


# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

FROM: City of Fresno Planning and Development Department  
2600 Fresno Street  
Fresno, California 93721-3604

TO: X Fresno County Clerk  
2220 Tulare Street – First Floor Lobby  
Fresno, California 93721

Office of Planning & Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212  
Sacramento, California 95812-3044

E2026/0000085  
**FILED**  
MAR 26 2026 TIME 12:38pm  
FRESNO COUNTY CLERK  
BY  DEPUTY

**Project Title:** Environmental Assessment No. P25-02299

**Project Location:** 3571 and 3593 South Cedar and 3588 South Orange Avenues; located on the west side of South Cedar Avenue between East Central Avenue and South Parkway Drive in Fresno, California. (APNs: 330-021-16, 330-021-55, and 330-021-02)

**Project Location – city:** City of Fresno **Project Location- county:** County of Fresno

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** Development Permit Application No. P25-02299 was filed by Nicholas Brantley of Pickett Solar and pertains to ±3.51 acres located at 3571 and 3593 South Cedar and 3588 South Orange Avenues. The applicant proposes a Development Permit to construct ±3.51 acres of ground mounted solar array within adjoining parcels 330-021-16 (±17.95 acres) and 330-021-02 (±0.32 acres). The proposed development is part of a larger site that is made up of three parcels, which includes the two subject parcels and APN 330-021-55 (±18.65 acres). The acreage of all three parcels combined is ±36.92-acres.

The solar array will be composed of (8) 125 kw inverters and (1,518) 700w solar modules mounted to an ATI Duratrak single axis solar tracking system. Construction of the tracking system will involve the installation of 300 driven steel piles into the ground to support the array. The piles will support a (24) rotating torque tubes or tracker “arms”, to which the modules will be attached. Modules will then rotate East to West throughout the day to track the path of the sun to maximize energy production. The system will interconnect to a new main service panel installed within the bordering fence line of the proposed solar array. This new service will serve solely as a point of interconnection for solar and for related monitoring equipment.

The solar array system will also be surrounded by a 6-foot-high chain link fence topped with 1 foot of 3-strand barbed wire with access to the solar system provided through two (2) 22-foot-wide rolling gates. The project will also include installing new underground utility lines and a new PG&E pole position. The proposed solar array will run in tandem with PG&E's standard utility services and is not intended to serve as a back-up or emergency power source during outages. Using the Solar Billing Plan Aggregation (SBPA), which replaced the NEMA program in February 2024, the solar array is designed to offset the power consumption for Orange Avenue Disposal Company, Inc. located on the adjacent properties to the North (APN's: 330-021-54 and 15) , which allows one renewable system (such as solar) to serve multiple eligible meters. Electricity generated first powers the business, reducing PG&E reliance, and any excess is sent to the grid, with the meter adjusting based on net energy use. Related Cross-Access Covenant Application No. P25-02981 proposes a cross-access covenant for the construction of a ground mount solar installation across parcels.

E202610000085

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Fresno

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Nicholas Brantley  
Pickett Solar  
(559) 431-3535  
Nicholas@PickettSolar.com

**Exempt Status:** (check one)

- Ministerial - PRC § 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines §15268
- Declared Emergency - PRC § 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines §15269(a)
- Emergency Project - PRC § 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines §15269(b) and (c)
- Categorical Exemption – CEQA Guidelines §15303/Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)**
- Statutory Exemption – PRC § \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

Sections 15303/ Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines exempts projects consisting of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. The proposed project is consistent with the conditions of Section 15303/Class 3, as demonstrated in the attached Categorical Exemption Determination for Development Permit Application No. P25-02299.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Erik Young, Supervising Planner  
City of Fresno Planning and Development Department

**Full telephone no.:** (559) 621-8009

**If filed/signed by applicant:**

Attach certified document of exemption finding  (check if attached)  
Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

**Signature:** Erik Young **Date:** March 25, 2026

**Printed Name and Title:** Erik Young, Supervising Planner  
City of Fresno Planning and Development Department

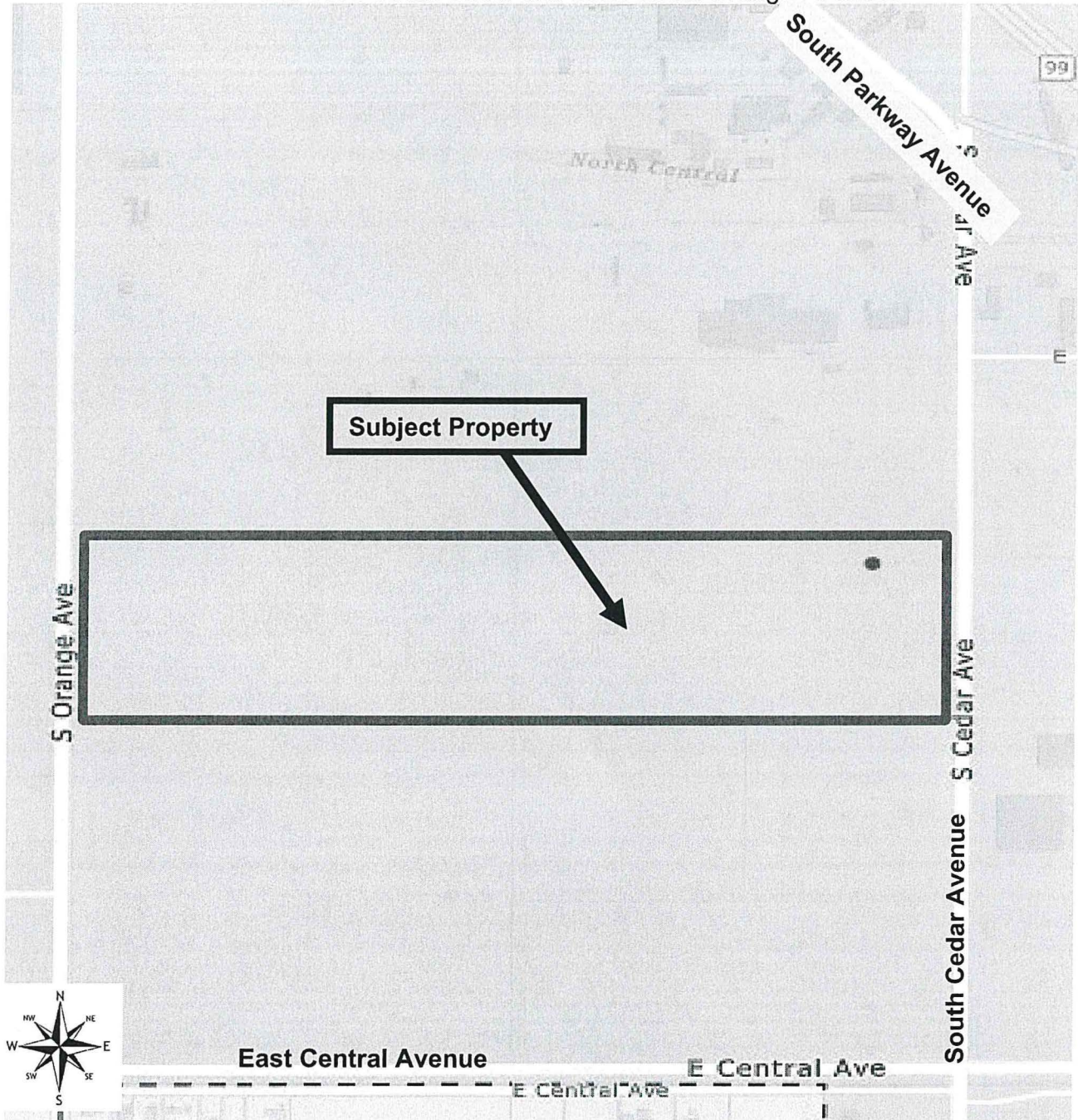
**Signed by Lead Agency**  **Signed by applicant**

**Attachments:** Vicinity Map  
Categorical Exemption Determination for Development Permit Application No. P25-02299

E202610000085

### VICINITY MAP/SITE LOCATION

3571 and 3593 South Cedar and 3588 South Orange Avenues



#### LEGEND

Subject Property 

Planning and Development Department  
2600 Fresno Street, Room 3043 · Fresno, CA 93721 · Phone (559) 621-8277

E2026/000085

**CITY OF FRESNO  
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. P25-02299**

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

**APPLICANT:** Nicholas Brantley  
Pickett Solar  
(559) 431-3535  
Nicholas@PickettSolar.com

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 3571 and 3593 South Cedar and 3588 South Orange Avenues; located on the west side of South Cedar Avenue between East Central Avenue and South Parkway Drive in Fresno, California. APNs: 330-021-16, 330-021-55, and 330-021-02 (Council District 3)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Development Permit Application No. P25-02299 was filed by Nicholas Brantley of Pickett Solar and pertains to the ±36.92 acres located at 3571 and 3593 South Cedar and 3588 South Orange Avenues (APNs: 330-021-16 (±17.95 acres), 330-021-02 (±0.32 acres) and 330-021-55 (±18.65 acres)). The applicant proposes a Development Permit to construct ±3.51 acres of ground mounted solar array across two of the three parcels, 330-021-16 (±17.95 acres) and 330-021-02 (±0.32 acres).

The solar array will be composed of (8) 125 kw inverters and (1,518) 700w solar modules mounted to an ATI Duratrak single axis solar tracking system. Construction of the tracking system will involve the installation of 300 driven steel piles into the ground to support the array. The piles will support a (24) rotating torque tubes or tracker "arms", to which the modules will be attached. Modules will then rotate East to West throughout the day to track the path of the sun to maximize energy production. The system will interconnect to a new main service panel installed within the bordering fence line of the proposed solar array. This new service will serve solely as a point of interconnection for solar and for related monitoring equipment.

The solar array system will also be surrounded by a 6-foot-high chain link fence topped with 1 foot of 3-strand barbed wire with access to the solar system provided through two (2) 22-foot-wide rolling gates. The project will also include installing new underground utility lines and a new PG&E pole position. The proposed solar array will run in tandem with PG&E's standard utility services and is not intended to serve as a back-up or emergency power source during outages. Using the Solar Billing Plan Aggregation (SBPA), which replaced the NEMA program in

February 2024, the solar array is designed to offset the power consumption for Orange Avenue Disposal Company, Inc. located on the adjacent properties to the North (APN's: 330-021-54 and 15) , which allows one renewable system (such as solar) to serve multiple eligible meters. Electricity generated first powers the business, reducing PG&E reliance, and any excess is sent to the grid, with the meter adjusting based on net energy use. Related Cross-Access Covenant Application No. P25-02981 proposes a cross-access covenant for the construction of a ground mount solar installation across parcels.

**This project is exempt under Sections 15303/Class 3 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as follows:**

Sections 15303/ Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines exempts projects consisting of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel.

The proposed project involves construction and installation of a ground-mounted solar energy facility on approximately  $\pm 3.51$  acres across two contiguous parcels totaling about  $\pm 18.27$  acres within a  $\pm 36.92$ -acre site zoned IH/UGM (Heavy Industrial/Urban Growth Management). Improvements include solar arrays, inverter equipment, new underground utility lines with a new PG&E pole position, fencing, a new paved driveway approach, and a temporary storm drainage basin with the installation of an inlet and lateral as required by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD).

The project site is currently undeveloped and consists primarily of bare soil. According to the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), approximately  $\pm 36.6$  acres of the site are designated as Farmland of Local Importance, while  $\pm 0.32$  acres is classified as Urban and Built-up Land. Farmland of Local Importance includes all farmable lands within Fresno County that do not meet the definitions of Prime, Unique, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The land is considered significant to the local economy, as defined by the county's advisory committee and adopted by the Board of Supervisors. In Fresno County, this includes irrigated pasture, dryland farming, confined livestock operations, poultry facilities, aquaculture, and grazing lands. Urban and Built-up Land refers to areas occupied by structures at a density of at least one unit per 1.5 acres. This includes residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and public infrastructure uses such as transportation facilities, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, landfills, and water control structures.

Despite its farmland designation, the site lies within the City of Fresno's Urban Growth Management Boundary, is zoned for Heavy Industrial use, and is designated for Employment – Heavy Industrial uses under the Fresno General Plan. Under the Fresno County Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, agricultural conservation measures are required for discretionary projects that permanently convert 20 acres or more of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The City of Fresno's General Plan outlines a future Farmland Preservation

Program to mitigate such conversions, offering options such as restrictive covenants, in-lieu fees, mitigation banks, conservation easements, and other CEQA-compliant strategies. However, because the subject property is not classified as Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important Farmland, and is located within city limits, mitigation is not required. The site has been previously disturbed through historical agricultural and residential use, which has altered the soil surface and removed native vegetation. Additionally, the site is not under a Williamson Act contract and shows no evidence of recent or active agricultural use within the past four years; therefore, the project does not constitute a conversion of significant farmland as defined by CEQA.

Based on a review of online resources provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), also known as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the project site has not been identified as habitat for any rare, threatened, or endangered species. These federal agencies oversee the monitoring of endangered species and their habitats. The site consists of previously disturbed land and holds no ecological value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. The solar facility will not have operating hours and will not be open to the public. Access will be limited to maintenance personnel (e.g., for panel cleaning or electrical inspections) and emergency responders, if necessary. Consequently, the project is not expected to generate any significant traffic impacts. Additionally, the proposed solar arrays will not produce noise that is perceptible at the property boundaries. The site will be fully served by all necessary utilities and public services. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District was provided opportunity to review the application and provided no comments or conditions. In summary, the project will not result in any significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

The project involves the installation of a small-scale utility and renewable energy facility with limited grading and site disturbance, consistent with the intent and scope of a Class 3 Categorical Exemption under CEQA. The proposed improvements, including the solar array, associated inverters, conduit, fencing, driveway approach, and drainage basin, constitute a small utility extension and minor accessory facility, which are examples specifically considered under the Class 3 exemption. The solar array is proposed on a currently unused portion of the site and is considered an accessory use. It is intended to generate renewable energy to offset the power consumption of the adjacent business, Orange Avenue Disposal Company, Inc., through a PG&E Net Energy Meter Aggregation (NEMA) agreement. This development does not alter the basic form or function of the site. Furthermore, the solar installation will occupy an area that could otherwise be developed for more intensive primary uses, such as building space. In contrast, the proposed solar facility represents a lower-impact alternative. As such, the project qualifies as a limited-scale development consistent with the Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

None of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions outlined in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply to the project. Furthermore, the proposed project is not expected to affect the environment significantly. A categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project, and the area is not environmentally sensitive.

Date: March 25, 2026

Prepared By: Brittany Martin

E2026/0000085

Submitted by:

*Erik Young*

---

Erik Young  
Supervising Planner  
Planning & Development Department  
(559) 621-8009