



BOARD AGENDA FACT SHEET

CLERK USE ONLY
BOS ACTION

Planning & Development Services
Department /Agency

January 26, 2021
Requested Board Date

1. Request:

Board Approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information Only/Presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Time: <u>11:00 a.m.</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Requested Action: *Type requested action below*

The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department respectfully requests the Board of Supervisors to conduct a public hearing to consider the following actions as recommended by the Planning Commission for the Wister Solar Energy Facility Project;

1. Approve the Water Supply Assessment, with findings;
2. Certify the Final EIR (SCH #2019110140), with findings;
3. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MM&RP);
4. Approve General Plan Amendment #19-0001, with findings;
5. Approve Zone Change #19-0001, with findings;
6. Approve Conditional Use Permit #18-0040, with findings;
7. Approve Conditional Use Permit #20-0006, with findings; and
8. Approve Variance #19-0003, with findings.

3. Cost \$ 0 Source: n/a
4. If approval of Contract, reviewed/approved by County Counsel on: n/a
By: _____ Action Request # n/a
Assigned by County Counsel's Office
5. If approval of position allocation change, approved by Human Resources on: n/a
By: _____
6. Electronic copy submittal date: 12/30/20 By: Caring A. Gomez, Admin. Secretary



Department Head/Agency Representative

INSTRUCTIONS: Back-up must be submitted 11 BUSINESS days prior to requested date. Back-up submitted must contain an Original and 6 copies. Copies must be submitted double sided and three (3) hole punched. Back-up must be submitted in a PDF format to cobstaff@co.imperial.ca.us.

CEO/CLERK USE ONLY:

DATE STAMP

BOARD DATE: _____

Action _____ Filing _____

Consent _____ Presentation _____

Hearing _____ CEO Approval _____

Other (specify) _____

CEO

Date



Imperial County Planning & Development Services Planning / Building

Jim Minnick
DIRECTOR

TO: Board of Supervisors

January 26, 2021

FROM: Jim Minnick, Director of Planning & Development Services

M/O _____

SUBJECT: **Wister Solar Energy Facility Project – Final EIR – Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program – General Plan Amendment #19-0001 – Zone Change #19-0001 – Conditional Use Permit #18-0040 – Conditional Use Permit #20-0006 and Variance #19-0003**

Dear Board Members:

REQUESTED ACTION:

The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department respectfully requests the Board of Supervisors to conduct a public hearing to consider the following actions as recommended by the Planning Commission for the Wister Solar Energy Facility Project:

1. Approve Water Supply Assessment, with findings;
2. Certify Final EIR – (SCH #2019110140), with Findings;
3. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program (MM&RP), with findings;
4. Approve General Plan Amendment #19-0001, with findings;
5. Approve Zone Change #19-0001, with findings;
6. Approve Conditional Use Permit #18-0040, with findings,
7. Approve Conditional Use Permit #20-0006, with findings; and
8. Approve Variance #19-0003, with findings.

BACKGROUND:

The Wister Energy Solar Facility proposes to develop a ground mounted PV solar power generating system, supporting structure, on-site substation, access driveways, and transmission structures and fiber optic cable. It will connect from the proposed substation to the Point of Interconnection (POI) at the existing Imperial Irrigation District (IID) 92-kV "K" line, and include approximately two miles of fiber optic cable from the proposed on-site substation to the existing Niland Substation, located at 402 Beal Road in Niland. The project has a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with San Diego Gas and Electric for the sale of power from the project. The lifespan of the project is expected to be approximately 20 to 25 years.

The proposed PV solar generating facility would consist of 3.5 foot by 4.8-foot PV modules (or panels) on single-axis horizontal trackers in blocks that each hold 2,520 PV panels. The panels would be oriented from east to west for maximum exposure and the foundation would be designed based on soil conditions, with driven piles as the preferred method. The PV modules would be made of a poly-crystalline silicon semiconductor material encapsulated in glass. Installation of the PV arrays would include installation of mounting posts, module rail assemblies, PV modules, inverters, transformers and buried electrical conductors. Concrete would be required for the footings, foundations and pads for the transformers and substation work.

The proposed project would consist of 12 blocks. Every two blocks will be collected to an inverter and would typically encompass approximately 8 acres, including a pad for one transformer and one inverter. Approximately 96 acres of ground disturbance, including acreage for 12 blocks, is required for the proposed project. The proposed project would include design elements (e.g., non- or anti-reflective material) to reduce the potential glare impacts on adjacent sensitive receptors (e.g. local residents, aircraft, traveling public on adjacent County roads).

The electrical output from the PV modules would be low voltage DC power that would be collected and routed to a series of inverters and their associated pad-mounted transformers. Each array would have one inverter and one transformer, which are collectively known as a Power Conversion Station (PCS). The inverters would convert the DC power generated by the panels to alternating current (AC) power and the pad mounted transformers step up the voltage to a nominal level. The outputs from the transformers are grouped together in PV combining switchgear, which in turn supplies the switchyard, where the power is stepped up to 92-kV for interconnection with the transmission system.

The proposed Wister Substation would be a new 92/12-kV unstaffed, automated, low-profile substation. The dimensions of the fenced substation would be approximately 300 feet by 175 feet. The enclosed substation footprint would encompass approximately 1.2 acres of the approximately 640-acre project parcel.

A proposed fiberoptic line from the proposed Wister Substation would be connected with the existing Niland Substation approximately two miles to the south, which would then be added to connect the proposed Wister Substation to the region's telecommunications system. Overall, this would provide Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), protective relaying, data transmission, and telephone services for the proposed Wister Substation and associated facilities. New telecommunications equipment would be installed at the proposed Wister Substation within the Mechanical and Electrical Equipment Room (MEER).

The proposed gen-tie line would originate at the proposed Wister substation and would terminate at the POI, at a distance of approximately 2,500 feet to the south-southwest. Steel poles, standing at a maximum height of 70 feet tall, will be spaced approximately every 300 feet along the route, and would support the 92-kV conductor and fiberoptic cable to the POI. Construction of the 2,500-foot gen-tie line to the POI would utilize overland travel via an all-weather improved access road along the entire route.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Due to the potential for significant impacts resulting from the proposed Wister Solar Energy Facility Project, the County determined that an EIR would be necessary. The County prepared an Initial Study (Code of California Regulations [CCR] §15063b (1) (A)) and subsequently issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the preparation of an EIR (SCH. No.2019110140) on Tuesday, November 6, 2019. The NOP was distributed to city, county, state and federal agencies, other public agencies, and various interested private organizations and individuals to define the scope of the EIR. The NOP was also published in the Imperial Valley Press on November 6, 2019. The purpose of the NOP was to identify public agencies and public concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed Project, and the scope and content of environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. Circulation of the NOP ended on December 11, 2019. A public scoping meeting was held on November 13, 2019 at the Board of Supervisors meeting room to gather input from the public.

Final Environmental Impact Report SCH# 2019110140

On June 30, 2020, a Notice of Completion (NOC) was filed with the State Clearinghouse for the Draft EIR, initiating the 50-day public review period of the Draft EIR document and associated technical appendices. Concurrent with filing the NOC, the County is also required to provide notice to the public, agencies, organization and other interested parties of the availability of the Draft EIR for review and comment. A Notice of Availability (NOA) was published on June 30, 2020 in the Imperial Valley Press newspaper. In addition, the NOA was posted on the County's website and at local libraries. Public comment on the Draft EIR were accepted in written form. The public review and comment period ended on August 18, 2020 after which time all comments received were responded

A Final EIR (FEIR) was prepared following the public review and comment period for the Draft EIR. The Final EIR responded to: written comments received during the public review and comment period; and oral comments made at any public hearing held to receive comments on the Draft EIR.

CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR:

The Final EIR will be independently reviewed and considered by the County. If the Final EIR is deemed "adequate and complete," the County may certify the EIR at a public hearing. In general, the rule of adequacy holds that the EIR can be certified if it demonstrates a good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information and provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the project in terms of its environmental consequences.

Following review and consideration of the Final EIR, the County may take action to approve, conditionally approve, revise, or reject the Project. Written findings would accompany a decision to approve or conditionally approve the project (CCR §15091). Likewise, a statement of overriding considerations would be prepared if necessary (CCR §15093). A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), as described below would also be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the Project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment.

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

The County must adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment (CCR §15097). This program will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project construction and operation.

The specific reporting or monitoring program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR. However, any mitigation measures adopted by the County as part of the certified Final EIR will be considered as conditions of approval for the project and will be included in the MMRP to ensure and verify compliance.

Staff will attempt to answer any questions you have. Thank you.

Attachments:

- A. Location Map and Site Plan
- B. Water Supply Assessment Resolution
- C. FEIR Resolution and Findings
- D. Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Resolution
- E. General Plan Amendment #19-0001 Resolution and Findings
- F. Zone Change #19-0001 Resolution and Ordinance (Zoning Map #70)
- G. Conditional Use Permit #18-0040 and Findings
- H. Conditional Use Permit #20-0006 and Findings
- I. Variance #19-0003 and Findings
- J. Planning Commission Hearing Package

CC: Tony Routhas, County Executive Officer
Adam Crook, County Counsel
Jim Minnick, Planning & Development Services Director
Michael Abraham, AICP, Assistant Planning & Development Services Director
Patricia Valenzuela, Planner IV
Rosa Soto, Office Supervisor
Carina Gomez, Administrative Secretary
File: GPA #19-0001/ZC#19-0001/CUP18-0040/CUP20-0006 & Var#19-0003; APN 003-240-001
File 10.105, 10-107, 10.130, 10.133, 40.103, 40.110, 40.141

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