

# LANCASTER EASTSIDE ANNEXATION PROJECT

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT  
INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

JULY 2025

PREPARED FOR



PREPARED BY

**Michael Baker**  
INTERNATIONAL



**PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/  
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

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**Lancaster Eastside  
Annexation Project**

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**Lead Agency:**



**CITY OF LANCASTER**

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JN 196028



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Statutory Authority and Requirements.....	1
1.2	Purpose.....	1
1.3	Consultation.....	2
1.4	Incorporation by Reference.....	2
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Project Description</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1	Project Location.....	4
2.2	Environmental Setting.....	4
2.3	Project Characteristics.....	7
2.4	Construction/Phasing.....	11
2.5	Permits and Approvals.....	11
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Initial Study Checklist</b> .....	<b>13</b>
3.1	Background.....	13
3.2	Environmental Factors Potentially Affected.....	15
3.3	Lead Agency Determination.....	16
3.4	Evaluation of Environmental Impacts.....	17
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Environmental Analysis</b> .....	<b>18</b>
4.1	Aesthetics.....	18
4.2	Agriculture and Forestry Resources.....	23
4.3	Air Quality.....	27
4.4	Biological Resources.....	44
4.5	Cultural Resources.....	53
4.6	Energy.....	59
4.7	Geology and Soils.....	68
4.8	Greenhouse Gases.....	77
4.9	Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	95
4.10	Hydrology and Water Quality.....	104
4.11	Land Use and Planning.....	112
4.12	Mineral Resources.....	116
4.13	Noise.....	118
4.14	Population and Housing.....	130
4.15	Public Services.....	132
4.16	Recreation.....	136
4.17	Transportation.....	138
4.18	Tribal Cultural Resources.....	145
4.19	Utilities and Service Systems.....	148
4.20	Wildfire.....	154
4.21	Mandatory Findings of Significance.....	156



5.0 References ..... 159  
6.0 Report Preparation Personnel ..... 164

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data  
Appendix B Biological Resources Reports  
Appendix C Cultural/Paleontological Resources Reports  
Appendix D Phase I ESA  
Appendix E Noise Data  
Appendix F VMT Assessments  
Appendix G Tribal Consultation Documentation

## LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 2-1 Regional Vicinity ..... 5  
Exhibit 2-2 Site Vicinity ..... 6  
Exhibit 2-3 Solar Facility Off-Site Utility Connections ..... 9  
Exhibit 4.2-1 Important Farmland ..... 24  
Exhibit 4.4-1 Regional Board/CDFW Jurisdictional Map ..... 49  
Exhibit 4.13-1 Noise Measurement Locations ..... 121

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.3-1 Solar Facility Construction Emissions ..... 33  
Table 4.3-2 Solar Facility Operational Emissions ..... 35  
Table 4.4-1 Special-Status Species Recorded in the Project Area ..... 45  
Table 4.6-1 Solar Facility and Countywide Energy Consumption ..... 64  
Table 4.6-2 Solar Facility Consistency with City's Climate Action Plan ..... 67  
Table 4.8-1 Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2020-2045 RTP/SCS ..... 85  
Table 4.8-2 Proposed Annexation Consistency with Connect SoCal 2024 ..... 87  
Table 4.8-3 Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 Inventory Sectors ..... 89  
Table 4.8-4 Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions ..... 91  
Table 4.8-5 Proposed Solar Facility Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 Inventory Sectors ..... 93



Table 4.11-1	Solar Facility General Plan Consistency Analysis .....	113
Table 4.13-1	Noise Compatible Land Use Objectives .....	119
Table 4.13-2	Short-Term Noise Measurements .....	122
Table 4.13-3	Noise Levels Generated During Construction Phases .....	124
Table 4.13-4	Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment .....	128
Table 4.17-1	Solar Facility Trip Generation .....	139
Table 4.17-2	Analysis Scenarios .....	141
Table 4.17-3	VMT Summary.....	142
Table 4.18-1	Tribal Consultation Letter Response .....	147
Table 4.19-1	Landfills Serving the City .....	152



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project (herein referenced as the “project”) involves the annexation of an approximately 638-acre area into the City of Lancaster’s jurisdiction, and development of an approximately 288-acre solar facility in the northern half of the annexation area. The project proposes to pre-zone the entire site to RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres); the project also proposes a Conditional Use Permit, which would allow the development of the solar facility under the proposed RR-2.5 zone.

Following a preliminary review of the project, the City of Lancaster (City) has determined that it is subject to the guidelines and regulations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the project, as proposed.

### 1.1 STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21177) and pursuant to Section 15063 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the City of Lancaster, acting in the capacity of Lead Agency, is required to undertake the preparation of an Initial Study to determine whether the project would have a significant environmental impact. If the Lead Agency finds that there is no evidence that the project, either as proposed or as modified to include the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study, may cause a significant effect on the environment, the Lead Agency shall find that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment and shall prepare a Negative Declaration (or Mitigated Negative Declaration) for that project. Such determination can be made only if “there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the Lead Agency” that such impacts may occur (Section 21080, Public Resources Code).

The environmental documentation, which is ultimately approved and/or certified by the City in accordance with CEQA, is intended as an informational document undertaken to provide an environmental basis for subsequent discretionary actions upon the project. The resulting documentation is not, however, a policy document and its approval and/or certification neither presupposes nor mandates any actions on the part of those agencies from whom permits and other discretionary approvals would be required.

### 1.2 PURPOSE

Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies specific disclosure requirements for inclusion in an Initial Study. Pursuant to those requirements, an Initial Study shall include:

- A description of the project, including the location of the project;
- Identification of the environmental setting;
- Identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries;
- Discussion of ways to mitigate significant effects identified, if any;
- Examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls; and
- The name(s) of the person(s) who prepared or participated in the preparation of the Initial Study.



### 1.3 CONSULTATION

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 21080.3, prior to determining whether a negative declaration or environmental impact report is required for a project, the Lead Agency (in this case, the City of Lancaster) shall consult with all responsible agencies and trustee agencies. Prior to that required consultation, the lead agency may informally contact any of those agencies to obtain any recommendations of those agencies on the environmental documentation to be prepared for the project. Following receipt of any written comments from those agencies, the City will consider their recommendations when formulating the preliminary findings. Following completion of this Initial Study, the City will initiate formal consultation with these and other governmental agencies as required under CEQA and its implementing guidelines.

### 1.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The following documents were utilized during preparation of this Initial Study and are incorporated into this document by reference. These documents are available for review at the City of Lancaster Community Development Department, located at 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, California 93534.

- City of Lancaster General Plan 2030 (adopted July 14, 2009). The *City of Lancaster General Plan 2030* (General Plan) was adopted by the Lancaster City Council on July 14, 2009, and has a horizon year of 2030. The General Plan identifies the types of development that are allowed, and the general pattern of future development within Lancaster. Additionally, the General Plan contains goals, objectives, policies, and specific actions that provide the framework for achieving the community's long-term vision. The General Plan consists of the following elements/plans: Natural Environment, Safety (updated in 2022), Active Living, Physical Mobility, Municipal Services and Facilities, Economic Development and Vitality, and Physical Development. The Housing Element (adopted in 2022) is provided under separate cover and covers the 2021-2029 housing cycle.
- City of Lancaster General Plan 2030 Final Environmental Impact Report (certified April 2009). The *City of Lancaster General Plan 2030 Final Environmental Impact Report* (General Plan EIR) evaluated the environmental impacts associated with buildout of the General Plan. The General Plan EIR concluded that environmental impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of existing regulatory requirements and mitigation measures with the exception of traffic and circulation, short- and long-term air quality, short- and long-term noise, hydrology/water quality, and water supply.
- Lancaster Municipal Code (current through Ordinance 1109, updated March 1, 2024). The *Lancaster Municipal Code* (LMC) consists of all the regulatory and penal ordinances and administrative ordinances of the City of Lancaster. The LMC is one of the City's primary tools to implement control of land uses, in accordance with General Plan goals and policies. The Lancaster Zoning Code, included as LMC Title 17, *Zoning*, provides the legislative framework to implement and enhance the General Plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the City.
- Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Area Plan (adopted June 16, 2015). The *Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Area Plan* (Area Plan) is a comprehensive long-range plan to guide development in the Antelope Valley. The Area Plan was created to achieve the communities' shared vision of the future through specific goals, policies, land use and zoning maps, and other planning instruments. The Area Plan replaces the previously adopted *1986 Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan*.



- Los Angeles Countywide General Plan (updated October 6, 2015). The unincorporated area of Los Angeles County is comprised of approximately 2,650 square miles, and over one million people. The *Los Angeles Countywide General Plan* (County General Plan) provides the policy framework and establishes the long range vision for how and where the unincorporated areas will grow, and establishes goals, policies, and programs to foster healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. This document represents a comprehensive effort to update the County's 1980 General Plan.
- Los Angeles County General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (March 2015). The *Los Angeles County General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report* (County General Plan EIR) addresses the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the County General Plan. Based on the analysis, it was determined that impacts associated with agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, historic resources, greenhouse gas emissions, mineral resources (only within the Antelope Valley Area Plan), noise, transportation/traffic, and water supply would be significant and unavoidable.
- Los Angeles County Code (current through Ordinance 2023-0062, passed December 19, 2023, effective January 19, 2024). The *Los Angeles County Code* (County Code) consists of all the regulatory and penal ordinances and administrative ordinances of the County of Los Angeles. The County Code is one of the County's primary tools to implement control of land uses, in accordance with County General Plan goals and policies. The County Zoning Code, included as County Code Title 22, *Planning and Zoning*, provides the legislative framework to implement and enhance the County General Plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the County.



## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The City of Lancaster (City) is located in the Antelope Valley in northern Los Angeles County (County), approximately 70 miles north of downtown Los Angeles; refer to [Exhibit 2-1, Regional Vicinity](#). Unincorporated Los Angeles County surrounds the City on all sides. Additional surrounding jurisdictions include unincorporated Kern County further to the north and the City of Palmdale to the south.

As shown on [Exhibit 2-2, Site Vicinity](#), the project site consists of two areas within unincorporated Los Angeles County: 1) an approximately 638-acre area herein referred to as the “annexation area”, and 2) an approximately 288-acre area within the annexation area herein referred to as the “solar facility site”. The proposed annexation area and solar facility site together make up the “project site” as referenced in this document and include the following Assessor’s Parcel Numbers [APNs]: 3384-001-001 through -004; 3384-001-800; 3384-002-001, -002, -008 through -017, -036 through -047; and 3384-002-021 through -035. The annexation area is generally bound by Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, Avenue J to the south, and 50th Street East to the west. The L-shaped solar facility site consists of three parcels (APNs 3384-001-001, -002, and -003) in the northern portion of the annexation area, generally bound by Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, Lancaster Boulevard to the south, and 50th Street East to the west. It should be noted that a rectangular shaped area surrounding the southern half of the annexation area bound by Nugent Street to the north and northwest of the Avenue J and (unimproved) 55th Street East intersection is already located within the City and is not considered a part of the project site.

Regional access is provided via the Antelope Valley Freeway (State Route 14 [SR-14]), which provides primary regional connectivity between the City and the greater Los Angeles area. Local access is provided via Avenue I, Lancaster Boulevard, Avenue J, 60th Street East, and 50th Street East.

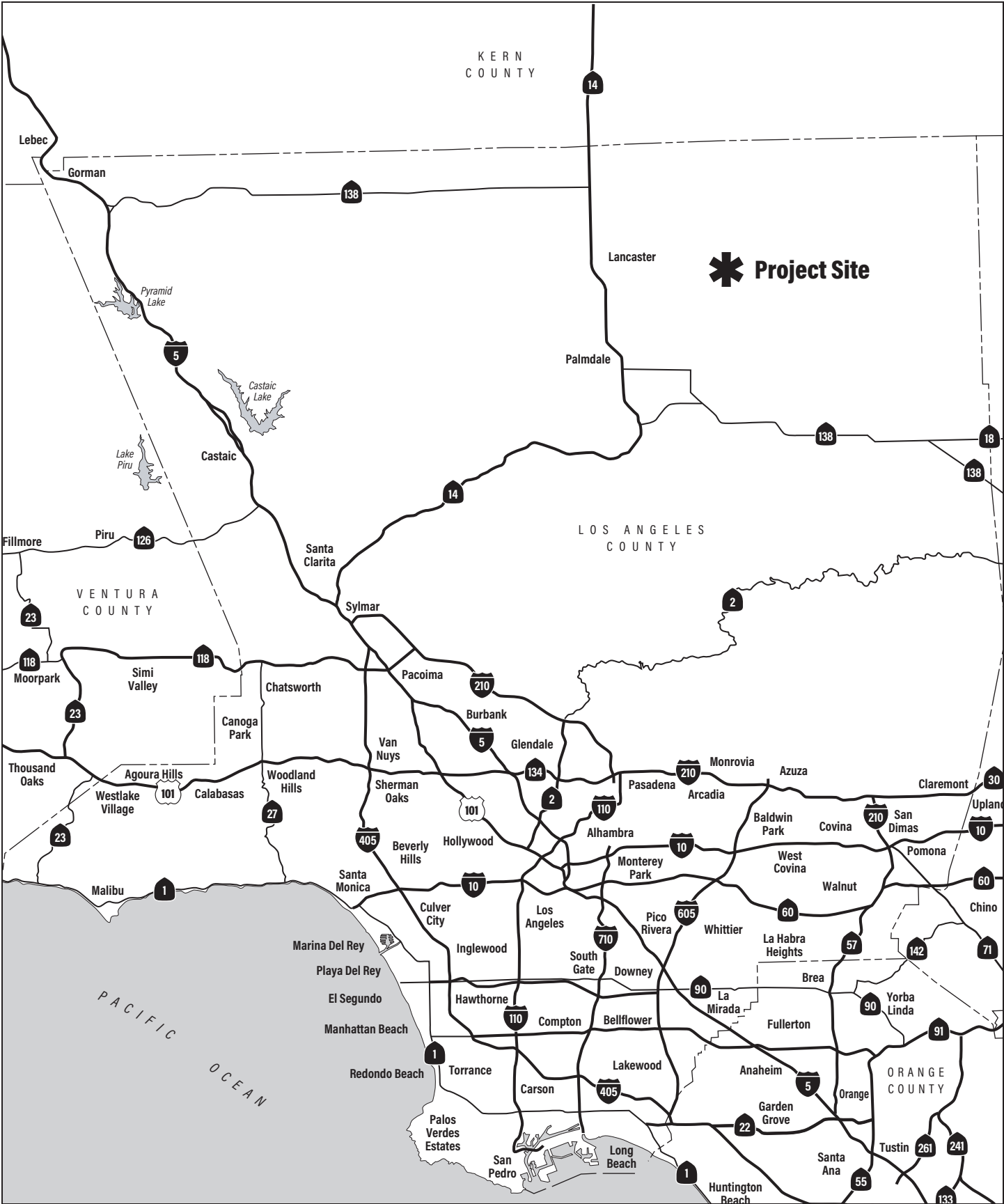
### 2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site mostly consists of vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields (both active and fallow). Structures on-site include a residence with farm animals, numerous outbuildings, and groundwater pumphouses used for agricultural (row crop) production in the northwestern portion of the site. A telecommunications facilities building (Frontier Communications) with an aboveground storage tank is located in the northeast corner of the project site. Farming facilities in the northwestern portion of the site are fenced on all sides while the remainder of the site is unfenced. A segment of Little Rock Wash traverses the eastern portion of the project site; refer to [Exhibit 2-2](#). Topography of the site ranges from approximately 2,390 to 2,412 feet above mean sea level.

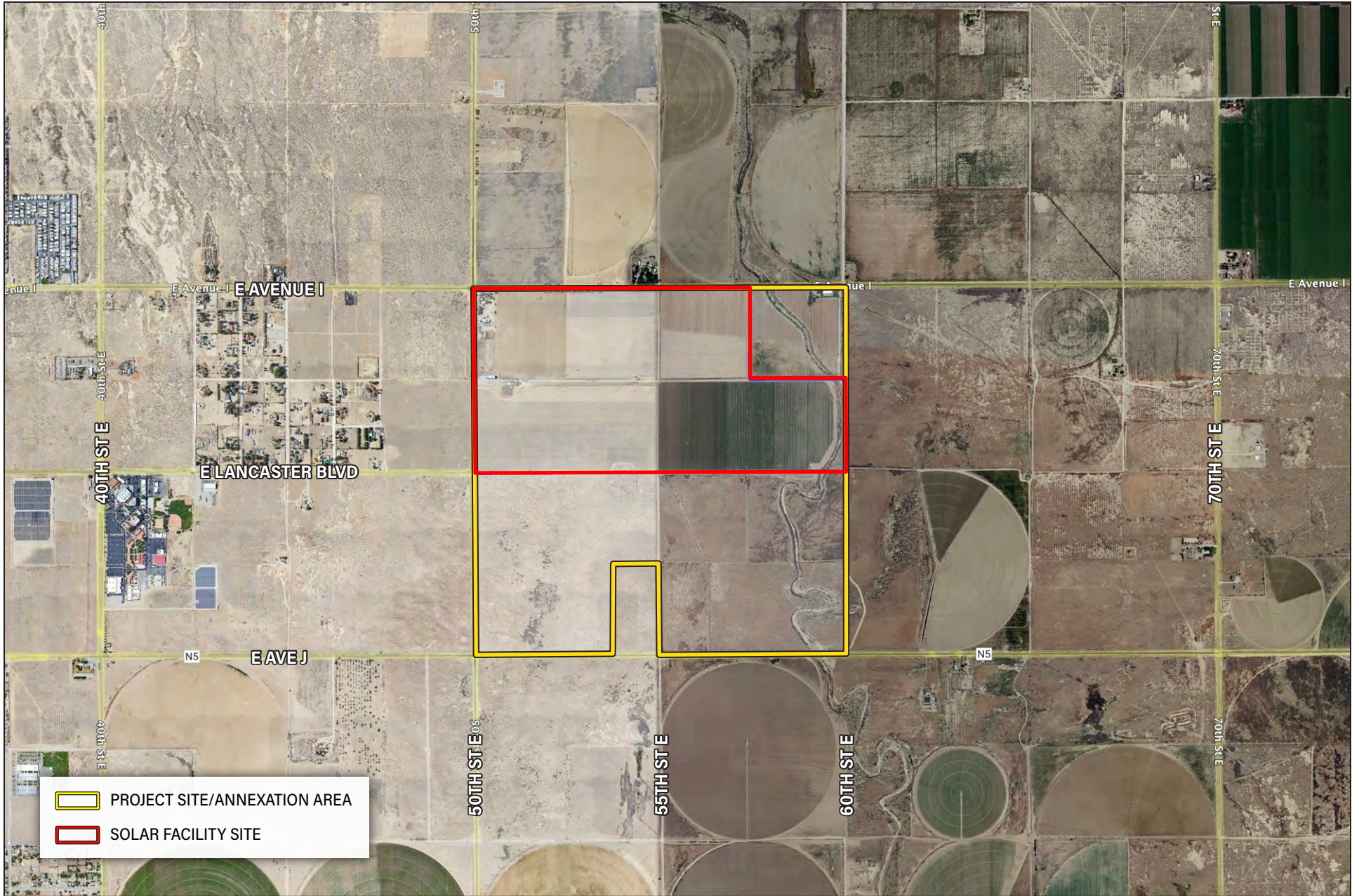
#### 2.2.1 EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION AND ZONING

##### COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Based on County’s Z-Net online mapping system, the project site is located within the Antelope Valley Planning Area. Based on the *Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Area Plan (East Portion)* Land Use Policy Map and the *Los Angeles County Antelope Valley East Portion Zoning Map*, the project site is designated N1 (Non-Urban 1 [0.5 du/ac]) and zoned A-2-5 (Heavy Agricultural, 5-acre minimum), respectively.



LANCASTER EASTSIDE ANNEXATION PROJECT  
 INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION  
**Regional Vicinity**



Source: Google Earth Pro, November 2023



According to the *Antelope Valley Area Plan* (Area Plan), a component of the *Los Angeles Countywide General Plan* (County General Plan), non-residential uses in the N1 land use category may include public and semi-public uses typically located in non-urban environs, such as solid and liquid waste disposal sites, utility and communication installations, and schools and other public facilities necessary to serve non-urban populations.

According to the *Los Angeles County Code* (County Code), Agricultural Zones (Zones A-1 and A-2) are established to permit a comprehensive range of agricultural uses in areas particularly suited for agricultural activities. Permitted uses are intended to encourage agricultural activities and other such uses required for, or desired by, the inhabitants of the community. An area so zoned may provide the land necessary to permit low-density single-family residential development, outdoor recreational uses, and public and institutional facilities.

## CITY OF LANCASTER

Based on the *Lancaster General Plan 2030* (Lancaster General Plan) Land Use Map, the project site is located within the City's sphere of influence and is designated Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]). Given that the site is currently located outside of the City's jurisdiction, there is no City zoning designation for the project site. However, the areas to the south within Lancaster are zoned Rural Residential (RR-2.5).

### 2.2.2 SURROUNDING LAND USES

Land uses surrounding the project site are primarily comprised of a combination of undeveloped, agricultural, and residential uses, as described below.

- North: Rural residential, vacant land, and agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located to the north of the project site across Avenue I in unincorporated Los Angeles County. These areas are within the City's sphere of influence and designated NU by the City. With respect to County land use designations and zoning, these areas designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5.
- East: Agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located east of the project site across 60<sup>th</sup> Street East in unincorporated Los Angeles County. These areas are within the City's sphere of influence and designated NU by the City. With respect to County designations and zoning, these areas are designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5.
- South: Agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located to the south of the project site south of Avenue J. These areas are located within the City of Lancaster and are designated and zoned NU and RR-2.5, respectively.
- West: Vacant land uses are located to the west of the project site west of 50<sup>th</sup> Street East. Residential uses are located further west. Western areas north of Lancaster Boulevard are located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and are designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5, respectively. Western areas south of Lancaster Boulevard are located within the City of Lancaster and are designated and zoned NU and RR-2.5, respectively.

## 2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The project consists of two components: 1) annexation of an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction, and 2) development of an approximately 288-acre solar facility in the northern half of the annexation area. The two project components are described in further detail below.



## ANNEXATION

The proposed annexation area encompasses approximately 638 acres generally bound by Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, Avenue J to the south, and 50th Street East to the west; refer to [Exhibit 2-2](#). It should be noted that a rectangular shaped area surrounding the southern half of the annexation area bound by Nugent Street to the north and northwest of the Avenue J and (unimproved) 55th Street East intersection is already located within the City and is not considered a part of the project site.

The annexation area is located within the City's sphere of influence (SOI) and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City's jurisdiction. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres). Based on *Lancaster Municipal Code* (Municipal Code) Section 17.08.030, *Purposes of the Residential Zones*, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use, allowing one dwelling unit per minimum net area of 100,000 square feet (or approximately 2.5 acres). As such, the approximately 638-acre annexation area would have an anticipated maximum buildout of 255 dwelling units.

Given that the annexation area is located within the City's SOI, buildout of the annexation area was considered in the Lancaster General Plan and Lancaster General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Specifically, the annexation area has a Lancaster General Plan land use designation of NU (0.4-2.0 du/ac), which is consistent with the allowed density under the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone (1 du/2.5 acres or 0.4 du/ac).

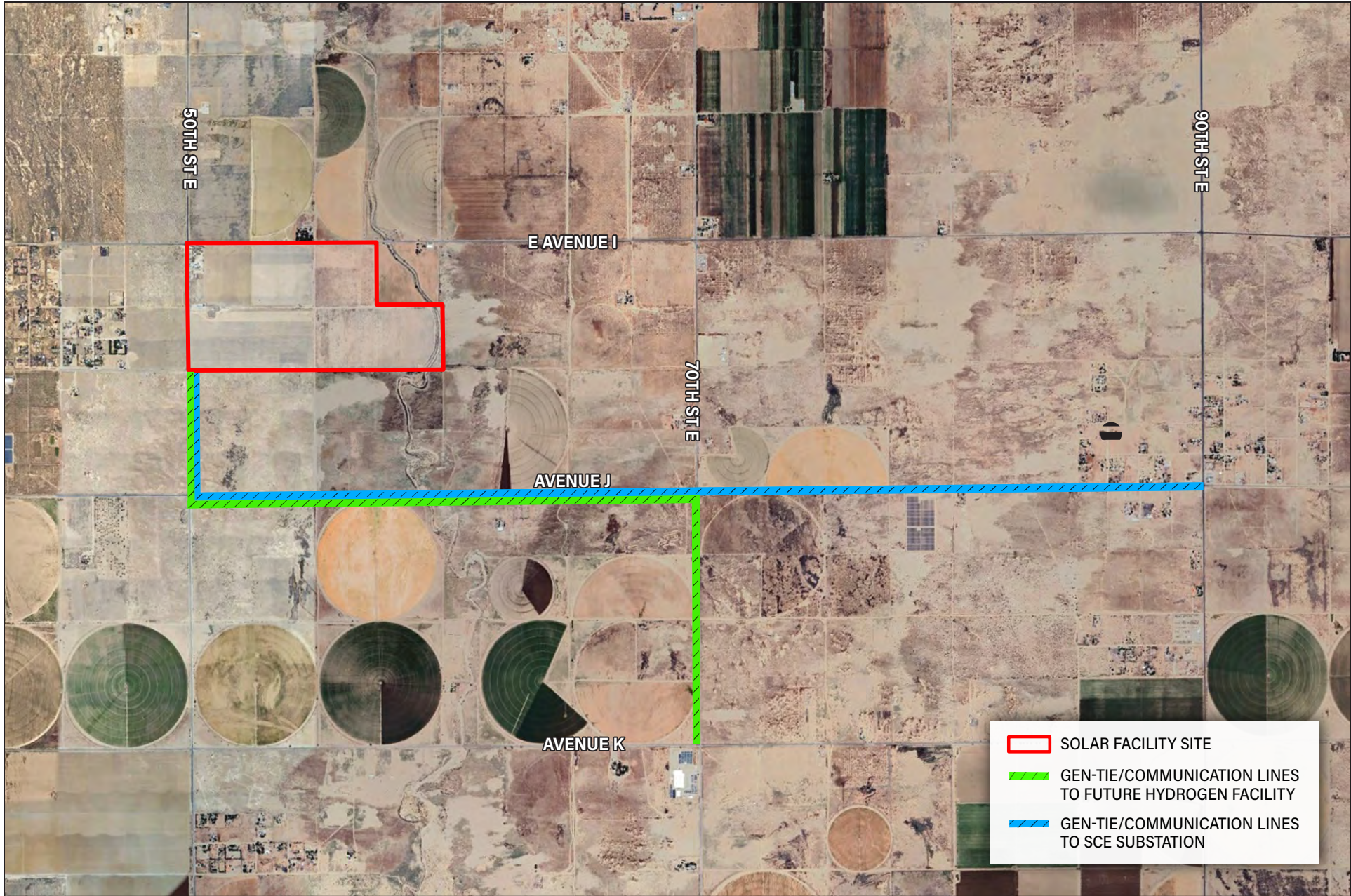
The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area; however, there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis.

## SOLAR FACILITY

The solar facility is proposed on an approximately 288-acre, L-shaped site encompassing three parcels (APNs 3384-001-001, -002, and -003) in the northern half of the annexation area. The solar facility site is generally bound by East Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, East Lancaster Boulevard to the south, and 50th Street East to the west. Under the proposed RR-2.5 zone, commercial solar electrical generation facilities are conditionally permitted. Thus, the solar facility would require a subsequent Conditional Use Permit (CUP) separate from the proposed project.

The proposed development consists of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a maximum 80-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) alternating current (AC) electric generating facility. It is anticipated that generation-tie (gen-tie) and communication lines may connect the facility to a previously approved hydrogen production facility located at 70th Street East and Avenue K, approximately two miles to the southeast of the proposed solar facility site. The previously approved hydrogen production facility is anticipated to be operational in 2027. This connection would allow for the support of hydrogen production. The gen-tie and communication lines would run southerly along 50th Street East (along the western solar facility site boundary), to Avenue J, and 70th Street East within the public right-of-way to the approved hydrogen production facility; the lines would not cross through any private property; refer to [Exhibit 2-3, \*Solar Facility Off-Site Utility Connections\*](#). If the solar facility is for the support of hydrogen production, it would not be connected to the electrical grid and would only supply power to the hydrogen facility.

Alternatively, the site may serve as a standalone solar facility, as determined by the final developer and operator. In this instance, the facility would either tie into the electrical grid through distribution lines adjacent to the project site or by running gen-tie and communication lines to an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) substation, the nearest of which is located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast.



Source: Google Earth Pro, December 2024



The gen-tie and communication lines would run southerly along 50th Street East (along the western solar facility site boundary) and easterly along Avenue J within the public right-of-way to the existing SCE substation; the lines would not cross through any private property; refer to [Exhibit 2-3](#). The final connection location(s) would be determined by SCE. Power produced by a standalone solar facility would be sold to another entity through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Regardless of the final application of power generated by the solar facility, the following project description contained herein would remain the same.

A PPA would be established for an initial period up to 35 years and could be renewed at that time. When the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City of Lancaster regulations.

The solar facility would include the following general elements:

- PV module arrays, either fixed or mounted on trackers (single or dual axis) depending on the chosen technology, oriented to maximize the amount of solar radiation absorbed over the year;
- Module mounting system;
- Balance of system and electrical boxes (e.g., combiner boxes, electrical disconnects);
- Electrical inverters and transformers;
- Energy storage facilities, which may include modular battery storage within a fully enclosed system;
- Electrical alternating current (AC) collection system, including switchgear;
- Data monitoring equipment;
- Collocated transmission and gen-tie communication lines (aboveground if over 66 kilovolts [kV] or underground if 66 kV or less); and
- Access roads and security fencing, with appropriate signage for public protection and locked gates for access by facility maintenance personnel only.

The proposed project does not require the construction of an on-site operations and maintenance (O&M) facility and would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. There would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. It is anticipated that regular maintenance, emergency as-needed maintenance, cleaning of the panels, and clearing seasonal vegetation would be necessary up to one to two times per week. Grazing animals may be used to control vegetation on the site.

Site access would be determined at the time that the entitlement for the facility is submitted to City Planning staff but would be taken from a public roadway. The site would be required to comply with Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements to provide a 20-foot-wide perimeter access road within the facility and access roadways every 1,000 feet to allow access throughout the solar field. Additionally, no development or ground disturbance would occur within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash.

The total number of PV modules or panels would depend on the technology selected, optimization evaluation, and detailed design. The market conditions, economic considerations, and environmental factors would be considered during the detailed design process. The following PV module technologies or equivalent may be incorporated into the proposed project:

- PV thin-film technology;
- PV crystalline silicon technology;
- Stationary fixed-tilt modular configuration; and
- Tracking module configuration.



Modules would be non-reflective and highly absorptive. The construction staging area would be within the solar facility site. Mass grading of the solar facility site would not be permitted; grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (i.e., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). Additionally, the proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed either aboveground if over 66 kV or underground if 66 kV or less via trenching within existing paved public right-of-way.

All existing structures within the footprint of the solar facility site would be demolished prior to construction of the solar facility. Compliance with all appropriate demolition procedures would be required prior to the issuance of new construction permits.

## 2.4 CONSTRUCTION/PHASING

The solar facility is proposed to be constructed in approximately three months. Construction activities would include clearing, grubbing, and balancing of the site, and installation of the solar panels and infrastructure. No mass grading would occur as it is not permitted and only grading associated with fire access roads and equipment pad would occur. Activities would occur during the City's allowed construction hours (7:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Saturday) pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.24.040, *Loud, unnecessary and unusual noises prohibited—Construction and building*.

No other construction activities or development projects are currently proposed within the annexation area at this time. Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis.

## 2.5 PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The City and other applicable agency approvals required for project implementation would include, but are not limited to, the following:

### City of Lancaster

- Adoption of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration;
- Pre-Zone (Zone Change) for Annexation;
- General Plan Amendment for Annexation;
- Conditional Use Permit for Solar Facility; and

### Local Agency Formation Commission for the County of Los Angeles

- Annexation of the entire project site (approximately 638 acres) into the City of Lancaster;
- Annexation of the entire project site into the Sanitation District #14 of Los Angeles County; and
- Annexation of the entire project site into the Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District.

Additionally, other agencies whose approval may be required include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD);
- California Energy Commission (CEC);



- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW);
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control District (RWQCB);
- Los Angeles County Fire Department (including the hazardous materials division); and
- Southern California Edison (SCE).



## 3.0 INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

### 3.1 BACKGROUND

<p><b>1. Project Title:</b> Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project</p>
<p><b>2. Lead Agency Name and Address:</b> City of Lancaster 44933 Fern Avenue Lancaster, California 93534</p>
<p><b>3. Contact Person and Phone Number:</b> Kendall Brekke, Senior Planner 661.723.6109</p>
<p><b>4. Project Location:</b> The project site consists of two areas within unincorporated Los Angeles County: 1) an approximately 638-acre "annexation area", and 2) an approximately 288-acre "solar facility site" within the northern half of the annexation area. The annexation area is generally bound by Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, Avenue J to the south, and 50th Street East to the west. The solar facility site consists of three parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 3384-001-001, -002, and -003) in the northern portion of the annexation area, generally bound by Avenue I to the north, 60th Street East to the east, Lancaster Boulevard to the south, and 50th Street East to the west.</p>
<p><b>5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:</b> City of Lancaster Kendall Brekke, Senior Planner 44933 Fern Avenue Lancaster, California 93534</p>
<p><b>6. General Plan Designation:</b> Based on the <i>Los Angeles County Antelope Valley Area Plan (East Portion)</i> Land Use Policy Map, the project site is designated N1 (Non-Urban 1 [0.5 du/ac]).  Based on the <i>Lancaster General Plan 2030</i> Land Use Map, the project site is located within the City's Sphere of Influence and is designated Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]).</p>
<p><b>7. Zoning:</b> Based on the <i>Los Angeles County Antelope Valley East Portion Zoning Map</i>, the project site is zoned A-2-5 (Heavy Agricultural).  Given that the site is currently located outside of the City's jurisdiction, there is no City zoning designation for the project site.</p>



### 8. Description of the Project:

The project consists of two components: 1) annexation of an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction, and 2) development of an approximately 288-acre solar facility in the northern half of the annexation area. The annexation area is located within the City's Sphere of Influence and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City's jurisdiction. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres). Under the proposed RR-2.5 zone, commercial solar electrical generation facilities are conditionally permitted. Thus, the solar facility would require a Conditional Use Permit. The solar facility development consists of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a maximum 80-megawatt solar photovoltaic alternating current electric generating facility. It is anticipated that generation-tie and communication lines would connect the facility to either 1) a recently approved hydrogen production facility located at 70th Street East and Avenue K, approximately two miles to the southeast of the proposed solar facility site, or 2) an existing Southern California Edison substation, the nearest of which is located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast. Additional details regarding the project are provided in [Section 2.3, \*Project Characteristics\*](#).

### 9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

Land uses surrounding the project site are primarily comprised of a combination of undeveloped, agricultural, and residential uses, as described below:

- ***North:*** Rural residential, vacant land, and agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located to the north of the project site across Avenue I in unincorporated Los Angeles County. These areas are within the City's sphere of influence and designated NU by the City. With respect to County land use designations and zoning, these areas designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5;
- ***East:*** Agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located east of the project site across 60<sup>th</sup> Street East in unincorporated Los Angeles County. These areas are within the City's sphere of influence and designated NU by the City. With respect to County designations and zoning, these areas are designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5;
- ***South:*** Agricultural (both active and abandoned fields) uses are located to the south of the project site south of Avenue J. These areas are located within the City of Lancaster and are designated and zoned NU and RR-2.5, respectively; and
- ***West:*** Vacant land uses are located to the west of the project site west of 50th Street East. Residential uses are located further west. Western areas north of Lancaster Boulevard are located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and are designated and zoned N1 and A-2-5, respectively. Western areas south of Lancaster Boulevard are located within the City of Lancaster and are designated and zoned NU and RR-2.5, respectively.

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

Refer to [Section 2.5, \*Permits and Approvals\*](#), for a description of the permits and approvals anticipated to be required for the project. Additional approvals may be required as the project entitlement process moves forward.



**11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?**

In accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18, consultation letters for the proposed project were sent to the following individuals. These letters were mailed via certified return receipt mail on May 28, 2024, and included copies of the site plan and cultural resources report. The table below identifies the tribes, the person to whom the letter was directed, and the date the letter was received.

Tribe	Contact Person	Date Letter Received
Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians	Sarah Brunzell, CRM Manager	May 31, 2024
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Ann Brierty, THPO	May 31, 2024
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Robert Martin, Chairperson	May 31, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Manfred Scott, Acting Chairman - Kw'ts'an Cultural Committee	June 3, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Jordan Joaquin, President, Quechan Tribal Council	June 3, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Jill McCormick, Historic Preservation Officer	June 3, 2024
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians	Donna Yocum, Chairperson	June 7, 2024
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	Alexandra McCleary, Senior Manager of CRM	May 31, 2024
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Wayne Walker, Co-Chairperson	May 31, 2024
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Mark Cochrane, Co-Chairperson	May 31, 2024

The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and San Manuel Band of Mission Indians responded to the notification letters and their requested mitigation measures have been included in Section 4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources.

### 3.2 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 on the following pages.

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



### 3.3 LEAD AGENCY 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 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.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Senior Planner \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: Kendall Brekke \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: City of Lancaster \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### 3.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. The issue areas evaluated in this Initial Study include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

The environmental analysis in this section is patterned after the Initial Study Checklist recommended by the CEQA Guidelines and used by the City of Lancaster in its environmental review process. For the preliminary environmental assessment undertaken as part of this Initial Study's preparation, a determination that there is a potential for significant effects indicates the need to more fully analyze the development's impacts and to identify mitigation.

For the evaluation of potential impacts, the questions in the Initial Study Checklist are stated and an answer is provided according to the analysis undertaken as part of the Initial Study. The analysis considers the long-term, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the development. To each question, there are four possible responses:

- No Impact. The project will not have any measurable environmental impact on the environment.
- Less Than Significant Impact. The project will have the potential for impacting the environment, although this impact will be below established thresholds that are considered to be significant.
- Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated. The project will have the potential to generate impacts which may be considered as a significant effect on the environment, although mitigation measures or changes to the project's physical or operational characteristics can reduce these impacts to levels that are less than significant.
- Potentially Significant Impact. The project will have impacts which are considered significant, and additional analysis is required to identify mitigation measures that could reduce these impacts to less than significant levels.

Where potential impacts are anticipated to be significant, mitigation measures will be required, so that impacts may be avoided or reduced to insignificant levels.



## 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following is a discussion of potential project impacts as identified in the Initial Study/Environmental Checklist. Explanations are provided for each item.

### 4.1 AESTHETICS

<i>Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			✓	
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				✓
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			✓	
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			✓	

#### a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

**Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the General Plan, local roadways that serve as scenic routes throughout the City include segments of the Antelope Valley Freeway (State Route 14 [SR-14]), Avenue K, Avenue M, 60th Street West, and 90th Street West. The project site is not located along these routes and therefore would not impact a scenic vista associated with these scenic routes. Figure 12-1, *Scenic Resources*, of the *Lancaster General Plan 2030 Master Environmental Assessment* identifies five scenic areas within the City; one of these areas, Little Rock Wash, traverses the eastern portion of the project site.<sup>1</sup> The visual buffer area of the Little Rock Wash encompasses the entire project site. As such, implementation of the proposed project could impact views of Little Rock Wash. Additionally, long-range scenic views of the desert and mountain ranges, including the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, Tehachapi Mountains to the north, and San Bernardino Mountains to the southeast, are available from the project site.

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation area includes portions of Little Rock Wash and the Little Rock Wash visual buffer area designated by the *Lancaster General Plan 2030 Master Environmental Assessment*. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre). Buildout of the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), including the annexation area, was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. As analyzed in the General Plan EIR, impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant as buildout of the General Plan

<sup>1</sup> City of Lancaster, *Lancaster General Plan 2030 Master Environmental Assessment*, April 2009.



focuses development in the City's urban core with little to no land use changes outside of the urban core, thereby preserving scenic views of the surrounding mountains and desert landscape. As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in greater view alteration or reduce existing views of scenic areas or scenic resources. Additionally, the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction (beyond the solar facility analyzed as part of this Initial Study), and any future development would be subject to project-specific CEQA review and approvals, as well as subject to the General Plan policies and LMC requirements. As such, the proposed annexation would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. No impact would occur in this regard.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility site includes portions of Little Rock Wash and the Little Rock Wash visual buffer area. Existing views of scenic resources and areas would be altered by development of the solar facility. However, the RR-2.5 pre-zone is consistent with the site's existing NU land use designation, and commercial solar electrical generation facilities are permitted in RR-2.5 zones with a conditional use permit (CUP). Mass grading of the site would not be permitting during construction of the solar facility and would be limited to grading of internal perimeter roads and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment. Additionally, the solar modules/panels would be non-reflective and highly absorptive, installed low to the ground (typically 6-8 feet in height), and would not exceed the 40-foot height limit of the RR-2.5 zone. The site would also be fenced to help screen the development from public views. Additionally, no development or ground disturbance would occur within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash. As such, following approval of a Conditional Use Permit, construction and operation of the proposed solar facility would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

The solar facility would be planned for decommission in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 3100, at which point the land would be restored to the existing condition at the time of project approval. Following compliance with existing State and local regulations related to solar facility decommissioning, views of scenic resources would be restored similar to existing conditions as feasible. Overall, impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

**b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

There are no officially designated State scenic highways within proximity to the project site.<sup>2</sup> The nearest Officially Designated State Scenic Highway is a segment of State Route 2, located approximately 23 miles to the south. The nearest Eligible State Scenic Highway (not officially designated) is a segment of State Route 58, located approximately 21 miles to the north of the project site. Given the distance, the proposed project would not affect scenic resources (i.e., trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings) along scenic highways. As such, no impact would occur in this regard.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Transportation, *California State Scenic Highway System Map*, <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacc>, accessed June 4, 2024.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) ***In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site primarily consists of relatively level, vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields, in a rural, non-urban area. Public views of the project site from surrounding roadways include that of scattered rural residences and farming structures. The site's existing and proposed zoning reflect non-urban and rural uses. As such, the analysis below is based on the threshold of whether or not the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

As discussed in Section 4.1(a), the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area to RR-2.5, which would be consistent with the site's existing NU land use designation. The RR-2.5 zone is intended to maintain a rural, non-urban environment. As analyzed in the General Plan EIR, buildout of the General Plan focuses growth primarily within the City's urban core with no conversion of rural residential to urban residential land. Therefore, given that no changes to the rural areas of the City's planning area were proposed in the General Plan, the proposed pre-zone of the annexation area to RR-2.5 would be consistent with the assumptions and less than significant conclusions in the General Plan EIR. Following approval of the annexation and pre-zone, rural residential uses would continue to be permitted and would not result in substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of public views in the area. Any future development would be subject to project-specific CEQA review and approvals and would be subject to the policies of the General Plan and development requirements of the LMC for the RR-2.5 zone. As such, annexation would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

### Construction

Temporary, construction-related activities associated with the development of the solar facility would alter the existing visual character of the solar facility site and surrounding area. Construction materials, equipment, and truck traffic would be visible from adjacent properties and along adjacent public right-of-way. However, these short-term construction-related activities would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views in the area as they are anticipated to occur temporarily. Further, all construction staging would occur within the solar facility site and off-site gen-tie and communication line installation would occur within existing rights-of-way. Overall, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

### Operations

Given that the site is primarily agricultural fields, development of the solar facility would change the visual character of the site and public views in the area. However, as buildout of the City's SOI, including the solar facility site, was previously analyzed in the General Plan EIR, the proposed development, consistent with the RR-2.5 zone, would not result in greater development intensity than what was previously analyzed for the site. As commercial solar electrical



generation facilities are permitted in the RR-2.5 zone with a CUP, the solar facility would be compatible with adjacent properties in the RR-2.5 zone, as well as other solar facility sites in the area. Further, the proposed solar panels, transformers, and battery storage equipment would be installed low to the ground. The modules would be non-reflective and highly absorptive. The site would also be fenced to help screen the development from public views. All off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed in existing paved right-of-way. Therefore, the proposed solar facility would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views in the area.

After decommissioning of the solar facility, the site would be restored to existing conditions and public views of the site would be similarly restored to the maximum extent feasible. Overall, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

d) ***Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors that pass through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, parking lot lighting, building illumination, security lighting, and landscape lighting). Depending upon the location of the light source and its proximity to adjacent light sensitive uses, light introduction can be a nuisance, affecting adjacent areas and diminishing the view of the clear night sky.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

As discussed in Section 4.1(a), the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction beyond the solar facility analyzed as part of this Initial Study, and any future development in accordance with the RR-2.5 zoning would be subject to project-specific CEQA review and approvals. Future projects would also be subject to the development requirements of the RR-2.5 zone, and any other applicable LMC requirements, such as lighting standards (to direct light fixtures away from adjacent properties to prevent light spillover and glare) pursuant to LMC Section 17.08.140, *Outdoor Lighting*. As analyzed in the General Plan EIR, buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was contemplated and would result in less than significant impacts given that buildout of the General Plan focuses development in the City's urban core where existing light sources already occur. As such, no impact would occur in this regard.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

### Construction

Project construction activities would occur during daylight hours and no additional nighttime lighting sources would be needed. Potential light and glare caused by construction vehicle headlights would be limited to the short-term construction phase. Overall, construction-related activities are not considered significant, because they are anticipated to be short-term. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

### Operations

The solar facility site is located within a rural, undeveloped area. Existing light sources in the project vicinity include minimal interior and exterior lighting associated with the on-site residence, outbuildings, and nearby rural residential uses. Light and glare caused by vehicular headlights along Avenue I, Lancaster Boulevard, Avenue J, 60th Street East, and 50th Street East could influence lighting in the project area.



The project would demolish all on-site structures and develop a solar facility in its place. The facility would create new sources of lighting from security and perimeter lighting. However, all lighting on-site would be shielded and focused downward onto the site to prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties pursuant to LMC Section 17.08.140, *Outdoor Lighting*. Further, the facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operations and generate minimal vehicular trips associated with maintenance and cleaning visits. Thus, light and glare from project-generated vehicular trips would be minimal. Additionally, the solar panels would be designed to be non-reflective and highly absorptive and would not result in substantial glare.

After decommissioning of the solar facility, the site would be restored to its natural state prior to project development as feasible and in accordance with State and local solar facility decommissioning requirements. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

<p><i>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 (1997) prepared by the California Department 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 forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</i></p>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	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?			✓	
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			✓	
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				✓
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓
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?			✓	

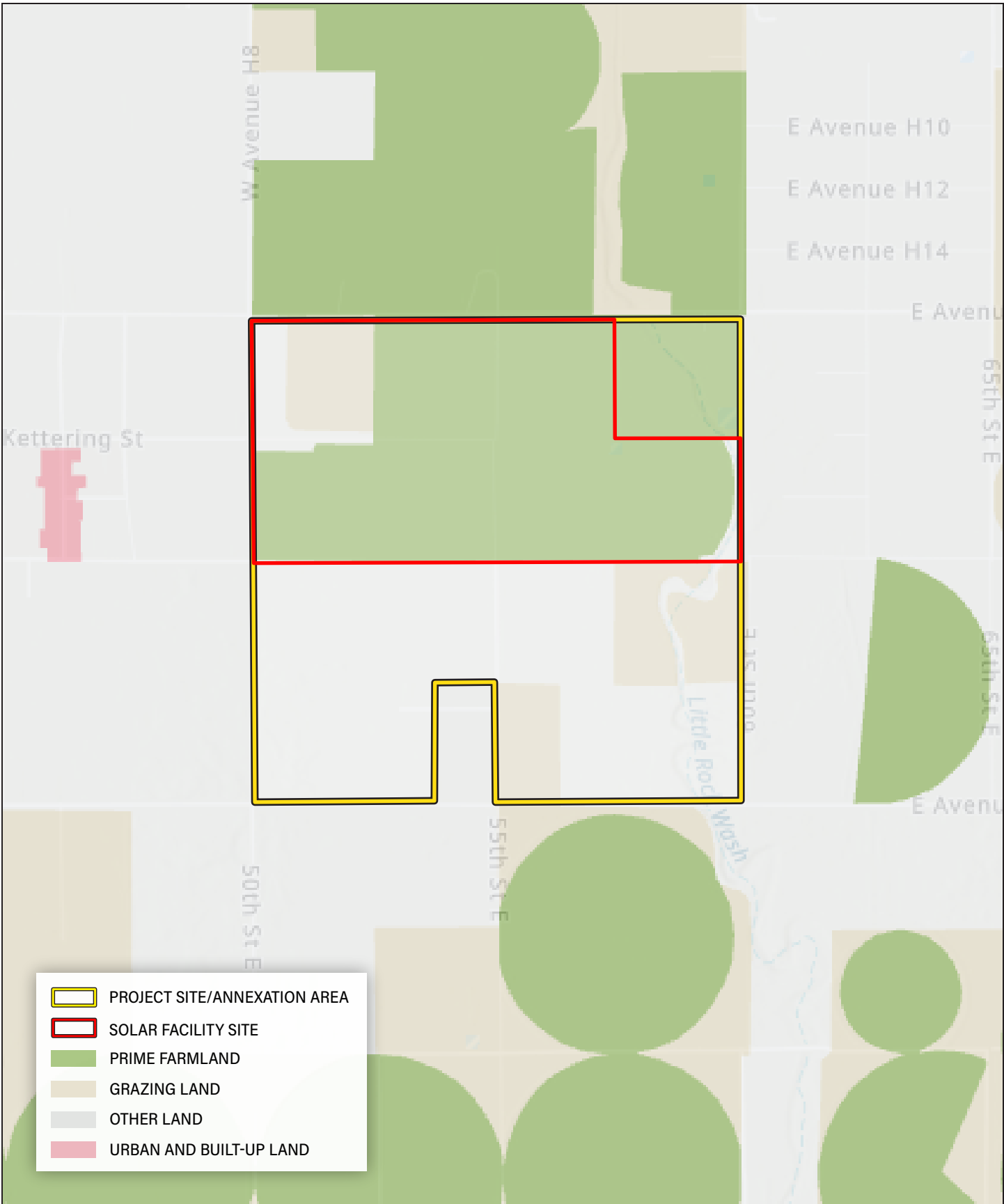
- a) **Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?**

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the California Department of Conservation, portions of the annexation area are designated as Prime Farmland, Grazing Land, and Other Land; refer to [Exhibit 4.2-1, Important Farmland](#).<sup>1</sup> As discussed in [Section 2.2, Environmental Setting](#), portions of the annexation area are currently developed with agricultural fields (both active and fallow), infrastructure for agricultural production (row crops), and supporting farming facilities and livestock.

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Conservation, *California Important Farmland Finder*, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, accessed June 3, 2024.



Source: California Department of Conservation, 2024



The proposed annexation would not directly involve the construction of any new development or structures and thus, would not in and of itself result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Currently, the annexation area is zoned A-2-5 (Heavy Agricultural)<sup>2</sup> under the County Code, which is intended to encourage agricultural activities and other such uses required for, or desired by, the inhabitants of the community. This zone also permits low-density single-family residential development, outdoor recreational uses, and public and institutional facilities. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area to RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres), which would be consistent with the site's existing Non-Urban Residential (NU) land use designation. The RR-2.5 zone permits commercial crop production and light agricultural uses, including grazing, and is intended to maintain a rural, non-urban environment. As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not convert areas of Prime Agricultural farmland to a non-agricultural use. Agricultural uses would continue to be permitted under the proposed RR-2.5 zone. Further, any future development within the annexation area would be subject to separate environmental review under CEQA to evaluate potential project-specific impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

A majority of the proposed solar facility site is designated as Prime Farmland, and the remainder of the site is designated as Grazing Land and Other Land; refer to Exhibit 4.2-1.<sup>3</sup> Under the site's current County Code A-2-5 zoning, variations of solar facilities are either permitted, conditionally permitted, or permitted following a ministerial site plan review.<sup>4,5</sup> As stated, the project proposes to annex the entirety of the annexation area and pre-zone the area as RR-2.5, including the solar facility site, which would permit solar facilities with a conditional use permit, similar to the site's existing County Code zoning.

The solar facility would result in the conversion of mapped important farmlands to a non-agricultural use. However, mass grading of the solar facility site would not be permitted and would be limited to internal perimeter roads and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment. Thus, the solar facility would not adversely impact or remove any of the features of the land that make it eligible as Prime Farmland. Further, the proposed RR-2.5 zone would continue permitting agricultural use on-site (e.g., commercial crop production, gardens, etc.) similar to the site's existing County Code A-2-5 zoning. As such, impacts related to the conversion of mapped important farmland to non-agricultural uses would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

#### **b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Section 4.2(a) regarding impacts involving zone changes. Neither the project site nor the surrounding properties are under a Williamson Act contract.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur.

<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning, *Los Angeles County Antelope Valley East Portion Zoning Map*, March 24, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Conservation, *California Important Farmland Finder*, <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, accessed June 3, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning, *Los Angeles County Antelope Valley East Portion Zoning Map*, March 24, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles County, California, Code of Ordinances, Title 22, Division 3, Section 22.16.030, *Land Use Regulations for Zones A-1, A-2, O-S, R-R, and W*.

<sup>6</sup> California Division of Land Resource Protection, *California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder Map*, <https://gis.conservation.ca.gov/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=18f7488c0a9d4d299f5e9c33b312f312>, accessed June 3, 2024.



### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) ***Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?***

**No Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

No zoning for forest land or timberland exists within the project site, and no impacts would occur in this regard.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- d) ***Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?***

**No Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Section 4.2(c). No impacts would occur in this regard.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Sections 4.2(a) through 4.2(d). Impacts would be less than significant.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



### 4.3 AIR QUALITY

<i>Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			✓	
b. 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?			✓	
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		✓		
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			✓	

#### Background

The project site is under the jurisdiction of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD), which covers the western portion of the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the Western Mojave Desert Nonattainment Area (WMDONA) as nonattainment for the 2015 70 parts per billion (ppb) 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Clean Air Act. AVAQMD is charged with achieving federal and State air quality standards within the WMDONA. As such, the AVAQMD adopted the *AVAQMD Federal 70 ppb Ozone Attainment Plan (Western Mojave Desert Nonattainment Area)* (AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan) on January 17, 2023.<sup>1</sup> The document sets forth a comprehensive program that would lead the area into compliance with federal and State air quality standards. The AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan includes the latest planning assumptions regarding population, vehicle, and industrial activity and addresses all existing and forecasted ozone precursor-producing activities within the Antelope Valley through the year 2026. According to the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan, AVAQMD would be in attainment of the 70 ppb ozone NAAQS by August 3, 2033.

In August 2016, the AVAQMD adopted the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines* (AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines) to provide direction on the preferred analysis approach in preparing environmental analysis or document review.<sup>2</sup> The guidelines characterize the topography and climate of the MDAB, defines cumulative impacts, and provide emission thresholds for construction and operation. The AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines establish significance thresholds for projects. Any project is significant if it triggers or exceeds the most appropriate evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria are: (1) generates total emissions (direct and indirect) in excess of the thresholds given in AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines Table 6, *Significant Emissions Thresholds*; (2) generates a violation of any ambient air quality standard when added to the local background; (3) does not conform with the applicable attainment or maintenance plan(s); and (4) exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater

<sup>1</sup> Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, *AVAQMD Federal 70 ppb Ozone Attainment Plan (Western Mojave Desert Nonattainment Area)*, January 17, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District, *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines*, August 2016.



than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a Hazard Index (HI) (non-cancerous) greater than or equal to 1. This air quality analysis is based on these four criteria.

**a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.** The air quality plan applicable to the project is the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan. As such, this air quality analysis assesses the project's consistency with the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan pursuant to the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines. The AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines explain that projects consistent with the existing land use plan are deemed consistent with the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan because the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan's assumptions for future air quality emissions are based largely on the adopted land use plans within its territory. Projects that involve zone changes, specific plans, general plan amendments, and similar land use plan changes which do not increase dwelling unit density, do not increase vehicle trips, and do not increase vehicle miles traveled, are also deemed consistent with the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan because these projects would not produce more emissions than what was assumed in the land use plan; therefore, it would not generate more emissions than what was assumed in the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan.

The purpose of the consistency analysis is to determine if a project is inconsistent with the assumptions and objectives of the regional air quality plans, and thus, if it would interfere with the region's ability to comply with federal and State air quality standards. It is important to note that even if a project is found consistent it could still have a significant impact on air quality under CEQA. Consistency with plans means that a project is consistent with the goals, objectives, and assumptions in the respective plan to achieve the federal and State air quality standards.

With respect to conformity impacts, the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines notes the following:

*"A project is non-conforming if it conflicts with or delays implementation of any applicable attainment or maintenance plan. A project is conforming if it complies with all applicable District rules and regulations, complies with all proposed control measures that are not yet adopted from the applicable plan(s), and is consistent with the growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s) (or is directly included in the applicable plan). Conformity with growth forecasts can be established by demonstrating that the project is consistent with the land use plan that was used to generate the growth forecast. An example of a non-conforming project would be one that increases the gross number of dwelling units, increases the number of trips, and/or increases the overall vehicle miles traveled in an affected area (relative to the applicable land use plan)."*

## **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The proposed annexation would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres). The proposed annexation and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. It should be noted that there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, considering the annexation area is located within the City's sphere of influence (SOI), the buildout of the annexation area was considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. Subsequently, the proposed annexation would not induce substantial unplanned population growth or affect the City's or SCAG's buildout projections. As the proposed annexation area would be consistent with land uses previously envisioned for the site based on the General Plan and would not induce substantial unplanned population growth beyond future projections, the proposed annexation area would be considered consistent with the growth forecasts in the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan. Therefore, any development within the proposed annexation area would be required to comply with all AVAQMD rules and regulations to improve air quality. Impacts would be less than significant.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed solar facility would be required to comply with all AVAQMD rules and regulations to improve air quality. Specifically, adherence with AVAQMD Rule 402 would minimize any discharge of air pollutants that could be detrimental or would cause a nuisance, and adherence with AVAQMD Rule 403 would reduce the amount of particulate matter entrained in the ambient air as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) fugitive dust sources by requiring actions to prevent, reduce or mitigate fugitive dust emissions. Further, the proposed solar facility would result in less than significant impacts regarding localized and regional air pollutants concentrations during the proposed solar facility construction and operations; refer to Sections 4.3(b) and 4.3(c). As such, the proposed solar facility would be consistent with the assumptions and objectives of the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan, and thus, would not interfere with the region's ability to comply with federal and State air quality standards.

As detailed in Section 4.14, *Population and Housing*, the solar facility would not include any residential dwelling units. Additionally, the solar facility would operate unmanned with minimal maintenance and cleaning visits by existing employees. As such, the solar facility would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the City. Further, under the proposed RR-2.5 zone, commercial solar electrical generation facilities permitted with a conditional use permit (CUP). With approval of the CUP, the solar facility development and its operation would be consistent with the proposed RR-2.5 zone as considered and envisioned in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. Therefore, the solar facility would not constitute substantial unplanned population growth or affect the City's or SCAG's buildout projections. As the solar facility would be consistent with land uses previously envisioned for the project site based on the General Plan and would not induce substantial unplanned population growth beyond future projections, the solar facility would be considered consistent with the growth forecasts in the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan.

In conclusion, the determination of the solar facility's consistency with the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan is primarily concerned with the long-term influence of a project on MDAB air quality. As discussed above, the proposed solar facility would not conflict with the goals and policies of the AVAQMD 70 ppb Plan or result in long-term impacts on the region's ability to meet State and federal air quality standards. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

**b) *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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

## CRITERIA POLLUTANTS

Carbon Monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless toxic gas that is emitted by mobile and stationary sources as a result of incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons or other carbon-based fuels. In cities, automobile exhaust can cause as much as 95 percent of all CO emissions.

CO replaces oxygen in the body's red blood cells. Individuals with a deficient blood supply to the heart, patients with diseases involving heart and blood vessels, fetuses (unborn babies), and patients with chronic hypoxemia (oxygen deficiency) as seen in high altitudes are most susceptible to the adverse effects of CO exposure. People with heart disease are also more susceptible to developing chest pains when exposed to low levels of CO.

Oxides of Nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>). NO<sub>x</sub> are a family of highly reactive gases that are a primary precursor to the formation of ground-level O<sub>3</sub> and react in the atmosphere to form acid rain. NO<sub>2</sub> (often used interchangeably with NO<sub>x</sub>) is a reddish-brown gas that can cause breathing difficulties at elevated levels. Peak readings of NO<sub>2</sub> occur in areas that have a high concentration of combustion sources (e.g., motor vehicle engines, power plants, refineries, and other industrial operations). NO<sub>2</sub> can irritate and damage the lungs and lower resistance to respiratory infections such as influenza.



The health effects of short-term exposure are still unclear. However, continued or frequent exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations that are typically much higher than those normally found in the ambient air may increase acute respiratory illnesses in children and increase the incidence of chronic bronchitis and lung irritation. Chronic exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> may aggravate eyes and mucus membranes and cause pulmonary dysfunction.

Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). O<sub>3</sub> occurs in two layers of the atmosphere. The layer surrounding the earth's surface is the troposphere. The troposphere extends approximately 10 miles above ground level, where it meets the second layer, the stratosphere. The stratospheric (the "good" O<sub>3</sub> layer) extends upward from about 10 to 30 miles and protects life on earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. "Bad" O<sub>3</sub> is a photochemical pollutant, and needs volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), and sunlight to form; therefore, VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> are O<sub>3</sub> precursors. To reduce O<sub>3</sub> concentrations, it is necessary to control the emissions of these O<sub>3</sub> precursors. Significant O<sub>3</sub> formation generally requires an adequate amount of precursors in the atmosphere and a period of several hours in a stable atmosphere with strong sunlight. High O<sub>3</sub> concentrations can form over large regions when emissions from motor vehicles and stationary sources are carried hundreds of miles from their origins.

While O<sub>3</sub> in the upper atmosphere (stratosphere) protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation, high concentrations of ground-level O<sub>3</sub> (in the troposphere) can adversely affect the human respiratory system and other tissues. O<sub>3</sub> is a strong irritant that can constrict the airways, forcing the respiratory system to work hard to deliver oxygen. Individuals exercising outdoors, children, and people with pre-existing lung disease such as asthma and chronic pulmonary lung disease are the most susceptible to the health effects of O<sub>3</sub>. Short-term exposure (lasting for a few hours) to O<sub>3</sub> at elevated levels can result in aggravated respiratory diseases such as emphysema, bronchitis and asthma, shortness of breath, increased susceptibility to infections, inflammation of the lung tissue, increased fatigue, as well as chest pain, dry throat, headache, and nausea.

Coarse Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). PM<sub>10</sub> refers to suspended particulate matter, which is smaller than 10 microns or ten one-millionths of a meter. PM<sub>10</sub> arises from sources such as road dust, diesel soot, combustion products, construction operations, and dust storms. PM<sub>10</sub> scatters light and significantly reduces visibility. In addition, these particulates penetrate into lungs and can potentially damage the respiratory tract. On June 19, 2003, the CARB adopted amendments to the statewide 24-hour particulate matter standards based upon requirements set forth in the Children's Environmental Health Protection Act (Senate Bill 25).

Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Due to recent increased concerns over health impacts related to fine particulate matter (particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or less), both State and Federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards have been created. Particulate matter impacts primarily affect infants, children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing cardiopulmonary disease. In 1997, the EPA announced new PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards. Industry groups challenged the new standard in court and the implementation of the standard was blocked. However, upon appeal by the EPA, the United States Supreme Court reversed this decision and upheld the EPA's new standards.

On January 5, 2005, the EPA published a Final Rule in the Federal Register that designates the MDAB as a nonattainment area for Federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards. On June 20, 2002, CARB adopted amendments for statewide annual ambient particulate matter air quality standards. These standards were revised/established due to increasing concerns by CARB that previous standards were inadequate, as almost everyone in California is exposed to levels at or above the current State standards during some parts of the year, and the statewide potential for significant health impacts associated with particulate matter exposure was determined to be large and wide-ranging.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is a colorless, irritating gas with a rotten egg smell; it is formed primarily by the combustion of sulfur-containing fossil fuels. SO<sub>2</sub> is often used interchangeably with SO<sub>x</sub>. Exposure of a few minutes to low levels of SO<sub>2</sub> can result in airway constriction in some asthmatics.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). VOCs are hydrocarbon compounds (any compound containing various combinations of hydrogen and carbon atoms) that exist in the ambient air. VOCs contribute to the formation of smog



through atmospheric photochemical reactions and/or may be toxic. Compounds of carbon (also known as organic compounds) have different levels of reactivity; that is, they do not react at the same speed or do not form O<sub>3</sub> to the same extent when exposed to photochemical processes. VOCs often have an odor, and some examples include gasoline, alcohol, and the solvents used in paints. Exceptions to the VOC designation include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate. VOCs are a criteria pollutant since they are a precursor to O<sub>3</sub>, which is a criteria pollutant. The terms VOC and reactive organic gases (ROG) (see below) are often used interchangeably.

Reactive Organic Gases (ROG). Like VOCs, ROGs are also precursors in forming O<sub>3</sub> and consist of compounds containing methane, ethane, propane, butane, and longer chain hydrocarbons, which are typically the result of some type of combustion/decomposition process. Smog is formed when ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> react in the presence of sunlight. ROGs are a criteria pollutant since they are a precursor to O<sub>3</sub>, which is a criteria pollutant. The terms ROG and VOC are often used interchangeably.

Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs). TACs (also referred to as hazardous air pollutants [HAPs]), are pollutants that result in an increase in mortality, a serious illness, or pose a present or potential hazard to human health. Health effects of TACs may include cancer, birth defects, and immune system and neurological damage.

TACs can be separated into carcinogens and noncarcinogens based on the nature of the physiological degradation associated with exposure to the pollutant. For regulatory purposes, carcinogens are assumed to have no safe threshold below which health impacts would not occur. Noncarcinogenic TACs differ in that there is a safe level in which it is generally assumed that no negative health impacts would occur. These levels are determined on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis.

TACs are not considered criteria air pollutants and thus are not specifically addressed through the setting of ambient air quality standards. Instead, the EPA and CARB regulate HAPs and TACs, respectively, through statutes and regulations that generally require the use of the maximum or best available control technology (MACT or BACT) to limit emissions.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

### Short-Term Construction Impacts

The proposed annexation area would be pre-zoned RR-2.5 and allow for rural single-family residential use, with one dwelling unit per minimum net area of 100,000 square feet (or approximately 2.5 acres). Based on LMC Section 17.08.030, *Purposes of the Residential Zone*, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use along with accessory and temporary uses, as well as other non-residential uses detailed in LMC Section 17.08.050, *Uses and Permit Requirements*. As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would accommodate development within the annexation area.

The thresholds of significance recommended by the AVAQMD for construction emissions were developed for individual development projects. Construction-related emissions are described as short-term or temporary in duration and have the potential to represent a significant impact with respect to air quality. As discussed above, there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Future construction-related activities associated with development within the annexation area may result in emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors from site preparation (e.g., demolition, excavation, grading, and clearing); exhaust from off-road equipment, material delivery trucks, and worker commute vehicles; vehicle travel on roads; and other miscellaneous activities (e.g., building construction, asphalt paving, application of architectural coatings, and trenching for utility installation). Because implementation of proposed annexation area does not propose any specific development, construction-related emissions that may occur at any one time are speculative and cannot be accurately determined at this stage of the planning process. Nonetheless, future development within the annexation area would



be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development occurs in a logical manner consistent with the annexation area, General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Future development projects would be required to comply with all applicable AVAQMD rules and regulations as well as other control measures to reduce construction emissions, including fugitive dust control measures to reduce particulate matter emissions, utilizing construction equipment vehicles in proper condition and in tune per manufacturer's specifications to reduce ozone precursor emissions, and reducing traffic congestion during future temporary construction activities and associated emissions. Upon complying with the existing AVAQMD regulations and applicable building code requirements, construction impacts related to development of the proposed annexation area would be less than significant.

### **Long-Term Operation Impacts**

Implementation of the proposed annexation would not directly generate operational emissions as no specific development is proposed that could generate emissions today. However, future developments within the annexation area may still result in long-term operational air emissions from normal daily activities (i.e., increased concentrations of ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and CO). Mobile source emissions would be generated by the motor vehicles traveling to and from the annexation area. Stationary area source emissions would be generated by consumption of natural gas for space and water heating devices, operation of landscape maintenance equipment, and use of consumer products. Stationary energy emissions would result from natural gas consumption associated with the annexation area.

All future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development occurs in a manner consistent with the proposed annexation area, General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Additionally, future development would be required to comply with the air quality standards of the AVAQMD and the City. Therefore, long-term operational impacts related to implementation of the proposed annexation area would be less than significant.

## **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

### **Short-Term Construction Emissions**

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1 was utilized to calculate the proposed solar facility's construction and operational air pollutants emissions. The solar facility would be constructed in a single phase with a construction equipment list provided by the applicant. No mass grading would be permitted and the project-related earthwork would be related to grading for access roads and equipment pads. All earthwork would be balanced on-site and would not require soil export or import. Based on the estimates made from Google Earth Pro, construction of the solar facility would involve demolition of an approximately 18,476-square foot structure. Table 4.3-1, *Solar Facility Construction Emissions*, presents the solar facility's anticipated construction emissions. As shown, construction emissions would not exceed AVAQMD thresholds.



**Table 4.3-1**  
**Solar Facility Construction Emissions**

Construction Year	Pollutant (pounds/day) <sup>1,2</sup>						Pollutant (tons/year) <sup>1,2</sup>					
	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Year 1 (2026)	6.26	51.7	68.8	0.12	5.8	3.18	0.21	1.71	2.21	<0.01	0.19	0.10
<b>Maximum Daily / Annual Emissions</b>	<b>6.26</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>0.10</b>
AVAQMD Significance Threshold <sup>3</sup>	137	137	548	137	82	65	25	25	100	25	15	12
<b>Threshold Exceeded?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Notes: AVAQMD = Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District; CO = carbon monoxide; NO <sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxide; PM <sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter no more than 2.5 microns in diameter; PM <sub>10</sub> = particulate matter no more than 10 microns in diameter; ROG = reactive organic gases. 1. Emissions were calculated using CalEEMod version 2022.1. Higher emissions between summer and winter are presented as a conservative analysis. 2. The reduction/credits for construction emissions applied in CalEEMod are based on the application of dust control techniques as required by AVAQMD Rule 403. The dust control techniques include the following: water exposed surfaces three times daily; and limit speeds on unpaved roads to 25 miles per hour. 3. Source: Antelope Valley AQMD, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines Table 6, Significant Emissions Thresholds, August 2016. In developing these thresholds, AVAQMD considered levels at which project emissions are cumulatively considerable. Consequently, exceedances of project-level thresholds would be cumulatively considerable.												
Source: Refer to the CalEEMod outputs provided in <a href="#">Appendix A, Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data</a> .												

### Fugitive Dust Emissions

Construction activities are a source of fugitive dust emissions that may have a substantial, temporary impact on local air quality. In addition, fugitive dust may be a nuisance to those living and working in the solar facility area. Fugitive dust emissions are associated with land clearing, ground excavation, cut-and-fill, and truck travel on unpaved roadways (including demolition as well as construction activities). Fugitive dust emissions vary substantially from day to day, depending on the level of activity, specific operations, and weather conditions. Fugitive dust from demolition, grading and construction is expected to be short-term and would cease upon completion of proposed solar facility. Most of this material is inert silicates, rather than the complex organic particulates released from combustion sources, which are more harmful to health.

Dust (larger than 10 microns) generated by such activities usually becomes more of a local nuisance than a serious health problem. Of particular health concern is the amount of PM<sub>10</sub> generated as a part of fugitive dust emissions. PM<sub>10</sub> poses a serious health hazard alone or in combination with other pollutants. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is mostly produced by mechanical processes. These include automobile tire wear, industrial processes such as cutting and grinding, and re-suspension of particles from the ground or road surfaces by wind and human activities such as construction or agriculture. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is mostly derived from combustion sources, such as automobiles, trucks, and other vehicle exhaust, as well as from stationary sources. These particles are either directly emitted or are formed in the atmosphere from the combustion of gases such as NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> combining with ammonia. PM<sub>2.5</sub> components from material in the Earth's crust, such as dust, are also present, with the amount varying in different locations.

Construction of the solar facility would implement all required dust control techniques per AVAQMD Rule 403 (e.g., watering exposed surfaces at least three times per day) to reduce PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. As depicted in [Table 4.3-1](#), total PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions would not exceed AVAQMD thresholds during construction. Thus, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### Construction Equipment and Worker Vehicle Exhaust

Exhaust emissions from construction activities include emissions associated with the transport of machinery and supplies to and from the solar facility site, employee commutes to the site, emissions produced on-site as equipment is used, and emissions from trucks transporting materials to/from the site. As presented in [Table 4.3-1](#), construction



equipment and worker vehicle exhaust emissions would not exceed the established thresholds for all criteria pollutants. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### ROG Emissions

In addition to gaseous and particulate emissions, operation of construction equipment also creates ROG emissions, which are O<sub>3</sub> precursors. As presented in Table 4.3-1, ROG emissions associated with the construction of the proposed solar facility would be negligible and would not exceed the established threshold. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Asbestos is a term used for several types of naturally occurring fibrous minerals that are human health hazards when airborne. The most common type of asbestos is chrysotile, but other types such as tremolite and actinolite are also found in California. Asbestos is classified as a known human carcinogen by State, federal, and international agencies and was identified as a toxic air contaminant by CARB in 1986.

Asbestos can be released from serpentinite and ultramafic rocks when the rock is broken or crushed. At the point of release, the asbestos fibers may become airborne, causing air quality and human health hazards. These rocks have been commonly used for unpaved gravel roads, landscaping, fill projects, and other improvement projects in some localities. Asbestos may be released to the atmosphere due to vehicular traffic on unpaved roads, during grading for development projects, and at quarry operations. All these activities may have the effect of releasing potentially harmful asbestos into the air. Natural weathering and erosion processes can act on asbestos bearing rock and make it easier for asbestos fibers to become airborne if such rock is disturbed. According to the Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology, *A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos Report* (August 2000), serpentinite and ultramafic rocks are not known to occur within the area.<sup>3</sup> Thus, no impact would occur.

### Total Construction Emissions

As shown in Table 4.3-1, the total construction emissions would not exceed established AVAQMD thresholds. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### Cumulative Short-Term Construction Impacts

In developing the thresholds, AVAQMD considered levels at which project emissions are cumulatively considerable. Consequently, exceedances of project-level thresholds would be cumulatively considerable.

As discussed above, the solar facility's construction emissions would be below the established thresholds and would result in less than significant air quality impacts. Thus, it can be reasonably inferred that the solar facility's construction emissions would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable air quality impact for nonattainment criteria pollutants (i.e., O<sub>3</sub>) in the MDAB. A less than significant impact would occur.

### Decommissioning Emissions

At the end of the solar facility's operational term, the applicant may determine that the solar facility should be decommissioned and deconstructed. Solar panels are typically mounted on support structures that are pile-driven into the ground, rather than resting directly on the surface. When decommissioning, these support structures would also

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology, *A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos Report*, August 2000, [https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/toxics/asbestos/ofr\\_2000-019.pdf](https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/toxics/asbestos/ofr_2000-019.pdf), accessed May 13, 2024.



be removed, which involves pulling out the piles and restoring the land to its natural state. At the end of solar facility's lifetime, everything would be removed from the racks and packaged for return transportation to the manufacturer or their approved Recycling Partner(s) for dismantling, material processing, and recovery. The proposed solar facility would implement decommissioning best management practices (BMPs) to ensure the collection and recycling of modules and to avoid the potential for modules to be disposed of as municipal waste.

Equipment would be de-energized prior to removal, salvaged (where possible), placed in appropriate shipping containers, and secured in a truck transport trailer for shipment off-site to be recycled or disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal facility. Site infrastructure would be removed, including the fences and the concrete pads that may support the inverters, transformers, and related equipment. The exterior fencing and gates would be removed, and all materials would be recycled to the extent feasible. All roads within the solar facility would be restored to their pre-construction condition unless the landowner elects to retain the improved roads for access throughout the property. The area would be thoroughly cleaned, and all debris removed. A collection and recycling program would be executed to promote recycling of project components and minimized disposal in landfills. Due to lack of details on decommissioning, as a conservative analysis, it was assumed that the decommissioning phase would generate the same amount of emissions as the construction phase. As shown in Table 4.3-1, decommissioning emissions would not exceed established AVAQMD thresholds. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### Long-Term Operational Emissions

Long-term air quality impacts would consist of mobile source emissions generated from the solar facility traffic (i.e., motor vehicle use by employees, deliveries traveling to and from the site), and emissions from area and energy sources. Emissions associated with each of these sources were calculated and are discussed below. Operational emissions generated by the solar facility are detailed in Table 4.3-2, Solar Facility Operational Emissions.

**Table 4.3-2  
Solar Facility Operational Emissions**

Source	Pollutant (pounds/day) <sup>1</sup>						Pollutant (tons/year) <sup>1</sup>					
	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
<b>Maximum Operational Emissions</b>												
Mobile	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Area	1.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Emissions</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>
AVAQMD Significance Threshold <sup>3</sup>	137	137	548	137	82	65	25	25	100	25	15	12
<b>Threshold Exceeded?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Notes: AVAQMD = Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District; CO = carbon monoxide; NO <sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxide; PM <sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter no more than 2.5 microns in diameter; PM <sub>10</sub> = particulate matter no more than 10 microns in diameter; ROG = reactive organic gases. 1. Emissions were calculated using CalEEMod version 2022.1. Higher emissions between summer and winter are presented as a conservative analysis. 2. The proposed solar facility would not consume natural gas or electricity on-site. 3. Antelope Valley AQMD, <i>California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines Table 6, Significant Emissions Thresholds</i> , August 2016. In developing these thresholds, AVAQMD considered levels at which project emissions are cumulatively considerable. Consequently, exceedances of project-level thresholds would be cumulatively considerable.												
Source: Refer to the CalEEMod outputs provided in <u>Appendix A, Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data</u> .												



### Area Source Emissions

Area source emissions include the emissions generated by from consumer products and painting. As shown in [Table 4.3-2](#), area source emissions would not exceed established AVAQM thresholds. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Energy Source Emissions

The solar facility would be an electricity producer that generates clean energy from solar power and would not consume electricity or natural gas on-site. Energy source emissions would be zero and would not exceed established AVAQM thresholds; refer to [Table 4.3-2](#). Impacts would be less than significant.

### Mobile Source

Mobile sources are emissions from motor vehicles, including tailpipe and evaporative emissions. Depending upon the pollutant being discussed, the potential air quality impact may be of either regional or local concern. For example, ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> are all pollutants of regional concern (NO<sub>x</sub> and ROG react with sunlight to form O<sub>3</sub> [photochemical smog], and wind currents readily transport SO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>). However, CO tends to be a localized pollutant, dispersing rapidly at the source.

Project-generated vehicle emissions were estimated using CalEEMod, and trip generation rates from the *Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – Solar Project Scoping*, prepared by Michael Baker International and dated May 6, 2024; refer to [Appendix F, VMT Assessments](#). During operation, the solar facility would generate a maximum of 24 average daily trips over a 24-hour period, once a year, as a worst-case scenario, when maintenance including routine maintenance, as-needed maintenance, and panel cleaning, occurring simultaneously. As shown in [Table 4.3-2](#), mobile source emissions would not exceed established AVAQM thresholds. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### Total Operational Emissions

As shown in [Table 4.3-2](#), the total operational emissions would not exceed established AVAQM thresholds. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

### Cumulative Long-Term Operational Impacts

As discussed above, the solar facility's operational emissions would be below the established thresholds and would not result in long-term operational air quality impacts. Additionally, adherence to applicable AVAQM rules and regulations would alleviate potential impacts related to cumulative conditions on a project-by-project basis. Emission reduction technology, strategies, and plans are constantly being developed. As a result, the solar facility would not contribute a cumulatively considerable net increase of any nonattainment criteria pollutant. Therefore, no cumulative operational impacts associated with implementation of the proposed solar facility would result.

### **Air Quality Health Impacts**

Adverse health effects induced by criteria pollutant emissions are highly dependent on a multitude of interconnected variables (e.g., cumulative concentrations, local meteorology and atmospheric conditions, and the number and character of exposed individual [e.g., age, gender]). In particular, O<sub>3</sub> precursors, VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub>, affect air quality on a regional scale. Health effects related to O<sub>3</sub> are therefore the product of emissions generated by numerous sources throughout a region. Existing models have limited sensitivity to small changes in criteria pollutant concentrations and, as such, translating project-generated criteria pollutants to specific health effects or additional days of nonattainment



would produce meaningless results. In other words, the proposed solar facility's less than significant increases in regional air pollution from criteria air pollutants during construction would have negligible impacts on human health.

As noted in the Brief of Amicus Curiae by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) (April 6, 2015) for the *Sierra Club vs. County of Fresno*, the SCAQMD acknowledged it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to quantify health impacts of criteria pollutants for various reasons including modeling limitations as well as where in the atmosphere air pollutants interact and form. Further, as noted in the Brief of Amicus Curiae by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) (April 13, 2015) for the *Sierra Club vs. County of Fresno*, SJVAPCD acknowledged that currently available modeling tools are not equipped to provide a meaningful analysis of the correlation between an individual development project's air emissions and specific human health impacts.

The SCAQMD acknowledges that health effects quantification from O<sub>3</sub>, as an example, is correlated with the increases in ambient level of O<sub>3</sub> in the air (concentration) that an individual person breathes. SCAQMD's Brief of Amicus Curiae states that it would take a large amount of additional emissions to cause a modeled increase in ambient O<sub>3</sub> levels over the entire region. The SCAQMD further states that based on their own modeling in the SCAQMD's *2012 Air Quality Management Plan*, a reduction of 432 tons (864,000 pounds) per day of NO<sub>x</sub> and a reduction of 187 tons (374,000 pounds) per day of VOCs would reduce O<sub>3</sub> levels at the highest monitored site by only nine parts per billion. As such, the SCAQMD concludes that it is not currently possible to accurately quantify O<sub>3</sub>-related health impacts caused by NO<sub>x</sub> or VOC emissions from relatively small projects (defined as projects with regional scope) due to photochemistry and regional model limitations.

Similarly, as the solar facility would not exceed AVAQMD's established thresholds for construction and operational air emissions, the solar facility would have a less than significant impact on air quality health impacts.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

c) ***Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

## SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Sensitive receptors are defined as facilities or land uses that include members of the population that are particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. Examples of these sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. CARB has identified the following groups of individuals as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65, children under 14, athletes, and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.

The nearest sensitive receptor is a single-family residential use located approximately 120 feet to the north of the project site.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

### Carbon Monoxide

CO emissions are a function of vehicle idling time, meteorological conditions, and traffic flow. Under certain extreme meteorological conditions, CO concentrations near a congested roadway or intersection may reach unhealthy levels (i.e., adversely affecting residents, school children, hospital patients, the elderly, etc.).

The MDAB is designated as an attainment/maintenance area for the federal CO standards and an attainment area for State standards. There has been a decline in CO emissions even though vehicle miles traveled on U.S. urban and



rural roads have increased. Nationwide estimated anthropogenic CO emissions have decreased 68 percent between 1990 and 2014. In 2014, mobile sources accounted for 82 percent of the nation's total man-made CO emissions. CO emissions have continued to decline since this time. The MDAB was re-designated as attainment and is no longer addressed in the AVAQMD's air quality plans. Three major control programs have contributed to the reduced per-vehicle CO emissions: exhaust standards, cleaner burning fuels, and motor vehicle inspection/maintenance programs.

Localized concentrations of CO are typically associated with the idling of vehicles, particularly in highly congested areas. For this reason, the areas of primary concern are congested roadway intersections that experience high levels of vehicle traffic with degraded levels of service (LOS). Regarding potential increases in CO concentrations that could potentially exceed applicable ambient air quality standards, signalized intersections that are projected to operate at an unacceptable LOS E or F are of particular concern. As discussed above, there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis and these individual projects would be required to analyze localized emissions associated with construction and operations through project-specific CEQA analysis. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

### **Toxic Air Contaminants**

Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) (also referred to as hazardous air pollutants [HAPs]), are pollutants that result in an increase in mortality, a serious illness, or pose a present or potential hazard to human health. Health effects of TACs may include cancer, birth defects, and immune system and neurological damage.

According to the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines, the following project types proposed for sites within the specified distance to an existing or planned (zoned) sensitive receptor land use must be evaluated using significance threshold criteria number 4 (exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a HI [non-cancerous] greater than or equal to 1) regarding sensitive receptors and cancer risk:

- Any industrial project within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptor land use;
- A distribution center (40 or more trucks per day) within 1,000 feet;
- A major transportation project (50,000 or more vehicles per day) within 1,000 feet;
- A dry cleaner using perchloroethylene within 500 feet; and
- A gasoline dispensing facility within 300 feet.

The proposed annexation and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. As noted above, implementation of the proposed annexation would not result in direct long-term operation of any stationary sources of TACs as no specific development is proposed at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). However, construction of future projects within the annexation area may result in temporary increases in emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) associated with the use of off-road diesel equipment. Health-related risks associated with diesel exhaust emissions are primarily associated with long-term exposure and associated risk of contracting cancer. As such, the calculation of cancer risk associated with exposure of to TACs are typically calculated based on a long-term (e.g., 70-year) period of exposure. The use of diesel-powered construction equipment, however, would be temporary and episodic and would occur over a relatively large area. In addition, future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis; any of the above project types (land uses with great potentials to generate significant amount of toxic air contaminants) would be required to be evaluated using AVAQMD significance threshold criteria number 4 regarding sensitive receptors and cancer risk pursuant to the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines.



For these reasons, exposure to construction-generated DPM would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds (i.e., cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a HI greater than or equal to 1). As such, impacts from toxic air contaminants would be less than significant in this regard.

### Valley Fever

Coccidioidomycosis, more commonly known as “Valley Fever,” is primarily a disease of the lungs caused by the spores of the *Coccidioides immitis* fungus. The spores are found in soils, become airborne when the soil is disturbed, and are subsequently inhaled into the lungs. After the fungal spores have settled in the lungs, they change into a multicellular structure called a spherule. Fungal growth in the lungs occurs as the spherule grows and bursts, releasing endospores, which then develop into more spherules. The *Coccidioides immitis* fungal spores are often found in the soil around rodent burrows, Indian ruins, and burial grounds. The spores become airborne when the soil is disturbed by winds, construction, farming, and soil disturbing activities. This type of fungus is endemic to the southwestern United States and is common in the Antelope Valley. The project is in an area designated as suspected endemic for Valley Fever by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Public Health (LACPH) indicate that the Antelope Valley Service Planning Area 1 has the reported case rate that are approximately 309 per 100,000 population.<sup>5</sup>

Although no specific development is proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below), nearby sensitive receptors as well as workers could be exposed to Valley Fever from fugitive dust generated during construction of future projects within the annexation area. There is the potential that *Coccidioides* spores would be stirred up during any earth-moving activities, exposing construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors to these spores and thereby, to the potential of contracting Valley Fever. However, all future development would be required to comply with AVAQMD Rules 401 and 403 during construction and implement Mitigation Measure MM-1 that would provide personal protective respiratory equipment to construction workers and provide information to all construction personnel and visitors about Valley Fever. With compliance with AVAQMD Rules and implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-1, dust from potential future construction activity would be limited and would not expose nearby sensitive receptors to the Valley Fever fungus. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

### Carbon Monoxide

An analysis of CO “hot spots” is needed to determine whether the change in the level of service (LOS) of an intersection as a result of the proposed project would have the potential to result in exceedances of the CAAQS or NAAQS. It has long been recognized that CO exceedances are caused by vehicular emissions, primarily when vehicles are idling at intersections. Vehicle emissions standards have become increasingly stringent in the last 20 years. With the turnover of older vehicles, introduction of cleaner fuels, and implementation of control technology on industrial facilities, CO concentrations have steadily declined.

Accordingly, with the steadily decreasing CO emissions from vehicles, even very busy intersections do not result in exceedances of the CO standard. CO attainment was thoroughly analyzed as part of the SCAQMD’s 2003 Air Quality Management Plan (SCAQMD 2003). The 2003 AQMP is the most recent AQMP that addresses CO concentrations. It should be noted that the South Coast Air Basin was redesignated as attainment/maintenance in 2007 and is no longer addressed in the SCAQMD’s subsequent AQMPs. Furthermore, the MDAB is designated as an

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *More information about the estimated areas with blastomycosis, coccidioidomycosis (Valley fever), and histoplasmosis in the United States*, <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/coccidioidomycosis/maps.html#aa>, accessed May 13, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, *Valley Fever (Coccidioidomycosis)*, <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Cocci.htm>, accessed June 4, 2024.



attainment/maintenance area for the Federal CO standards and an attainment area for State standards. As part of the 2003 AQMP CO hot-spot analysis, the Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection in Los Angeles, one of the most congested intersections in Southern California with an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day, was modeled for CO concentrations. This modeling effort identified a CO concentration high of 4.6 parts per million (ppm), which is well below the 35-ppm federal standard.

As the CO hotspots were not experienced at the Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection (100,000 vehicle trips per day), it can be reasonably inferred that CO hotspots would not be experienced at any intersections with a lower volume of traffic. The solar facility is surrounded by vacant lands and no signalized intersections are located within the project vicinity. Further, it is acknowledged that the solar facility would generate up to 24 trips per day, significantly lower than 100,000 vehicles per day experienced at the Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection. As such, the proposed solar facility would not contribute to a significant increase in CO concentrations that could potentially exceed applicable ambient air quality standards within the solar facility vicinity. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

### Toxic Air Contaminants

According to the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines, the following project types proposed for sites within the specified distance to an existing or planned (zoned) sensitive receptor land use must be evaluated using significance threshold criteria number 4 (exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a HI [non-cancerous] greater than or equal to 1) regarding sensitive receptors and cancer risk:

- Any industrial project within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptor land use;
- A distribution center (40 or more trucks per day) within 1,000 feet;
- A major transportation project (50,000 or more vehicles per day) within 1,000 feet;
- A dry cleaner using perchloroethylene within 500 feet; and
- A gasoline dispensing facility within 300 feet.

The nearest sensitive receptor is a remote single-family residential use located approximately 120 feet to the north of the project site. As the proposed solar facility is not any of the above project types and does not involve stationary sources that could generate significant toxic air contaminants emissions, it is not anticipated to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations during operation, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a Hazard Index (HI) (non-cancerous) greater than or equal to 1.

Project construction may result in temporary increases in emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) associated with the use of off-road diesel equipment. Health-related risks associated with diesel-exhaust emissions are primarily associated with long-term exposure and associated risk of contracting cancer. As such, the calculation of cancer risk associated with exposure to TACs are typically calculated based on a long-term (e.g., 70-year) period of exposure. The use of diesel-powered construction equipment, however, would be temporary and episodic and would occur over a relatively large area. As such, exposure to construction-generated DPM would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds (i.e., incremental increase in cancer risk of 1 in one million) during project construction.

The proposed solar facility is anticipated to generate approximately 156 hauling truck (heavy-duty trucks) trips per day during construction; refer to [Appendix A](#). However, as the amount to which the nearest sensitive receptors (i.e., residences located approximately 120 feet to the north of the project site) are exposed (a function of concentration and duration of exposure) is the primary factor used to determine health risk (i.e., potential exposure to TAC emission levels that exceed applicable standards), the project is not anticipated to result in significant impacts in this regard. The project would not generate heavy-duty vehicle trips during operation. As such, project operation is not anticipated to result in significant exposure to TAC, and impacts in this regard would be less than significant.



## Valley Fever

Any nearby sensitive receptors as well as construction workers could be exposed to Valley Fever from fugitive dust generated during construction for the proposed solar facility. There is the potential that *Coccidioides* spores would be stirred up during any earth-moving activities, exposing construction workers and nearby sensitive receptors to these spores and thereby, to the potential of contracting Valley Fever. However, the proposed solar facility would be required to comply with AVAQMD Rules 401 and 403 during construction and implement Mitigation Measure MM-1 that would provide personal protective respiratory equipment to construction workers and provide information to all construction personnel and visitors about Valley Fever. With compliance with AVAQMD Rules and implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-1, dust from construction activity of the proposed solar facility would be limited and would not expose nearby sensitive receptors to the Valley Fever fungus. Impacts would be less than significant in this regard.

### Mitigation Measures:

## ANNEXATION

MM-1 Prior to any ground disturbance activities associated with construction of future projects (including the proposed solar facility) within the annexation area, the project operator shall provide evidence to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department that the project operator and/or construction manager has developed a “Valley Fever Training Handout” training and schedule of sessions for education to be provided to all construction personnel. All evidence of the training session materials, handout(s), and schedule shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department within 24 hours of the first training session. Multiple training sessions may be conducted if different work crews come to the site for different stages of construction; however, all construction personnel shall be provided training prior to beginning work. The evidence submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department regarding the “Valley Fever Training Handout” and session(s) shall include the following:

- A sign-in sheet (to include the printed employee names, signature, and date) for all employees who attended the training session.
- Distribution of a written flier or brochure that includes educational information regarding the health effects of exposure to criteria pollutant emissions and Valley Fever.
- Training on methods that may help prevent Valley Fever infection.
- A demonstration to employees on how to use personal protective equipment, such as respiratory equipment (masks), to reduce exposure to pollutants and facilitate recognition of symptoms and earlier treatment of Valley Fever. Where respirators are required, the equipment shall be readily available and shall be provided to employees for use during work. Proof that the demonstration is included in the training shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department. This proof can be via printed training materials/agenda, DVD, digital media files, or photographs.

The project operator also shall consult with the Los Angeles County Public Health to develop a Valley Fever Dust Management Plan (Plan) that addresses the potential presence of the *Coccidioides* spore and mitigates for the potential for *Coccidioidomycosis* (Valley Fever). Prior to issuance of grading permits, the project operator shall submit the Plan to the Los Angeles County Public Health for review and approval. The Plan shall include a program to evaluate the potential for exposure to Valley Fever from construction activities and to identify appropriate safety procedures that shall be implemented, as needed, to minimize personnel and public exposure to potential *Coccidioides* spores. Measures in the Plan shall include the following:



- Provide High Efficiency Particulate (HEP)-filters for heavy equipment equipped with factory enclosed cabs capable of accepting the filters. Require contractors utilizing applicable heavy equipment to furnish proof of worker training on proper use of applicable heavy equipment cabs (e.g., turning on the air conditioning prior to using the equipment).
- Provide communication methods, such as two-way radios, for use in enclosed cabs.
- Require National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved half-face respirators equipped with minimum N-95 protection factor for use during worker collocation with surface disturbance activities, as required per the hazard assessment process.
- Require employees to be medically evaluated, fit-tested, and properly trained on the use of the respirators, and implement a full respiratory protection program in accordance with the applicable Cal/OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (8 CCR 5144).
- Provide separate, clean eating areas with hand-washing facilities.
- Install equipment inspection stations at each construction equipment access/egress point. Examine construction vehicles and equipment for excess soil material and clean, as necessary, before equipment is moved off-site.
- Train workers to recognize the symptoms of Valley Fever, and to promptly report suspected symptoms of work-related Valley Fever to a supervisor.
- Work with a medical professional to develop a protocol to medically evaluate employees who develop symptoms of Valley Fever.
- Work with a medical professional, in consultation with the Los Angeles County Public Health, to develop an educational handout for on-site workers and surrounding residents within three miles of the project site and include the following information on Valley Fever: what are the potential sources/causes, what are the common symptoms, what are the options or remedies available should someone be experiencing these symptoms, and where testing for exposure is available. Prior to construction permit issuance, this handout shall have been created by the project operator and reviewed by the project operator and reviewed by the City of Lancaster Community Development Department. Upon approval from the City of Lancaster Community Development Department, this handout shall be mailed to all existing residences within three miles of the project boundaries, no less than 30 days prior to any work commencing.
- When possible, position workers upwind or crosswind when digging a trench or performing other soil-disturbing tasks.
- Prohibit smoking at the worksite outside of designated smoking areas; designated smoking areas shall be equipped with handwashing facilities.
- Post warnings on-site and consider limiting access to visitors, especially those without adequate training and respiratory protection.
- Audit and enforce compliance with relevant Cal/OSHA health and safety standards on the job site.

## SOLAR FACILITY

Refer to Mitigation Measure MM-1 above.

- d) ***Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?***

### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

According to the AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines, land uses associated with odor complaints typically include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding.



## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation area would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres). Based on LMC Section 17.08.030, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use. Uses which do not fall into any other category, and are not temporary uses, uses subject to the Director's Review, or uses subject to permit in these zones shall be subject to interpretation of the City of Lancaster Community Development Director. As future allowed uses in RR-2.5 are not anticipated to include land uses typically associated with odor complaints, the project would have a less than significant operational odor impact.

It should be noted that there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Construction activities associated with future developments may generate detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust and architectural coatings. However, future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. In addition, developments within the annexation area would be required to comply with the California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485, which minimizes the idling time of construction equipment either by shutting it off when not in use or by reducing the time of idling to no more than five minutes. This would further reduce the detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust. Roadway improvements within the City would also be required to comply with the AVAQMD Rule 1120, which would minimize odor impacts from ROG emissions during asphalt paving activities, if any. Thus, odors impacts associated with project construction would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed solar facility would not involve land uses typically associated with odor complaints. Minimal traffic is anticipated for maintenance purposes. As discussed above, adherence with AVAQMD Rule 402 would minimize any discharge of air pollutants that could be detrimental or would cause a nuisance. As such, less than significant impacts in regard of operational odor would occur.

Construction activities associated with the solar facility may generate detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust. However, construction-related odors would be short-term in nature and cease upon project completion. In addition, construction activities would be required to comply with the California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485, which minimizes the idling time of construction equipment either by shutting it off when not in use or by reducing the time of idling to no more than five minutes. This would reduce detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust. As such, the construction of the solar facility would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Thus, odors impacts associated with construction of the proposed solar facility would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓		
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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			✓	
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?		✓		
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓
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?				✓

This section is primarily based upon the following technical studies; refer to [Appendix B, Biological Resources Reports](#):

- *Results of a Biological Resources Due Diligence Assessment for the Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (Annexation Area BRA)*, prepared by Michael Baker International, dated April 10, 2024;
- *Biological Resources Assessment of APNs 3384-001-001, 002, and 003, Lancaster, California (Solar Facility BRA)*, prepared by Mark Hagan, dated March 14, 2022; and
- *Delineation of State and Federal Jurisdictional Waters for the Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California (Jurisdictional Delineation)*, prepared by Michael Baker International, (n.d.).



- 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?**

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

The Annexation Area BRA included a literature review and records search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and the California Native Plant Society’s (CNPs) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CIRP), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC). The records search encompassed the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) *Lancaster East, Alpine Butte, Rosamond, Rosamond Lake, Redman, Littlerock, Palmdale, Ritter Ridge, and Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. In addition, publicly available reports, survey results, and literature detailing the biological resources previously observed on or within the vicinity of the annexation area were reviewed. While the Annexation Area BRA did not include a field survey, the Solar Facility BRA field survey was conducted over most of the northern half of the annexation area. Additionally, a field survey was conducted by Michael Baker International in 2022 for a separate project located approximately one mile south of the annexation area; the results of this survey are also considered in this analysis.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the record search results, 51 special status species (23 special-status plant species and 28 special-status wildlife species) have been recorded in the USGS *Lancaster East, Alpine Butte, Rosamond, Rosamond Lake, Redman, Littlerock, Palmdale, Ritter Ridge, and Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles, CNDDDB, CIRP, and IPaC online database. Of these 51 special-status species, only 11 were recorded within the project area; refer to Table 4.4-1, Special-Status Species Recorded in the Project Area.

**Table 4.4-1  
Special-Status Species Recorded in the Project Area**

Common Name	Scientific Name
<b>Special-status wildlife species observed during field survey</b>	
Mountain plover	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
<b>Special-status wildlife species previously recorded within or immediately adjacent to the annexation area</b>	
Cooper’s hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Tricolored blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>
Short-eared owl	<i>Aseo flammeus</i>
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Swainson’s hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>
Northern harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>
Source: Refer to Appendix B, <i>Biological Resources Reports</i> .	

<sup>1</sup> Michael Baker International, *Lancaster East Side Project – Cannabis Facility Site Biological Resources Assessment*. June 2022.



## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

### Special-Status Plant Species

Of the 23 special-status plant species recorded in the project area, none have been recorded within the annexation area. Most of the records occurred over five miles from the annexation area, and due to this distance, as well as habitat fragmentation and agricultural and disturbed habitat conditions within the annexation area, it is unlikely that any of the recorded species would occur within the annexation area.

As the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction, the action in and of itself would not have an adverse effect on any special-status plant species. Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis, and applicable mitigation measures would be identified, as needed. This may entail preparation of a Biological Resources Assessment and implementation of any applicable project-level mitigation measures (Mitigation Measure MM-2). Further, future residential uses or other permitted uses proposed within the annexation area would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulations regarding special-status plant species. As such, following implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-2, impacts would be less than significant.

### Special-Status Wildlife Species

Two special-status species, mountain plover and loggerhead shrike, were present in the northern portion of the annexation area during the field survey conducted for the Solar Facility BRA. Additionally, other special-status wildlife species that have been previously recorded within or immediately adjacent to the annexation area include Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), short-eared owl (*Aseo flammeus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), and prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*); refer to [Table 4.4-1](#). All of these species are considered to have a moderate to high potential to occur within the annexation area. Burrowing owl feathers were reported during the Solar Facility BRA site survey; however, there were no suitable burrows, no suitable cover habitat, and no other owl sign observed. Based on the results of the Solar Facility BRA, there is no suitable habitat within the annexation area to support desert kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis arsipus*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), or Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*).

As the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction, the action in and of itself would not have an adverse effect on any special-status wildlife species. Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis, and applicable mitigation measures would be identified, as needed. This may entail preparation of a Biological Resources Assessment, including focused wildlife species surveys to determine if suitable habitat is present to support such species.

Additionally, it is acknowledged that on October 10, 2024, the California Fish and Game Commission voted to designate the western burrowing owl as a candidate for potential listing as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). As a candidate species under CESA, the burrowing owl is afforded the same protections as listed species against "take" without permit authorization throughout the entirety of California. As such, regardless of focused survey findings, if suitable habitat for burrowing owl is present, Mitigation Measure MM-3 would require pre-construction surveys be conducted prior to any ground disturbing activities. Further, future residential uses or other permitted uses proposed within the annexation area would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulations regarding special-status wildlife species. As such, following implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-2 and MM-3, impacts would be less than significant in this regard.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis. Given that a site-specific biological resources assessment was prepared for the solar facility site (i.e., the Solar Facility BRA), Mitigation Measure MM-2 would not be required. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-3 would still be required to reduce potential impacts to burrowing owls. Overall, impacts would be less than significant.

### Mitigation Measures:

#### ANNEXATION

- MM-2 Each future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA) shall be screened by the City of Lancaster Community Development Department to determine whether a Biological Resources Assessment is required. Screening shall consider the type of project and project site conditions. If the site has existing vegetation on-site and/or is undeveloped and vacant, prior to issuance of any permits required to conduct ground disturbing activities, the City may require a Biological Resources Assessment be prepared by a qualified biologist for review and approval by the City of Lancaster Community Development Department. The assessment shall include biological field survey(s) of the project site to characterize the extent and quality of habitat that would be impacted by development. The potential presence of special-status species on-site may support conducting focused plant or wildlife species surveys. Surveys shall be conducted by qualified biologists and/or botanists in accordance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and/or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) survey protocols for target species. If no special status/sensitive species, sensitive habitats/natural communities, or federally protected wetlands are observed during the field survey, then no further mitigation will be required. If biological resources are documented on the project site, the project proponent shall comply with the applicable requirements of the regulatory agencies and shall apply mitigation determined through the agency permitting process.
- MM-3 For future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA), if suitable habitat for burrowing owl (candidate for potential listing as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act [CESA]) is observed, two separate pre-construction burrowing owl clearance surveys shall be conducted prior to any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities. One survey shall be conducted no less than 14 days prior to disturbance and the other survey within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance. The survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist retained by the project proponent and in accordance with the methods outlined in the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (California Department of Fish and Game 2012). Documentation of surveys and findings shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department for review and file. If no burrowing owls or occupied burrows are detected, project activities may begin, and no additional avoidance and minimization measures shall be required. If an occupied burrow is found outside, but within 500 feet, of the development footprint, the qualified biologist shall establish a “no-disturbance” buffer around the burrow location(s). As a candidate species under CESA, the burrowing owl shall be afforded the same protections as listed species against “take” without permit authorization throughout the entirety of California. The size of the “no-disturbance” buffer shall be determined in consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and be based on the species status (i.e., breeding, non-breeding) and proposed level of disturbance. If an occupied burrow is found within the development



footprint and cannot be avoided, a burrowing owl exclusion and mitigation plan shall be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval prior to initiating project activities.

## SOLAR FACILITY

Refer to Mitigation Measure MM-3 above.

- 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the Jurisdictional Delineation, previous vegetation mapping indicates that the annexation area is a mixture of ruderal areas, agricultural land, and desert wash; specifically, the northern half of the annexation area away from Little Rock Wash is primarily agricultural with developed and landscaped land cover types in the northwest corner where the existing structures are located. According to the Annexation Area BRA, the annexation area is not located within USFWS-designated Critical Habitat for any federally listed species. Additionally, as described in Section 4.4(c) below, Little Rock Wash is not considered waters of the U.S. and would not fall under the regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, according to Table 2, *State and Federal Jurisdictional Resources*, of the Jurisdictional Delineation, no riparian habitat under CDFW jurisdiction is present in the annexation area. As such, no impact would occur.

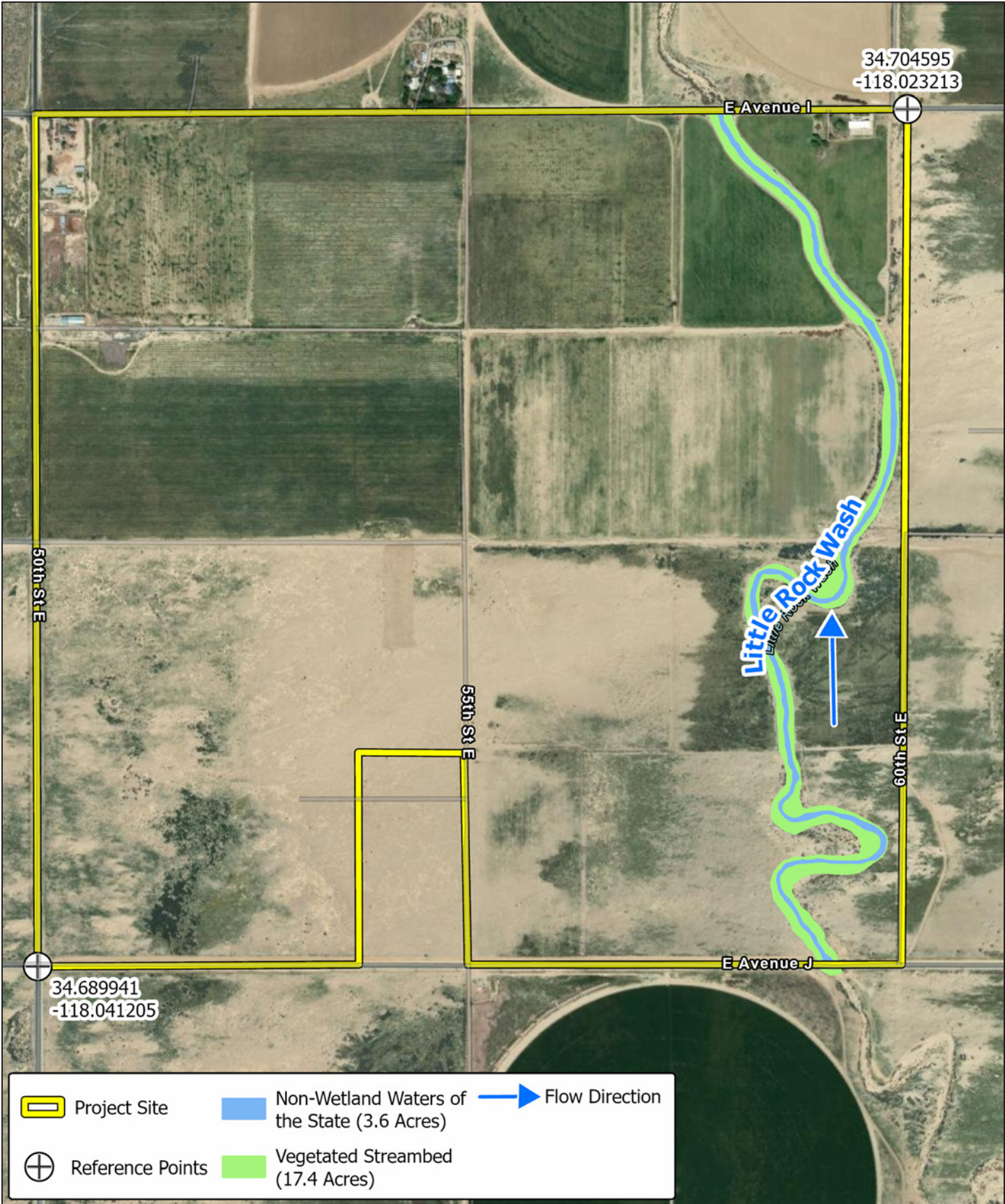
## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis. No development or ground disturbance associated with the solar facility would occur within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) ***Have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Little Rock Wash traverses the eastern portion of the project site and flows south to north. Based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), Little Rock Wash is mapped as a riverine intermittent streambed intermittently-flooded feature. However, the Jurisdictional Delineation found that Little Rock Wash does not contain any outlet to a traditional navigable water. Therefore, Little Rock Wash is not considered waters of the U.S. and would not fall under the regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, Little Rock Wash includes approximately 3.6 acres of RWQCB non-wetland waters of the State and 17.4 acres of CDFW vegetated streambed; refer to Exhibit 4.4-1, Regional Board/CDFW Jurisdictional Map.



Source: Michael Baker International, 2024



## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

As the proposed annexation would not include development or construction, this action would not in and of itself have an adverse effect on Little Rock Wash and its jurisdictional features. Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis, and applicable mitigation measures would be identified, as needed. If future development occurs within the identified RWQCB non-wetland waters and/or CDFW vegetated streambed areas, a Water Discharge Requirement (WDR) from the RWQCB pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Act and/or CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) would be required in accordance with existing RWQCB and/or CDFW regulatory requirements. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

Little Rock Wash traverses the eastern portion of the solar facility site. However, no development or ground disturbance is proposed within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash as part of the proposed solar facility development. As such, no impact would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.** Wildlife corridors and linkages are key features for wildlife movement between habitat patches. Wildlife corridors are generally defined as those areas that provide opportunities for individuals or local populations to conduct seasonal migrations, permanent dispersals, or daily commutes. Linkages generally refer to broader areas that provide movement opportunities (often between areas of conserved land) for multiple keystone/focal species or allow for propagation of ecological processes (i.e., for movement of pollinators).

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The most prominent natural corridor within the annexation area is Little Rock Wash, which traverses the eastern portion of the annexation area and flows south to north. Little Rock Wash is not recognized as a corridor in the General Plan; however, Little Rock Wash is recognized by the County as part of the Antelope Valley Significant Ecological Area (SEA),<sup>2</sup> which provides dispersal and migration opportunities between the San Gabriel Mountains and the playa lakes of Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB). Other potential migratory pathways would generally be opportunistic across open space areas between agricultural fields but would likely be reduced by the presence of surrounding roadways and existing agricultural, commercial, and residential developments within the project site. These developments have fragmented the connection between the project site and surrounding naturally occurring vegetation communities. Elevated noise levels, vehicle roadway/traffic, lighting, and presence of humans and domestic pets are also expected to further decrease the suitability of the project site to be used as a wildlife movement corridor or linkage.

Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis, and applicable mitigation measures would be identified. Additionally, future development would be required to comply with Mitigation Measure MM-4, which would require pre-construction nesting bird clearance surveys be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to any ground

<sup>2</sup> County of Los Angeles, *Significant Ecological Areas Map*, <https://egis-lacounty.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/c01bf32eee6d4768ac0a82470c810648>, accessed June 12, 2024.



disturbing activities. Results of the pre-construction survey and any subsequent monitoring would be provided to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department, CDFW, and other appropriate agency(ies). Further, future residential uses or other permitted uses proposed within the annexation area would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulations regarding migratory wildlife. Following implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-4, impacts to nesting birds would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

### Mitigation Measures:

## ANNEXATION

MM-4 For future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA), if ground-disturbing activities or removal of any trees, shrubs, or any other potential nesting habitat are scheduled within the avian nesting season (generally from January 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist retained by the project proponent shall conduct a pre-construction clearance survey for nesting birds within three days prior to any ground disturbing activities.

The qualified biologist conducting the clearance survey shall document the negative results if no active bird nests are observed on the project site during the clearance survey with a brief letter report indicating that no impacts to active bird nests would occur before construction can proceed. If an active avian nest is discovered during the pre-construction clearance survey, construction activities shall stay outside of a 300-foot buffer around the active nest. For raptor species, this buffer shall be 500 feet. The biologist shall be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by the construction activity. Results of the pre-construction survey and any subsequent monitoring shall be provided to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## SOLAR FACILITY

Refer to Mitigation Measure MM-4 above.

e) ***Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

LMC Chapter 15.66, *Biological Impact Fee*, establishes a biological impact fee to mitigate long-term incremental impacts of new development on biological resources on a regional basis. Specifically, the fee applies to all new development on vacant land which has not been previously developed. The proposed annexation area is located in an area consisting of scattered rural development predominantly surrounded by agricultural use and vacant, undeveloped land. As such, future development within the annexation area would be required to comply with LMC Chapter 15.66. However, as the proposed annexation would not include any development or construction, this action would not require payment of fees pursuant to LMC Chapter 15.66. No impact would occur in this regard.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed solar facility site is located in an area consisting of agricultural land, scattered residential uses, and undeveloped land. As such, the proposed solar facility would be subject to LMC Chapter 15.66, *Biological Impact Fee*, where applicable, which requires new development within the City to pay a biological impact fee to mitigate the long-term incremental effects on biological resources, including loss of habitat and reduction in total numbers of flora and fauna. Compliance with existing regulatory requirements related to the protection of biological resources would ensure no impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

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?***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The West Mojave Plan (WMP) is a Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) which covers approximately 9.3 million acres in the western portion of the Mojave Desert, including parts of San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Kern, and Inyo Counties. The WMP provides a comprehensive strategy for conserving and protecting nearly 100 sensitive plants and animals and the natural communities which they inhabit. However, no other agencies adopted the HCP proposed in the WMP to cover their jurisdictions, including the City of Lancaster. Thus, the adopted plan only applies to BLM lands.

The project site does not include any BLM lands; given that the WMP only governs BLM lands, the project would not conflict with the provisions of the WMP. No impacts would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			✓	
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?		✓		
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?			✓	

This section is primarily based upon the following technical studies; refer to Appendix C, Cultural Cultural/Paleontological Resources Reports:

- *Cultural Resources and Paleontological Identification Study for the Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project* (Cultural/Paleo Report), prepared by Michael Baker International, dated April 2024;
- *Cultural Resources Report for Van Dam Farm Property APN 3384-001, 002, and 003, 280 Acres on the Southeast Corner of Avenue I and 50th Street East, Unincorporated County of Los Angeles, California (Solar Facility Cultural Report)*, prepared by Bruce Love Consulting, dated May 15, 2024; and
- *Phase II Archaeological Evaluation of CA-LAN-5037/H, Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project, Lancaster, CA* (Phase II Archaeological Evaluation), prepared by Michael Baker International, dated December 13, 2024.

**a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the Cultural/Paleo Report, the only remaining structure located within the annexation area meets the 45-year-old age requirement to be potentially considered as a historic resource. However, it should be noted that the annexation component of the proposed project would not include construction or development activities that would disturb this structure. The proposed Rural Residential (RR-2.5) pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with its current Lancaster General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]. Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the Lancaster General Plan and Lancaster General Plan EIR. If future development proposed in the annexation area would disturb this resource, it would require evaluation by a qualified architectural historian to determine its eligibility for listing in the California Register. Any future development or construction in the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As part of the Cultural/Paleo Report, a South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) records search was conducted at California State University, Fullerton on December 6, 2023 to determine whether the project could result in a significant adverse change to cultural resources in accordance with CEQA. The SCCIC records search identified



five previous cultural resource studies completed within a half-mile radius around the annexation area (including the solar facility site), one of which (LA-12339) covers a portion of the annexation area; results of this study found no cultural resources existing within the study area (which covers a portion of the annexation area). The SCCIC records search did not find any record of previously recorded cultural resources within a half-mile radius of the annexation area, which includes the solar facility site.

Further, a cultural resources study was conducted in 2022 and updated in 2024 to document and identify any resources older than 50 years old that can be considered historical or archaeological in nature on the solar facility site (Solar Facility Cultural Report). The Solar Facility Cultural Report included a records search, a Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File search, and an intensive pedestrian archaeological survey. According to the Solar Facility Cultural Report, one historic period farm structure was identified on the proposed solar facility site. Based on a historical evaluation conducted as part of the Solar Facility Cultural Report, the historic-era farmhouse dates back to circa 1925; however, the structure lacks the distinctiveness in historical, architectural, or cultural aspects required for historical listing. As such, the farmhouse and associated structure were recommended as not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources in the Solar Facility Cultural Report. Overall, no historical resources pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 is identified on the solar facility site, and a less than significant impact pertaining to historical resources would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

**b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?**

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the Cultural/Paleo Report, the project area comprises Quaternary alluvium, alluvial fan deposits, and younger playa deposits, which could conceal buried archaeological artifacts. Although the records search at the SCCIC did not identify any archaeological sites previously recorded in the project area, survey of the solar facility site within the annexation area suggests a possibility that additional precontact archaeological deposits may exist within the annexation area. However, the history of agriculture in the project area may have compromised the integrity of any unknown archaeological resources. As such, the Cultural/Paleo Report determined that sensitivity to potential unknown archaeological resources is moderate in the annexation area due to the proximity of the known precontact site recorded in the solar facility site, the proximity to resources (including a natural water source), and soil deposits that buried artifacts.

However, it should be noted that the annexation component of the proposed project would not include construction or development activities that may disturb ground surface and potentially uncover previously unknown archaeological resources. The proposed Rural Residential (RR-2.5) pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current Lancaster General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]. Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the Lancaster General Plan and Lancaster General Plan EIR. Any future development or construction in the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis.

Further, as recommended by the Phase II Archaeological Evaluation and through tribal consultation summarized in Section 4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, preparation of an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan and archaeological monitoring may be required during construction of future development (Mitigation Measures MM-5 and MM-6). The need for an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan and archaeological monitoring should consider level of ground disturbance proposed. If potentially significant materials are inadvertently encountered during



construction, a data recovery program should be implemented to document these deposits and all recovered materials should be curated at an appropriate facility to preserve their scientific value for future research. The Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan should be in place for unanticipated finds, including human remains, in compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

Further, due to the heightened cultural sensitivity of the project area, additional mitigation measures were requested by tribes during the City's tribal consultation pursuant to SB 18 and AB 52. Specifically, Mitigation Measure MM-7 would require tribal monitoring, Mitigation Measure MM-8 would establish procedures should a pre-contact cultural resource be discovered, and Mitigation Measure MM-9 would establish protocol if human remains or funerary objects are encountered. Upon implementation of mitigation measures, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

As discussed above, the Solar Facility Cultural Report included a records search, a Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File search, and an intensive pedestrian archaeological survey for the solar facility site. During the archaeological pedestrian survey conducted between November 2021 and January 2022, a concentration of Native American chipped stone artifacts, groundstone artifacts, and fire-affected rock were identified; this site is later identified as CA-LAN-5037/H. As detailed in the Solar Facility Cultural Report, CA-LAN-5037/H was comprised of 78 artifacts, including one banded chert projectile point, one obsidian biface, one chert core and one jasper core, 22 flakes, 20 pieces of shatter, six mano fragments, one metate, three metate fragments, one schist pestle, two fire affected rocks, and 15 miscellaneous schist fragments on the surface. However, no formal subsurface excavation test was conducted at the time to assess the site's integrity or the extent of subsurface deposits.

As such, the Phase II Archaeological Evaluation was conducted to determine the eligibility for CA-LAN-5037/H to be listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. Specifically, the Phase II Archaeological Evaluation assessed the significance, integrity, and data potential of CA-LAN-5037/H through surface survey, subsurface testing, ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys, and laboratory analysis. Fieldwork for the evaluation was conducted from October 14 through October 18, 2024. A surface survey of the site failed to relocate many of the previously recorded artifacts found during the Solar Facility Cultural Report field surveys, possibly due to looting and ground surface visibility constraints due to vegetation growth. However, 14 previously unrecorded artifacts were identified, including a cowrie shell, a green chert core, and a granite handstone fragment. Overall, a total of 36 pieces of lithic debitage, one lithic core, 12 groundstone fragments, one cowrie shell, 243 small animal bone fragments, and five pieces of modern or historic glass were recovered from the field work excavations conducted for the Phase II Archaeological Evaluation.

The Phase II Archaeological Evaluation found that subsurface deposits were sparse and heavily disturbed by historical agricultural plowing, with evidence of horizontal and vertical mixing of cultural and modern materials. GPR surveys identified subsurface anomalies, but most corresponded to modern disturbances, including gopher dens and agricultural plowing. Still, at least one anomaly proved to be a faint archaeological feature with some thermal affected groundstone. Overall, results of the Phase II Archaeological Evaluation concluded that CA-LAN-5037/H does not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and is not considered a significant resource under CEQA.

Construction activities associated with the solar facility would include clearing, grubbing, and balancing of the site, and installation of the solar panels and infrastructure; no mass grading would occur as it is not permitted, and only grading associated with fire access roads and equipment pad would occur. Nonetheless, according to the Cultural/Paleo Report, the sensitivity for potential undocumented precontact archaeological sites in the solar facility site is considered moderate to high due to the known precontact site identified within the solar facility project area, the proximity of known resources (including a natural perennial water source), and soil deposits known to bury archaeological deposits. Further, due to the heightened cultural sensitivity of the project area, additional mitigation measures were requested by tribes during the City's tribal consultation pursuant to SB 18 and AB 52. As such, preparation of a monitoring and



treatment plan (Mitigation Measure MM-5), archaeological monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-6), tribal monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-7), establishment of protocol if a pre-contact cultural resource is discovered (Mitigation Measure MM-8), and adherence to State Health and Safety Code during inadvertent discoveries of human remains (Mitigation Measure MM-9) would be required during construction of the solar facility. With implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-5 through MM-9, impacts in this regard would be reduced to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation Measures:**

**ANNEXATION**

MM-5 Monitoring and Treatment Plan. Each future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA) shall be screened by the City of Lancaster Community Development Department to determine whether an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan is required prior to issuance of project permits. The need for an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall consider the level of ground disturbance proposed. Ground disturbances include activities such as grading, excavation, trenching, boring, or demolition that extend below the current grade. If there will be no ground disturbance, then an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan shall not be required.

If there will be ground disturbance, prior to issuance of any permits required to conduct ground disturbing activities, A qualified archaeologist shall prepare an Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan and submit it to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department for dissemination to the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation Cultural Resources Management Department (YSMN, also known as San Manuel Band of Mission Indians). Once all parties review and approve the plan, it shall be adopted by the City of Lancaster prior to permitting for the project. Any and all findings will be subject to the protocol detailed within the Archaeological Monitoring and Treatment Plan.

MM-6 Archaeological Monitoring. Each future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA) shall be screened by the City of Lancaster Community Development Department to determine whether archaeological monitoring is required during project construction. The need for monitoring shall consider the level of ground disturbance proposed. Ground disturbances include activities such as grading, excavation, trenching, boring, or demolition that extend below the current grade. If there will be no ground disturbance, then archaeological monitoring and preparation of a monitoring and treatment plan shall not be required.

If there will be ground disturbance, prior to issuance of any permits required to conduct ground disturbing activities, the City may require said project to include archaeological monitoring during construction as a project condition. An archaeological monitor with at least three years of regional experience in archaeology shall be present for all ground-disturbing activities that occur within the proposed project area (which includes, but is not limited to, tree/shrub removal and planting, clearing/grubbing, grading, excavation, trenching, compaction, fence/gate removal and installation, drainage and irrigation removal and installation, hardscape installation [benches, signage, boulders, walls, seat walls, fountains, etc.], and archaeological work). A sufficient number of archaeological monitors shall be present each work day to ensure that simultaneously occurring ground disturbing activities receive thorough levels of monitoring coverage.



MM-7 Tribal Monitoring. Due to the heightened cultural sensitivity of the project area, at the discretion of the consulting tribe(s), Tribal monitor(s) authorized to represent Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (YSMN, also known as San Manuel Band of Mission Indians) shall be present for all ground-disturbing activities that occur within the project area (which includes, but is not limited to, tree/shrub removal and planting, clearing/grubbing, grading, excavation, trenching, compaction, fence/gate removal and installation, drainage and irrigation removal and installation, hardscape installation [benches, signage, boulders, walls, seat walls, fountains, etc.], and archaeological work). At the discretion of the consulting tribe(s), a sufficient number of Tribal monitors shall be present each work day to ensure that simultaneously occurring ground disturbing activities receive thorough levels of monitoring coverage.

MM-8 Treatment of Cultural Resources During Project Implementation. If a pre-contact cultural resource is discovered during project implementation, ground-disturbing activities shall be suspended 60 feet around the resource(s), and an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) physical demarcation/barrier constructed.

A qualified archaeologist shall be retained to develop a research design that shall include a plan to evaluate the resource for significance under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) criteria. Representatives from the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation (YSMN, also known as San Manuel Band of Mission Indians), the qualified archaeologist, and the City of Lancaster Community Development Department shall confer regarding the research design, as well as any testing efforts needed to delineate the resource boundary. Following the completion of evaluation efforts, all parties shall confer regarding the resource's archaeological significance, its potential as a Tribal Cultural Resource (TCR), and avoidance (or other appropriate treatment) of the discovered resource. Removal of any cultural resource(s) shall be conducted with the presence of a tribal monitor representing YSMN, unless otherwise decided by YSMN. All plans for analysis shall be reviewed and approved by the project applicant and YSMN prior to implementation, and all removed material shall be temporarily curated on-site.

It is the preference of YSMN that removed cultural material be reburied as close to the original find location as possible. However, should reburial within/near the original find location during project implementation not be feasible, then a reburial location for future reburial shall be decided upon by YSMN, the property owner, and the City of Lancaster, and all finds shall be reburied within this location. Additionally, in this case, reburial shall not occur until all ground-disturbing activities associated with the project have been completed, all monitoring has ceased, all cataloguing and basic recordation of cultural resources have been completed, and a final monitoring report has been issued to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department, California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), and YSMN. All reburials are subject to a reburial agreement that shall be developed between the property owner and YSMN outlining the determined reburial process/location and shall include measures and provisions to protect the reburial area from any future impacts.

Should it occur that avoidance, preservation in place, and on-site reburial are not an option for treatment, the property owner shall relinquish all ownership and rights to this material and confer with YSMN to identify an American Association of Museums (AAM)-accredited facility within the County of Los Angeles that can accession the materials into their permanent collections and provide for the proper care of these objects in accordance with the Office of Historic Preservation *Guidelines for the Curation of Archeological Collections* (1993). A curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository shall be developed between the property owner and museum that legally and physically transfers the collections and associated records to the facility. This agreement shall stipulate the payment of fees necessary for permanent curation of the collections and associated records and the obligation of the project developer/applicant to pay for those fees.



All draft records/reports containing the significance and treatment findings and data recovery results shall be prepared by the qualified archaeologist and submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department and YSMN for their review and comment. After approval from all parties, the final reports and site/isolate records are to be submitted to the local CHRIS Information Center, the City of Lancaster, and YSMN.

MM-9 Inadvertent Discoveries of Human Remains. If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any activities associated with the project, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and that code enforced for the duration of the project.

## SOLAR FACILITY

Refer to Mitigation Measures MM-5 through MM-9.

c) ***Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

As discussed above, the project site, including the annexation area, includes archaeological resources that indicates the site had prolonged use for precontact activities. As such, human remains may be encountered on-site. However, it should be noted that the annexation area component would not including construction or development. Additionally, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with its current Lancaster General Plan land use designation of NU. Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the Lancaster General Plan and Lancaster General Plan EIR. As such, the annexation area would not have the potential to disturb any potential human remains on-site. Any future development or construction on the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As discussed in the Cultural/Paleo Report, the project site, including the solar facility contains archaeological resources that indicates that the site had prolonged use for precontact activities. As such, the project site may contain precontact human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries, during earth removal or ground disturbing activities. If human remains are found, those remains would require proper treatment, in accordance with applicable laws. State of California Public Resources Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 through 7055 describe the general provisions for human remains. Specifically, Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 describes the requirements if any human remains are accidentally discovered during excavation of a site. As required by State law, the requirements and procedures set forth in Section 5097.98 of the California Public Resources Code would be implemented, including notification of the County Coroner, notification of the Native American Heritage Commission, and consultation with the individual identified by the Native American Heritage Commission to be the most likely descendant. If human remains are found during excavation, excavation must stop near the find and any area that is reasonably suspected to overlay adjacent remains until the County Coroner has been called out, the remains have been investigated, and appropriate recommendations have been made for the treatment and disposition of the remains. Following compliance with the aforementioned regulations, impacts related to the disturbance of human remains are less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.6 ENERGY

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			✓	
b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			✓	

### REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### State

##### Senate Bill 100

Senate Bill (SB) 100 (Chapter 312, Statutes of 2018) requires that retail sellers and local publicly owned electric utilities procure a minimum quantity of electricity products from eligible renewable energy resources so that the total kilowatt-hours (kWh) of those products sold to their retail end-use customers achieve 44 percent of retail sales by December 31, 2024; 52 percent by December 31, 2027; 60 percent by December 31, 2030; and 100 percent by December 31, 2045. SB 100 requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), California Energy Commission (CEC), California Air Resources Board (CARB), and all other state agencies incorporate this policy into all relevant planning. In addition, SB 100 requires the CPUC, CEC, and state board to utilize programs authorized under existing statutes to achieve such renewable energy goals.

##### California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Energy Code; Title 24)

The 2022 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6), commonly referred to as “Title 24,” became effective on January 1, 2023. In general, Title 24 requires the design of building shells and building components to conserve energy. The standards are updated periodically to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. The 2022 Title 24 standards encourage efficient electric heat pumps, establish electric-ready requirements for new homes, expand solar photovoltaic and battery storage standards, strengthen ventilation standards, and more. Buildings whose permit applications are applied for on or after January 1, 2023, must comply with the 2022 Title 24 standards.

##### California Green Building Standards (CALGreen)

The 2022 updates to CALGreen (2022 CALGreen) went into effect on January 1, 2023. The 2022 California Green Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11), commonly referred to as CALGreen, went into effect on January 1, 2023. CALGreen is the first-in-the-nation mandatory green buildings standards code. The California Building Standards Commission developed the green building standards in an effort to meet the goals of California’s landmark initiative Assembly Bill (AB) 32, which established a comprehensive program of cost-effective reductions of GHGs to 1990 levels by 2020. CALGreen was developed to (1) reduce GHGs from buildings; (2) promote environmentally responsible, cost-effective, healthier places to live and work; (3) reduce energy and water consumption; and (4) respond to the environmental directives of the administration. CALGreen requires that new



buildings employ water efficiency and conservation, increase building system efficiencies (e.g., lighting, heating/ventilation and air conditioning [HVAC], and plumbing fixtures), divert construction waste from landfills, and incorporate electric vehicles charging infrastructure. There is growing recognition among developers and retailers that sustainable construction is not prohibitively expensive, and that there is a significant cost-savings potential in green building practices and materials.<sup>1</sup>

### California Energy Commission Integrated Energy Policy Report

In 2002, the California State legislature adopted SB 1389, which requires the CEC to develop an Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) every two years. SB 1389 requires the CEC to conduct assessments and forecasts of all aspects of energy industry supply, production, transportation, delivery and distribution, demand, and prices, and use these assessments and forecasts to develop energy policies that conserve resources, protect the environment, ensure energy reliability, enhance the State's economy, and protect public health and safety.

The CEC adopted the 2023 Integrated Energy Policy Report (2023 IEPR) on February 14, 2024. The 2023 IEPR provides the results of the CEC's assessments of a variety of energy issues facing California, many of which will require action if the State is to meet its climate, energy, air quality, and other environmental goals while maintaining reliability and controlling costs. The 2023 IEPR discusses speeding connection of clean resources to the electricity grid, the potential use of clean and renewable hydrogen, and the California Energy Demand Forecast to 2040.

## **Local**

### City of Lancaster General Plan

The General Plan was adopted on July 14, 2009, and has a horizon year of 2030. The Plan for the Natural Environment chapter includes goals, objectives, policies, and actions related to energy resources and efficiency. The objectives and policies related to the proposed project are listed below.

Objective 3.6: Encourage efficient use of energy resources through the promotion of efficient land use patterns and the incorporation of energy conservation practices into new and existing development, and appropriate use of alternative energy.

Policy 3.6.1: Reduce energy consumption by establishing land use patterns which would decrease automobile travel and increase the use of energy efficient modes of transportation.

Policy 3.6.2: Encourage innovative building, site design, and orientation techniques which minimize energy use.

Policy 3.6.3: Encourage the incorporation of energy conservation measures in existing and new structures.

Policy 3.6.4: Support State and Federal legislation that would eliminate wasteful energy consumption in an appropriate manner.

Policy 3.6.5: Promote the amount of energy consumed by City operations and assist residents and businesses in reducing their energy consumption rates.

Policy 3.6.6: Consider and promote the use of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar energy.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Green Building Council, *Green Building Costs and Savings*, <https://www.usgbc.org/articles/green-building-costs-and-savings>, accessed May 1, 2024.



## IMPACT THRESHOLDS AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

CEQA Guidelines Appendix G contains the Environmental Checklist Form that was used during the preparation of this document. Accordingly, a project may create a significant adverse environmental impact if it would:

- a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; and
- b) Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Based on these standards/criteria, the effects of the proposed project have been categorized as either a “less than significant impact” or a “potentially significant impact.” If a potentially significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant level through the application of goals, policies, standards, or mitigation, it is categorized as a significant and unavoidable impact. The standards used to evaluate the significance of impacts are often qualitative rather than quantitative because appropriate quantitative standards are either not available for many types of impacts or are not applicable for some types of projects.

CEQA Guidelines Appendix F is an advisory document that assists in determining whether a project will result in the inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. The analysis in Section 4.6(a) relies on Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines, which includes the following criteria to determine whether the threshold of significance is met:

- Criterion 1: The project’s energy requirements and its energy use efficiencies by amount and fuel type for each stage of the project including construction, operation, maintenance and/or removal. If appropriate, the energy intensiveness of materials may be discussed.
- Criterion 2: The effects of the project on local and regional energy supplies and on requirements for additional capacity.
- Criterion 3: The effects of the project on peak and base period demands for electricity and other forms of energy.
- Criterion 4: The degree to which the project complies with existing energy standards.
- Criterion 5: The effects of the project on energy resources.
- Criterion 6: The project’s projected transportation energy use requirements and its overall use of efficient transportation alternatives.

- a) ***Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?***

### Less Than Significant Impact.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

### Construction-Related Energy

The proposed annexation encompasses approximately 638 acres and is located within the City’s sphere of influence (SOI) and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City’s jurisdiction in the General Plan. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres), which would allow for an anticipated maximum buildout of 255 dwelling units for rural single-family residential uses. It should be noted



that there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). As such, construction details of future projects are unknown at this stage of the planning process; construction-related energy consumption that may occur at any one time is speculative and cannot be accurately determined at this time. Notwithstanding, some incidental energy conservation would occur during construction through compliance with State requirements that equipment not in use for more than five minutes be turned off. Construction equipment would also be required to comply with the latest U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Air Resources Board (CARB) engine emissions standards. These emissions standards require highly efficient combustion systems that maximize fuel efficiency and reduce unnecessary fuel consumption. In addition, because the cost of fuel and transportation is a significant aspect of construction budgets, contractors have a strong financial incentive to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during construction (Criterion 4).

Significant reductions in energy inputs for construction materials can be achieved by selecting construction materials composed of recycled materials that require less energy to produce than non-recycled materials.<sup>2</sup> The integration of resource-efficient construction materials can help reduce environmental impacts associated with the extraction, transport, processing, fabrication, installation, reuse, recycling, and disposal of these construction materials.<sup>3</sup> As such, construction would have a nominal effect on the local and regional energy supplies (Criterion 2). It is noted that construction fuel use is temporary and would cease upon completion of construction activities. There are no unusual characteristics associated with future development within the proposed annexation area that would necessitate the use of construction equipment, materials, or methods that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or State (Criterion 5). Therefore, fuel energy and construction materials consumed during construction would not represent a significant demand on energy resources.

Additionally, all future developments within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development is consistent with the General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

### Operational Energy

Future projects within the annexation area would result in operational energy demand. As discussed above, future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development occurs in a logical manner consistent with the General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Specifically, future projects would be required to comply with the most current version of the Title 24 and CALGreen standards, which provide efficiency standards related to various building features, including appliances, water and space heating and cooling equipment, building insulation and roofing, and lighting. Furthermore, the Title 24 and CALGreen standards are updated every three years and become more stringent between each update; therefore, implementation of the proposed annexation area would not result in excessive long-term operational energy consumption or result in unique or more intensive peak or base period electricity demand (Criteria 2 and 4).

The electricity provider for the City, Lancaster Choice Energy, is subject to California's Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) reflected in SB 100. The RPS requires investor-owned utilities, electric service providers, and community choice aggregators to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 100 percent of total procurement by 2045. Renewable energy is generally defined as energy that comes from resources which is naturally replenished within a human timescale such as sunlight, wind, tides, waves, and geothermal heat. The increase in reliance of such

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, *Green Building Materials*, <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/greenbuilding/materials#Material>, accessed May 2, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



energy resources further ensures that future development within the proposed annexation area would not result in the waste of finite energy resources (Criterion 5).

The key drivers of transportation-related fuel consumption are job locations/commuting distance and many personal choices on when and where to drive for various purposes. As discussed above, future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. Operational energy consumption associated with future projects would be analyzed prior to the development, and vehicle miles traveled-reducing improvements encouraging residents, workers, and visitors within the City to use alternative transportation methods, including walking, biking, and transit would be implemented as appropriate. Therefore, implementation of the proposed annexation area would contribute towards improving the overall traffic flow throughout the City and contribute towards reducing Citywide fuel consumption. Overall, fuel consumption associated with the proposed annexation area would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to other developments in the region (Criterion 2 and Criterion 6).

Therefore, implementation of the proposed annexation would not cause wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during operation, or preempt future energy development or future energy conservation. A less than significant impact would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses on the sources of energy that are relevant to the solar facility: fuel for vehicle trips during construction and operations, as well as fuel for off-road equipment associated with construction. The solar facility would not use natural gas or electricity on-site during operations. The results of the California Emissions Estimator Model version 2022.1 (CalEEMod) and energy consumption modeling are included in Appendix A, Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data. The amount of operational fuel consumption was estimated using the annual Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as modeled in CalEEMod and CARB Emissions Factor 2021 (EMFAC2021) computer program, which provides projections for typical daily fuel (i.e., diesel and gasoline) usage in the County. The estimated construction fuel consumption is based on the solar facility's construction equipment list, timing/phasing, and hours of duration for construction equipment, as well as vendor, hauling, and construction worker trips.

It should be noted that the proposed solar facility includes an 80-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) alternating current (AC) electric generating facility. The average daily solar radiation at the project location for 80 MW solar PV with standard and fixed open rack is 6.62 kWh per square meter per day.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the solar facility project would generate approximately 146,681 megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity per year, which could be used to replace fossil fuels-generated electricity. Thus, electricity generated by the solar facility would replace approximately 0.002 percent of electricity consumed annually in Los Angeles County<sup>5</sup> that are primarily generated from nonrenewable sources. Further, over the 30 years life of the project, the project would generate approximately 4,400,430 MWh of electricity in total.

The solar facility's estimated construction and operational fuel consumption is summarized in Table 4.6-1, Solar Facility and Countywide Energy Consumption. The solar facility's off-road construction (equipment) diesel fuel consumption, on-road construction fuel consumption, and operational vehicle fuel consumption would increase the County's consumption by 0.4048 percent, 0.0037 percent, and 0.00001 percent, respectively (Criterion 1).

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<sup>4</sup> National Renewable Energy Laboratory, *PVWatts® Calculator*, <https://pvwatts.nrel.gov/>, accessed June 9, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles County electricity consumption data for year 2022, California Energy Commission, *Electricity Consumption by County*, <http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/>, accessed July 2, 2024.



**Table 4.6-1**  
**Solar Facility and Countywide Energy Consumption**

Energy Type	Solar Facility Annual Energy Consumption	Los Angeles County Annual Energy Consumption <sup>2</sup>	Percentage Increase Countywide <sup>2</sup>
<b>Fuel Consumption</b>			
• Construction Off-Road Fuel Consumption <sup>3</sup>	27,535 gallons	32,057,095 gallons	0.4048%
• Construction On-Road Fuel Consumption <sup>3</sup>	4,280 gallons	116,711,190 gallons	0.0037%
• Operational Automotive Fuel Consumption <sup>3</sup>	9 gallons	116,711,190 gallons	0.00001%
Notes:			
1. As modeled in CalEEMod version 2022.1.			
2. The proposed solar facility increases in construction off-road and on-road fuel consumption are compared with the projected Los Angeles Countywide off-road fuel consumption and Los Angeles Countywide on-road fuel consumption in 2026, which is the year of construction. The proposed solar facility increase in operational automotive fuel consumption is compared with the projected Countywide on-road fuel consumption in 2026, which is the first year of operation.			
3. Proposed solar facility fuel consumption calculated based on CalEEMod results. Countywide operational fuel consumption, off-road construction equipment diesel fuel consumption, and on-road fuel consumption are from CARB EMFAC2021.			
Refer to Appendix A, <i>Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data</i> , for assumptions used in this analysis.			

### Construction-Related Energy

Construction would consume energy in two general forms: (1) the fuel energy consumed by construction vehicles and equipment; and (2) bound energy in construction materials, such as asphalt, steel, concrete, pipes, and manufactured or processed materials such as lumber and glass. Overall, it is acknowledged that the electricity required to construct the solar facility is anticipated to be negligible compared to the amount of renewable electricity to be generated by the solar facility. Therefore, the discussion below focuses on fossil fuel consumption during construction of the solar facility.

Construction vehicles and other energy-consuming equipment would be used during the construction phase of the solar facility. Fuel consumed during the construction phase would be temporary and would not represent a significant demand on energy resources. It is assumed that diesel fuel would be primarily used for construction vehicles (i.e., haul trucks used for the transportation of solar arrays, solar panels, and associated equipment) and other off-road energy-consuming equipment, while gasoline would be primarily used for vehicles used by construction workers. As shown in Table 4.6-1, the solar facility's construction on-road fuel consumption would be approximately 4,280 gallons per year, which would constitute a nominal (approximately 0.0037 percent) increase over the County's typical annual on-road fuel consumption, the solar facility's construction off-road fuel consumption would be approximately 27,535 gallons per year, which would constitute a nominal (approximately 0.4048 percent) increase over the County's typical annual off-road construction fuel consumption. In addition, some incidental energy conservation would occur during construction through compliance with State requirements that heavy-duty diesel equipment not in use for more than five minutes be turned off. Construction equipment would also be required to comply with the latest EPA and CARB engine emissions standards. These emissions standards require highly efficient combustion systems that maximize fuel efficiency and reduce unnecessary fuel consumption. Furthermore, due to increasing transportation costs and fuel prices, contractors and owners have a strong financial incentive to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during construction (Criterion 4).

Further, project-related incremental increase in the use of energy bound in construction materials (i.e., energy supplies) such as metal, concrete, and manufactured or processed materials (e.g., lumber) would not substantially increase demand for energy compared to overall local and regional demand for construction materials. As such, construction would have a nominal effect on the local and regional energy supplies (Criterion 2). Additionally, it is noted that there are no unusual project characteristics that would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or State (Criterion 5). Therefore, construction fuel consumption would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than other similar development projects of this nature. As such, a less than significant impact would occur.



## Decommissioning-Related Energy

At the end of the proposed solar facility's operational term, the applicant may determine that the solar facility site should be decommissioned and deconstructed. Solar panels are typically mounted on support structures that are pile-driven into the ground, rather than resting directly on the surface. When decommissioning, these support structures would also be removed, which involves pulling out the piles and restoring the land to its natural state. At the end of battery life, battery modules would be removed from the racks and packaged for return transportation to the manufacturer or their approved Recycling Partner(s) for dismantling, material processing, and recovery. The solar facility would implement decommissioning best management practices (BMPs) to ensure the collection and recycling of modules and to avoid the potential for modules to be disposed of as municipal waste.

Equipment would be de-energized prior to removal, salvaged (where possible), placed in appropriate shipping containers, and secured in a truck transport trailer for shipment off-site to be recycled or disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal facility in accordance with existing regulations. Site infrastructure would be removed, including the fences and the concrete pads that may support the inverters, transformers, and related equipment. The exterior fencing and gates would be removed, and all materials would be recycled to the extent feasible. On-site roadways would be restored to their pre-construction condition unless the landowner elects to retain the improved roads for access throughout the property. The area would be thoroughly cleaned, and all debris removed. A collection and recycling program would be executed to promote recycling of components and minimize disposal in landfills. Due to the lack of details on decommissioning, it was assumed that the decommissioning phase would utilize similar amount of energy as the construction phase. As such, impacts regarding decommissioning-related energy would also be less than significant.

## Operational Energy

### Operational Energy Demand and Generation

As previously stated, the solar facility would not consume natural gas or electricity during operation. Therefore, the solar facility would have nominal effects on the local and regional energy and fuel supplies and on requirements for additional capacity (Criteria 2 and 4). Further, the solar facility would provide the County and the State of California with additional renewable energy sources on previously disturbed land that would assist the State in complying with the RPS under SB 100. Renewable energy is generally defined as energy that comes from resources which are naturally replenished within a human timescale such as sunlight, wind, tides, waves, and geothermal heat. The increase in reliance of such energy resources further ensures that new development would not result in the waste of the finite energy resources (Criterion 5). Therefore, the solar facility would not cause wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during operation, or preempt future energy development or future energy conservation. A less than significant impact would occur.

### Transportation Energy

Pursuant to the Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NTSA) is responsible for establishing additional vehicle standards and for revising existing standards. Compliance with Federal fuel economy standards is not determined for each individual vehicle model. Rather, compliance is determined based on each manufacturer's average fuel economy for the portion of their vehicles produced for sale in the United States.

The key drivers of transportation-related fuel consumption are job locations/commuting distance and many personal choices on when and where to drive for various purposes. Those factors are outside of the scope of the design of the solar facility. Based on the *Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – Solar Project Scoping*, prepared by Michael Baker International and dated May 6, 2024, during operation, the solar facility would generate a maximum of 24 average daily trips over a 24-hour period, once a year, with maintenance including routine maintenance, as-needed maintenance,



and panel cleaning, occurring simultaneously; refer to Appendix F, VMT Assessments. As indicated in Table 4.6-1, operational daily trips are estimated to consume approximately nine gallons of fuel per year, which would represent a negligible (less than 0.0001 percent) amount compared to County's automotive fuel consumption. As such, the proposed solar facility would consume nominal amount of transportation fuels and does not propose any unusual features that would result in excessive long-term operational fuel consumption (Criterion 2 and Criterion 6). Therefore, fuel consumption associated with project-related vehicle trips would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary in comparison to other similar developments in the region.

Lastly, the proposed solar facility would provide additional renewable energy sources; thus, the project would not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy during operation. Overall, a less than significant impact would occur.

### **Conclusion**

The solar facility would not result in a substantial increase in demand for electrical transmission service, resulting in the need for new or expanded sources of energy supply or new or expanded energy delivery systems or infrastructure. In addition, the solar facility would provide additional renewable energy sources on previously disturbed land; thus, the solar facility would not result in the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy during operation. Overall, a less than significant impact would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### ***b) Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

As discussed above, the proposed annexation would not result in direct increases in energy consumption as there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). The proposed annexation area and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide the framework for future development within the annexation area. The proposed annexation would also support the CAP measures by supporting alternative energy uses (i.e., solar photovoltaic electric generation); refer Table 4.6-2. Further, all future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development occurs in a logical manner consistent with the General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Specifically, future projects would be required to comply with the most current version of the Title 24 standards and CALGreen Code to improve energy efficiency and promote green building practices. Therefore, the proposed annexation area would not conflict with renewable energy or energy efficiency plans and impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

## **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

### **Consistency with the City of Lancaster CAP**

Consistency with applicable CAP measures is analyzed in Table 4.6-2, Solar Facility Consistency with City's Climate Action Plan. As depicted in Table 4.6-2, the proposed solar facility would be consistent with the City's CAP.



**Table 4.6-2**  
**Solar Facility Consistency with City's Climate Action Plan**

Measure Code	Measure	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Energy Measures</b>		
4.2.1a:	<u>Renewable Energy Purchase Plan</u> . Increase Lancaster Choice Energy's renewable energy and carbon free energy purchase.	<b>Consistent.</b> The solar facility would provide the State with additional renewable energy sources by generating solar energy. Therefore, the solar facility would support this measure.
4.2.2c	<u>Lancaster Choice Energy Programs</u> . Develop energy efficiency programs that will provide opportunities for residential and commercial buildings to become more energy efficient, reduce usage, and save money.	<b>Not Applicable.</b> The solar facility would not include buildings that would consume energy during operation. Therefore, this measure is not applicable to the solar facility.
Source: City of Lancaster, <i>City of Lancaster Climate Action Plan</i> , March 2017.		

**Conclusion**

As discussed above, the proposed solar facility would not consume natural gas or electricity during operation. The proposed solar facility would provide the City, the County, and the State of California with additional renewable energy sources on previously disturbed land that would assist the State in complying with the RPS under SB 100. Further, the proposed solar facility would support the City's CAP and General Plan Policy 3.6.6 by generating solar energy. Therefore, the proposed solar facility would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency and impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
1) 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.				✓
2) Strong seismic ground shaking?			✓	
3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			✓	
4) Landslides?				✓
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✓	
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?			✓	
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			✓	
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?			✓	
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✓		

This section is partially based upon the *Cultural Resources and Paleontological Identification Study for the Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California* (Cultural/Paleo Report), prepared by Michael Baker International and dated April 2024; refer to [Appendix C, Cultural/Paleontological Resources Reports](#).

**a) *Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:***

**1) *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.***



**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Southern California, including the project area, is subject to the effects of seismic activity due to the active faults that traverse the area. Active faults are defined as those that have experienced surface displacement within Holocene time (approximately the last 11,000 years) and/or are in a State-designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone.

According to the *Lancaster General Plan 2030 Master Environmental Assessment* (General Plan MEA) Figure 2-5, *Faults in the Antelope Valley Region*, there are no earthquake fault zones within the City or the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI).<sup>1</sup> According to the General Plan EIR, the nearest active fault is the San Andreas Fault, which is located approximately 13 miles south of the project site. Due to the distance, the potential for surface rupture of a known active fault is considered very low. No impact would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 2) ***Strong seismic ground shaking?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Southern California is known to be earthquake prone, and the City and City's SOI would likely be subjected to some degree of seismic ground shaking during earthquake events. The proposed annexation and pre-zone would not include any proposed development or construction, and as such would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground-shaking. The annexation and RR-2.5 pre-zone would accommodate new rural single-family residential uses, as well as other uses subject to conditional use permits. All future development permitted by the annexation and RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to comply with existing regulatory requirements, including the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act, Seismic Hazard Mapping Act, the California Building Standards Code (CBSC), and LMC Chapter 15.08, *Building Code*. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed development would be limited primarily to solar panel installations and would entail minimal soil disturbance. Mass grading of the solar facility site would not be permitted and would be limited to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (i.e., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). Additionally, the proposed off-site generation-tie (gen-tie) and communication lines would be installed within existing paved public right-of-way. The solar facility would be designed and constructed in compliance with existing regulatory requirements, including the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act, Seismic Hazard Mapping Act, the California Building Standards Code (CBSC), and LMC Chapter 15.08, *Building Code*. Further, operation of the solar facility would not include any residences or habitable structures; the site would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. As such, the solar facility would not directly or

<sup>1</sup> City of Lancaster, *Lancaster General Plan 2030 Master Environmental Assessment*, April 2009.



indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground-shaking. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 3) **Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**

#### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Liquefaction of cohesionless soils can be caused by strong vibratory motion due to earthquakes. Liquefaction is characterized by a loss of shear strength in the affected soil layers, thereby causing the soils to behave as a viscous liquid. Susceptibility to liquefaction is based on geologic and geotechnical data. River channels and floodplains are considered most susceptible to liquefaction, while alluvial fans have a lower susceptibility. Depth to groundwater is another important element in the susceptibility to liquefaction. Groundwater shallower than 30 feet results in high to very high susceptibility to liquefaction, while deeper water results in low and very low susceptibility.

As shown in the General Plan MEA Figure 2-6, *Study Area Seismic Hazards Map*, there is a portion of the annexation area with liquefaction potential located along the length of Little Rock Wash (traversing north to south along 60th Street East) in the eastern portion of the annexation area. The proposed annexation would not include any development or construction. However, future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zoning within the annexation area could occur in a potential liquefaction zone. Additionally, future improvements would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety to reduce potential liquefaction impacts. Thus, the proposed annexation action itself would not expose people or structures to adverse liquefaction hazards, and impacts would be less than significant.

#### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

According to the Phase I ESA prepared for the solar facility, *Phase-I Environmental Site Assessment, Three Adjoining Parcels Totalling Approximately 280 Acres, Assessor Parcel #'s 3384-001-001; -002; And -003, East Side of 50<sup>th</sup> Street East, North Side of Lancaster Blvd, Lancaster, California 93535*, prepared by Bruin Geotechnical Services, Inc., dated December 6, 2021, groundwater within the site vicinity is greater than 100 feet below ground surface; refer to [Appendix D, Phase I ESA](#).

As shown in the General Plan MEA Figure 2-6, *Study Area Seismic Hazards Map*, there is a portion of the solar facility site with liquefaction potential. However, this liquefaction zone is located along the length of Little Rock Wash (traversing north to south along 60th Street East), and no development or ground disturbance is proposed within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash. As such, development of the solar facility would not occur in a potential liquefaction zone. Regardless, the solar facility would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety. Further, operation of the proposed solar facility would not include any residences or habitable structures; the site would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation.

As such, liquefaction impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level upon compliance with applicable federal and State laws and the City's Building and Zoning Codes.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



4) **Landslides?**

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Landslides, slope failures, and mudflows of earth materials generally occur where slopes are steep and/or the earth materials are too weak to support themselves. Earthquake-induced landslides may also occur due to seismic ground shaking. However, only the southwest areas within the City and City's SOI, directly below the north slopes of Quartz Hill and along the slopes of Portal Ridge, are susceptible to landslide hazards. The project site is entirely flat and there are no adjacent hillsides. Therefore, the project site does not have the potential for earthquake induced landslides, and project implementation would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides. No impact would occur.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

b) **Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The annexation area mostly consists of vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields (both active and fallow). The proposed annexation would not include any development or construction. The proposed annexation includes a proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone, which would accommodate rural residential uses consistent with the site's existing Non-Urban Residential (NU) land use designation. Construction of uses in accordance with the RR-2.5 zone could require grading activities with the potential to result in soil erosion or loss of topsoil.

LMC Section 8.50.110, *Grading Design Plan*, requires that grading of a project site during construction be designed to minimize soil erosion, runoff, and water waste. LMC Section 8.16.030 *Disturbing Surface of Land or Causing Wind Erosion Prohibited*, prohibits the disturbance of surface or subsurface land by excavating, grading, leveling cultivating, plowing, discing, removing any existing vegetation or by depositing or spreading a quantity of soil on said land, or by any other act likely to cause or contribute to dust emission or wind erosion of said land during construction activities. LMC Section 8.16.030 also prohibits the aggravation of an existing dust or wind erosion condition without providing sufficient protection. Further, LMC Section 15.64.060, *Drainage/Flood Control Improvements Fee*, funds mitigation of stormwater runoff impacts caused by the construction and operation of new development.

In compliance with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, development projects involving one or more acres of site disturbance would be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and associated best management practices (BMPs) in compliance with the SWRCB's Construction General Permit during grading and construction. Typical BMPs include erosion prevention mats or geofabrics, silt fencing, sandbags, plastic sheeting, temporary drainage devices, and positive surface drainage to allow surface runoff to flow away from site improvements or areas susceptible to erosion. Additionally, in compliance with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) Rule 403, future development projects would be required to apply dust control techniques, such as watering exposed surfaces three times daily and limiting speeds on unpaved roads to 25 miles per hour, during construction. Adherence to Rule



403 would reduce the amount of particulate matter entrained in the ambient air to prevent, reduce, and mitigate fugitive dust emissions during disturbance of topsoil.

As such, future development projects within the annexation area would be required to comply with the LMC and the NPDES program requirements. Further, all future development projects would be required to undergo separate environmental review under CEQA to evaluate site-specific impacts and identify any required mitigation measures. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The primary concern in regard to soil erosion or loss of topsoil would occur during the construction phase of the solar project. The site is predominantly pervious with minimal impervious areas associated with the single-family residence and associated ancillary farm structures. All structures on-site would be demolished prior to construction of the solar facility development. However, mass grading of the solar facility site would not be permitted; grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (i.e., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). Additionally, the proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed within existing paved public right-of-way. The proposed development would be limited primarily to solar panel installation and would entail minimal soil disturbance. Grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment. All demolition and construction activities would be subject to compliance with Section 8.16.030 *Disturbing Surface of Land or Causing Wind Erosion Prohibited*, Section 8.50.110, *Grading Design Plan*, and Section 15.64.060, *Drainage/Flood Control Improvements Fee*, of the LMC, and the NPDES program requirements. The NPDES Construction General Permit requires preparation of a SWPPP, which would identify specific erosion and sediment control BMPs to be implemented in order to protect stormwater runoff during construction activities. Compliance with the LMC and NPDES requirements would minimize effects from soil erosion. Following compliance with the LMC and NPDES requirements, construction activities associated with the solar facility would result in a less than significant impact.

Operation of the proposed solar facility would minimally increase impervious areas on-site, primarily from the development of concrete pads for electrical transformers and battery storage boxes, among other improvements. It is not anticipated that the potential for soil erosion or loss of topsoil would increase from existing conditions. No operational impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 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 an on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Sections 4.7(a)(3) and 4.7(a)(4) regarding liquefaction and landslide impacts.

Fissures can lead to subsidence as surface water enters fissures and moves laterally through the soils to eventually erode the underlying rock material. Similar to subsidence hazards, collapsible/compressible soils are also associated with fissures. However, according to the General Plan MEA Figure 2-3, *Soil Stability Issues*, the annexation area does not include any fissures or sinkholes and is mapped as having low shrink/swell potential.



Any future developments would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety to reduce potential geologic hazards. Thus, the proposed annexation itself would not expose people or structures to adverse hazards, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Sections 4.7(a)(3) and 4.7(a)(4) regarding liquefaction and landslide impacts.

As stated, the solar facility site is located within a seismically-active area that could result in unstable soil conditions. However, the proposed development on-site would be limited to solar panels and ancillary operational equipment/structures and would entail minimal soil disturbance. Grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment. Additionally, the proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed within existing paved public right-of-way. The solar project would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety to ensure geotechnical stability with respect to potential lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, and collapsible soils hazards. Upon implementation of existing regulations, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- d) ***Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

As detailed in Section 4.7(c), soil within the annexation area has low shrink-swell potential (i.e., expansion). All future development projects in the annexation area and in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zone would be required to undergo separate environmental review under CEQA to evaluate site-specific impacts and identify any required mitigation measures. Additionally, future projects would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety to reduce impacts related to expansive soils. Thus, the proposed annexation itself would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to property or life due to being located on expansive soil, and impacts would be less than significant.

### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

As stated, soil within the solar facility site has low shrink-swell potential (i.e., expansion). The solar facility development would be required to comply with the CBSC and LMC requirements related to building safety to ensure geotechnical stability with respect to expansive soils. Further, operation of the proposed solar facility would not include any residences or habitable structures; the site would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. Upon implementation of existing regulations, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



- e) ***Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Existing uses in the annexation area utilize individual septic tanks for wastewater disposal. Similarly, future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zoning would likely utilize septic tanks for wastewater disposal. The use of septic tanks in the City is regulated by LMC Section 16.24.210, *Use of septic tanks*, which allows the use of on-site septic systems in nonurban residential areas as defined by the General Plan only where there is no feasible method of providing sanitary sewers, and where the soil and groundwater conditions of the site are suitable for the use of such systems. Additionally, the 2022 California Plumbing Code (CPC) contains plumbing design and construction standards related to septic tanks. The standards protect against hazards that may arise from the use of plumbing piping and systems by regulating and controlling the design, construction, installation, quality of materials, location and operation of plumbing piping systems within the State. Specifically, septic tank systems are required to meet design criteria, distance requirements, and capacity standards outlined in Appendix H, *Private Sewage Disposal System*, of the 2022 CPC. Additionally, new septic tank systems would also be required to meet design criteria and soil absorption capacities that are compatible with existing on-site soils. Upon compliance with existing State and local regulations, impacts in this regard would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Operation of the proposed solar facility would not include any residences or habitable structures; the site would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. Thus, no septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would be constructed as part of the solar facility and no impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- f) ***Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.** The Cultural/Paleo Report analyzed potential project impacts on paleontological resources. The Cultural/Paleo Report conducted a record search for paleontological resources at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, a search of online databases, and a paleontological sensitivity analysis. Two localities were identified at shallow depths and within five miles of the project area from similar rock formations to those underlying the project area, including one locality with several mammal, reptile, and fish fossils. Due to the fossil sensitivity of the rock formations present within the project area (Quaternary-aged alluvium, Younger eolian deposits of Holocene age, and Younger alluvial fan deposits of Holocene to late Pleistocene age), the project site has a high potential to disturb paleontological resources within undisturbed bedrock.

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The proposed annexation would not include any development or construction. As such, the annexation action in and of itself would not require monitoring or result in excavation that could destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. However, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would permit uses consistent with the annexation area's existing NU land use designation. Due to the fossil sensitivity of the annexation area, implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-10 would ensure that, future projects, requiring a discretionary action under CEQA, halt all ground-disturbing activities if any paleontological resources are encountered and for a qualified paleontologist to assess the significance of the find. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate avoidance measures recommended by the qualified paleontologist and approved by the City would be followed. Additionally, Mitigation



Measure MM-10 would require a paleontological resources monitor be present during ground-disturbing activities for future projects, requiring a discretionary action under CEQA, within the annexation area that include excavations at or five feet below the surface where soil transitions to native sediments. As such, impacts regarding paleontological resources would be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation incorporated.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

Due to the fossil sensitivity of rock formations present within the project area and high potential to disturb paleontological resources within undisturbed bedrock, ground disturbing activities associated with construction of the solar facility could encounter previously undiscovered paleontological resources if anticipated to be at or below five feet below the surface. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-10 would ensure that, should any paleontological resources be encountered during ground-disturbing activities, all such activities are halted until a qualified paleontologist assesses the significance of the find, and Mitigation Measure MM-11 would ensure a paleontological resources monitor is present during ground-disturbing activities at depths at or greater than five feet at the presumed transition to native sediments. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate avoidance measures recommended by the qualified paleontologist and approved by the City would be followed. As such, impacts regarding paleontological resources would be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation incorporated.

### Mitigation Measures:

## ANNEXATION

MM-10 Paleontological Resources Inadvertent Discovery. For future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA), the applicant shall retain a qualified paleontologist prior to issuance of grading and/or construction permit(s). In the event that paleontological resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, all construction activities in the immediate area of the find shall be temporarily halted, and the qualified paleontologist shall evaluate the find to determine the appropriate treatment in accordance with Society for Vertebrate Paleontology guidelines for identification, evaluation, disclosure, avoidance, recovery, or curation, as appropriate. Any fossils recovered during mitigation shall be deposited to an accredited and permanent scientific institution.

MM-11 Paleontological Monitoring. For future development within the annexation area subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (meaning, subject to discretionary action and non-exempt from CEQA), paleontological monitoring shall occur during all ground disturbing activities at or five feet below the surface by a qualified paleontologist (retained per Mitigation Measure MM-10). Activities to be monitored include grading, trenching, drilling, and any other ground disturbing activities that reach native sediments. The monitors will examine sediments exposed by grading activities, take photographs, and may collect sediment samples for microfossil and sedimentary analysis, as safety conditions permit. Tools used on-site can include brushes, trowels, geology hammers, sieves, GPS units, and tablets for recordation during monitoring, as well as collection materials in instances of fossil discovery.

Boring and drilling of deep holes may also be monitored on a part-time basis. These activities bring subsurface sediments to the surface as loosened spoils. Although the precise depth of discovery can be difficult to ascertain, fossils recovered from boring and drilling activities may still be significant. The qualified paleontologist will determine the monitoring of these activities.

The qualified paleontologist shall complete, at a minimum, a daily written monitoring log as well as other documentation, such as photographic records and other forms, as determined by the qualified paleontologist.



**SOLAR FACILITY**

Refer to Mitigation Measures MM-10 and MM-11.



## 4.8 GREENHOUSE GASES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓	
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓	

### GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

California is a substantial contributor of global greenhouse gases (GHGs), emitting over 381.3 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year.<sup>1</sup> Climate studies indicate that California is likely to see an increase of three to four degrees Fahrenheit over the next century. Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is also an important GHG that potentially contributes to global climate change. GHGs are global in their effect, which is to increase the earth's ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere. As primary GHGs have a long lifetime in the atmosphere, accumulate over time, and are generally well-mixed, their impact on the atmosphere is mostly independent of the point of emission.

The impact of human activities on global climate change is apparent in the observational record. Air trapped by ice has been extracted from core samples taken from polar ice sheets to determine the global atmospheric variation of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) from before the start of industrialization (approximately 1750), to over 650,000 years ago. For that period, it was found that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations ranged from 180 to 300 parts per million (ppm). For the period from approximately 1750 to the present, global CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations increased from a pre-industrialization period concentration of 280 to 379 ppm in 2005, with the 2005 value far exceeding the upper end of the pre-industrial period range. As of May 2024, the highest monthly average concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere was recorded at 426 ppm.<sup>2</sup>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) constructed several emission trajectories of GHGs needed to stabilize global temperatures and climate change impacts. It concluded that a stabilization of GHGs at 400 to 450 ppm carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>3</sup> concentration is required to keep global mean warming below 2 degrees Celsius (°C), which in turn is assumed to be necessary to avoid dangerous climate change.

<sup>1</sup> California Air Resource Board, *California Greenhouse Gas Emissions from 2001 to 2021: Trends of Emissions and Other Indicators*, December 14, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Scripps Institution of Oceanography, *Carbon Dioxide Concentration at Mauna Loa Observatory*, <https://keelingcurve.ucsd.edu/>, accessed May 6, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) – A metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based upon their global warming potential.



## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### Federal

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Endangerment Finding

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to regulate GHG emissions stems from the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007). The Supreme Court ruled that GHGs meet the definition of air pollutants under the existing Clean Air Act and must be regulated if these gases could be reasonably anticipated to endanger public health or welfare. Responding to the Court's ruling, the EPA finalized an endangerment finding in December 2009. Based on scientific evidence it found that six GHGs (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, hydrofluorocarbons [HFCs], perfluorocarbons [PFCs], and sulfur hexafluoride [SF<sub>6</sub>]) constitute a threat to public health and welfare. Thus, it is the Supreme Court's interpretation of the existing Clean Air Act and the EPA's assessment of the scientific evidence that form the basis for the EPA's regulatory actions.

#### Title V Operating Permit Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule (Tailoring Rule)

On May 13, 2010, the EPA issued the Title V Operating Permit Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule (Tailoring Rule), which establishes a commonsense approach to addressing GHG emissions from stationary sources under the Clean Air Act (CAA) permitting programs. Through the Tailoring Rule, EPA raised the major source regulatory threshold for GHGs from the 100/250 ton per year levels to 100,000 tons per year of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. New facilities with GHG emissions of at least 100,000 tons per year CO<sub>2</sub>e and existing facilities with at least 100,000 tons per year CO<sub>2</sub>e making changes that would increase GHG emissions by at least 75,000 tons per year CO<sub>2</sub>e are required to obtain New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permits. Facilities that must obtain a PSD permit anyway, to cover other regulated pollutants, must also address GHG emissions increases of 75,000 tons per year CO<sub>2</sub>e or more. New and existing sources with GHG emissions above 100,000 tons per year CO<sub>2</sub>e must also obtain operating permits. However, the United States Supreme Court overturned the Tailoring Rule of the EPA in 2014.

### State

#### Assembly Bill 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006)

California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assemble Bill (AB) 32; California Health and Safety Code Division 25.5, Sections 38500-38599). AB 32 establishes regulatory, reporting, and market mechanisms to achieve quantifiable reductions in GHG emissions and establishes a cap on Statewide GHG emissions. AB 32 requires that Statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 specifies that regulations adopted in response to AB 1493 (Pavley Bill) should be used to address GHG emissions from vehicles. However, AB 32 also includes language stating that if the AB 1493 regulations cannot be implemented, then the California Air Resources Board (CARB) should develop new regulations to control vehicle GHG emissions under the authorization of AB 32.

#### Senate Bill 375

Senate Bill (SB) 375, signed in September 2008 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008), aligns regional transportation planning efforts, regional GHG reduction targets, and land use and housing allocations. SB 375 requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to adopt a sustainable communities' strategy (SCS) or alternative planning strategy (APS) that will prescribe land use allocation in that MPOs regional transportation plan. CARB, in consultation with MPOs, is required to provide each affected region with GHG reduction targets emitted by passenger cars and light trucks in the region for the years 2020 and 2035. These reduction targets are to be updated every eight years but can be updated every four years if advancements in emissions technologies affect the reduction strategies to achieve the targets. CARB is also charged with reviewing each MPO's SCS or APS for consistency with its assigned targets. If MPOs do not meet the GHG reduction targets, transportation projects may not be eligible for funding.



### Executive Order S-3-05

Executive Order S-3-05 set forth a series of target dates by which Statewide emissions of GHGs would be progressively reduced, as follows:

- By 2010, reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels;
- By 2020, reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels; and
- By 2050, reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

The Executive Order directed the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Secretary to coordinate a multi-agency effort to reduce GHG emissions to the target levels. The Secretary is required to submit biannual reports to the Governor and California Legislature describing the progress made toward the emissions targets, the impacts of global climate change on California's resources, and mitigation and adaptation plans to combat these impacts. To comply with Executive Order S-3-05, the Cal/EPA Secretary created the California Climate Action Team, made up of members from various State agencies and commissions. The Climate Action Team released its first report in March 2006, which proposed to achieve the targets by building on the voluntary actions of California businesses, local governments, and communities and through State incentive and regulatory programs.

### California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Energy Code; Title 24)

The *California Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings—Part 6, Title 24, California Code of Regulations*—commonly referred to as Title 24, were first adopted in 1976 by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and have been updated periodically since then, as directed by statute. Title 24 contains energy and water efficiency requirements (and indoor air quality requirements) for newly constructed buildings, additions to existing buildings, and alterations to existing buildings. The code was most recently updated in 2022 (2022 Title 24) and went into effect on January 1, 2023. The 2022 Title 24 builds on California's technology innovations, encouraging energy efficient approaches to encourage building decarbonization, emphasizing heat pumps for space heating and water heating. This set of Title 24 also extends the benefits of photovoltaic and battery storage systems and other demand flexible technology to work in combinations with heat pumps to enable California buildings to be responsive to climate change. This Title 24 also strengthens ventilation standards to improve indoor air quality. Updates in the 2022 Title 24 provides crucial steps in the state's progress toward 100 percent clean carbon neutrality by midcentury.

### California Green Building Standards (CALGreen)

The *California Green Building Standards Code—Part 11, Title 24, California Code of Regulations*, also known as CALGreen, is the first-in-the-nation mandatory green building standards code. It began in 2007, when the California Building Standard Commission (CBSC) was directed to develop green building standards to help meet the goals of California's landmark climate initiative—Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), which established a comprehensive program of cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases (GHG) to 1990 levels by 2020. CALGreen was developed to (1) reduce GHG emissions from buildings; (2) promote environmentally responsible, cost-effective, and healthier places to live and work; (3) reduce energy and water consumption; and (4) respond to the environmental directives of the administration. CALGreen requires that new buildings employ water efficiency and conservation, increase building system efficiencies (e.g., lighting, heating/ventilation and air conditioning [HVAC], and plumbing fixtures), divert construction waste from landfills, and incorporate electric vehicles charging infrastructure. CALGreen significantly raises the minimum environmental standards for construction of new buildings in California. The mandatory provisions in CALGreen will reduce the use of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitting materials, will strengthen water conservation, and will require construction waste recycling. The 2022 updates to CALGreen (2022 CALGreen) went into effect on January 1, 2023.



### Senate Bill 32

Signed into law on September 2016, SB 32 codifies the 2030 GHG reduction target in Executive Order B-30-15 (40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030). SB 32 authorizes CARB to adopt an interim GHG emissions level target to be achieved by 2030. CARB also must adopt rules and regulations in an open public process to achieve the maximum, technologically feasible, and cost-effective GHG reductions.

### CARB Scoping Plan

On December 11, 2008, CARB adopted its *Climate Change Scoping Plan* (Scoping Plan), which functions as a roadmap to achieve GHG reductions in California required by AB 32 through subsequently enacted regulations. The Scoping Plan contains the main strategies California will implement to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions by 174 million metric tons (MT), or approximately 30 percent, from the State's projected 2020 emissions levels of 596 million MTCO<sub>2</sub>e under a business as usual (BAU)<sup>4</sup> scenario. This is a reduction of 42 million MTCO<sub>2</sub>e, or almost ten percent, from 2002 to 2004 average emissions, and requires the reductions in the face of population and economic growth through 2020. The Scoping Plan calculates 2020 BAU emissions as the emissions that would be expected to occur in the absence of any GHG reduction measures. The 2020 BAU emissions estimate was derived by projecting emissions from a past baseline year using growth factors specific to each of the different economic sectors (e.g., transportation, electrical power, industrial, commercial, and residential). CARB used three-year average emissions, by sector, from 2002 to 2004 to forecast emissions to 2020. The measures described in the Scoping Plan are intended to reduce projected 2020 BAU emissions to 1990 levels, as required by AB 32.

On January 20, 2017, CARB released the proposed Second Update to the Scoping Plan, which identified the State's post-2020 reduction strategy. The Second Update was finalized in November 2017 and approved on December 14, 2017, and reflects the 2030 target of a 40 percent reduction below 1990 levels, set by Executive Order B-30-15 and codified by SB 32. The 2017 Scoping Plan Update establishes a new Statewide emissions limit of 260 million MTCO<sub>2</sub>e for the year 2030, which corresponds to a 40 percent decrease in 1990 levels by 2030.

On December 15, 2022, CARB released the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan), which identifies the strategies achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier. The 2022 Scoping Plan contains the GHG reductions, technology, and clean energy mandated by statutes. The 2022 Scoping Plan was developed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 through a substantial reduction in fossil fuel dependence, while at the same time increasing deployment of efficient non-combustion technologies and distribution of clean energy. The plan would also reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) and would include mechanical CO<sub>2</sub> capture and sequestration actions, as well as emissions and sequestration from natural and working lands and nature-based strategies. Under 2022 Scoping Plan, by 2045, California aims to cut GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels, reduce smog-forming air pollution by 71 percent, reduce the demand for liquid petroleum by 94 percent compared to current usage, improve health and welfare, and create millions of new jobs. This plan also builds upon current and previous environmental justice efforts to integrate environmental justice directly into the plan, to ensure that all communities can reap the benefits of this transformational plan.

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<sup>4</sup> "Business as Usual" refers to emissions that would be expected to occur in the absence of GHG reductions; refer to <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/bau.htm>. Note that there is significant controversy as to what BAU means. In determining the GHG 2020 limit, CARB used the above as the "definition." It is broad enough to allow for design features to be counted as reductions.



## Regional

### Southern California Association of Governments

On September 3, 2020, the Regional Council of Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) formally adopted the *Connect SoCal: 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020-2045 RTP/SCS)*. The SCS portion of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS highlights strategies for the region to reach the regional target of reducing GHGs from autos and light-duty trucks by 8 percent per capita by 2020, and 19 percent by 2035 (compared to 2005 levels). Specially, these strategies are:

- Focus growth near destinations and mobility options;
- Promote diverse housing choices;
- Leverage technology innovations;
- Support implementation of sustainability policies; and
- Promote a green region.

Furthermore, the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS discusses a variety of land use tools to help achieve the state-mandated reductions in GHG emissions through reduced per capita vehicle miles travelled (VMT). Some of these tools include center-focused placemaking, focusing on priority growth areas, job centers, transit priority areas, as well as high quality transit areas and green regions.

The most recent RTP/SCS (Connect SoCal 2024) was approved by SCAG's Regional Council in April 2024. Connect SoCal 2024 outlines a vision for a more resilient and equitable future, with investment, policies, and strategies for achieving the region's shared goals through 2050. Connect SoCal 2024 sets forth a forecasted regional development pattern which, when integrated with the transportation network, measures, and policies, will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light-duty trucks and achieve the GHG emissions reduction target for the region set by the CARB. In addition, Connect SoCal 2024 is supported by a combination of transportation and land use strategies that outline how the region can achieve California's GHG-emission-reduction goals and federal Clean Air Act requirements. These are articulated in a set of Regional Strategic Investments, Regional Planning Policies, and Implementation Strategies. The Regional Planning Policies are a resource for County Transportation Commissions (CTCs) and local jurisdictions, who can refer to specific policies to demonstrate alignment with the RTP/SCS when seeking resources from State or federal programs. The Implementation Strategies articulate priorities for SCAG efforts in fulfilling or going beyond the Regional Planning Policies.

## Local

### Antelope Valley AQMD California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines

In August 2016, the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) adopted the *Antelope Valley AQMD California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines* (AVAQMD CEQA and Federal Conformity Guidelines) to provide direction on the preferred analysis approach in preparing environmental analysis or document review. The guidelines characterize the topography and climate of the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB), defines cumulative impacts, and provide emission thresholds for construction and operation.

On May 13, 2010, EPA issued the Title V Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule (Tailoring Rule), which establishes a commonsense approach to addressing GHG emissions from stationary sources under the Clean Air Act (CAA) permitting programs. Through the Tailoring Rule, EPA raised the major source regulatory threshold for GHGs from the 100/250 ton per year levels to 100,000 tons per year of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. Subsequently, AVAQMD established a daily and yearly significance thresholds for GHG emissions for all CEQA projects within its jurisdiction based on the Tailoring



Rule: a project that generates total GHG emissions (direct and indirect) in excess of the annual threshold of 100,000 tons per year and the daily threshold of 548,000 pounds per day may be presumed to have resulted in significant impacts.<sup>5</sup> However, the United States Supreme Court overturned the Tailoring Rule of the EPA in 2014. As such, the established threshold is not valid and not applicable to the proposed project.

#### City of Lancaster Climate Action Plan

The City adopted the *City of Lancaster Climate Action Plan (CAP)* in March 2017. The CAP documents the City's GHG emissions inventories and the progress the City has made through its alternative energy and sustainability programs. The CAP also identifies projects that would enhance the City's ability to further reduce GHG emissions. A focused working group made up of City staff worked to develop projects which would enhance the community, improve government operations, and ultimately reduce GHG emissions. A total of 61 projects across eight sectors were identified: traffic, energy, municipal operations, water, waste, built environment, community, and land use. Additionally, the CAP evaluates four different future scenarios, and the proposed measures were quantified for each scenario based upon the project descriptions, action items, and indicators. These scenarios assume that Lancaster Choice Energy (LCE) has varying amounts of alternative energy in their portfolio by 2050, which result in different amounts of GHG reductions. Under all scenarios, the City meets the 2020 target by a wide margin and makes substantial progress towards achieving the post-2020 reduction targets.

#### **THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Amendments to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4 were adopted to assist lead agencies in determining the significance of the impacts of GHG emissions and gives lead agencies the discretion to determine whether to assess those emissions quantitatively or qualitatively. This section recommends certain factors to be considered in the determination of significance (i.e., the extent to which a project may increase or reduce GHG emissions compared to the existing environment; whether the project exceeds an applicable significance threshold; and the extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHGs). The amendments do not establish a threshold of significance; rather, lead agencies are granted discretion to establish significance thresholds for their respective jurisdictions, including looking to thresholds developed by other public agencies or suggested by other experts, such as the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), so long as any threshold chosen is supported by substantial evidence (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(c)). The California Natural Resources Agency has also clarified that the CEQA Guidelines amendments focus on the effects of GHG emissions as cumulative impacts, and therefore GHG emissions should be analyzed in the content of CEQA's requirements for cumulative impact analyses (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3)).<sup>6,7</sup> A project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not cumulatively considerable if the project would comply with an approved plan or mitigation program that provides specific requirements to avoid or substantially lessen the cumulative problem within the geographic area of the project.<sup>8</sup>

The City has not adopted a numerical significance threshold. Furthermore, as discussed above, the AVAQMD's threshold is not valid due to that the EPA Tailoring Rule was overturned. As such, as there is no applicable adopted or accepted numerical threshold of significance for GHG emissions, the methodology for evaluating the project's impacts related to GHG emissions focuses on its consistency with Statewide, regional, and local plans adopted for the purpose

<sup>5</sup> Antelope Valley AQMD Executive Director Barbara Lods, *Email communication – GHG Threshold*, November 13, 2023. Also see: Antelope Valley AQMD, *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal Conformity Guidelines Table 6, Significant Emissions Thresholds*, August 2016.

<sup>6</sup> California Natural Resources Agency, *Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action*, pp. 11-13, 14, 16, December 2009, [https://resources.ca.gov/CNRALegacyFiles/ceqa/docs/Final\\_Statement\\_of\\_Reasons.pdf](https://resources.ca.gov/CNRALegacyFiles/ceqa/docs/Final_Statement_of_Reasons.pdf), accessed May 9, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *Transmittal of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's Proposed SB97 CEQA Guidelines Amendments to the Natural Resources Agency*, April 13, 2009, <https://planning.lacity.org/eir/CrossroadsHwd/deir/files/references/CO1.pdf>, accessed May 9, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> 4 California Code of Regulations Section 15064(h)(3).



of reducing and/or mitigating GHG emissions. This evaluation of consistency with such plans is the sole basis for determining the significance of the project's GHG-related impacts on the environment.

Notwithstanding, for informational purposes, the analysis also calculates the amount of GHG emissions that would be attributable to the project using recommended air quality models, as described below. The project's GHG impacts are evaluated by assessing the project's consistency with applicable local, regional, and Statewide GHG reduction plans and strategies. On a Statewide level, the 2022 Scoping Plan provides measures to achieve SB 32 targets. On a regional level, the SCAG 2020-2045 RTP/SCS contains measures to achieve VMT reductions required under SB 375. On the local level, the CAP includes goals and strategies that would enhance the City's ability to further reduce GHG emissions. Thus, if the project complies with these plans, policies, regulations, and requirements, the project would result in a less than significant impact because it would be consistent with the overarching State and regional plans for GHG reduction.

- a) ***Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?***
- b) ***Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The proposed annexation would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. The proposed annexation and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. It should be noted that there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). The GHG impact analysis for the proposed annexation is based on the annexation's consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan, the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, and the CAP. The 2022 Scoping Plan describes the approach the State will take to reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030. The 2020-2045 RTP/SCS includes performance goals that were adopted to help focus future investments on the best-performing projects, as well as different strategies to preserve, maintain, and optimize the performance of the existing transportation system. Connect SoCal 2024 sets forth a forecasted regional development pattern which, when integrated with the transportation network, measures, and policies, will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light-duty trucks and achieve the GHG emissions reduction target for the region set by CARB. The CAP identifies projects that would enhance the City's ability to further reduce GHG emissions through its alternative energy and sustainability programs.

Future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that development occurs in a manner consistent with the General Plan, LMC, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Additionally, considering the annexation area is located within the City's sphere of influence (SOI), buildout of the annexation area was considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. Implementation of the proposed annexation would not directly generate construction and operational emissions as no specific development is being proposed. Future development within the annexation area would occur incrementally over time, based largely on funding availability, economic considerations, market demand, and other planning considerations. As the proposed annexation does not propose demolition or development activities, construction and operational GHG emissions are not quantified as part of this programmatic analysis. Furthermore, future project-specific environmental review under CEQA would be conducted pursuant to City guidelines and compliance with existing AVAQMD regulations.



### Consistency with the SCAG RTP/SCS

As mentioned above, Connect SoCal 2024 was adopted on April 4, 2024. However, CARB concluded that the technical methodology SCAG used to quantify the GHG emission reductions for the Connect SoCal 2024 does not operate accurately.<sup>9</sup> SCAG resubmitted the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Submittal Package for CARB's review in June 2024. At the time of preparation of this Initial Study, CARB has not made its determination. Review by CARB is limited to acceptance or rejection of SCAG's determination that its SCS would, if implemented, achieve the region's GHG emissions reduction target. If CARB rejects SCAG's determination of meeting the GHG emission target, SCAG would need to revise the SCS or adopt an alternative planning strategy demonstrating the ability to achieve the target. As such, until CARB makes the decision, Connect SoCal 2024 is not a fully adopted document and is potentially subject to further updates, especially from the GHG reduction perspective of the methods and assumptions of the calculation of Auto Operating Costs (AOC)<sup>10</sup>, induced travel, electric vehicle incentives, job center parking and parking deregulation, off-model strategy assumptions, and emissions factors. As CARB has not made the decision at the time of preparation of this document, to provide a more complete analysis, the consistency analysis relies upon both the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS and Connect SoCal 2024, refer to Table 4.8-1, Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2020-2045 RTP/SCS and Table 4.8-2, Proposed Annexation Consistency with Connect SoCal 2024.

The 2020-2045 RTP/SCS includes performance goals that were adopted to help focus future investments on the best-performing projects and different strategies to preserve, maintain, and optimize the performance of the existing transportation system. The 2020-2045 RTP/SCS is forecasted to help California reach its GHG reduction goals by reducing GHG emissions from passenger cars by 8 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, and by 19 percent by 2035 in accordance with the most recent CARB targets adopted in March 2018. Five key SCS strategies are included in the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS to help the region meet its regional VMT and GHG reduction goals. Table 4.8-1 evaluates the project's consistency with the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS strategies. As detailed, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the GHG emission reduction strategies contained in the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS.

<sup>9</sup> California Air Resources Board, *RE: CARB Review of Southern California Association of Governments' 2024 SCS Senate Bill 375 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Draft Technical Methodology*, March 29, 2024. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/SCAG%20memo%20final.pdf>, accessed, May 9, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> AOC is used as key variable across several major model components of the travel demand model, such as vehicle ownership, destination choice, and mode choice. This parameter represents the expenses associated with the usage of vehicles, expressed in cents per mile or dollar per mile. AOC plays a pivotal role as a fundamental parameter within the travel demand model.



**Table 4.8-1**  
**Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2020-2045 RTP/SCS**

Reduction Strategy	Applicable Land Use Tools	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Focus Growth Near Destinations and Mobility Options</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize land use patterns that facilitate multimodal access to work, educational and other destinations</li> <li>Focus on a regional jobs/housing balance to reduce commute times and distances and expand job opportunities near transit and along center-focused main streets</li> <li>Plan for growth near transit investments and support implementation of first/last mile strategies</li> <li>Promote the redevelopment of underperforming retail developments and other outmoded nonresidential uses</li> <li>Prioritize infill and redevelopment of underutilized land to accommodate new growth, increase amenities and connectivity in existing neighborhoods</li> <li>Encourage design and transportation options that reduce the reliance on and number of solo car trips (this could include mixed uses or locating and orienting close to existing destinations)</li> <li>Identify ways to 'right size' parking requirements and promote alternative parking strategies (e.g., shared parking or smart parking)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Center Focused Placemaking, Priority Growth Areas (PGA), Job Centers, High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs), Transit Priority Areas (TPA), Neighborhood Mobility Areas (NMAs), Livable Corridors, Spheres of Influence (SOIs), Green Region, Urban Greening.</b></p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The proposed annexation would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would increase housing opportunities within the City and boost economic growth in the area. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area to develop underutilized land to accommodate new growth within the City. Therefore, the annexation would be consistent with the strategy.</p>
<b>Promote Diverse Housing Choices</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve and rehabilitate affordable housing and prevent displacement</li> <li>Identify funding opportunities for new workforce and affordable housing development</li> <li>Create incentives and reduce regulatory barriers for building context sensitive accessory dwelling units to increase housing supply</li> <li>Provide support to local jurisdictions to streamline and lessen barriers to housing development that supports reduction of greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>	<p><b>PGA, Job Centers, HQTAs, NMA, TPAs, Livable Corridors, Green Region, Urban Greening.</b></p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> As mentioned above, the proposed annexation would accommodate development of future rural residential uses; therefore, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the strategy.</p>
<b>Leverage Technology Innovations</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote low emission technologies such as neighborhood electric vehicles, shared rides hailing, car sharing, bike sharing and scooters by providing supportive and safe infrastructure such as dedicated lanes, charging and parking/drop-off space</li> </ul>	<p><b>HQTA, TPAs, NMA, Livable Corridors.</b></p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> Future development within the proposed annexation area would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen building codes at the time of construction. Rural residential development could include accessory electric vehicle (EV)</p>



Reduction Strategy	Applicable Land Use Tools	Project Consistency Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to services through technology—such as telework and telemedicine as well as other incentives such as a “mobility wallet,” an app-based system for storing transit and other multi-modal payments</li> <li>• Identify ways to incorporate “micro-power grids” in communities, for example solar energy, hydrogen fuel cell power storage and power generation</li> </ul>		charging stations, designated EV parking, as well as bike parking and storage, as applicable. Therefore, future development within the proposed annexation area would leverage technology innovation and help the City, County, and State meet its GHG reduction goals. The proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Support Implementation of Sustainability Policies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue funding opportunities to support local sustainable development implementation projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• Support Statewide legislation that reduces barriers to new construction and that incentivizes development near transit corridors and stations</li> <li>• Support local jurisdictions in the establishment of Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs), Community Revitalization and Investment Authorities (CRIAs), or other tax increment or value capture tools to finance sustainable infrastructure and development projects, including parks and open space</li> <li>• Work with local jurisdictions/communities to identify opportunities and assess barriers to implement sustainability strategies</li> <li>• Enhance partnerships with other planning organizations to promote resources and best practices in the SCAG region</li> <li>• Continue to support long range planning efforts by local jurisdictions</li> <li>• Provide educational opportunities to local decisions makers and staff on new tools, best practices and policies related to implementing the Sustainable Communities Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>Center Focused Placemaking, Priority Growth Areas (PGA), Job Centers, High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs), Transit Priority Areas (TPA), Neighborhood Mobility Areas (NMAs), Livable Corridors, Spheres of Influence (SOIs), Green Region, Urban Greening.</b>	<b>Consistent.</b> As mentioned above, The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. Future development within the annexation area would be required to comply with the most recent version of Title 24 and CALGreen Code. Thus, the proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Promote a Green Region</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support development of local climate adaptation and hazard mitigation plans, as well as project implementation that improves community resiliency to climate change and natural hazards</li> <li>• Support local policies for renewable energy production, reduction of urban heat islands, and carbon sequestration</li> <li>• Integrate local food production into the regional landscape</li> </ul>	<b>Green Region, Urban Greening, Greenbelts and Community Separators.</b>	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would promote new residential development within the annexation area. Future development would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures, which would help reduce energy consumption and reduce GHG emissions. Overall, the proposed annexation would support climate change resilience and local policies for



Reduction Strategy	Applicable Land Use Tools	Project Consistency Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote more resource efficient development focused on conservation, recycling, and reclamation</li> <li>• Preserve, enhance, and restore regional wildlife connectivity</li> <li>• Reduce consumption of resource areas, including agricultural land</li> <li>• Identify ways to improve access to public park space</li> </ul>		efficient development that reduces energy consumption and GHG emissions.
<small>Source: Southern California Association of Governments, 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy – Connect SoCal, September 3, 2020.</small>		

Connect SoCal 2024 outlines a vision for a more resilient and equitable future, with investment, policies, and strategies for achieving the region’s shared goals through 2050. Connect SoCal 2024 sets forth a forecast regional development pattern which, when integrated with the transportation network, measures, and policies, will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light-duty trucks and achieve the GHG emissions reduction target for the region set by the CARB. In addition, Connect SoCal 2024 is supported by a combination of transportation and land use strategies that outline how the region can achieve California’s GHG-emission-reduction goals and federal Clean Air Act requirements. These are articulated in a set of Regional Strategic Investments, Regional Planning Policies, and Implementation Strategies. Table 4.8-2 evaluates the proposed annexation’s consistency with Connect SoCal 2024 strategies. As detailed, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the GHG emission reduction strategies contained in the Connect SoCal 2024.

**Table 4.8-2**  
**Proposed Annexation Consistency with Connect SoCal 2024**

Reduction Strategy	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Mobility Implementation Strategies</b>	
<b>Transit and Multimodal Integration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit/Rail. Through land use planning, support residential development along high-frequency transit corridors and around transit/rail facilities and centers.*</li> <li>• Active Transportation.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support community-led active transportation and safety plans, projects and programs (e.g., Safe Routes to Schools)*</li> <li>○ Expand the region’s networks of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This includes creating more low stress facilities, such as separated bikeways and bike paths, slow streets, and open streets.*</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed annexation would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City’s jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. The pre-zone would not conflict with transit and multimodal integration. Furthermore, the RR-2.5 pre-zone would accommodate residential development and related active transportation improvements (e.g., pedestrian and bicycle amenities) in the annexation area. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Funding the System/User Pricing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with local, regional, state, and national partners to support transition to a mileage-based user fee.*</li> <li>• Support local and regional partners on implementation of dynamic and congestion-based pricing programs, including facilitation of regional coordination.*</li> <li>• Continue development and support for job-center parking pricing, including through Smart Cities and the Mobility Innovations Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) grant program.*</li> <li>• Continue to coordinate with regional partners to support build-out of regional express lanes network.*</li> </ul>	<b>Not Applicable.</b> The proposed annexation would incorporate an approximately 638-acre area into the City’s jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. The proposed RR-2.5 zone would accommodate low density residential uses and would not involve large-scale development or City-initiated programs that could impact the regional transportation network. Therefore, the strategy would not be applicable to the proposed annexation.



Reduction Strategy	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Communities Implementation Strategies</b>	
<b>Priority Development Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of housing in areas with existing and planned infrastructure and availability of multimodal options, and where a critical mass of activity can promote location efficiency.*</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> As mentioned above, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would accommodate housing development in the annexation area where there are existing religious uses approximately 0.85-mile to the west. As future development within the annexation area occurs, new multimodal infrastructure could be developed to connect with the existing multimodal network closer to the City's urban areas. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Housing the Region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide technical assistance for jurisdictions to complete and implement their housing elements and support local governments and Tribal Entities to advance housing production.</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> As mentioned, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would promote housing development within the City. Thus, the proposed annexation would assist the City in increasing housing development and would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>15-Minutes Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop technical-assistance resources and research that support 15-minute communities across the SCAG region by deploying strategies that include, but are not limited to, redeveloping underutilized properties and increasing access to neighborhood amenities, open space and urban greening, job centers and multimodal mobility options.*</li> <li>Identify and pursue funding programs and partnerships for local jurisdictions across the region to realize 15-minute communities.*</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> As mentioned above, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would promote housing development on underutilized properties. The annexation area is located to the east of the City's more urban core areas; however, development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zone could expand and help create new 15-minute communities in the eastern portion of the City. Development of low-density residential uses in the annexation area could also encourage development of complementary neighborhood serving uses. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Environment Implementation Strategies</b>	
<b>Sustainable Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research the availability of resources that can support the development of water and energy-efficient building practices, including green infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> Future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone in the annexation area would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures, which would help reduce energy consumption and reduce GHG emissions. Overall, the proposed annexation would support sustainable development that reduces energy consumption and GHG emissions. The proposed annexation would be consistent with this reduction strategy.
<b>Clean Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate development of EV Charging infrastructure through public-private partnerships</li> <li>Support the deployment of clean transit and technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the CARB innovative clean technology (ICT) rule.</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> Future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone in the annexation area would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures, which include requirements related to EV charging stations for any applicable proposed uses. Rural residential uses may also include accessory EV charging. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with this strategy.
<b>Climate Resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support integration of climate vulnerability assessments into infrastructure planning and delivery for implementing agencies.</li> <li>Collaborate with partners to foster adoption of systems and technologies that can reduce water demand and/or increase water</li> </ul>	<b>Not Applicable.</b> The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would accommodate low density residential uses and would not involve large-scale development or City-initiated programs that could drive development of climate vulnerability assessments or other climate



Reduction Strategy	Project Consistency Analysis
supply, such as alternative groundwater recharge technologies, stormwater capture system, urban cooling infrastructure and greywater usage systems.	resiliency technologies. Thus, this reduction strategy would not be applicable. Nevertheless, future development would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures, which would help reduce energy and water consumption and reduce GHG emissions.
<b>Economy Implementation Strategies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the implementation and transition to near-zero and zero-emission technologies for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and supporting infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<b>Not Applicable.</b> The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would promote new rural residential development within the annexation area. The anticipated residential uses would likely not utilize medium- or heavy-duty vehicles and thus, this reduction strategy would not be applicable. Nevertheless, while limited, future truck uses associated with future rural development would be required to comply with all applicable CARB regulations, including the Low Carbon Fuel Standards (LCFS) and newer engine standards.
Notes: * (Asterisks) denote quantified GHG emission reduction strategies that help to reach SCAG's GHG reduction target set by CARB. Source: California Air Resources Board, <i>Connect SoCal 2024, Chapter 3, The Plan</i> , April 2024.	

Consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan

The 2022 Scoping Plan identifies reduction measures necessary to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier. Actions that reduce GHG emissions are identified for each AB 32 inventory sector. Provided in Table 4.8-3, Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 GHG Inventory Sectors, is an evaluation of applicable reduction actions/strategies by emissions source category to determine how the proposed annexation would be consistent with or exceed reduction actions/strategies outlined in the 2022 Scoping Plan.

**Table 4.8-3**  
**Proposed Annexation Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 Inventory Sectors**

Actions and Strategies	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Smart Growth / Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT)</b>	
Reduce VMT per capita to 25% below 2019 levels by 2030, and 30% below 2019 levels by 2045.	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed annexation would incorporate approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. Future proposed development within the annexation area would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the action.
<b>New Residential and Commercial Buildings</b>	
Require all electric appliances beginning 2026 for residential and 2029 for commercial, contributing to 6 million heat pumps installed Statewide by 2030.	<b>Consistent.</b> The City of Lancaster has not adopted an ordinance or program limiting the use of natural gas on-site cooking and/or heating. However, if adopted, future development associated with the proposed annexation would be required to comply with the applicable goals or policies limiting the use of natural gas equipment in the future. Furthermore, future proposed development would be required to comply with all applicable Title 24 and CALGreen code measures, which would help reduce energy consumption. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the action.
<b>Combined Heat and Power</b>	
Facilities retire by 2040.	<b>Consistent.</b> The annexation would incorporate the annexation area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. The RR-2.5 permits non-commercial solar energy



Actions and Strategies	Project Consistency Analysis
	systems, including building and ground-mounted photovoltaic panels, non-commercial wind energy systems, and vertical-axis wind turbines. A solar facility is also being proposed in the annexation area (and analyzed as part of this project) that would promote clean energy. As such, the proposed annexation would be consistent with the action.
<b>Non-combustion Methane Emissions</b>	
Divert 75% of organic waste from landfills by 2025.	<b>Consistent.</b> Future development within the annexation area would be required to recycle and compose 75 percent of waste per Assembly Bill 341. As such, future development accommodated by the proposed annexation and pre-zone would be consistent with the action.
Source: California Air Resources Board, <i>2022 Scoping Plan</i> , November 16, 2022.	

Consistency with the City of Lancaster CAP

The City of Lancaster adopted a CAP in March 2017. The CAP documents the City’s GHG emissions inventories and the progress the City has made through its alternative energy and sustainability programs. The CAP outlines how the City would meet the State GHG reduction targets for 2020 and make substantial progress towards achieving the post-2020 targets. The CAP contains various measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions. The CAP measures cover the following key areas: transportation, water introduction, built environment, community, and land use.

The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. The proposed annexation would support the CAP measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions by supporting alternative energy uses (i.e., non-commercial solar energy systems, including buildings and ground-mounted photovoltaic panels, non-commercial wind energy systems, and non-commercial wind energy systems in accordance with LMC Section 17.08.050, *Uses and Permits Required*). Further, future development within the annexation area would be analyzed at a project-level and be reviewed by the City on a case-by-case basis to ensure that each development implements applicable CAP measures to be consistent with the CAP, and that additional environmental review is conducted under CEQA, as needed. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Conclusion**

The proposed annexation would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, including AB 32, SB 32, the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS, the Connect SoCal 2024, the 2022 Scoping Plan, and the City of Lancaster CAP. Impacts would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

**Project-Related Sources of Greenhouse Gases**

Project-related GHG emissions include emissions from direct and indirect sources. Direct GHG emission sources include emissions from construction and decommissioning activities, and mobile sources, while indirect sources include emissions from water demand. Given that the solar facility would be unmanned with minimal maintenance activities during operations, no emissions from area source, energy source, refrigerants, or solid waste are anticipated. Project-generated vehicle emissions were estimated using CalEEMod, and trip generation rates from *Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – Solar Project Scoping*, prepared by Michael Baker International and dated May 6, 2024; refer to Appendix F, VMT Assessments. During operation, the solar facility would generate a maximum of 24 average daily trips over a 24-hour period, once a year, with maintenance including routine maintenance, as-needed maintenance, and panel cleaning, occurring simultaneously. Table 4.8-4, Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions, presents the estimated CO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions associated with the proposed solar facility; refer to Appendix A, Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data, for CalEEMod outputs.



**Table 4.8-4  
Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Source	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O	Refrigerants	CO <sub>2</sub> e
	Metric Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e per year <sup>1,2</sup>				
<b>Construction Emissions</b>					
Off-Road Equipment and On-Road Emissions	406.00	0.02	0.01	0.06	408.00
<b>Decommissioning Emissions</b>					
Off-Road Equipment and On-Road Emissions	406.00	0.02	0.01	0.06	408.00
<b>Total Amortized Construction and Decommissioning Emissions over 30 Years<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>27.20</b>				
<b>Operational Emissions</b>					
Mobile Emissions	0.06	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	0.06
Water Usage	1.23	<0.01	<0.01	0.00	1.24
<b>Total Operational Emissions</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>1.30</b>
<b>Combined Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning Emissions (Total Project-Related Emissions [MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year])</b>	<b>28.49</b>				
<b>Total Project-Related Emissions (Tons per year)</b>	<b>31.4 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e per year</b>				
Notes:					
1. Emissions calculated using California Emissions Estimator Model Version 2022.1 (CalEEMod) computer model.					
2. Totals may be slightly off due to rounding.					
3. The amount of GHG emissions from solar facility construction and decommissioning would total 27.20 MTCO <sub>2</sub> e per year when amortized over 30 years, or 816.00 MTCO <sub>2</sub> e total.					
4. Based on the <i>United States Environmental Protection Agency, Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator</i> , <a href="https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator#results">https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator#results</a> , accessed on May 29, 2024, 28.49 MTCO <sub>2</sub> e is equivalent to 31.4 Tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e.					
Refer to Appendix A, <i>Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Energy Data</i> , for assumptions used in this analysis.					

**Direct Project-Related Sources of Greenhouse Gases**

**Construction Emissions.** Construction GHG emissions are typically summed and amortized over the lifetime of the project (assumed to be 30 years), then added to the operational emissions.<sup>11</sup> The emissions associated with the proposed solar facility's construction activities were calculated based on on-road and off-road road equipment emissions factors from CalEEMod. As shown in Table 4.8-4, the proposed solar facility would result in 13.60 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year when amortized over 30 years (or a total of 408.00 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e in 30 years).

**Decommissioning Emissions.** At the end of the proposed solar facility's operational term, the applicant may determine that the solar facility should be decommissioned and deconstructed. Solar panels are typically mounted on support structures that are pile-driven into the ground, rather than resting directly on the surface. When decommissioning, these support structures would also be removed, which involves pulling out the piles and restoring the land to its natural state. At the end of solar facility's lifetime, modules and equipment would be removed from the racks and packaged for return transportation to the manufacturer or their approved Recycling Partner(s) for dismantling, material processing, and recovery. The proposed solar facility decommissioning would include best management practices (BMPs) to ensure the collection and recycling of modules and to avoid the potential for modules to be disposed of as municipal waste.

Equipment would be de-energized prior to removal, salvaged (where possible), placed in appropriate shipping containers, and secured in a truck transport trailer for shipment off site to be recycled or disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal facility. Site infrastructure would be removed, including the fences and the concrete pads that may

<sup>11</sup> The project lifetime could vary for each project. However, to make the GHG emissions quantification methodology consistent across all projects, the project lifetime is based on the standard 30-year assumption according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast Air Quality Management District, *Draft Guidance Document – Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Threshold*, October 2008).



support the inverters, transformers, and related equipment. The exterior fencing and gates would be removed, and all materials would be recycled to the extent feasible. Project roads would be restored to their pre-construction condition unless the landowner elects to retain the improved roads for access throughout the property. The area would be thoroughly cleaned, and all debris removed. A collection and recycling program would be executed to promote recycling of project components and minimized disposal in landfills. Due to lack of the details on decommissioning, as a conservative analysis, it was assumed that the decommissioning phase would generate the same amount of emissions as the construction phase. As depicted in [Table 4.8-4](#), decommissioning of the proposed solar facility would result in the direct emissions of 408.00 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> (13.60 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> per year, amortized over 30 years).

Mobile Source. The solar facility would generate up to 24 trips per day, once a year when maintenance including routine maintenance, as-needed maintenance, and panel cleaning occurring simultaneously. The solar facility would result in approximately 0.06 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> per year of mobile source generated GHG emissions; refer to [Table 4.8-4](#).

Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>). SF<sub>6</sub> is a colorless, odorless, nontoxic, nonflammable gas. SF<sub>6</sub> is most commonly used as an electrical insulator in high voltage equipment that transmits and distributes electricity, including equipment such as electrical circuit breakers, which may be used at the solar facility. The California Climate Action Registry (Registry) lists SF<sub>6</sub> as a potential source of fugitive emissions from electrical transmission and distribution equipment. Fugitive emissions are unintentional leaks of GHGs from equipment such as joints, seals, and gaskets. SF<sub>6</sub> Leak Reduction Gas Insulated Switchgear prevents SF<sub>6</sub> from leakage of gas insulated switchgear in electricity transmission and distribution systems by setting limits on leakage rates and implement best management practices for the recovery and handling of SF<sub>6</sub>. The proposed solar facility would be required to comply with the applicable regulatory requirements for any SF<sub>6</sub> containing switchgear. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

#### Indirect Project-Related Sources of Greenhouse Gases

Water Demand. Emissions associated with water usage were calculated based on estimated water consumption for panel washing and modeled in CalEEMod. The project would use up to 3.7 acre-feet (AF)<sup>12</sup> of water per year for panel washing during operation. Emissions from indirect energy impacts due to water usage would result in an estimated 1.24 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>/year of GHG emissions; refer to [Table 4.8-4](#).

#### Total Project-Related Sources of Greenhouse Gases

As shown in [Table 4.8-4](#), the total amount of GHG emissions associated with the proposed solar facility would be 28.49 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>/year (31.4 tons CO<sub>2e</sub> per year). It is important to note that the proposed solar facility would generate clean renewable energy that would offset emissions that would otherwise have resulted from producing an equivalent amount of electricity from a non-renewable energy source.

#### **Consistency with Applicable GHG Plans, Policies, or Regulations**

The GHG plan consistency analysis for the proposed solar facility is based on the consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan and the CAP. The 2022 Scoping Plan describes the approach the State will take to reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030. The CAP identifies projects that would enhance the City's ability to further reduce GHG emissions through its alternative energy and sustainability programs. The proposed solar facility would install solar panels and infrastructure and would only generate up to 24 trips per day, once a year; therefore, the SCAG 2020-2045 RTP/SCS and Connect SoCal 2024 are not considered for plan consistency analysis.

<sup>12</sup> The estimation is based on the *Tumbleweed Energy Storage Project – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memorandum*, prepared by Michael Baker International, dated October 1, 2021. The Tumbleweed Energy Storage Project would consume 0.5 acre-feet water on 39-acre lot during operation. Proportionally, the proposed solar facility would use approximately 3.7 AF (0.5/39\*288).



Consistency with 2022 CARB Scoping Plan

The 2022 Scoping Plan identifies reduction measures necessary to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 or earlier. Actions that reduce GHG emissions are identified for each AB 32 inventory sector. Provided in [Table 4.8-5, Proposed Solar Facility Consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 GHG Inventory Sectors](#), is an evaluation of applicable reduction actions/strategies by emissions source category to determine how the proposed solar facility would be consistent with or exceed reduction actions/strategies outlined in the 2022 Scoping Plan.

**Table 4.8-5  
Proposed Solar Facility Consistency with 2022 Scoping Plan: AB 32 GHG Inventory Sectors**

Actions and Strategies	Project Consistency Analysis
<b>Smart Growth / Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT)</b>	
Reduce VMT per capita to 25% below 2019 levels by 2030, and 30% below 2019 levels by 2045	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed solar facility would generate electricity using on-site solar panels and would only generate 24 daily trips over a 24-hour period, once a year as a worst-case scenario during maintenance and cleaning. Vehicle miles traveled generated by the proposed solar facility would be minimal and result in less than significant VMT impacts; refer to <a href="#">Section 4.17, Transportation</a> . As such, the proposed solar facility would be consistent with the strategy.
<b>Construction Equipment</b>	
Achieve 25% of energy demand electrified by 2030 and 75% electrified by 2045	<b>Consistent.</b> The City of Lancaster has not adopted an ordinance or program requiring the use of electrified construction equipment. However, if adopted, construction of the proposed solar facility would be required to comply with the applicable goals or policies using the electrified construction equipment. As such, the solar facility would not conflict with the strategy.
<b>Combined Heat and Power</b>	
Facilities retire by 2040.	<b>Consistent.</b> The solar facility is a clean electricity provider. As such, the solar facility would be consistent with the strategy.
<b>Non-combustion Methane Emissions</b>	
Divert 75% of organic waste from landfills by 2025	<b>Consistent.</b> Minimal solid waste would be generated from regular maintenance activities and vegetation clearing. Any panels removed and/or replaced during routine maintenance would be properly disposed of at a certified solar panel recycling facility.

Source: California Air Resources Board, *2022 Scoping Plan*, November 16, 2022.

Consistency with the City of Lancaster CAP

The City of Lancaster adopted a CAP in March 2017. The CAP documents the City’s GHG emissions inventories and the progress the City has made through its alternative energy and sustainability programs. The CAP outlines how the City would meet the State GHG reduction targets for 2020 and make substantial progress towards achieving the post-2020 targets. The CAP contains various measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions. The CAP measures cover the following key areas: transportation, water introduction, built environment, community, and land use.

The solar facility would support the CAP measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions by supporting alternative energy uses (i.e., solar photovoltaic electric generation). Additionally, as mentioned above, the proposed solar facility would generate nominal emissions during construction and operation. Furthermore, the electricity generated by the proposed solar facility would offset emissions that would otherwise have resulted from producing an equivalent amount of electricity from a non-renewable energy source. As such, the solar facility would be consistent with the City’s CAP, and impacts would be less than significant.



## **Conclusion**

The proposed solar facility would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, including AB 32, SB 32, the 2022 Scoping Plan, and the City of Lancaster CAP. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓	
b. Create a significant 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 one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✓
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓
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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				✓
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				✓

This section is primarily based upon the *Phase-I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase 1 ESA), Three Adjoining Parcels Totaling Approximately 280 Acres, Assessor Parcel #'s 3384-001-001; -002; And -003, East Side of 50<sup>th</sup> Street East, North Side of Lancaster Blvd, Lancaster, California 93535*, prepared by Bruin Geotechnical Services, Inc. and dated December 6, 2021; refer to [Appendix D, Phase I ESA](#).

**a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Exposure of the public or the environment to hazardous materials could occur through improper handling or use of hazardous materials or hazardous wastes particularly by untrained personnel, a transportation accident, environmentally unsound disposal methods, or fire, explosion, or other emergencies. The severity of potential effects varies with the activity conducted, the concentration and type of hazardous material or wastes present, and the proximity of sensitive receptors.



## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre) land use designation. Additionally, buildout of the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), including the annexation area, was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. As such, the proposed annexation itself would not result in significant hazard through the routine use, transport, or disposal of any hazardous materials.

Buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning would primarily consist of residential developments with limited hazardous materials use. However, a limited number of commercial uses are conditionally permitted in the RR-2.5 zoning and could require some hazardous materials for construction and operation of future development. However, future development within the annexation area would be subject to compliance with existing federal, State, and local regulations, standards, and guidelines related to the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Specifically, future development would be subject to compliance with existing hazardous materials regulations codified in California Code of Regulations Titles 8, 22, and 26, and their enabling legislations set forth in Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.95 as well as California Code of Regulations Title 49. Both federal and State regulations require any business, where the maximum quantity of a regulated substance exceeds the specified threshold quantity, register with the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) as a manager of regulated substances and prepare a Risk Management Plan. The Risk Management Plan must contain an off-site consequence analysis, a five-year accident history, an accident prevention program, an emergency response program, and a certification of the truth and accuracy of the submitted information. Businesses would also be required to submit their plans to the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) (i.e., LACFD), which would make the plans available to emergency response personnel.

Compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing the use, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. Impacts regarding the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials associated with future RR-2.5 development in the annexation area would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility development consists of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of an 80-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) alternating current (AC) electric generating facility. It is anticipated that off-site generation-tie (gen-tie) and communication lines would connect the facility to either 1) a previously approved hydrogen production facility approximately two miles to the southeast of the solar facility site or 2) an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) substation located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast. When the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City regulations.

### Construction

All existing structures within the solar facility site would be demolished prior to construction of the solar facility. Construction of the solar facility could expose construction workers and the public to temporary hazards related to the transport, use, and maintenance of construction materials (i.e., oil, diesel fuel, transmission fluid, etc.). Construction activities would be short-term, and the materials used would not be in such quantities or stored in such a manner as to pose a significant safety hazard. Construction activities would be required to comply with applicable laws and regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), State, County, and the City governing the use, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials/waste, ensuring that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner. Impacts concerning the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction would be less than significant.



## Operations

The solar facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation; there would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. It is anticipated that regular maintenance, emergency as-needed maintenance, cleaning of the panels, and clearing seasonal vegetation would be necessary up to one to two times per week. Hazardous materials necessary to maintain the solar facility, and any hazardous wastes generated during site maintenance, would be managed, used, handled, stored, and transported in accordance with existing hazardous materials regulations codified in California Code of Regulations Titles 8, 22, and 26, and their enabling legislations set forth in Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.95 as well as California Code of Regulations Title 49. Both federal and State regulations require any business, where the maximum quantity of a regulated substance exceeds the specified threshold quantity, register with the LACFD as a manager of regulated substances and CUPA and prepare a Risk Management Plan. The Risk Management Plan must contain an off-site consequence analysis, a five-year accident history, an accident prevention program, an emergency response program, and a certification of the truth and accuracy of the submitted information.

All equipment installed on the project site (e.g., solar panels, battery storage, etc.) would be replaced as needed in accordance with all applicable regulations. The use of these materials and the routine activities on the project site would be conducted in compliance with all applicable regulations to minimize potential hazards to the public and to the environment. The facility would also be equipped with any required/necessary safety mechanisms, which include fire suppression systems, dust suppression systems, detectors/alarms, shutdown systems, and temperature monitoring and controls. These safety mechanisms would be determined as part of the engineering design. Additionally, the project would require coordination with, and approval by, the Los Angeles County Fire Department for fire access, life safety equipment, and hazardous materials permitting.

At the end of the proposed solar facility's operational term, the facility would be deconstructed and decommissioned. The equipment on-site would be removed, and the site restored to its original conditions, as feasible. All solar equipment, including the PV arrays and batteries, would be removed and packaged for return transportation to the manufacturer or their approved recycling partner(s) for dismantling, material processing, and recovery. Applicable best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to ensure proper collection and recycling of solar equipment. All decommissioning activities would occur in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City regulations.

Compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing the use, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. Impacts regarding the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during operation and decommissioning of the solar facility would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- b) ***Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.** One of the means through which human exposure to hazardous substance could occur is through accidental release. Incidents that result in an accidental release of hazardous substance into the environment can cause contamination of soil, surface water, and groundwater, in addition to any toxic fumes that might be generated. If not cleaned up immediately and completely, the hazardous substances can migrate into the soil or enter a local stream or channel causing contamination of soil and water. Human exposure of contaminated soil, soil vapor, or water can have potential health effects on a variety of factors, including the nature of the contaminant and the degree of exposure. The Phase I ESA analyzes the northern half of the annexation area (i.e., the proposed solar facility site). However, given that the remainder of the annexation area to the south of the



proposed solar facility site consists of similar past and existing agricultural use, it can be presumed that the information in the Phase I ESA applies to the entirety of the annexation area.

## **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

No construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. As such, the proposed annexation would not create a significant hazard reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. However, buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in accidental conditions involving existing on-site contamination due to current and past uses within the annexation area.

### **Existing and Historic Uses**

Based on the Phase I ESA, the site was developed in 1925 with a residence, and was used for agricultural (row crop) purposes. Additional structures, including groundwater pumphouses, were developed over the years. The Phase I ESA concluded that potential past pesticide and fertilizer use, including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticide, constitute a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC). To reduce the potential for exposure to such uses during future demolition/site grading activities, Mitigation Measure MM-12 requires future applicants to retain a hazardous materials specialist to conduct soil sampling from the agricultural areas of the site to be analyzed for agricultural chemicals, including organochlorine pesticides (OCP), organophosphate pesticides (OPP), and chlorinated herbicides (CH), following the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) Guidance for Sampling Agricultural Fields. If results from the soil sampling indicate soil contamination above regulatory screening levels and above background levels and the soils will not be excavated and disposed off-site in accordance with regulatory requirements, the project Applicant shall obtain regulatory oversight from the applicable regulatory agency (e.g., LACFD Health Hazardous Materials Division [HHMD], DTSC, and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board). Upon compliance with Mitigation Measure MM-12, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

### **Building Demolition**

According to the Phase I ESA, due to the age of existing on-site buildings (constructed prior to 1979), de minimis conditions may be present, potentially involving asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), lead-based paint (LBP), and/or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the building materials, electrical transformers, and/or ballasts located within the annexation area. Future demolition of these structures could expose construction personnel and the public to ACMs, LBPs, and/or PCBs. Therefore, project applicants are required to comply with Mitigation Measure MM-13, which would require ACMs, LBPs, and PCBs surveys be conducted by a qualified specialist or contractor and be submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department for approval prior to demolition of existing structures. Specifically, if ACMs are identified, asbestos abatement is required to be completed prior to any activities that would disturb ACMs or create an airborne asbestos hazard. Asbestos removal is required to be performed by a State-certified asbestos containment contractor in accordance with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District's (AVAQMD) Rule 1403. If paint is separated from building materials (chemically or physically) during demolition of the structures, the paint waste is required to be evaluated independently from the building material by a qualified environmental professional in accordance with California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 1532.1. If LBPs are found, abatement is required to be completed by a qualified Lead Specialist prior to any activities that would create lead dust or fume hazard. LBP removal and disposal activities are required to comply with California Code of Regulation Title 8, Section 1532.1, which specifies exposure limits, exposure monitoring and respiratory protection, and mandates good worker practices by workers exposed to lead. If PCBs are found, the wastes shall be delivered to a permitted facility or a facility which has been otherwise authorized to receive hazardous waste pursuant to Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, and their implementing regulations. The PCB wastes shall be properly manifested in accordance with the requirements of California Code of Regulations Title 22, Section 66263.44 on the use of the Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest. Specialists or contractors performing ACMs, LBPs, and/or PCBs are required to provide evidence of



abatement activities to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department. As such, compliance with existing regulations related to ACMs, LBPs, and/or PCBs and implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-13 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Future development projects in accordance with the RR-2.5 zoning would be required to undergo project-specific environmental review under CEQA and the City's discretionary review process to determine potential impacts based on project-specific construction and operational activities. With implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-12 and MM-13, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

## **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

### **Construction**

#### Construction Equipment

During construction, there is a possibility of accidental release of hazardous substances such as petroleum-based fuels or hydraulic fluid used for construction equipment. The level of risk associated with the accidental release of hazardous substances is not considered significant due to the small volume and low concentration of hazardous materials utilized during construction. The construction contractor would be required to use standard construction controls and safety procedures that would avoid and minimize the potential for accidental release of such substances into the environment. Standard construction practices would be observed such that any materials released are appropriately contained and remediated as required by local, State, and federal law.

#### Construction Activities

Construction of the proposed solar facility would involve demolishing all on-site structures and thus, could result in the same potential impacts concerning hazardous materials as any demolition and development would within the annexation area; refer to the discussion above. In summary, construction activities could result in accidental conditions involving existing on-site contamination from past pesticide and fertilizer use, including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticide. To reduce the potential for exposure of hazardous materials/waste during ground disturbing activities, Mitigation Measure MM-12 would require soil sampling for such hazardous materials/waste. Further, due to the age of existing on-site buildings (constructed prior to 1979), there is the potential for ACMs, LBPs, PCBs, as well as other potential hazardous materials, to be present in association with the on-site building materials. Demolition of these structures could expose construction personnel and the public to ACMs, LBPs, and/or PCBs. Mitigation Measure MM-13 would require ACMs, LBPs, and PCBs surveys be conducted by a qualified specialist or contractor and be submitted to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department for approval prior to demolition of existing structures. Compliance with existing regulations and implementation of Mitigation Measure MM-12 and Mitigation Measure MM-13 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

### **Operations**

Refer to Section 4.9(a) for a description of impacts related to solar facility operations. Upon adherence to existing regulations related to hazards and hazardous materials, impacts pertaining to the potential for accidental conditions during project operations would be less than significant.



**Mitigation Measures:**

**ANNEXATION**

- MM-12 Prior to construction activities involving ground disturbing activities, the project applicant shall retain a hazardous materials specialist to conduct soil sampling from the agricultural areas of the site to be analyzed for agricultural chemicals, including organochlorine pesticides (OCP), organophosphate pesticides (OPP), and chlorinated herbicides (CH), following the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) Guidance for Sampling Agricultural Fields. If results from the soil sampling indicate soil contamination above regulatory screening levels and above background levels and the soils will not be excavated and disposed off-site in accordance with regulatory requirements, the project Applicant shall obtain regulatory oversight from the applicable regulatory agency (e.g., DTSC, and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board [RWQCB]). Proof of regulatory oversight, if applicable, shall be provided to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department.
- MM-13 The project applicant shall retain a qualified specialist or contractor to conduct surveys of asbestos-containing materials (ACM), lead-based paint (LBP), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and submit the surveys to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department for approval. If ACMs are located, asbestos abatement shall be completed prior to any activities that would disturb ACMs or create an airborne asbestos hazard. Asbestos removal shall be performed by a State-certified asbestos containment contractor in accordance with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District's (AVAQMD) Rule 1403. If LBPs are found, abatement shall be completed by a qualified lead specialist prior to any activities that would create lead dust or fume hazard. LBP removal and disposal shall be performed in accordance with California Code of Regulation Title 8, Section 1532.1, which specifies exposure limits, exposure monitoring and respiratory protection, and mandates good worker practices by workers exposed to lead. If PCBs are found, the wastes shall be delivered to a permitted facility or a facility which has been otherwise authorized to receive hazardous waste pursuant to Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, and their implementing regulations. The PCB wastes shall be properly manifested in accordance with the requirements of California Code of Regulations Title 22, Section 66263.44 on the use of the Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest. Specialists or contractors performing ACM, LBP, and/or PCBs removal shall provide evidence of abatement activities to the City of Lancaster Community Development Department. The project Applicant shall inform the City of Lancaster Community Development Director, via monthly compliance reports, of the date when all ACMs, LBPs, and/or PCBs are removed from the project site.

**SOLAR FACILITY**

Refer to Mitigation Measures MM-12 and MM-13 above.

- c) ***Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?***

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

There are no schools located within 0.25-mile of the annexation area. As such, no impact would occur.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- d) ***Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?***

**No Impact.** Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to compile and update a regulatory sites listing (per the criteria of the Section). The California Department of Health Services is also required to compile and update, as appropriate, a list of all public drinking water wells that contain detectable levels of organic contaminants and that are subject to water analysis pursuant to Section 116395 of the Health and Safety Code. Government Section 65962.5 requires the local enforcement agency, as designated pursuant to Section 18051 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), to compile, as appropriate, a list of all solid waste disposal facilities from which there is a known migration of hazardous waste.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The annexation area is not listed pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.<sup>1</sup> Thus, no impact would result.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

There are no airports within two miles of the annexation area. The closest (public) airport is the U.S. Air Force Plant 42 located approximately 4.4 miles to the southwest of the proposed annexation area. According to the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, the project site is located outside of the Palmdale Airport /U.S. Air Force Plant 42 Influence Area.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, no impacts would occur. As such, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area. No impacts would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

<sup>1</sup> California Environmental Protection Agency, *Cortese Listing*, <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, Palmdale Regional Airport - Airport Influence Area*, dated May 13, 2003, [https://case.planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/aluc\\_airport-palmdale.pdf](https://case.planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/aluc_airport-palmdale.pdf), accessed May 7, 2024.



**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- f) ***Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?***

**No Impact.**

#### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

No construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. As such, the proposed annexation would not result in any adverse alterations to vehicular circulation routes or obstruct public access along adjacent roadways. However, buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in new residences, which could impact emergency response or emergency evacuation in the area. Future development within the annexation area would be required to comply with all applicable City codes and policies related to emergency access, including the California Fire Code and LMC Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*. Additionally, future residential developments would be required to undergo project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) to evaluate project-level impacts with regards to emergency access and to undergo plan check review with the City and LACFD. Project-specific analysis and mitigation measures would then be implemented as needed. Thus, the proposed annexation would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The proposed solar facility would not physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Demolition and construction activities would be confined to the boundaries of the solar facility site with the exception of off-site gen-tie and communication lines installed within the public right-of-way and would require trenching along 50th Street East, Avenue J, and 90th Street East. As discussed in Section 4.17, Transportation, the City would require any traffic management or control plan be implemented to ensure traffic flow, emergency access, and any pedestrian and bicyclist access is maintained during construction. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- g) ***Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?***

**No Impact.**

#### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire, the City and its SOI are not located in or near a State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) or a Local Responsibility Area FHSZ.<sup>3</sup> Thus, there would be no impact.

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Forestry and Fire, *Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer*, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/03beab8511814e79a0e4eabf0d3e7247/>, accessed July 10, 2024.



## **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



#### 4.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓	
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			✓	
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 through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
1) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?			✓	
2) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?			✓	
3) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?			✓	
4) Impede or redirect flood flows?			✓	
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			✓	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			✓	

**a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.** As part of Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established regulations under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to control direct stormwater discharges. In California, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) administers the NPDES permitting program and is responsible for developing NPDES permitting requirements. The NPDES program regulates industrial pollutant discharges, which include construction activities. The SWRCB works in coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore water quality.

The existing NPDES (Phase I) stormwater program requires municipalities serving more than 1,000,000 persons to obtain a NPDES stormwater permit for any construction project larger than five acres. Proposed NPDES stormwater regulations (Phase II) expand this existing national program to smaller municipalities with populations of 10,000 persons or more and construction sites that disturb more than one acre. For other dischargers, such as those affecting



groundwater or from nonpoint sources, a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) must be filed with the RWQCB. For specified situations, some permits may be waived, and some discharge activities may be handled through being included in an existing General Permit.

The City of Lancaster has been designated a regulated Small Municipal Separate Storm System by the EPA pursuant to 40 CFR 122.322(a)(1). To comply with the Phase II regulations of the NPDES, the City filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the SWRCB Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit (MS4 Permit) in lieu of obtaining an individual permit. In compliance with Federal regulations, the City submitted an NOI, a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), and applicable fee on March 7, 2003; the SWMP was revised in August 2003. On April 20, 2003, NPDES General Permit No. CAS000004 was adopted. The objective of the City's SWMP is to establish ordinances, policies, procedures, and practices to manage and control the quality of stormwater runoff in Lancaster.

## **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre) land use designation. Additionally, buildout of the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), including the annexation area, was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The proposed annexation would not include any development or construction. As such, the proposed annexation itself would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Thus, the proposed annexation would result in less than significant impacts.

## **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

### **Construction**

Minimal grading and earthwork activities would be required for construction of the solar facility. Specifically, grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (i.e., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). Additionally, off-site generation tie (gen-tie) and communication lines would be installed either aboveground or underground via trenching within existing paved public-right-way.

As the solar facility would disturb more than one acre of land, a General Construction Permit under the NPDES program would be required. Compliance with the General Construction Permit would include submittal of an NOI, Risk Assessment, Site Map, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), and other documents prior to the commencement of soil disturbing activities. The SWPPP would identify point and nonpoint sources of pollutant discharge associated with the solar facility that could adversely affect water quality. The SWPPP would also list proposed best management practices (BMPs) to be implemented during construction in order to control sediment and other pollutants in stormwater and non-storm water runoff. Further, the SWPPP is required to include a visual monitoring program, a chemical monitoring program for "nonvisible" pollutants to be implemented if there is a failure of BMPs, and a monitoring plan if the site discharges directly to a water body listed on the State's 303(d) list of impaired waters. Examples of construction BMPs include soil and wind erosion controls, sediment controls, tracking controls, non-stormwater management controls, and waste management controls. Selection and implementation of these BMPs would occur during the final design stage. The SWPPP would also cover construction activities associated with the planned decommission of the solar facility, which would require site restoration and soil management plan per with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 3100. Additionally, a WDR would be filed with the RWQCB. Compliance with existing regulations would minimize construction-related water quality impacts associated with construction of the solar facility. Impacts would be less than significant.



## Operations

Operation of the solar facility would minimally increase impervious areas on-site, primarily from the development of concrete pads for electrical transformers and battery storage boxes, among other improvements. Proposed roadways on-site would be compacted but remain pervious, and proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would either be installed aboveground or underground along existing paved right-of-way. Nonetheless, implementation of the solar facility would require the preparation of a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) in compliance with the NPDES permit. Project-specific WQMPs are intended to reduce pollutants and post-development runoff and can include low impact development (LID) features, site design BMPs, and structural/nonstructural treatment BMPs to address post-construction stormwater runoff management. LID features may include techniques to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, or retain runoff close to the source, and are consistent with the prescribed hierarchy of treatment provided in the regional MS4 permit. Selection of LID and additional treatment control BMPs would occur during the final design stage. Additionally, the solar facility would be required to comply with the City's SWMP, which includes additional minimum control measures that reduce stormwater runoff during operation. The planned decommission of the solar facility would remove impervious surfaces that increase runoff. Overall, the solar project would be required to comply with existing regulations for water quality standards and waste discharge requirements, which would be ensured as part of the City's plan review process. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The annexation area is located in the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin), which is managed by the Antelope Valley Watermaster. The proposed annexation would not include any proposed development or construction. As such, annexation in and of itself would not impact groundwater supplies or recharge. While buildout of the annexation area in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could increase water demand in the annexation area, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone is consistent with the site's existing Non-Urban Residential (NU) land use designation. Additionally, buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge beyond that previously analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

There are existing groundwater pumphouses located in the northwestern portion of the solar facility site that would be demolished as part of the proposed solar facility development. The solar facility would not require the direct use of groundwater, such as from groundwater wells, during construction or operation. Proposed solar project-related impacts to groundwater supplies during construction and operation are described below.

## Construction

Groundwater pumped from the Basin could be required during the construction phase for such activities as dust suppression, soil compaction, and grading. Water may also be used at points of ingress/egress to minimize the tracking of dirt off-site onto local roadways from construction vehicles. Water usage during construction is not expected to be substantial over the short-term construction period. Therefore, the short-term consumption of groundwater during



construction would result in a less than significant impact on groundwater supplies and would not impede sustainable groundwater management of the Basin. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Operations

Implementation of the solar facility would minimally increase impervious areas on-site, primarily from the development of concrete pads for electrical transformers and battery storage boxes, among other improvements. Proposed roadways on-site would be compacted but remain pervious, and proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed underground along existing paved right-of-way. Additionally, operation of the solar facility would not result in excessive water use as the facility would be unmanned and would not have landscaping water demands. Water would only be utilized for occasional cleaning of the solar panels, up to one to two times per week. Thus, the proposed solar facility would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

c) ***Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:***

1) ***Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The annexation area mostly consists of vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields (both active and abandoned). The proposed annexation action would not include any proposed development or construction. Additionally, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone is consistent with the site's existing NU land use designation. Thus, buildout of the annexation area based on the NU designation was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The proposed annexation action itself would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

For future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone in the annexation area, a General Construction Permit under the NPDES program may be required. Compliance with the General Construction Permit would require submittal of an NOI, SWPPP, Risk Assessment, and other documents prior to the commencement of soil disturbing activities. The SWPPP would list structural and non-structural BMPs to be implemented by future projects in order to control erosion and sediment during construction and operation. Future projects would also be required to develop and implement an erosion control plan. These plans would include but not be limited to erosion and sediment control, general housekeeping practices such as sweeping up of site debris, proper waste disposal procedures, and inspection for and repair of leaks and spills from construction vehicles. LMC Section 8.50.110, *Grading design plan*, also requires that grading of a project site be designed to minimize soil erosion, runoff, and water waste. Additionally, all future development projects would also be required to undergo separate environmental review under CEQA and implement project-level mitigation measures, as needed. Impacts would be less than significant.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

#### Construction

Soil disturbance would temporarily occur during construction of the solar facility due to earth-moving activities such as excavation, trenching, and grading. However, minimal soil disturbance is anticipated, and the construction period would



be temporary. Grading would be confined to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (i.e., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). Additionally, off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed either aboveground or underground via trenching within existing paved public-right-way. Disturbed soils would be susceptible to erosion from wind and rain, resulting in sediment transport via stormwater runoff from the solar facility site. The project would be subject to compliance with the requirements set forth in the NPDES Construction General Permit for construction activities; refer to Section 4.10(a). Compliance with the NPDES requirements, including preparation of a SWPPP, would reduce the volume of sediment-laden runoff discharging from the site during construction. Implementation of BMPs would reduce the potential for sediment and stormwater runoff containing pollutants from entering receiving waters. Therefore, solar facility implementation would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site during the construction process such that substantial erosion or siltation would occur. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Operations

Operations of the proposed solar facility would not have the potential to result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site as the site would be unmanned and monitored remotely. Additionally, the planned decommission of the solar facility would remove impervious surfaces that increase runoff. Overall, operations of the solar facility would not substantially alter the existing topography or drainage patterns on-site. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 2) ***Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Existing drainage on-site generally flows east to northeast towards Little Rock Wash, which eventually flows north to northeast into the Rosamond Dry Lake, an isolated, intrastate dry lakebed. Additionally, based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel Number 06037C0450F, the majority of the annexation area, beginning on the east side of the annexation area, is identified as Zone A.<sup>1</sup> Zone A is described as an area without base flood elevation determinations. The remainder of the annexation area is identified as Zone X, which is located outside of a flood zone.

While the proposed annexation action would not include any proposed development or construction, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would allow development consistent with the site's existing NU land use designation. All future development in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone would be subject to federal, State, regional, and local regulations related to flood control, including payment of drainage/flood control improvement fees per LMC Section 15.64.060, *Drainage/Flood Control Improvements Fee*. The drainage/flood control improvement fee funds the goals, objectives, policies, and specific actions of the General Plan and the City's Master Plan of Drainage, and helps to mitigate stormwater runoff impacts caused by new development. Therefore, impacts related to flooding resulting from altered drainage patterns would be less than significant.

<sup>1</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Flood Insurance Rate Map, Panel Number 06037C0450F*, September 26, 2008.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The majority of the solar facility site, beginning on the east side, is identified as Zone A and could be prone to flooding; the remainder of the solar facility site is identified as Zone X.<sup>2</sup> Implementation of the proposed solar facility would minimally increase impervious areas on-site, primarily from the development of concrete pads for electrical transformers and battery storage boxes, among other improvements. Proposed roadways on-site would be compacted but remain pervious, and proposed off-site gen-tie and communication lines would be installed underground along existing paved right-of-way. Further, no development would occur within 100 feet of Little Rock Wash. The facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. The planned decommission of the solar facility would remove impervious surfaces. Overall, the proposed improvements would not substantially alter the existing topography or drainage patterns on-site.

Further, the project would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local regulations related to flood control, as detailed above. Following adherence to existing regulations, impacts related to flooding due altered drainage patterns would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 3) ***Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Sections 4.10(c)(1) and 4.10(c)(2).

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 4) ***Impede or redirect flood flows?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Refer to Section 4.10(c)(2).

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Flood Insurance Rate Map, Panel Number 06037C0450F*, September 26, 2008.



d) ***In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Flooding can occur during and immediately after periods of heavy rainfall, or from tsunamis, seiches, or dam failure. A tsunami is a great sea wave, commonly referred to as a tidal wave, produced by a significant undersea disturbance such as tectonic displacement of a sea floor associated with large, shallow earthquakes. The annexation area is located over 80 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and thus, is at a sufficient distance so as not to be subject to tsunami impacts. Additionally, the annexation area is not in close proximity to any large bodies of water. Thus, seiches are not a potential hazard within the project area. Dam failure is the structural collapse of a dam that releases the water stored in the reservoir behind the dam. A dam failure is usually the result of the age of the structure, inadequate spillway capacity used in construction, or structural damage caused by an earthquake or flood. Littlerock-Palmdale Dam is located approximately 14 miles south of the project site. However, the annexation area is not located within the inundation area of the dam.<sup>3</sup> Thus, flooding from dam failure is not a potential hazard.

As analyzed in Section 4.10(c)(2), the annexation area is located in an area that could be prone to flooding. However, compliance with existing regulations would minimize impacts related to flooding from future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone. Additionally, compliance with the NPDES permit requirements for preparation of a SWPPP and/or WQMP to implement site-specific structural and non-structural controls would further minimize the risk of releasing pollutants due to future project inundation in the annexation area. Therefore, flood hazard impacts related to the release of pollutants from project inundation would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to the Annexation Area analysis above regarding tsunami and seiche inundation; no impacts would occur.

As analyzed in Section 4.10(c)(2), the solar facility site is located in an area that could be prone to flooding. Compliance with existing regulations would minimize impacts related to flooding. Additionally, compliance with the NPDES permit requirements for preparation of a SWPPP and/or WQMP to implement site-specific structural and non-structural controls would further minimize the risk of releasing pollutants due to inundation at the solar facility site. Following the planned decommission of the solar facility, there would be no impacts involving flooding, tsunami, or seiche. Therefore, impacts related to the release of pollutants from solar project inundation would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

e) ***Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Sections 4.10(a) and 4.10(b).

<sup>3</sup> Palmdale Water District, *Littlerock Dam, Dam Failure Inundation Map, Los Angeles County, CA, DOSD No. 57.000*, October 19, 2018.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community?			✓	
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			✓	

### a) *Physically divide an established community?*

**Less Than Significant Impact.** Activities and features that could physically divide a community include, but are not limited to:

- Construction of major highways or roadways;
- Construction of storm channels;
- Closing bridges or roadways; and
- Construction of utility transmission lines.

The key factor with respect to this threshold is the potential to create physical barriers that change the connectivity between areas of a community to the extent that persons are separated from other areas of the community.

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation area mostly consists of vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields, with some scattered structures, including rural residences, outbuildings, groundwater pumphouses, a telecommunications facility, and above-ground storage tank. Due to the nature of rural development, there are no cohesive, consolidated communities established in the annexation area.

The proposed annexation would not directly involve the construction of new development. Additionally, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would be consistent with the site's current Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre) land use designation. Buildout of the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), including the annexation area, was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. As such, no impacts would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility would not physically divide an established community as the site is primarily vacant, with scattered active and inactive agricultural, rural residential, and utility uses, and is bound by existing roadways on all sides. While there are rural residential uses to the north and west of the site, these uses are separated by vacant land, agricultural fields, and existing roadways. Additionally, while the project proposes construction of utility transmission lines (i.e., off-site generation-tie [gen-tie] and communication lines), these utility lines would only serve the proposed solar facility and would be installed within the existing roadway right-of-way as to not physically divide any established communities. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



- b) ***Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The annexation area has an existing County General Plan land use designation of N1 (Non-Urban 1 [0.5 du/ac]) and is zoned A-2-5 (Heavy Agricultural). Given that the site is currently located outside of the City’s jurisdiction, there is no City zoning designation for the annexation area; however, the annexation area has a Lancaster General Plan NU land use designation. The annexation area is located within the City’s SOI and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City’s jurisdiction. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area as RR-2.5. Based on LMC Section 17.08.030, *Purposes of the Residential Zones*, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use, allowing one dwelling unit per minimum net area of 100,000 square feet (or approximately 2.5 acres), which is consistent with the site’s current NU land use designation. Given that the annexation area is located within the City’s SOI, buildout of the annexation area was considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area; however, there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). As such, impacts would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

**General Plan Consistency**

The solar facility site has a County General Plan N1 land use designation and is zoned A-2-5. Upon approval of the proposed annexation and pre-zone, the solar facility site would be zoned RR-2.5, consistent with the site’s current NU land use designation.

Table 4.11-1, *Solar Facility General Plan Consistency Analysis*, analyzes the proposed solar facility’s consistency with applicable goals and policies in the Plan for the Natural Environment and Plan for Physical Development (i.e., Land Use Element) of the General Plan.

**Table 4.11-1  
Solar Facility General Plan Consistency Analysis**

Applicable General Plan Policies	Proposed Solar Facility Consistency Analysis
<b>Plan for the Natural Environment</b>	
Policy 3.4.1: Ensure the comprehensive management of programs for significant biological resources that remain within the Lancaster sphere of influence.	<b>Consistent.</b> As detailed in Section 4.4, <i>Biological Resources</i> , construction activities associated with the solar facility could impact burrowing owls and nesting birds. Thus, pre-construction clearance surveys are required for burrowing owls and nesting birds pursuant to Mitigation Measures MM-4 and MM-5, respectively, to minimize potential impacts. Implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-4 and MM-5 would ensure the comprehensive management of programs for significant biological resources during construction of the proposed solar facility.
Policy 3.4.4: Ensure that development proposals, including City sponsored projects, are analyzed for short- and long-term impacts to biological	<b>Consistent.</b> As detailed in Section 4.4, <i>Biological Resources</i> , project-specific technical studies were prepared to analyze short- and long-term impacts to biological resources as a result of the project, and appropriate mitigation measures were incorporated into this IS/MND; refer to Appendix B, <i>Biological Resources Reports</i> .



Applicable General Plan Policies	Proposed Solar Facility Consistency Analysis
resources and that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.	
Policy 3.6.1: Reduce energy consumption by establishing land use patterns which would decrease automobile travel and increase the use of energy efficient modes of transportation.	<b>Consistent.</b> As detailed in Section 4.17, <i>Transportation</i> , land use projects that meet any of the screening thresholds based on size, location, proximity to transit or trip-making potential are presumed to result in a less than significant impact in regard to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) based on the City's <i>Local Transportation Assessment Guidelines</i> (Transportation Guidelines). Specifically, if a land use project generates 110 or fewer daily trips, it would meet the screening threshold based on project size. As shown in Table 4.17-1, <i>Solar Facility Trip Generation</i> , the solar facility would generate approximately 24 average daily trips and thus, would meet the Project Size screening category (i.e., less than the 110-trip threshold). Therefore, the solar facility is presumed to result in a less than significant impact.
Policy 3.6.6: Consider and promote the use of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar energy.	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed solar facility would provide the County and the State with additional renewable energy sources by generating solar energy. Therefore, the proposed solar facility would support this measure.
<b>Plan for Physical Development</b>	
Policy 17.1.6: Revise the zoning ordinance to conform with the General Plan text and map and to address changing conditions with new concepts that will allow both flexibility in application as well as a pleasing and attractive built environment.	<b>Consistent.</b> The solar facility site currently has an NU land use designation. Given that the site is currently located outside of the City's jurisdiction, there is no City zoning designation for the project site. The project proposes to pre-zone the site to RR-2.5, which would be consistent with the density allowed under the NU land use designation. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would also be compatible with adjacent City properties to the south with the same zoning designation. A Zone Change and General Plan Amendment are proposed to ensure General Plan and Zoning Code consistency for the project site.
Policy 18.1.1: Cooperate with other jurisdictions and communities in developing compatible land uses on lands adjacent to the Lancaster General Plan study area.	<b>Consistent.</b> The entire project site, including the solar facility site, is located within the City's SOI and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City's jurisdiction from unincorporated Los Angeles County. The project Applicant is working with the Local Agency Formation Commission for the County of Los Angeles to process the requested annexation. Refer to response to Policy 17.1.6 regarding the solar facility's compatibility with the adjacent uses.
Policy 18.1.2: Encourage development that is compatible with the City's designated rural and non-urban areas.	<b>Consistent.</b> The solar facility site is located in a rural, non-urban area and has an NU land use designation. Development of the proposed solar facility would be compatible with the project area's non-urban area. Refer to responses to Policies 17.1.6 and 18.1.1 regarding the solar facility project's compatibility with the General Plan and adjacent uses.
Policy 18.1.3: Ensure that land use map designations are compatible with adjacent proposed land uses, surrounding developments, existing infrastructure, the roadway system, and Redevelopment Project Areas.	<b>Consistent.</b> Refer to response to Policy 17.1.6.
Policy 18.3.1: Require annexation proposals to demonstrate a positive relationship between facility and service costs and generated revenues and that there is a demonstrated need for such proposal.	<b>Consistent.</b> As part of the annexation component of the project, the project requires annexation approval through Local Agency Formation Commission for the County of Los Angeles. The project Applicant is working with Local Agency Formation Commission for the County of Los Angeles to ensure all required documentation is provided to ensure the requested annexation is appropriate.
Policy 19.2.7: Provide for and protect outlying lands designated rural residential, providing a distinct interface between urban and rural uses.	<b>Consistent.</b> Refer to response to Policy 18.1.2.



Applicable General Plan Policies	Proposed Solar Facility Consistency Analysis
Policy 19.3.4: Preserve and protect important areas of historic and cultural interest that serve as visible reminders of the City's social and architectural history.	<b>Consistent.</b> As detailed in Section 4.5, <i>Cultural Resources</i> , project-specific technical studies were prepared to analyze potential impacts to historic resources as a result of the project. As detailed, the proposed annexation and solar facility would not have the potential to disturb historic resources and less than significant impacts would occur. However, due to the archeological sensitivity of the project site, preparation of an archaeological monitoring and treatment plan (Mitigation Measure MM-6), archaeological monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-7), tribal monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-8), establishment of protocol if a pre-contact cultural resource is discovered (Mitigation Measure MM-9), and adherence to State Health and Safety Code during inadvertent discoveries of human remains (Mitigation Measure MM-10) would be required.
Policy 20.1.1: Promote harmonious and mutually beneficial uses of land between the City of Lancaster, the City of Palmdale, the Counties of Los Angeles, Kern and San Bernardino, and the United States Air Force.	<b>Consistent.</b> The proposed solar facility would develop a clean, alternative energy source for the region, as well as further establish the City as a solar power hub. Refer to response to Policy 17.1.6 regarding the solar facility's compatibility with adjacent and surrounding land uses.
Source: City of Lancaster, <i>City of Lancaster General Plan 2030</i> , July 14, 2009.	

As analyzed in [Table 4.11-1](#), the solar facility would be consistent with applicable General Plan policies. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

### LMC Consistency

Based on LMC Section 17.08.050, *Uses and permit requirements*, the RR-2.5 zone allows for commercial solar facilities with a conditional use permit. The solar facility would meet the 100,000 square-foot minimum lot size and would not exceed the 40-foot height limit of the RR-2.5 zone. Further, the proposed development would comply with all applicable design requirements of the RR-2.5 zone per LMC Section 17.08.290, *Solar farms*. Such requirements would include the screening of storage areas, installation of perimeter landscaping for screening purposes, and necessary right-of-way dedication for street improvements. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				✓
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?				✓

- 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?***

**No Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation area is located in the Palmdale Production-Consumption (P-C) region.<sup>1</sup> According to the California Department of Conservation's *Special Report 143 Part V Mineral Land Classification of Greater Los Angeles Area: Classification of Sand and Gravel Resource Area, Saugus - Newhall - Production - Consumption Region, Palmdale - Production - Consumption Region*, the annexation area is designated as Mineral Resource Zone 3 (MRZ-3). MRZ-3 is defined as an area which contains potential but presently unproven resources.<sup>2</sup>

The annexation area is within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) and is planned for the eventual annexation into the City with a Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre) General Plan designation. As such, buildout of the annexation area was already considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. As such, the proposed annexation would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As stated, the project site, including the proposed solar facility, is within the City's SOI and was planned for eventual annexation into Lancaster. The solar facility site is similarly identified as MRZ-3. Operation of the proposed solar facility would not involve mineral resource extraction activities, and there are no existing or proposed mineral resource extraction activities occurring in the vicinity. Thus, development of the solar facility would not result in a loss of availability of known mineral resources and no impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology, *Special Report 143 Part V Mineral Land Classification of Greater Los Angeles Area: Classification of Sand and Gravel Resource Area, Saugus - Newhall - Production - Consumption Region, Palmdale - Production - Consumption Region*, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



- 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?*

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.12(a).

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.12(a).

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



### 4.13 NOISE

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			✓	
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			✓	
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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?			✓	

#### FUNDAMENTALS OF NOISE

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves in a compressible medium such as air and is characterized by both its amplitude and frequency (or pitch). The human ear does not hear all frequencies equally. In particular, the ear deemphasizes low and very high frequencies. To better approximate the sensitivity of human hearing, the A-weighted decibel scale (dBA) has been developed. On this scale, the human range of hearing extends from approximately 3 dBA to around 140 dBA.

Noise is generally defined as unwanted or excessive sound, which can vary in intensity by over one million times within the range of human hearing; therefore, a logarithmic scale, known as the decibel scale (dB), is used to quantify sound intensity. Noise can be generated by a number of sources, including mobile sources such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes, and stationary sources such as construction sites, machinery, and industrial operations. Noise generated by mobile sources typically attenuates (is reduced) at a rate between 3 dBA and 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. The rate depends on the ground surface and the number or type of objects between the noise source and the receiver. Hard and flat surfaces, such as concrete or asphalt, have an attenuation rate of 3 dBA per doubling of distance. Soft surfaces, such as uneven or vegetated terrain, have an attenuation rate of about 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise generated by stationary sources typically attenuates at a rate between 6 dBA and about 7.5 dBA per doubling of distance.

There are a number of metrics used to characterize community noise exposure, which fluctuate constantly over time. One such metric, the equivalent sound level ( $L_{eq}$ ), represents a constant sound that, over the specified period, has the same sound energy as the time-varying sound. Noise exposure over a longer period of time is often evaluated based on the Day-Night Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ ). This is a measure of 24-hour noise levels that incorporates a 10-dBA penalty for sounds occurring between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. The penalty is intended to reflect the increased human sensitivity to noises occurring during nighttime hours, particularly at times when people are sleeping and there are lower ambient noise conditions. Typical  $L_{dn}$  noise levels for light and medium density residential areas range from 55 dBA to 65 dBA.

Two of the primary factors that reduce levels of environmental sounds are increasing the distance between the sound source to the receiver and having intervening obstacles such as walls, buildings, or terrain features between the sound source and the receiver. Factors that act to increase the loudness of environmental sounds include moving the sound



source closer to the receiver, sound enhancements caused by reflections, and focusing caused by various meteorological conditions.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### State

The State Office of Planning and Research *Noise Element Guidelines* include recommended exterior and interior noise level standards for local jurisdictions to identify and prevent the creation of incompatible land uses due to noise. The *Noise Element Guidelines* contain a land use compatibility table that describes the compatibility of various land uses with a range of environmental noise levels in terms of the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). A noise environment of 50 CNEL to 60 CNEL is “normally acceptable” for residential uses. The Office of Planning and Research recommendations also note that, under certain conditions, more restrictive standards than the maximum levels cited may be appropriate.

### Local

#### Lancaster General Plan 2030

The *Lancaster General Plan 2030* (General Plan) was adopted on July 14, 2009, and the horizon year for the adopted General Plan is 2030. The General Plan contains the vision, goals, objectives, policies, and specific actions for the City. The General Plan includes the following elements or plans: natural environment, public health and safety, active living, physical mobility, municipal services and facilities, economic development and vitality and physical development. The following objective and policies from the General Plan are applicable to the project:

- Objective 4.3: Promote noise compatible land use relationships by implementing the noise standards identified in Table 3-1 (Table 4.13-1, *Noise Compatible Land Use Objectives*, below) to be utilized for design purposes in new development, and establishing a program to attenuate existing noise problem[s].

**Table 4.13-1  
Noise Compatible Land Use Objectives**

Land Use Category	Maximum Exterior CNEL	Maximum Interior CNEL
Rural, Single-Family, Multiple-Family Residential	65 dBA	45 dBA
Schools:		
Classrooms	65 dBA	45 dBA
Playgrounds	70 dBA	-
Libraries	-	50 dBA
Hospitals/Convalescent Facilities:		
Living Areas	-	50 dBA
Sleeping Areas	-	40 dBA
Commercial and Industrial	70 dBA	-
Office Areas	-	50 dBA

Source: City of Lancaster, *Lancaster General Plan 2030*, July 14, 2009.

- Policy 4.3.1: Ensure that noise-sensitive land uses and noise generators are located and designed in such a manner that City noise objectives will be achieved.
- Policy 4.3.2: Wherever feasible, manage the generation of single event noise levels (SENL) from motor vehicles, trains, aircraft, commercial, industrial, construction, and other activities such that



SENL levels are no greater than 15 dBA above the noise objectives included in the Plan for Public Health and Safety.

Policy 4.3.3: Ensure that the provision of noise attenuation does not create significant negative visual impacts.

#### Lancaster Municipal Code

The most effective method to control community noise impacts from non-transportation noise sources (such as playgrounds, trash compactors, air-conditioning units, etc.) is through the application of a community noise ordinance. For the purpose of this analysis, the noise impacts associated with the project are controlled by General Plan 2030 Plan for Public Health and Safety, and the permitted hours of construction activity are established in the LMC.

The City of Lancaster has set restrictions with respect to the hours during which construction activity may take place. LMC Section 8.24.040, *Loud, unnecessary and unusual noises prohibited - Construction and Building*, indicates that “...a person at any time on Sunday or any day between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. shall not perform any construction or repair work of any kind upon any building or structure or perform any earth excavating, filling or moving where any of the foregoing entails the use of any air compressor, jack hammer, power-driven drill, riveting machine, excavator, diesel-powered truck, tractor or other earth moving equipment, hard hammers on steel or iron or any other machine tool, device or equipment which makes loud noises within 500 feet of an occupied dwelling, apartment, hotel, mobile home or other place of residence.”

#### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

##### **Stationary Noise Sources**

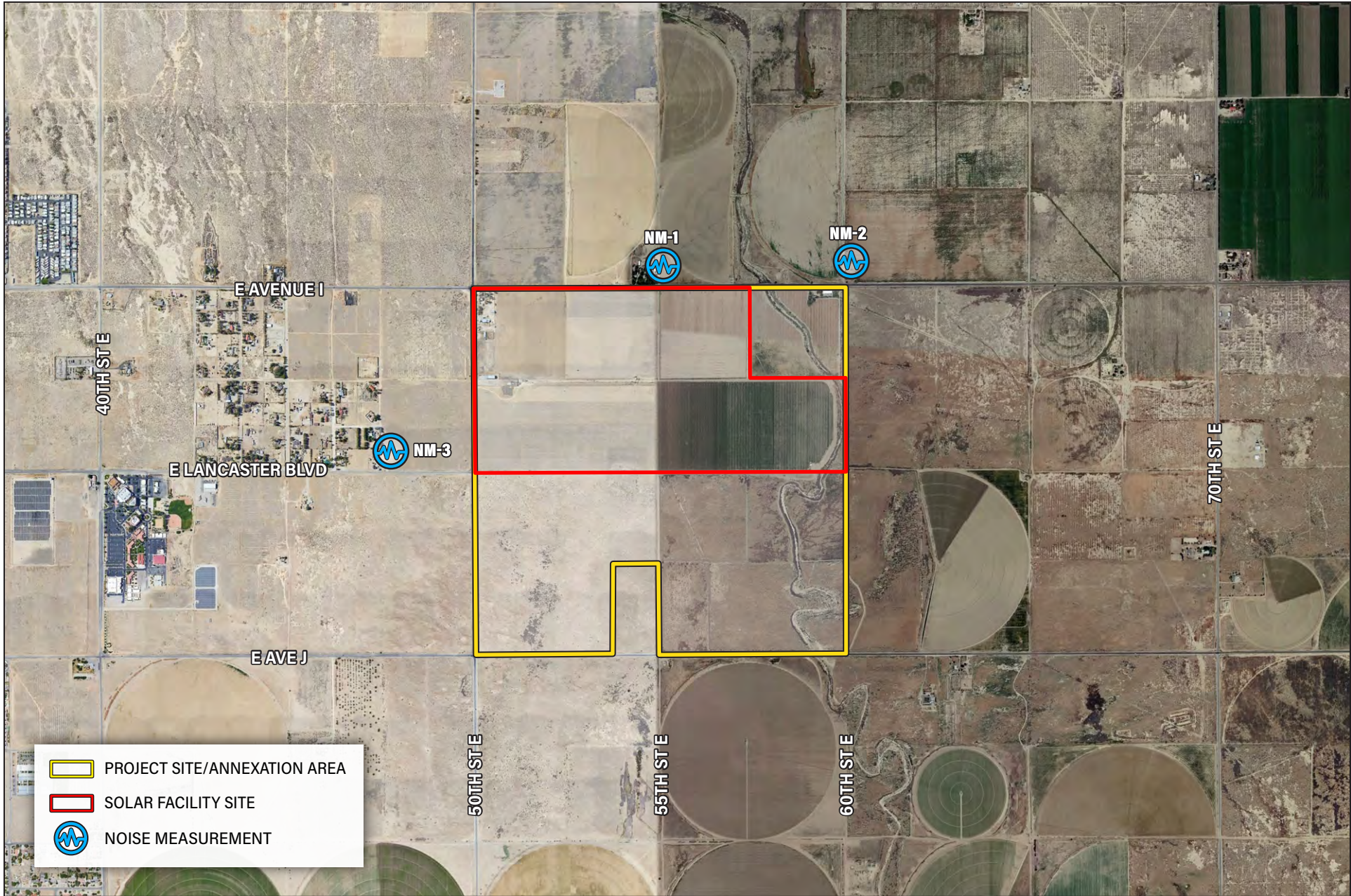
Land uses surrounding the project site are primarily comprised of a combination of undeveloped, agricultural, and residential uses. As such, no major stationary noise sources currently exist in the project vicinity.

##### **Mobile Noise Sources**

The majority of existing mobile noise sources in the project area is generated from vehicles traveling along Avenue I and 50<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **NOISE MEASUREMENTS**

Michael Baker International conducted short-term noise measurements to quantify existing ambient noise levels in the project area. Three short-term noise measurements were taken on December 14, 2023, between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.; refer to Exhibit 4.13-1, *Noise Measurement Locations*. The noise measurement sites are representative of typical existing noise exposure at and immediately adjacent to the project site. Short-term ( $L_{eq}$ ) measurements are considered representative of the noise levels in the project vicinity. As shown in Table 4.13-2, *Short-Term Noise Measurements*, short-term noise levels during the daytime ranged from 55.3 to 62.2 dBA  $L_{eq}$ .



Source: Google Earth Pro, June 2024



**Table 4.13-2**  
**Short-Term Noise Measurements**

Site No.	Location	L <sub>eq</sub> (dBA)	L <sub>min</sub> (dBA)	L <sub>max</sub> (dBA)	Time
ST1	In front of single-family residences at 5437 East Avenue I	60.3	27.8	84.1	11:01 a.m.
ST2	Northeast corner of the 60 <sup>th</sup> street and Avenue I intersection	62.2	32.3	82.4	11:21 a.m.
ST3	To the east of 4661 Lancaster Boulevard	55.3	29.6	76.3	11:40 a.m.
Notes: L <sub>eq</sub> = Equivalent Sound Level; L <sub>min</sub> = Minimum Noise Level; L <sub>max</sub> = Maximum Noise Level					
Source: Michael Baker International, 2023; refer to <a href="#">Appendix E</a> .					

Meteorological conditions consisted of clear skies, warm temperatures, with light wind speeds (4 miles per hour), and low humidity. Noise monitoring equipment used for the ambient noise survey consisted of a Brüel & Kjær Hand-held Analyzer Type 2250 equipped with a Type 4189 pre-polarized microphone. The monitoring equipment complies with applicable requirements of the American National Standards Institute for Type I (precision) sound level meters. The results of the field measurements are included in [Appendix E, Noise Analysis](#).

### SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Sensitive populations are more susceptible to the effects of noise than are the general population. Land uses considered sensitive by the State of California include schools, playgrounds, athletic facilities, hospitals, rest homes, rehabilitation centers, long-term care and mental care facilities. Generally, a sensitive receptor is identified as a location where human populations (especially children, senior citizens, and sick persons) are present.

Land uses less sensitive to noise are business, commercial, and professional developments. Noise receptors categorized as being least sensitive to noise include industrial, manufacturing, utilities, agriculture, natural open space, undeveloped land, parking lots, warehousing, and transit terminals. These type of land uses often generate high noise levels. Moderately sensitive land uses typically include multi-family dwellings, hotels, motels, dormitories, and outpatient clinics.

It should be noted that the annexation area is approximately 638 acres, and the only development currently proposed within the annexation area is the solar facility (approximately 288 acre) in the northern portion of the annexation area. The nearest sensitive receptors are the single-family residences located approximately 120 feet to the north of both the proposed annexation area and the solar facility site. The nearest sensitive receptors to the southern half of the annexation area are single-family residences located approximately 1,350 feet to the west.

- a) ***Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?***

### Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation encompasses approximately 638 acres and is located within the City's SOI and thus, has been planned for eventual annexation into the City's jurisdiction. The project proposes to pre-zone the annexation area RR-2.5 (Rural Residential; 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres), which would allow for an anticipated maximum buildout of 255 rural single-family residential units. Currently, there is no construction or development proposed within the



annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Construction-related impacts associated with the proposed solar facility are described below and would result in less than significant impacts. Future developments within the annexation area in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zoning would be located further away from the closest sensitive receptors (single-family residential uses located approximately 1,350 feet to the west) than the proposed solar facility site. As discussed below, noise impacts during construction of the proposed solar facility would be less than significant. As such, due to the further distance to the nearest sensitive receptors, future construction-related impacts associated with development within the annexation area would be less than significant. Therefore, short-term construction noise impacts related to implementation of the proposed annexation area would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed annexation would not directly generate operational noise levels as no specific development is proposed. In addition, it should be noted that future developments other than the proposed solar facility within the annexation area would be located further away from the sensitive receptors (single-family residential uses located approximately 1,350 feet to the west). As discussed below, noise impacts during operation of the solar facility would be less than significant. As such, due to the further distance to the nearest sensitive receptors and less stationary noise sources from residential developments than the solar facility, future operational impacts associated with developments within the annexation area would be less than significant. Therefore, long-term operational noise impacts related to implementation of the proposed annexation area would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility is proposed on an approximately 288-acre, L-shaped site encompassing three parcels in the northern half of the annexation area. The proposed solar facility consists of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a maximum 80-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) alternating current (AC) electric generating facility.

### Short-Term Noise Impacts

Construction activities generally are temporary and have a short duration, resulting in periodic increases in the ambient noise environment. Ground-borne noise and other types of construction-related noise impacts typically occur during the initial phases (cleaning, grubbing and balancing), which has the potential to create the highest levels of noise. Construction equipment produce maximum noise levels when equipment is operating under full power conditions (i.e., the equipment engine at maximum speed). However, equipment used on construction sites typically operates under less than full power conditions, or partial power. To characterize construction-period noise levels more accurately, the average ( $L_{eq}$ ) noise level associated with each construction stage is calculated based on the quantity, type, and usage factors for each type of equipment that would be used during each construction stage. These noise levels are typically associated with multiple pieces of equipment simultaneously operating on part power.

The City has established a quantitative threshold that applies to noise levels at active construction sites. Based on the *City of Lancaster General Plan 2030, Plan for Public Health and Safety*, Policy 4.3.2, SENL from construction activities shall not exceed the 80 dBA limit at nearby sensitive receiver locations at any given time.<sup>1</sup> Due to the nature of the construction activities occurring at one phase across the entire 288-acre solar facility site, construction equipment would be focused on one sub-area until specifications are met and then move on to the next sub-area of the solar facility site. Therefore, it is unlikely that stationary construction equipment would operate continuously for 10 days or more in the direct vicinity of the nearest single-family residential uses to the north. For the purposes of this analysis, a

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the *City of Lancaster General Plan 2030, Plan for Public Health and Safety*, Policy 4.3.2, single event noise levels from construction activities shall not exceed 15 dBA above the exterior noise standards at nearby sensitive receiver locations. Since the closest sensitive receptors are single-family residences with an exterior noise standard of 65 dBA, the 65+15 dBA = 80 dBA noise standard has been used to evaluate construction noise impacts from the proposed project.



construction noise impact would occur at the single-family residences if construction noise generated exceeds 80 dBA, consistent with General Plan Policy 4.3.2.

The estimated construction noise levels at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors are presented in [Table 4.13-3, \*Noise Levels Generated During Construction Activities\*](#). Noise levels from construction equipment and activities were modeled using the Federal Highway Administration's Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM). Construction equipment anticipated to be used for the project was provided by the project Applicant; refer [Appendix E, \*Noise Data\*](#). To present a conservative impact analysis, the estimated noise levels were calculated for a scenario in which all heavy construction equipment were assumed to operate simultaneously.

The nearest sensitive uses (single-family residences) are located approximately 120 feet to the north of the proposed solar facility in unincorporated Los Angeles County, when measured from the property line. However, construction activities would occur throughout the solar facility site, and it should also be noted that construction noise levels would intermittently occur for a few days when construction equipment is operating closest to the nearest sensitive uses. The remainder of the time, the construction noise levels would be much lower because the equipment would be working in an area farther away from the existing sensitive uses. The General Noise Assessment methodology prescribed in the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*, recommends evaluating construction noise from the center of the site, stating under the variable distance in its construction noise calculation to "assume that all equipment operates at the center of the project." As such, the construction noise levels shown in [Table 4.13-3](#) are estimated using the distance from the center of the solar facility to the property line of the existing sensitive receptors, which is approximately 1,385 feet from the closest sensitive receptor to the north.

**Table 4.13-3  
Noise Levels Generated During Construction Phases**

Phase	Estimated Exterior Construction Noise Level at 1,385 feet (Center of Solar Facility Site) (dBA L <sub>eq</sub> ) <sup>1</sup>
All Construction Phases	67.1
Notes: 1. These noise levels conservatively assume the simultaneous operation of all heavy construction equipment at the same precise location. Refer <a href="#">Appendix E</a> for modeled construction equipment.	
Source: Federal Highway Administration, <i>Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM)</i> , 2006.	

As shown in [Table 4.13-3](#), the nearest receptor to the solar facility could be exposed to temporary and intermittent construction noise level of approximately 67.1 dBA and would not exceed the City's construction noise thresholds of 80 dBA. The project would be required to comply with the City's allowable construction hours specified in LMC Section 8.24.040, which permits construction activities between 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday. Therefore, compliance with the LMC would minimize impacts from construction noise, as construction would be limited to the permitted times and would not exceed the most stringent noise standards. A less than significant impact would occur.

### Long-Term Noise Impacts

Typical operation and maintenance of the solar facility would include permanent and temporary noise sources associated with the solar PV systems, electrical collection lines, generation-tie (gen-tie) power lines, and maintenance activities. Specific details regarding the on-site stationary sources such as reference noise levels, and their distances from the nearest sensitive receptors are not currently available. As such, as a conservative analysis, stationary noise impacts are analyzed from the solar facility's property line to the nearest sensitive receptors to the north and reference noise levels were obtained from other solar projects, which are similar in nature. As previously noted, the nearest sensitive receptors are located approximately 120 feet to the north of the proposed solar facility within unincorporated Los Angeles County. It should be also noted that, the proposed solar facility does not require the construction of an on-site operations and maintenance (O&M) facility and would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular



operation. There would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. However, routine maintenance activities, including equipment testing, monitoring, and repair would occur as needed and is discussed below.

### Solar PV Systems

The solar PV arrays could include operation of single axis trackers. Noise from each tracker motor ranges from approximately 62 dBA to 63 dBA at one-meter distances.<sup>2</sup> This is considered an appropriate reference noise level due to the low intensity of the motor. Each set of tracker motors would operate for a short period of time (normally two seconds each per tracker) and pauses for a longer period of time (about five minutes) before operating again. This process only occurs during daylight hours. Due to the dispersed layout of tracker motors, their distance from sensitive receptors, and the intermittent noise generating activity, composite noise levels were not calculated. The nearest sensitive noise receptor would be located approximately 120 feet to the north of the proposed solar facility property line. At this distance, tracker noise would be approximately 32 dBA and would not exceed the City's 65 dBA noise level standard for residential uses. As shown in Table 4.13-2, existing ambient noise level at the single-family residential uses is approximately 60.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$ , which is higher than the projected noise levels from solar PV arrays. Therefore, noise from solar PV arrays would not increase existing ambient noise levels. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Electrical Collection Lines

The proposed electrical collection lines would generate audible corona noise.<sup>3</sup> Audible noise transmission and distribution lines are a function of the line voltage, the conductor design, and weather conditions. Audible noise levels on typical 230 kV lines are very low and are usually not noticeable. For example, the calculated rainy weather audible noise for a 230 kV transmission line at the right-of-way edge is about 25 dBA.<sup>4</sup> Even though any electrical transmission or distribution line that would be installed as part of the solar facility would have the potential to emit electrical discharge (or corona discharge), audible noise from corona discharge is expected to be within the range of 25 dBA or below. As shown in Table 4.13-2, existing ambient noise level at the single-family residential uses is approximately 60.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$ . Therefore, noise levels associated with electrical collection lines would be inaudible at the nearest sensitive receptor to the north over the existing ambient noise levels and would not exceed the City's 65 dBA noise level standard for residential uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Gen-tie Power Line

It is anticipated that gen-tie and communication lines would connect the solar facility to a previously approved hydrogen production facility located at 70th Street East and Avenue K, approximately two miles to the southeast of the solar facility site. Alternatively, the site may serve as a standalone solar facility, as determined by the final developer and operator. In this instance, the facility would either tie into the electrical grid through distribution lines adjacent to the project site or by running gen-tie and communication lines to an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) substation, the nearest of which is located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast. If the solar facility is for the support of hydrogen production, it would not be connected to the electrical grid and would only supply power to the hydrogen facility. However, the gen-tie lines would not cross through any private property. Like the electrical collection lines, the gen-tie line would generate audible corona noise (i.e., 25 dBA at the right-of-way edge). As the nearest sensitive receptor is located approximately 120 feet to the north of the solar facility, noise levels from the gen-tie lines would be lower than 25 dBA. Furthermore, the gen-tie and communication lines would run southerly along 50th Street East (along the western solar facility site boundary) and easterly along

<sup>2</sup> County of San Diego, *Desert Green Solar Farm Noise Assessment*, February 20, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The corona noise is defined as a voltage or power generated by dischargers on the power line. Specifically, corona noise is caused by partial discharges on insulators and in air surrounding electrical conductors of overhead power lines.

<sup>4</sup> County of San Diego, *Tri-Valley Project PEA, Chapter 17 – Corona and Induced Current Effects*, [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/AdminRecord/IncorporatedByReference/Section-2-9---Noise-References/CPUC1999\\_Tri-Valley-Project-PEA.pdf](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/AdminRecord/IncorporatedByReference/Section-2-9---Noise-References/CPUC1999_Tri-Valley-Project-PEA.pdf), accessed June 4, 2024.



Avenue J within the public right-of-way to the existing SCE substation; the lines would not cross through any private property. As shown in [Table 4.13-2](#), existing ambient noise level at the single-family residential uses is approximately 60.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$  and noise levels associated with the gen-tie power line would be inaudible over the existing ambient noise levels and would not exceed the City's 65 dBA noise level standard for residential uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Substations

Additional permanent noise sources from the solar facility would include inverters and transformers located at the on-site substation. Transformers would be located within inverters, but it is unknown at this time whether the inverters would be enclosed or open. As a conservative analysis, it is assumed that the inverters would be open. Open inverters would generate noise level of approximately 52 dBA at 75 feet, while transformers would generate noise level of approximately 57 dBA at 50 feet.<sup>5</sup> As previously noted, specific details regarding the on-site substations such as reference noise levels, and their distances from the nearest sensitive receptors are not currently available. As such, as a conservative analysis, substation noise impacts are analyzed from the solar facility's property line to the nearest sensitive receptors to the north (approximately 120 feet) and reference noise levels were obtained from other solar projects, which are similar in nature. At this distance, noise levels from the inverters and transformers would be approximately 48 dBA and 49 dBA, respectively, which is below the City's 65 dBA noise level standard for residential uses. As shown in [Table 4.13-2](#), existing ambient noise level at the nearest single-family residential uses is approximately 60.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$ ; thus, noise levels associated with the substations would not exceed the existing ambient noise levels. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Maintenance Activities

As previously stated, the solar facility does not require the construction of an on-site O&M facility and would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. There would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. Routine maintenance activities, including equipment testing, monitoring, and repair would occur as needed. During operation, the solar facility would generate a maximum of 24 average daily trips over a 24-hour period, once a year, with maintenance including routine maintenance, as-needed maintenance, and panel cleaning, occurring simultaneously. Therefore, the project would not create a substantial increase of vehicular noise in the area. Any increase in traffic would be minimal and sporadic; therefore, impacts from vehicular noise would be less than significant.

### **Decommissioning**

When the project is decommissioned, equipment operation and site restoration activities would result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project area. Given the fact that much of the construction equipment necessary to construct the solar facility would also be required to decommission the site, it is reasonable to assume that decommissioning activities would be similar in nature to the construction activities. Like the construction noise analysis above, decommissioning of the project would result in potentially increased noise levels compared to existing conditions. Nevertheless, the project would be required to comply with the City's allowable construction hours specified in LMC Section 8.24.040. Therefore, upon compliance with the LMC noise standards, short-term noise impacts from decommissioning activities would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

<sup>5</sup> County of Kern, *Aratina Solar Project Draft Environmental Impact Report, Section 4.12, Noise*, May 2021.



**b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The proposed annexation and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. It should be noted that there is no construction or development proposed within the annexation area at this time (aside from the solar facility described below). Construction-related vibration impacts associated with the solar facility are described below. It should be noted that future developments other than the solar facility within the annexation area would be located further away from the nearest sensitive receptors (single-family residential uses located approximately 1,350 feet to the west). Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with distance from the source. As discussed below, vibration impacts during construction of the solar facility would be less than significant. As such, due to the further distance to the nearest sensitive receptors and structures, construction-related vibration impacts associated with future developments within the annexation area would be less than significant. Therefore, short-term construction vibration impacts related to implementation of the proposed annexation would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed annexation would not involve land uses that directly generate operational vibrational impacts. Based on LMC Section 17.08.030, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use. As future allowed uses in RR-2.5 are not anticipated to include land uses typically generate operational groundborne vibration (such as railroads, warehouses, or transit stations), the proposed annexation would have a less than significant operational groundborne vibration impact. Therefore, long-term operational vibration impacts related to implementation of the proposed annexation area would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

**Construction**

Construction activities associated with the solar facility can generate varying degrees of groundborne vibration, depending on the construction procedure and the construction equipment used. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with distance from the source. The effect on buildings located in the vicinity of the construction site often varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and construction characteristics of the receiver building(s). The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibration at moderate levels, to slight damage at the highest levels. Groundborne vibrations from construction activities rarely reach levels that damage structures. Ordinary buildings that are not particularly fragile would not experience any cosmetic damage (e.g., plaster cracks) at distances beyond 25 feet. This distance can vary substantially depending on the soil composition and underground geological layer between vibration source and receiver. In addition, not all buildings respond similarly to vibration generated by construction equipment.

The types of construction vibration impacts include human annoyance and building damage. Human annoyance occurs when construction vibration rises significantly above the threshold of human perception for extended periods of time. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines are used to evaluate potential impacts related to construction vibration for both potential building damage and human annoyance. The FTA has identified an architectural damage criterion for continuous vibrations of 0.20 inch-per-second (inch/second) peak particle velocity (PPV). Further, as the nearest sensitive receptors to project construction are residents, the criterion for human annoyance of 0.2 inch/second PPV is utilized. The construction equipment list was provided by the project applicant and typical vibration levels produced by construction equipment is illustrated in Table 4.13-4, Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment.



It should be noted that solar panels are typically mounted on support structures that are pile-driven into the ground, and therefore pile drivers would be utilized during construction.

**Table 4.13-4  
Typical Vibration Levels for Construction Equipment**

Equipment	Approximate peak particle velocity at 25 feet (inch/second) PPV	Approximate peak particle velocity at 120 feet (inch/second) PPV
Vibratory Roller	0.210	0.0200
Pile Driver (impact)	0.644	0.0612
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.0072
Small Bulldozer/Tractors	0.003	0.0003
Calculated using the following formula: $PPV_{equip} = PPV_{ref} \times (25/D)^{1.1}$ where: PPV (equip) = the peak particle velocity in in/sec of the equipment adjusted for the distance PPV (ref) = the reference vibration level in in/sec from Table 12-2 of the FTA <i>Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidelines</i> D = the distance from the equipment to the receiver		
Source: Federal Transit Administration, <i>Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual</i> , September 2018.		

As a conservative analysis, construction vibration impacts are analyzed from the solar facility property line to the nearest sensitive receptor property line. The nearest receptor (single-family residential use) is approximately 120 feet to the north when measured from the solar facility's property line. As indicated in [Table 4.13-4](#), vibration velocities from typical heavy construction equipment operation would range from 0.0003 to 0.0612 inch/second PPV at the nearest sensitive receptor building to the north. Therefore, vibration velocities from the proposed construction activities would not exceed the 0.2 inch/second PPV significance threshold for architectural damage or the human annoyance criteria. Construction vibration impacts would be less than significant.

### Operations

Implementation of solar facility would not typically result in substantial operational groundborne vibration. Although water trucks (as part of maintenance and panel cleaning) would travel within the solar facility and through roadways across the City, it is unusual for vibration from sources, such as buses and trucks, to be perceptible, even in locations close to major roads.<sup>6</sup> As such, it can be reasonably inferred that operational activities associated with solar facility would not create perceptible vibration impacts to the nearest sensitive receptors. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) ***For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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?***

### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation would annex an approximately 638-acre area into the City's jurisdiction and pre-zone the site RR-2.5. Based on LMC Section 17.08.030, the RR-2.5 zone is intended for rural single-family residential use. The proposed annexation area is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The closest (public) airport is the U.S. Air Force Plant 42 located approximately 4.4 miles to the southwest

<sup>6</sup> Federal Transit Administration, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*, September 2018.



of the proposed annexation area. According to the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, the project site is located outside of the Palmdale Airport /U.S. Air Force Plant 42 Influence Area.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, no impacts would occur.

Further, no private airstrips are in the immediate vicinity of the project area. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

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<sup>7</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, Palmdale Regional Airport - Airport Influence Area*, dated May 13, 2003, [https://case.planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/aluc\\_airport-palmdale.pdf](https://case.planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/aluc_airport-palmdale.pdf), accessed May 7, 2024.



## 4.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial unplanned 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)?			✓	
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			✓	

- a) ***Induce substantial unplanned 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)?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

A project can induce population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and/or businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure). The annexation area is located within the City’s Sphere of Influence (SOI) and is planned for eventual annexation into Lancaster with a General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre). As such, buildout of the annexation area was already considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR.

The proposed annexation and pre-zone of the annexation area to RR-2.5 zoning would be consistent with the current NU land use designation. Assuming 2.5 dwelling units per acre, the approximately 638-acre annexation area would result in a buildout of 255 residential units. Based on the City’s average household size of 3.16 people per household, the buildout of 255 residential units would result in a population increase of approximately 806 individuals.<sup>1</sup> Based on the U.S. Census, the City is forecasted to have a population of 213,300 individuals by 2045. This would result in a population growth of 47,064 individuals from the City’s baseline population estimate of 166,236 in 2023.<sup>2</sup> The anticipated increase in population would represent 1.7 percent of the City’s estimated population growth from 2023 to 2045. Overall, the proposed annexation would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area given that buildout of the annexation area was previously considered in the General Plan EIR. As such, the proposed annexation would result in less than significant impacts.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Lancaster City, California*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lancastercitycalifornia/IPE120222>, accessed June 10, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility would not include any residential dwellings. Additionally, the solar facility would operate unmanned with minimal maintenance and cleaning visits by existing employees. As such, the proposed development would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the City. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

**b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The annexation area consists primarily of vacant, disturbed desert habitat and agricultural fields (both active and abandoned). Structures on-site include a single-family residence with farm animals, numerous outbuildings, and groundwater pumphouses used for agricultural (row crop) production in the northwestern portion of the site. No other existing residences are located within the annexation area. No construction or development is proposed as part of the proposed annexation. Thus, the proposed annexation would have no impact.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility site is currently developed with agricultural fields and a single-family residence. Construction of the proposed solar facility would require demolition of all structures on-site, including the existing single-family residence. However, this would not result in a substantial displacement of existing people or housing that would necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. 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:				
1) Fire protection?			✓	
2) Police protection?			✓	
3) Schools?			✓	
4) Parks?			✓	
5) Other public facilities?			✓	

a) ***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:***

1) ***Fire protection?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The annexation area is currently in unincorporated Los Angeles County and thus, fire protection services is provided by the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD). The nearest LACFD fire station is Station 117 located at 44851 30th Street East in the City of Lancaster, approximately 2.1 miles west of the annexation area. As discussed in [Section 2.0, Project Description](#), the annexation area is within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), which the Lancaster General Plan considered the eventual annexation of into the City's jurisdiction. As such, upon proposed annexation into the City, the annexation area would be served by public services that currently serve Lancaster. The City currently contracts with LACFD for fire protection services with six fire stations within the City and one fire station in the unincorporated community of Antelope Acres. Therefore, similar to existing conditions, fire protection services would continue to be provided by LACFD.

The proposed Rural Residential (RR-2.5) pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with its current General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]). Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed as part of the project's annexation component. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding fire protection services and would not require the need for new or physically altered facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As previously discussed, the project site, including the solar facility site, is within the City's SOI and would continue to be served by LACFD for fire protection services. The solar facility may result in a temporary increase in demand for LACFD fire protection services during construction; however, such demand would be temporary and cease upon project completion. Operation of the solar facility is not likely to cause a fire and increase in demand for fire services because the facility would be unmanned and have a very low potential for creating a fire risk. Additionally, all proposed activities would be subject to compliance with requirements set forth in the California Fire Code and California Building Code related to fire safety, which is adopted by reference in LMC Sections 15.08, *Building Code*, and 15.32, *Fire Code*. Overall, implementation of the solar facility is not anticipated to adversely impact existing LACFD services and would not result in the need for new or physically altered facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 2) *Police protection?*

#### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The Lancaster Police Department (LPD) partners with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LACSD) to provide law enforcement services to the City. The nearest LPD facility is located at 501 Lancaster Boulevard, approximately 5.5 miles west of the annexation area.

As discussed, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current NU General Plan land use designation. As such, buildout of the City's SOI, including the proposed annexation area, was previously considered and analyzed in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed for the project's annexation component and any future development would be subjected to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review). As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding police protection services and would not require the need for new or physically altered police facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The solar facility may result in a temporary increase in demand for LPD and LACSD services during construction such as potential security needs for construction activities. However, construction activities would be subject to compliance with LMC Title 18, *Building Code and Regulations*, which adopts by reference the California Building Code. Chapter 33, *Safeguards During Construction*, of the California Building Code includes emergency access requirements which would minimize site safety hazards and potential construction-related impacts to police services.

Additionally, operation of the solar facility would not substantially increase the need for additional police protection services to the project site. The facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. There would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. It is anticipated that regular maintenance, emergency as-needed maintenance, cleaning of the panels, and clearing seasonal vegetation would be necessary up to one to two times per week. As a result, the proposed solar facility would unlikely result in substantial increases in calls for service or require the construction of new or physically altered police protection facilities. In addition, the solar facility would be subject to review by the City prior to project approval to ensure that it meets City requirements in regard to public safety (e.g., nighttime security lighting) to minimize the potential for safety concerns. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.



**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 3) Schools?

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Four school districts currently provide school services to the City: Antelope Valley Union High School District, Eastside Union School District, Lancaster School District, and Westside Union School District. Specifically, the Antelope Valley Union High School District and Eastside Union School District currently serves the annexation area.

No construction or development is proposed for the project's annexation component. While buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in up to 255 new residences, future residential development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review). As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding school services. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

Short-term temporary construction jobs would likely be employed by workers already living in the City or neighboring jurisdictions. Given that the solar facility would be unmanned and require minimal maintenance, operations of the solar facility would not introduce any new permanent residents into the City that may increase demand for school services. As such, implementation of the proposed solar facility would not result in increased demand for school services nor the need for the construction of additional school facilities. No impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 4) Parks?

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The City of Lancaster currently maintains 12 parks with seven facilities and one stadium.<sup>1</sup> Nearby parks include the Tierra Bonita Park (44910 27<sup>th</sup> Street East) approximately two miles to the west and the Skytower Park (43434 Vineyard Drive) approximately two miles to the southwest of the annexation area.

No construction or development is proposed for the project's annexation component. While buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in up to 255 new residences, future residential development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review). Additionally, future residential development within the annexation area would be required to comply with existing City requirements to offset impacts of new residential development on the City's existing and planned parks and recreational facilities. Specifically, future residential projects would be required to comply with applicable park acquisition and development fees and/or park in-lieu fee payments per LMC Sections 15.64.070, *Park acquisition fee*, and 15.64.080, *Park development fee*, and Chapter 15.72, *Park-In-Lieu Fees*, respectively. As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding park services. Impacts would be less than significant.

<sup>1</sup> City of Lancaster, *Parks and Facilities*, <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/parks-recreation-arts/parks-and-facilities>, accessed November 28, 2023



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The unmanned solar facility would not introduce any new permanent residents to the City and thus, would not generate an increased demand for parks or recreational facilities. As such, no impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

### 5) *Other public facilities?*

#### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Library services in Lancaster are provided by the Los Angeles County Library (LACL). The closest LACL branch to the annexation area is the Lancaster Library, located at 601 Lancaster Boulevard, approximately 5.5 miles to the west.

The proposed annexation and associated RR-2.5 pre-zone would provide direction for future development within the annexation area. However, no construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. While buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in up to 255 new residences, future residential development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review). As such, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding library services, and impacts would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As discussed, construction of the solar facility would be short-term and would employ workers that already reside in the City or in nearby jurisdiction. Additionally, the operation of the solar facility would be unmanned and would not result in population growth within the City. Thus, the solar facility would not introduce any new permanent residents to the City that could increase demand for other public facilities, including library services. No impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.16 RECREATION

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?			✓	
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?			✓	

- 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?***

### **Less Than Significant Impact.**

### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The annexation area is currently in unincorporated Los Angeles County; however, as discussed, the annexation area is within the City’s Sphere of Influence (SOI) and is planned for eventual annexation into the City’s jurisdiction. As such, buildout of the annexation area was already considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. Upon approval of the proposed annexation into the City, future residents in the annexation area would utilize parks and recreational services that currently serve Lancaster. The City currently maintains 12 parks, seven recreational facilities and one stadium.<sup>1</sup> The closest City park to the annexation area is the Tierra Bonita Park at 44910 27th Street East, approximately 2.5 miles to the west.

The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the area’s current General Plan land use designation of Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre). As previously discussed, buildout of the City’s SOI, including the annexation area, was previously considered in the General Plan buildout and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Additionally, the proposed annexation action would not include any proposed development or construction beyond the solar facility analyzed as part of this Initial Study. For example, future residential development within the annexation area would be required to comply with existing City requirements to offset impacts of new residential development on the City’s existing and planned parks and recreational facilities. Specifically, future residential projects would be required to comply with applicable park acquisition and development fees and/or park in-lieu fee payments per LMC Sections 15.64.070, *Park acquisition fee*, and 15.64.080, *Park development fee*, and Chapter 15.72, *Park-In-Lieu Fees*, respectively. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result impact the use of existing parks or recreational facilities. No impacts would occur.

### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Given the nature of the proposed use, the solar facility would not result in direct population growth within the City. At project completion, the solar facility would operate unmanned with limited existing employees conducting maintenance and cleaning activities. No new jobs would be generated by the solar facility development. Therefore, the solar facility

<sup>1</sup> City of Lancaster, *Parks and Facilities*, <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/our-city/departments-services/parks-recreation-arts/parks-and-facilities>, accessed October 4, 2024.



would not result in a substantial increase in demand on parks or other recreational facilities and would not result in the physical deterioration of these facilities. No impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.16(a).

#### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.16(a).

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.17 TRANSPORTATION

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			✓	
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			✓	
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			✓	
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?			✓	

This section is primarily based upon the following technical studies; refer to [Appendix F, VMT Assessments](#):

- *Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – Solar Project Scoping* (Solar Project Scoping Memo), prepared by Michael Baker International, dated May 6, 2024; and
- *Lancaster Eastside Annexation Project – Annexation Area VMT Assessment* (Annexation Area VMT Assessment), prepared by Michael Baker International, dated June 12, 2024.

**a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

No construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. Future developments in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to comply with all applicable City codes and policies related to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities (e.g., General Plan, *Master Plan of Trails and Bikeways*, *Master Plan of Complete Streets*, *Local Transportation Assessment Guidelines*, and LMC Sections 15.64.040, *Traffic impact fee*, and 15.64.050, *Traffic signalization fee*). Any future roadway improvements within the annexation area would also be required to comply with existing City standards related to street improvements. Specifically, LMC Section 16.20.080, *Rural street requirements*, requires subdivisions within RR zones to generally comply with the cross-sections detailed in Section 2.2, *Complete Streets Cross-Sections*, of the *City of Lancaster Master Plan of Complete Streets* for right-of-way and design guidance in rural residential areas. Further, future developments within the annexation area would be required to undergo project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review). Project-specific analysis and mitigation measures would then be implemented as needed. Thus, impacts associated with the annexation area would be less than significant.



## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

### Consistency with the City's Local Transportation Assessment Guidelines

The Solar Project Scoping Memo is based on City's *Local Transportation Assessment Guidelines* (Transportation Guidelines) and evaluates the need for a Local Transportation Assessment (Level of Service Operational Assessment) and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Assessment for the proposed solar facility.

The solar facility's estimated trip generation was calculated using site-specific operational information provided by City staff and trip generation rates obtained from the site operator instead of the Institute of Transportation Engineer's (ITE) Trip Generation Manual since the manual does not include average trip rates for solar facility developments. The following anticipated solar facility operational characteristics are assumed in this analysis:

- One to two vehicles (work trucks) per week assumed for routine and as-needed maintenance. A conservative estimate condition assumed with both routine and as-needed maintenance occurring during the same day.
- Panel cleaning to take place twice per year (at most). Panel cleaning crew assumed to be up to ten individuals (using ten work trucks). No in/out activity assumed throughout day.

Table 4.17-1, *Solar Facility Trip Generation*, details the solar facility's estimated operational trip generation. As shown, operation of the proposed solar facility is anticipated to generate 24 average daily trips.

**Table 4.17-1  
Solar Facility Trip Generation**

Time Period	Daily Site Generated Trips (Conservative Estimate During Operations) <sup>1</sup>									Total
	Routine Maintenance			As-Needed Maintenance			Panel Cleaning			
	Total	Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	
24-Hour Period	2	1	1	2	1	1	20	10	10	24
Notes:										
<sup>1</sup> Represents a conservative estimate daily condition when maintenance and panel cleaning both occur during the same day.										
Source: Refer to Appendix F, <i>VMT Assessments</i> .										

As detailed in the Solar Project Scoping Memo and the City's Transportation Guidelines, land use projects that generate net new trips of 100 or more during any peak hour, or 1,000 for any 24-hour period during the work week would be required to prepare a project-specific Local Transportation Assessment. The solar facility is anticipated to generate 24 average trips per day, which is less than the 1,000 for any 24-hour period threshold; refer to Table 4.17-1. Therefore, the solar facility is screened out of preparing a Local Transportation Assessment and would be consistent with the City's Transportation Guidelines. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Roadway Facilities

Local access to the solar facility site is provided via Avenue I, Lancaster Boulevard, Avenue J, 60th Street East, and 50th Street East.

Construction activities associated with the solar facility would include short-term traffic trips associated with the transfer of construction equipment, construction worker trips, and hauling trips for soil and construction material. Although construction traffic may have the potential to impact the local circulation system, the scope of construction activity at



the site is expected to be limited. The City would require any traffic management or control plan be implemented to ensure traffic flow, emergency access, and any pedestrian and bicyclist access is maintained during construction. Additionally, construction staging would occur within the solar facility site and would not impact adjacent uses.

As part of the project, off-site utility improvements are also proposed along existing roadway rights-of-ways. As detailed in [Section 2.3, \*Project Characteristics\*](#), it is anticipated that generation-tie (gen-tie) and communication lines would connect the proposed solar facility to either 1) a previously approved hydrogen production facility approximately two miles to the southeast of the proposed solar facility site or 2) an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) substation, the nearest of which is located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast; refer to [Exhibit 2-3, \*Solar Facility Off-Site Utility Connections\*](#). Solar facility site access would be determined during final plan review but would be taken from an adjacent public roadway (i.e., Avenue I, 50th Street East, and/or Lancaster Boulevard). As such, construction activities for off-site improvements may require temporary partial lane closures on these public roadways depending on final design. The City would require any traffic management or control plan be implemented to ensure traffic flow, emergency access, and any pedestrian and bicyclist access is maintained during construction. Thus, short-term construction impacts on public roadways would be less than significant.

Upon completion of construction, the proposed solar facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. There would be no full-time personnel on-site during operation. It is anticipated that regular maintenance, emergency as-needed maintenance, cleaning of the panels, and clearing seasonal vegetation would be necessary up to one to two times per week. Grazing animals may be used to control vegetation on the site. As a result, project operation would involve minimal operational trips, and minimal impacts on roadway facilities would occur.

Further, when the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City of Lancaster regulations. Because the supporting equipment sits on the surface of the land, when the arrays are removed after the proposed solar facility's lifetime, the land would be restored to the site's existing environmental conditions with no future uses proposed.

### **Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities**

Transit services, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities are currently not provided in the project area. Several bus stops serviced by the Antelope Valley Transportation Authority are located along Avenue I and Lancaster Boulevard, the closest of which is approximately one mile west near the intersection of Lancaster Boulevard and 40th Street East. There are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities along the project's boundaries; existing shoulders along these surrounding roadways are unpaved.

Since there are no transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities within project area, project construction would not impact these services or facilities. Further, the proposed project would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. When the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City of Lancaster regulations. Because the supporting equipment sits on the surface of the land, when the arrays are removed after the proposed solar facility's lifetime, the land would be restored to the site's existing environmental conditions with no future uses proposed. As such, operational impacts would similarly be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



b) **Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

The Annexation Area VMT Assessment evaluates the annexation area’s VMT impacts in accordance with the City’s Transportation Guidelines, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research’s *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (OPR Technical Advisory), and the City’s *Vehicle Miles Traveled Mitigation Program, Program Environmental Impact Report* (VMT Mitigation Program EIR). The City’s Transportation Guidelines was the primary resource used in the VMT assessment, in particular VMT calculation guidelines and threshold requirements. The OPR Technical Advisory was a secondary assessment resource. The VMT Mitigation Program EIR was referenced to evaluate potential mitigation options.

**Modeling Assumptions**

The VMT analysis was conducted using 2016 Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS) travel model (model). The SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS model’s base year is 2016 and horizon year is 2040. This programmatic analysis of the annexation area was conducted using the 2040 model. For an analysis year of 2040, the baseline socioeconomic data (SED) was obtained from the 2040 model dataset.

The travel demand forecasting model uses traffic analysis zones (TAZ), which contains SED and other model inputs. The key land use inputs used in calculating VMT include population, number of households, and types of employment.

The SCAG 2016 RTP/SCS model is a mode-choice model which includes both roadway and transit network assumptions in the model. The RTP roadway network was used for this analysis, and no changes to roadway or transit network were made.

Model runs were conducted for 2040 conditions for both without and with the proposed annexation action with the above discussed SED and networks. The analysis scenarios/conditions are described below in Table 4.17-2, Annexation VMT Analysis Scenarios. The model consists of both residential (households and population) and non-residential land uses (employment by type/category) as inputs. For households, the travel model uses household characteristics such as household income, household size, and household workers, etc. to determine the household travel patterns.

**Table 4.17-2  
Analysis Scenarios**

Scenario/ Condition	Boundary	Project Condition	Description
Baseline Condition	Without Annexation Area	Without Project	Identification of total future year Citywide VMT that assumes the annexed area would be located outside of the City and would remain consistent with the current County zoning (Agriculture).
Without Project Condition	With Annexation Area	Without Project	Future year model run to determine the Citywide VMT with the annexed area included in the calculation, but without the annexation land use change. Land use remains consistent with County zoning (Agriculture).



Scenario/ Condition	Boundary	Project Condition	Description
With Project Condition	With Annexation Area	With Project	Future year model run to determine the Citywide VMT with the annexed area included in the calculation of the Citywide VMT and the land use change from agriculture to the proposed residential (RR-2.5) zoning.

Source: Refer to Appendix F, *VMT Assessments*.

### Programmatic Level VMT Assessment

Per the City’s Transportation Guidelines and OPR Technical Advisory, the threshold by which an impact is to be determined is “no net change in VMT.” Table 4.17-3, *VMT Summary*, provides the results of the VMT Assessment for each of the analysis scenarios/conditions.

**Table 4.17-3  
VMT Summary**

Year 2040	Baseline	Without Project	With Project	Comparison	Impact
Citywide Roadway VMT	2,282,928	2,288,299	2,297,806	+14,878	+0.65 Percent

Source: Refer to Appendix F, *VMT Assessments*.

As shown in Table 4.17-3, buildout within the annexation area would result in a small increase to total Citywide VMT (+14,878), which equates to a 0.65 percent increase in Citywide VMT. However, no project-specific development is proposed as part of the annexation action and thus, no project-specific VMT mitigation (e.g., implementation of transportation demand management measures) can be applied. Nevertheless, on January 24, 2023, the City adopted a Vehicle Miles Traveled Impact Fee Mitigation Program (VMT Mitigation Program), as analyzed in the VMT Mitigation Program EIR. The VMT Mitigation Program allows developers to pay \$150 per VMT to mitigate their VMT impacts and tier off of the VMT Mitigation Program EIR. According to the VMT Mitigation Program EIR, future developments that occur within the City, including within the annexation area, would be subject to project-specific CEQA review and approvals which may require VMT analysis to be conducted at a project-specific level. Should future projects within the annexation area exceed the City’s VMT thresholds, the projects would be able to tier from the VMT Mitigation Program EIR and mitigate their VMT impacts through the City’s VMT Mitigation Program. As such, the proposed annexation action would result in less than significant VMT impacts.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The Solar Project Scoping Memo evaluates the solar facility’s VMT impacts in accordance with the City’s Transportation Guidelines. Based on the City’s Transportation Guidelines, land use projects that meet any of the screening thresholds based on size, location, proximity to transit or trip-making potential are presumed to result in a less than significant impact in regard to VMT. Specifically, if a land use project generates 110 or fewer daily trips, it would meet the screening threshold based on project size. As shown in Table 4.17-1, the solar facility would generate approximately 24 average daily trips and thus, would meet the Project Size screening category (i.e., less than the 110-trip threshold). Therefore, the solar facility is screened out of additional VMT analysis and would result in a less than significant impact.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



- c) ***Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

As stated, no construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. However, buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in new development, which could increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. Future developments in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to comply with all applicable City codes and policies with regards to hazards associated with a geometric design feature or incompatible uses, including the California Fire Code and LMC Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*. Any future roadway improvements within the annexation area would also be required to comply with existing City standards related to street improvements. Specifically, LMC Section 16.20.080, *Rural street requirements*, requires subdivisions within RR zones to generally comply with the cross-sections detailed in Section 2.2, *Complete Streets Cross-Sections*, of the *City of Lancaster Master Plan of Complete Streets* for right-of-way and design guidance in rural residential areas. Additionally, future developments in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone within the annexation area would be required to undergo project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) to evaluate project-level impacts with regards to hazards associated with a geometric design feature or incompatible uses and would be required to go through plan check review with the City and Los Angeles County Fire Department. Thus, impacts associated with the annexation action related to hazards associated with a geometric design feature or incompatible uses would be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

The solar facility does not propose changes to the City's circulation system, such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections, and would not introduce incompatible uses to area roadways (e.g., farm equipment). As detailed in Section 2.3, Project Characteristics, it is anticipated that off-site gen-tie and communication lines would run southerly along 50th Street East (along the western solar facility site boundary) within the public right-of-way to connect the proposed solar facility to either 1) a previously approved hydrogen production facility approximately two miles to the southeast of the solar facility site, or 2) an existing SCE substation, the nearest of which is located at the northeast corner of Avenue J and 90th Street East, approximately three miles to the southeast; refer to Exhibit 2-3. Site access would be determined during final plan review but would be taken from an adjacent public roadway (i.e., Avenue I, 50th Street East, and/or Lancaster Boulevard. Additionally, when the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned and restored to the site's existing environmental conditions in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City of Lancaster regulations. Overall, the proposed solar facility would comply with existing regulations, including Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements in regard to site access, and would not increase hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- d) ***Result in inadequate emergency access?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

As stated, no construction or development is proposed as part of the annexation action. However, buildout of the annexation area under the proposed RR-2.5 zoning could result in new development, which could impact existing



emergency access routes in the area. Future developments in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to comply with all applicable City codes and policies related to emergency access, including the California Fire Code and LMC Title 15, *Buildings and Construction*. Additionally, future developments in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to undergo project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) to evaluate project-level impacts with regards to emergency access and plan check review with the City and Los Angeles County Fire Department. Thus, impacts associated with the annexation area related to emergency access would be less than significant.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As stated, the solar facility would require the construction of off-site gen-tie and communication lines within the public right-of-way and impact 50th Street East, Avenue J, and 90th Street East; refer to [Exhibit 2-3](#). Site access would be determined during final plan review but would be taken from an adjacent public roadway (i.e., Avenue I, 50th Street East, and/or Lancaster Boulevard). It should be acknowledged that the solar facility site would be required to comply with Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements to provide a 20-foot-wide perimeter access road within the facility and access roadways every 1,000 feet to allow access throughout the solar field.

As such, construction activities for off-site improvements may require temporary partial lane closures on these public roadways depending on final design. The City would require any traffic management or control plan be implemented to ensure traffic flow, emergency access, and any pedestrian and bicyclist access is maintained during construction.

Upon completion of the construction, the proposed solar facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely during regular operation. As a result, project operation would involve minimal operational trips, and no impacts on emergency access would occur. Further, when the proposed solar facility ceases permanent operation, it would be decommissioned and restored to the site's existing environmental conditions in accordance with all requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and all applicable federal, State, and City of Lancaster regulations.

Impacts related to emergency access would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
1) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or				✓
2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			✓	

As of July 1, 2015, California Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) was enacted and expanded CEQA by establishing a formal consultation process for California tribes within the CEQA process. The bill specifies that any project may affect or cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource would require a lead agency to “begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditional and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project.” Section 21074 of AB 52 also defines a new category of resources under CEQA called “tribal cultural resources.” Tribal cultural resources are defined as “sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe” and is either listed on or eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources or a local historic register, or if the lead agency chooses to treat the resource as a tribal cultural resource.

On February 19, 2016, the California Natural Resources Agency proposed to adopt and amend regulations as part of AB 52 implementing Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations, CEQA Guidelines, to include consideration of impacts to tribal cultural resources pursuant to Government Code Section 11346.6. On September 27, 2016, the California Office of Administrative Law approved the amendments to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and these amendments are addressed within this environmental document.

Signed into law in 2004, Senate Bill (SB 18) requires that cities and counties notify and consult with California Native American tribes about proposed local land use planning decisions for the purpose of protecting traditional tribal cultural sites. Cities and counties must provide general plan and specific plan amendment proposals to tribes that have been identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as having traditional lands located within the lead agency’s boundaries. If requested by the tribes, the lead agency must also conduct consultations with the tribes prior to adopting or amending their general and specific plans.



In compliance with AB 52 and SB 18, the City of Lancaster distributed letters on March 5, 2024 to Native American tribes notifying each tribe of the opportunity to consult with the City regarding the proposed project; refer to Appendix G, AB 52 Consultation Documentation. The tribes were identified based on a list provided by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) or were tribes that had previously requested to be notified of future projects proposed by the City.

- a) ***Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:***
- 1) ***Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or***

**No Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The project site, including the annexation area, is currently in unincorporated Los Angeles County and in the City's SOI. As detailed in Section 4.5, the annexation area does not include any structure located on-site that is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register of historical resources that is also a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. The proposed Rural Residential (RR-2.5) pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with its current Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]) land use designation. Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed as part of the project's annexation component and future development within the annexation area would be subject to project-specific and site-specific discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. Given that no historic resources with a tribal cultural resource significance are located on-site, no impact would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As stated above, the annexation area, including the solar facility site, does not include any structure on-site that is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register of historical resources. As such, no impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- 2) ***A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

## ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

In accordance with AB 52 and SB 18, consultation letters for the proposed project were sent to the following individuals. These letters were mailed via certified return receipt mail on May 28, 2024, and included copies of the site plan and



cultural resources report. Table 4.18-1, Tribal Consultation Letter Response, identifies the tribes, the person to whom the letter was directed, and the date the letter was received.

**Table 4.18-1  
Tribal Consultation Letter Response**

Tribe	Contact Person	Date Letter Received
Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians	Sarah Brunzell, CRM Manager	May 31, 2024
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Ann Brierty, THPO	May 31, 2024
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Robert Martin, Chairperson	May 31, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Manfred Scott, Acting Chairman - Kw'ts'an Cultural Committee	June 3, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Jordan Joaquin, President, Quechan Tribal Council	June 3, 2024
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	Jill McCormick, Historic Preservation Officer	June 3, 2024
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians	Donna Yocum, Chairperson	June 7, 2024
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	Alexandra McCleary, Senior Manager of CRM	May 31, 2024
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Wayne Walker, Co-Chairperson	May 31, 2024
Serrano Nation of Mission Indians	Mark Cochrane, Co-Chairperson	May 31, 2024

Source: Refer to Appendix G, AB 52 Consultation Documentation.

The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and San Manuel Band of Mission Indians responded to the notification letters and consulted with the City on the proposed project. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians determined the project has a moderate to high potential for inadvertent discoveries of tribal cultural resources and provided requested mitigation measures, which have been included as Mitigation Measures MM-5 through MM-9 in Section 4.5, Cultural Resources. The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians and Morongo Band of Mission Indians did not respond to the City’s requested deadline to provide any requested mitigation measures and thus, the City concluded consultation with the three tribes. As such, impacts were determined to be less than significant.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✓	
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			✓	
c. Result in 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?			✓	
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			✓	
e. Comply with Federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			✓	

- a) ***Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

#### Water

Water services for the annexation area are provided by Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40.<sup>1</sup> The Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts provide services to approximately 260,000 people and plays a crucial role in water service to Kagel Canyon, Malibu, Val Verde, Acton, and the Antelope Valley.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, Los Angeles Waterworks District No. 40 services portions of the Antelope Valley including the annexation area and uses a combination of groundwater from the Antelope Valley Groundwater Basin and purchased water from the Antelope Valley East Kern Water District to meet water demands.

Buildout of the annexation area based on a Non-Urban Residential (NU; 0.4-2.0 dwelling units per acre [du/ac]) land use designation was previously considered in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed as part of the project's annexation component. Future development within the annexation area in

<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles County Public Works, *Service Locator*, <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/general/servicelocator/>, accessed October 4, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County Public Works, *About LA County Waterworks Districts*, <https://pw.lacounty.gov/core-service-areas/water-resources/waterworks-districts/>, accessed May 30, 2024.



accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would be subject to project-specific and site-specific ministerial and discretionary approvals (including separate CEQA review) on a case-by-case basis. Potential impacts with regards to water facilities would be evaluated at the project-level at that time. Additionally, any future developments in the annexation area needing water services from Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40 would be subject to standard connection fees and ongoing user fees. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding water services and would not require the need for new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

### **Wastewater**

Local sewer services for the City are provided by the City of Lancaster Utilities Division. The City's Utilities Division maintains over 426.5 miles of sewer mains, 8,980 manholes, and one sewer force main pump station which then discharges into sewers owned and operated by the Los Angeles County Sanitation District (LACSD). The wastewater is then conveyed into the LACSD's Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant (LWRP) for treatment.<sup>3</sup> The LWRP is located approximately 8.15 miles northwest of the project site at 1865 Avenue D. The LWRP provides primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment which treats wastewater for a population of approximately 160,00 people.

The annexation area is currently within the City's SOI and could eventually connect to the City's wastewater network as future development occurs. As stated, no construction or development is proposed as part of the project's annexation action. As no development would occur, no wastewater would be generated. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding wastewater services and would not require the need for new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Any future developments in the annexation area needing the City's wastewater services would be subject to standard connection fees and ongoing user fees. Less than significant impacts would occur.

### **Stormwater**

Little Rock Wash is located along the eastern boundary of the annexation area and flows northerly. For most of its length on-site, Little Rock Wash is a wide, braided drainage with many bifurcated channels. The general topography of the annexation area slopes to the northeast. As such, existing hydrology on-site generally flows northeast towards Little Rock Wash through bifurcated channels northerly eventually dissipate south of the Rosamond Dry Lake.

No construction or development is proposed as part of the proposed annexation and pre-zone. Therefore, no impacts to existing stormwater facilities would occur. Additionally, future developments would be required to implement stormwater infrastructure improvements as part of the project to comply with existing regulations related to stormwater collection and treatment. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Dry Utilities**

Dry utilities include electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. Electrical services to the annexation area are provided by Southern California Edison (SCE); natural gas by Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas); and telecommunications by a number of broadband and telephone service providers.

The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with its current NU land use designation. Buildout of the City's SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. No construction or development is proposed as part of the project's annexation component and thus, no increase in demand for dry utilities would occur. Future development in accordance with the RR-2.5 pre-zone

<sup>3</sup> City of Lancaster, *Sewer System Management Plan Update*, <https://www.cityoflanasterca.org/home/showpublisheddocument/41314/637123581466530000>, October 2019.



within the annexation area would be subject to standard connection fees and ongoing user fees. Thus, the proposed annexation and pre-zone would not result in a substantial impact regarding dry utilities. No impacts would occur.

## SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

### Water

The solar facility may result in an increase in water demand during the construction phase (i.e., watering of the site to reduce fugitive dust), however, the water usage would be temporary and would cease upon construction completion of the solar facility. Operation of the solar facility would not result in excessive water use as the facility would be unmanned. Minimal water usage would be utilized for the cleaning of solar facility components (i.e., PV module arrays) and perimeter landscaping. As such, construction and operation of the proposed solar facility would not result in substantial impacts regarding water services and would not require the need for new or expanded facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

### Wastewater

Temporary construction activities associated with the project would not generate substantial wastewater and would be short-term in nature. As discussed, operations of the solar facility would be unmanned and would be monitored off-site. Thus, operations of the solar facility would not result in wastewater generation. As such, project implementation is not anticipated to require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities; no impacts would occur.

### Stormwater

The project site currently conveys stormwater runoff in a northeast direction across the site towards the Little Rock Wash. Mass grading of the solar facility site would not be permitted, and grading would be limited to internal perimeter roads (90 percent compacted, all-weather access) and grading necessary for concrete pads supporting equipment (e.g., battery storage containers, inverters, switchgear, etc.). The site would not be paved and thus, would maintain permeability to allow stormwater accumulated on-site to infiltrate into the earth. Similar to existing conditions, excess runoff would flow northeast towards Little Rock Wash. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

### Dry Utilities

Project construction and operations would not substantially increase dry utility use substantially above existing conditions in a manner that would require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded dry utilities facilities. It should be noted that the solar facility would generate electricity for either a planned hydrogen facility to the south of the site or tie into an existing SCE substation to the east of the site; refer to [Exhibit 2-3](#). The project proposes off-site generation tie (gen-tie) and communication lines to be installed underground within existing paved right-of-way. The environmental impact of the proposed utility improvements are analyzed throughout this Initial Study. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



- b) ***Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

As described in Section 4.19(a), the annexation area would not result in any construction or development that would require water resources. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site's current NU designation. Thus, buildout of the annexation area was previously considered and analyzed in the General Plan and General Plan EIR. Further, according to Los Angeles County Public Works' *2020 Urban Water Management Plan for the Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40 Antelope Valley* (2020 UWMP) Table 7-2 through Table 7-4 indicates that the Los Angeles Waterworks District No. 40 has adequate water supply to meet the demands of water during normal, single dry, and multiple dry years.<sup>4</sup> As such, a less than significant impact would occur.

#### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

As described in Section 4.19(a), construction and operational activities associated with the solar facility would not generate a substantial increase in water supply demand provided by the Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) ***Result in 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Sewer services for the City are currently provided by the City of Lancaster Utility Division. As stated, the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone is consistent with the site's current NU land use designation, which was previously considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The proposed annexation action does not involve any construction or development and thus, would not increase wastewater generation. While the annexation area is not currently served by the City of Lancaster Utilities Division, the City could provide wastewater services to the annexation area as development occur. Future development would be subject to standard connection fees and ongoing user fees, as applicable. Overall, the annexation action would result in less than significant impacts.

#### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

As described in Section 4.19(a), construction and operational activities associated with the proposed solar facility would not generate an increase in demand for wastewater treatment services. The proposed solar facility would be unmanned and would not result in wastewater generation. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Public Works, *2020 Urban Water Management Plan for Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40 Antelope Valley*, October 2021.



- d) **Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?**

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

WM, formerly named Waste Management, is the exclusive provider of waste and recycling collection services to residents and business in the City.<sup>5</sup> WM collects solid waste and disposes approximately 99 percent of the City’s waste at two landfills identified in Table 4.19-1, Landfills Serving the City.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 4.19-1  
Landfills Serving the City**

<b>Name/Location</b>	<b>Amount Disposed by the City in 2019 (tons per day)</b>	<b>Maximum Daily Throughput (tons per day)</b>	<b>Remaining Capacity (cubic yards)</b>	<b>Anticipated Closure Date</b>
Antelope Valley Public Landfill	106	5,548	17,911,225	4/1/2044
Lancaster Landfill and Recycling Center	243	5,100	14,514,648	3/1/2044
Notes: cy = cubic yards				
Sources:				
CalRecycle, SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details: Antelope Valley Public Landfill (19-AA-5624), <a href="https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3458?siteID=1364">https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3458?siteID=1364</a> , accessed October 4, 2024.				
CalRecycle, SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details: Lancaster Landfill and Recycling Center (19-AA-0050), <a href="https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3571?siteID=1035">https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/3571?siteID=1035</a> , accessed October 4, 2024.				

As stated, the proposed annexation action would not result in construction or development and thus, would not result in any solid waste generation. The proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone of the annexation area would be consistent with the site’s current NU land use designation. Buildout of the City’s SOI, including the annexation area, was considered in the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Thus, the annexation component of the proposed project would not result in solid waste generation and less than significant impacts would occur.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Construction activities associated with the solar facility would generate some construction debris. All construction debris would be one-time in nature and would not have the capability to substantially affect the capacity of regional landfills. The disposal of construction debris would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, such as the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11 (CalGreen), which requires 75 percent of construction waste be recycled.

During operations, the solar facility would be unmanned and monitored remotely. Minimal solid waste would be generated from regular maintenance activities and vegetation clearing. Any panels removed and/or replaced during routine maintenance would be properly disposed of at a certified solar panel recycling facility. As such, operations of

<sup>5</sup> City of Lancaster, WM (formerly Waste Management), <https://www.cityoflancasterca.org/our-city/about-us/sustainability/green-practices/illegal-dumping-proper-waste-disposal/waste-management>, accessed October 4, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> CalRecycle, Jurisdiction Disposal and Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) Tons by Facility, <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/DisposalReporting/Destination/DisposalByFacility>, accessed October 4, 2024.



the solar facility would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- e) ***Comply with Federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?***

**Less Than Significant Impact.**

#### **ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.19(a) and Section 4.19(d). As discussed, the annexation component of the proposed project would not result in any construction or development. As such, the annexation area would not result in any solid waste generation. Any future solid waste generation from future development in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would be required to comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction regulations. As such, less than significant impacts would occur.

#### **SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.19(a) and Section 4.19(d). As discussed, the solar facility would be unmanned and would result in only minimal solid waste generation from maintenance activities and vegetation clearing. As such, less than significant impacts would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.20 WILDFIRE

<i>If located in or near State responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?				✓
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?				✓
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				✓

**a) *Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?***

**No Impact.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire, the annexation area is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Hazard Severity Zone and is not within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, no impacts would occur.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

The analysis provided above for the Annexation Analysis is also applicable to the Solar Facility Analysis.

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Forestry and Fire, *Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area*, effective April 1, 2024, <https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=988d431a42b242b29d89597ab693d008>, accessed April 30, 2024.



- b) *Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- c) *Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.

- d) *Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?*

**No Impact.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Refer to Section 4.20(a).

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation is required for the annexation or solar facility.



## 4.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<i>Would the project:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?		✓		
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)?		✓		
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✓		

- 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?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

As detailed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, future development in the annexation area in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 pre-zone would be subject to project-specific environmental review and may require preparation of a Biological Resources Assessment and implementation of site-specific biological surveys and mitigation measures (Mitigation Measure MM-2). Additionally, the western burrowing owl was recently designated as a candidate for potential listing as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). As a candidate species under CESA, the burrowing owl is afforded the same protections as listed species against “take” without permit authorization throughout the entirety of California. As construction activities could impact burrowing owls and nesting birds, Mitigation Measures MM-3 and MM-4 would be implemented to minimize potential impacts to burrowing owls and nesting birds by requiring pre-construction clearance surveys, respectively. With implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-2 through MM-4, the proposed annexation would not 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, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal.



Further, as indicated in Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, and Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, project implementation is not anticipated to result in adverse impacts to cultural, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources upon implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-5 through MM-11. Specifically, these mitigation measures would require preparation of a monitoring and treatment plan (Mitigation Measure MM-5), archaeological monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-6), tribal monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-7), establishment of protocol if a pre-contact cultural resource is discovered (Mitigation Measure MM-8), adherence to State Health and Safety Code during inadvertent discoveries of human remains (Mitigation Measure MM-9), establishment of protocol if inadvertent discovery of paleontological resources (Mitigation Measure MM-10), and paleontological monitoring (Mitigation Measure MM-11). Upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures, the project is not anticipated to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory, and impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

As detailed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, construction activities associated with the solar facility could impact burrowing owls and nesting birds. Thus, pre-construction clearance surveys are required for burrowing owls and nesting birds pursuant to Mitigation Measures MM-3 and MM-4, respectively. As such, the project would not 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, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. Further, as indicated in Section 4.5 and Section 4.7, construction activities associated with the solar facility is not anticipated to result in adverse impacts to cultural, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources upon implementation of Mitigation Measures MM-5 through MM-11, as detailed above. Upon implementation of recommended mitigation measures, the solar facility is not anticipated to eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory, and impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

- 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)?***

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

### ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

The proposed annexation would involve annexing approximately 638 acres from unincorporated Los Angeles County into the City of Lancaster and pre-zoning the area to RR-2.5. The annexation component of the proposed project would not include any construction or development. As analyzed throughout this Initial Study, upon compliance with existing regulations and identified mitigation measures, the proposed annexation would result in less than significant environmental impacts and thus, would not contribute towards cumulatively considerable impacts in conjunction with related projects. Further, future development within the annexation area in accordance with the proposed RR-2.5 zoning would be subject to case-by-case environmental review under CEQA to analyze project-level environmental impacts and may require project-specific mitigation. With implementation of identified mitigation measures, impacts would be less than significant.

### SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS

Construction and operations of the proposed solar facility would result in less than significant environmental impacts upon compliance with existing regulations and identified mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed development would not contribute towards cumulatively considerable impacts in conjunction with related projects. As such, impacts would be less than significant.



- c) *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.**

**ANNEXATION ANALYSIS**

This Initial Study reviewed the proposed annexation's potential impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gases, hydrology/water quality, noise, hazards and hazardous materials, traffic, and other issues. As concluded in this Initial Study, the proposed annexation would result in less than significant impacts with implementation of identified mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in environmental impacts that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings.

**SOLAR FACILITY ANALYSIS**

As stated, the Initial Study reviewed the proposed solar facility's potential impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gases, hydrology/water quality, noise, hazards and hazardous materials, traffic, and other issues. As concluded in this Initial Study, the proposed solar facility would result in less than significant environmental impacts with implementation of the identified mitigation measures. Therefore, the proposed solar facility would not result in environmental impacts that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings.



## 5.0 REFERENCES

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## 6.0 REPORT PREPARATION PERSONNEL

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