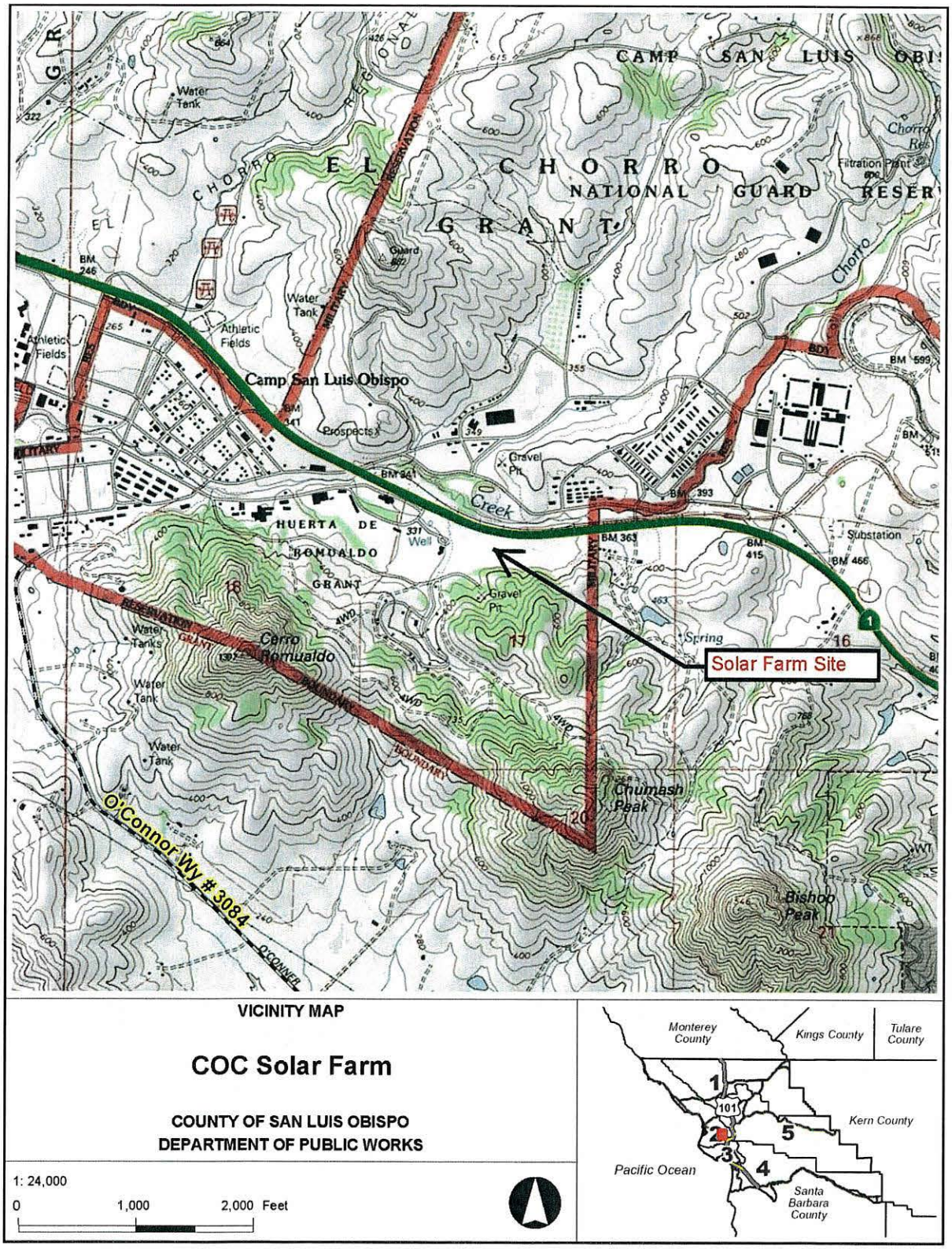
BR-2 Prior to any ground disturbance, the County shall conduct the necessary pre-construction surveys to determine presence or absence of special-status wildlife species. Wildlife surveys shall be done no more than 30 days prior to the start of work. If surveys show an absence of sensitive species, work may proceed without additional measures being required. In the unlikely event that special-status wildlife is observed, mitigation shall be implemented to avoid and/or minimize impacts. These measures could include for example, establishing a work buffer area, coordinating with applicable resource agencies, and/or follow-up surveys to confirm if and when the species is no longer utilizing the site.

CR-1 A qualified geoarchaeologist and Native American monitor shall monitor initial ground disturbance activities to ensure there is no disturbance of cultural remains in the project impact area. The qualified archaeologist will ensure Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing is installed properly at the project's borders.

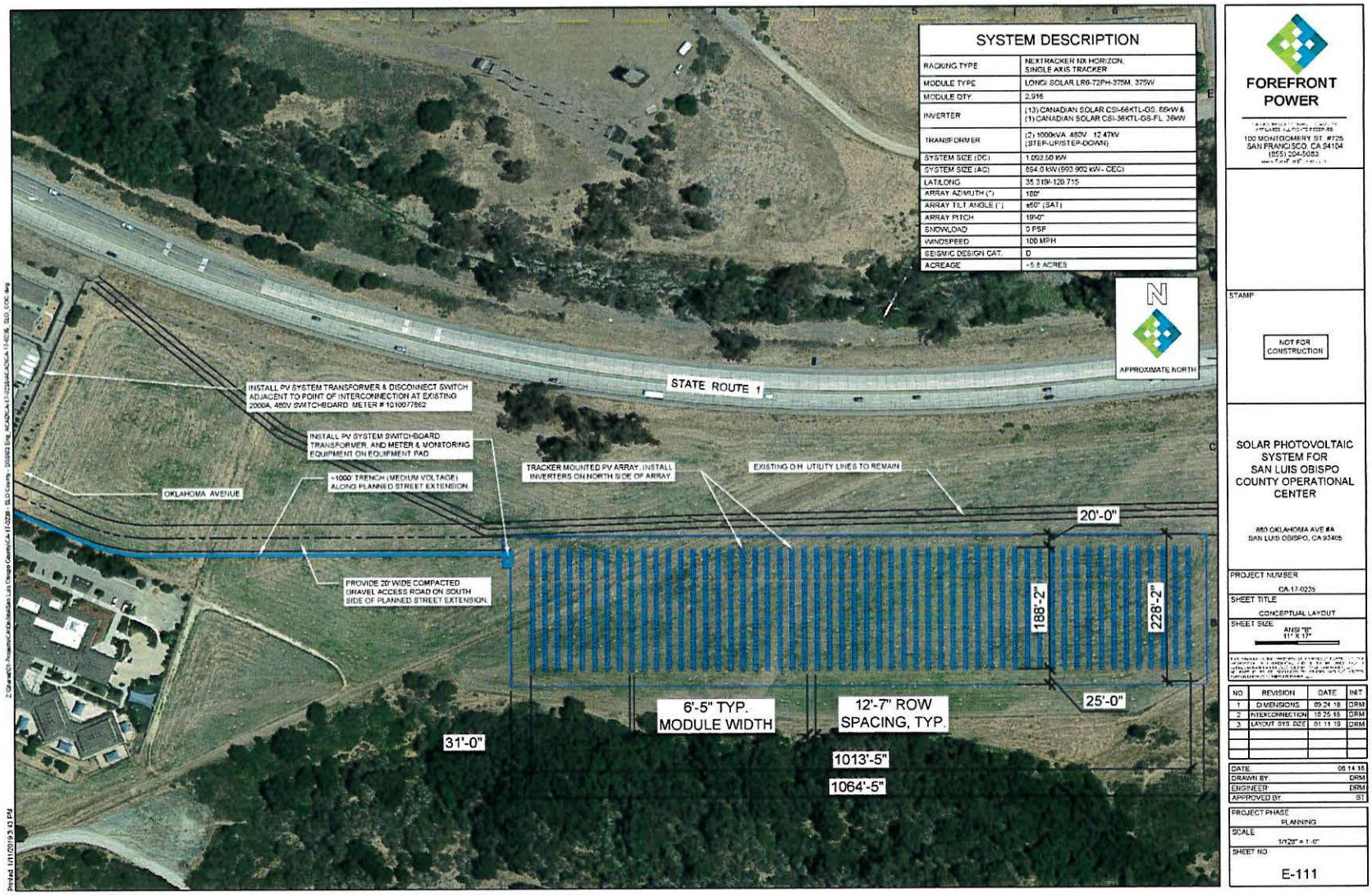
CR-2 During earth moving activities, in the event archaeological resources are unearthed or discovered, construction in the vicinity of the find shall stop, and the Public Works project manager and the Environmental Coordinator shall be notified so that the extent and location of discovered materials may be recorded by a qualified archaeologist, and disposition of artifacts may be accomplished in accordance with state and federal law.

CR-3 In the event archaeological resources are found to include human remains, or in any other case when human remains are discovered during construction, the County Coroner and Environmental Coordinator are to be notified so proper disposition may be accomplished.

Exhibit C – Maps, Photos, and Photo-simulations



County Operations Center - Solar Farm Preliminary Site Plan



FOREFRONT POWER
100 MONTGOMERY ST. #725
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104
(855) 204-5083

STAMP
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY OPERATIONAL CENTER
880 OKLAHOMA AVE #A
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93405

PROJECT NUMBER: CA-17-0235
SHEET TITLE: CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT
SHEET SIZE: ANSI "B" 11" X 17"

NO.	REVISION	DATE	INIT
1	DIMENSIONS	09.24.18	DRM
2	INTERCONNECTION	10.25.18	DRM
3	LAYOUT SYS SIZE	01.11.19	DRM

DATE	06.14.18
DRAWN BY	DRM
ENGINEER	DRM
APPROVED BY	BT

PROJECT PHASE: PLANNING
SCALE: 1/128" = 1'-0"
SHEET NO: E-111

Photo 1. Looking east across the project site. Highway 1 is on the photo left.

Photo 2. Looking west across the project site. Cerro Romauldo is on the left, Highway 1 photo-right.

Insert photo sims when pdf-ing document.