

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOULEVARD COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP (BCPG)
*****7 PM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 – PUBLIC MEETING FINAL AGENDA / NOTICE**
COMMUNITY ROOM, 39919 RIBBONWOOD ROAD, BOULEVARD, CA, 91905***

TONIGHT'S MEETING IS BEING SHARED ON ZOOM.

Meeting ID: 869 4932 0521

Passcode: 641936

Invite Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86949320521?pwd=xYM0sFJhBB4ebmdQSfJ9cPBfQ24JH.1>

A. ROLL CALL (Determination of quorum): 1) Manuel Casanova, Jr.; 2) Earl Goodnight; 3) Carl Anderson III;
4) Anthony Ralphs; 5) Melanie Hayden; 6) Vacant; 7) Nancy Good

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (optional):

C. APPROVE MINUTES/ SUMMARY FOR August 6th MEETING:

D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: This is an opportunity for public comment on any subject within the Group's jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda. No action can be taken on non-agenda items. Items can be added to future agendas. **Comments shall be limited to (3) minutes.**

E. ACTION ITEMS:

1. **STARLIGHT SOLAR OPPOSITION LETTER TO SUPERVISOR ANDERSON:** Thomas Wall submitted a Draft letter to the BCPG that his group is planning to send to Joel Anderson regarding the Starlight Solar project.
"The letter makes clear they remain fully opposed to Starlight Solar project while simultaneously advocating for stronger protection should the County approve the project. The letter includes BESS safety measures, groundwater and residential well monitoring, an independent plume analysis, resolution of the construction water issue, and the Community Impact Fund".

They request the BCPG's support for the letter that will be submitted to Supervisor Anderson prior to the September 16th Board of Supervisors hearing
Discussion and vote

F. GROUP BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **DRAFT BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS) ZONING ORDINANCE PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** Planning & Development Services (PDS) has released the Draft Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Zoning Ordinance amendment for public comment.
The draft ordinance is available on the [Engage San Diego website](#).
County Staff is scheduled to present a Zoom PowerPoints presentation during our meeting.

An additional presentation will be available on Zoom, Thursday, September 17 at 6:00 p.m.
(Each meeting will cover the same material).

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87632623299>

Comments can be submitted via email to PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov or mailed to the attention of Mayu Tanaka at the County of San Diego Planning & Development Services, 5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 210, San Diego CA, 92123.

Comments must be received by September 27.

- **DISCRETIONARY PERMIT FOR A MINOR USE PERMIT - PDS2026-ZAP-26-001.** A request for a recommendation has been sent for a discretionary permit application submitted to Planning & Development Services (PDS) for a project within the BCPG area.
Lumen Pine Valley site exists at 36549 Old Hwy 80, Boulevard, Ca.
The full project scope consists of the addition of two new unoccupied 12-foot by 36foot prefabricated UL listed equipment shelters (Fiber Optic Related) with a maximum height of 10' 5" within an existing Fiber Optic compound. The shelters would be installed on a new concrete pad within the previously disturbed and fenced site area to house fiber optic equipment. Work would be limited to approx. 75' of trenching for underground conduits to connect the shelters to existing equipment, extension of electrical service from the existing utility connection, and construction of a short concrete walkway for minimal maintenance foot traffic.
- **PLANNING GROUP SEAT VACANCIES:** The three Board seats that were up for the November election had one candidate apply. With the expiration of Goodnight's term in December 2026 the Board will start 2027 with five members.
- **SANDAG UNINCORPORATED REPRESENTATION:** Association of Planning Groups (APG)
Nothing to report.
APG's next in-person meeting will be on Saturday, December 5, 2026.
- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**
- **FIRE SAFE & REVITALIZATION (JBRA) REPORTS:**

G. PROJECT UPDATES:

1. **100 MW STARLIGHT SOLAR AND BATTERY STORAGE PROJECT DRAFT EIR RELEASED 7/31/2025 (PDS2022-MUP-22-010):** Jim Whalen to report.
2. **74 MW RUGGED SOLAR DISCRETIONARY PDS2017-MUP-12-007W1 TIME EXTENSION PERMIT:**
Jim Whalen to report.

NO MOVEMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS 3,4,5,6

3. **TULE WIND PHASE II-69MW:** Currently permitted to erect up to 24 new turbines on State land and the Ewiiapayaap Reservation.
Avangrid Inc. (parent company of Tule Wind) and Vitol Inc. have reached a transfer agreement for the 2023 **production tax credits** of the Tule Wind Project. Going forward, we will have to see how it affects the project.
4. **TERRA-GEN'S BOULDER BRUSH FACILITIES (SUBSTATION GEN-TIE) PDS2022-MUP-19-002TE:** Ruling on appeal submitted 6/20/2023 by non-profit BAD.

Litigation against the Boulder Brush Substation update from Donna Tisdale:

BAD last appeal of Boulder Brush was lost because it was based in large part on the County not including Torrey Wind in the EIR and then Terra-Gen withdrew Torrey Wind. Our attorney argued that the withdrawal was done informally through the planner instead of making a formal withdrawal.

Project docs and maps link: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/ceqa/BoulderBrush.html>.

5. **TERRA-GEN'S 252 MW-60 TURBINE CAMPO WIND PROJECT. ON OCTOBER 27th THE 9th CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS DIMISSED THE LEGAL CHALLENGE BASED ON TRIBAL SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY:** Campo Wind was approved for Campo Reservation land by Dept of Interior April 2020. Federal lawsuit filed 7-8-20. On August 6, 2021, the federal judge granted the Campo Band's Motion to Dismiss the case based on sovereignty. The case

was appealed to 9th Circuit. In 2021. **The non-profit BAD won their appeal against the FAA approval of the project.**

6. **60 MW 420 ACRE BOULEVARD SOLAR MUP12-010TE PDS2012-3300-12-00 @ 796 Tierra Del Sol Road;** No project progress reported. This project is currently still in process with the County; however, they have not received a new submittal for some time.
An absentee owner is promoting the project.

H. ADJOURNMENT:

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 1, 2026

For more information contact Earl Goodnight, email boulevardplanninggroup@gmail.com, Current and past meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted on the County website @ <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/gpupdate/comm/blvd.html>.

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Starlight Solar (BESS) Project – Boulevard Community Planning Group

Dear Supervisor Joel Anderson,

On behalf of the **Boulevard Community Planning Group**, we respectfully urge you to **vote NO on the Starlight Solar Project** when it comes before the Board of Supervisors in September.

Our fundamental concern is the combination of the project's extraordinary scale and its location. Starlight would place a **217.4 MW / 868 MWh battery energy storage system (BESS)**, using technology that continues to evolve and for which significant questions remain about failure, toxic emissions and emergency response, **in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and next to homes**.

Starlight was presented and understood as a solar project, yet its defining component is an enormous BESS - one of the largest in the state. The scale and risks of the BESS, including fire, toxic emissions and emergency-response challenges, were not understood by the community until recently.

Using the EPRI incident rate of 0.20 incidents per GWh-year, a BESS of this size has an estimated **16% annual probability of an incident, equating to approximately 99.5% over a 30-year operating life**. That probability matters even more because of where this facility would be located. **The Thorn Fire**, one of the three fires causing evacuations in the last few months, demonstrated just how quickly wildfire conditions can escalate in Boulevard by growing to nearly 700 acres in less than two hours.

The issue is therefore not simply whether Starlight can meet fire-code requirements or whether an individual battery incident can be contained under ideal conditions. It is whether a BESS project with **“significant and unavoidable impacts”** per the EIR should be placed in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone where a fire can spread with extraordinary speed and the consequences of a failure could be dramatically amplified.

The project also sits over the **fractured-rock groundwater system on which Boulevard and surrounding rural communities depend**. Unlike urban communities with municipal water systems, surrounding residents depend on groundwater wells, with limited alternatives if that water supply is compromised. Because groundwater can move through interconnected fractures and contamination may not remain confined to property or watershed boundaries, a serious BESS fire or chemical release could threaten groundwater quality **well beyond the project site**.

This concern extends beyond Boulevard. The siting decisions being made here may establish a precedent for what is considered acceptable throughout San Diego County's rural backcountry, where other communities face similar wildfire, evacuation and groundwater constraints.

For these reasons, **we ask you to vote NO**. If the Board nevertheless considers approval, we respectfully request five critical protections:

1. Commission a scientifically sound, truly independent plume study.

Require a new third-party plume analysis performed by a **qualified atmospheric-dispersion engineering firm with no relationship to the applicant, its consultants or community consultants**.

At minimum, the analysis should:

- use an appropriate model for outdoor, long-distance atmospheric dispersion, such as **AERMOD or SCICHEM**, rather than relying on Fire Dynamics Simulator for this purpose;
- use conservative, scientifically supported toxic-emission assumptions and clearly document how critical inputs are derived;
- evaluate coherent and realistic meteorological conditions;
- use recognized exposure durations, including the appropriate **60-minute AEGL-2 comparison**; and
- evaluate **AEGL-1 at neighboring property lines** when determining appropriate setbacks.

2. Require scientifically defensible BESS setbacks and maximize battery separation.

- Setbacks should protect **neighboring property lines, not simply existing residences**, so the project does not restrict the future lawful use of surrounding properties.
- The County should evaluate an **AEGL-1-based setback**, including the approximately **2,200-foot distance identified in the community's analysis**, based on the results of a scientifically sound independent plume study.
- Battery containers and battery groups should be separated to the **maximum feasible extent** to reduce the potential for an incident to propagate between containers or beyond the BESS facility.
- Phase 2 batteries should be moved to the **furthest feasible southern location and furthest away from each other**, away from neighboring properties and evacuation routes.

3. Protect groundwater and residential wells.

Require enforceable groundwater and private-well protections, paid for by the developer, including:

- **Baseline groundwater and water-quality testing** before construction begins.
- **Monthly groundwater monitoring** throughout construction.
- **Private-well testing within three miles:** Any resident with a private well within three miles of the project should be eligible for developer-funded baseline testing and testing **every six months throughout construction**.
- **Long-term well monitoring:** Participating wells should receive **annual developer-funded testing for the operational life of the project**.
- **Comprehensive testing:** Testing should include **water level, water quality, and well production/yield where feasible**.
- **Enforceable remedy:** If testing identifies a significant decline in water quality, water level, or well production potentially attributable to the project, require an **independent investigation and developer-funded corrective action, including restoration or replacement of the affected water supply where necessary**.

4. Resolve the Construction Water Source Before Approval

The Final EIR identifies Jacumba Community Services District as the construction water source, yet **Jacumba is not providing the water**. The actual source and haul distance remain unresolved.

The County has stated that if the new source is farther away than what the EIR analyzed, additional environmental review may be required. A longer haul distance could increase truck traffic, vehicle miles traveled, air emissions, greenhouse gases, noise, and roadway impacts.

We ask the County, before the Board votes, to:

- **Identify the actual construction water source and haul distance.**
- **Identify the maximum haul distance analyzed in the Final EIR.**
- **Rerun CalEEMod and the transportation analysis using the actual source and haul distance.**
- **Publicly disclose the results and complete any additional environmental review required before approval.**

The Board **should not approve the project based on a Final EIR that identifies a construction water source** the project does not have.

5. Secure the full \$7 million Community Impact Fund before Phase 1.

If the **\$7 million Community Impact Fund** is included in the final project agreement, require the entire amount to be **contractually guaranteed and funded before Phase 1 construction begins.**

Community impacts begin on Day One including construction traffic delays (one lane road in and out), dust, noise, groundwater concerns, fire risk, changes to rural community character, and property-related impacts. Residents attempting to sell their homes will face disclosure obligations associated with a major solar and battery facility being developed nearby and may find a decrease in property value. Residents may see higher fire-insurance premiums or loss of coverage.

The resources intended to address those impacts should therefore be available **when the impacts begin, not years later and not contingent upon Phase 2 or a future power purchaser.** If Phase 2 is never built, that does not erase the impacts Boulevard will already have experienced from Phase 1. Additionally, a full \$7 million Community Impact Fund payment represents approximately 1% of the estimated lifetime gross revenue of half a billion to one billion dollars.

We support renewable energy, but the transition to clean energy must include **responsible siting and meaningful protections for the rural communities being asked to host these facilities.**

Joel, what we are asking of you, as our representative for Boulevard, is to make it clear to the entire Board of Supervisors that the community of Boulevard does not want this project. If the project is approved, Boulevard will be forced to accept yet another large-scale renewable energy development that the community has consistently opposed.

Boulevard already carries a disproportionate share of the County's renewable energy infrastructure, and these projects are changing the rural character, quality of life, and safety of our community.

If the County chooses to approve Starlight Solar despite the community's opposition, we believe the five requests we are making are reasonable and necessary protections. We are asking you to stand with Boulevard and advocate strongly for all five as conditions of any approval.

We respectfully ask you to stand with Boulevard and the broader Mountain Empire.

Respectfully,

Boulevard Community Planning Group