

County of San Diego
Jacumba Hot Springs Sponsor Group
Final Agenda for Regular Meeting 5:30pm on April 20, 2021
Jacumba Hot Springs, CA 91934

To attend via computer or smart phone:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89254658551?pwd=VWtFM3VUQWpPWEO2UUY3S2ZkQnpTUT09>

Join by Phone:

(669) 900-6833 or (346) 248-7799

Meeting ID: 892 5465 8551

Passcode: 090930

- A. Roll call** (Determination of quorum): Seat 1. Jacari Cousins; Seat 2. Greg Curran; Seat 3. Cherry Diefenbach; Seat 4. Jeffery Osborne; Seat 5. VACANT
- B. Pledge of Allegiance.** (waived-due to virtual meeting format)
- C. Approval of draft minutes for Jacumba Sponsor Group (JSG) virtual meeting held on March 16, 2021.**
- D. Public Communication:** The public may comment on any subject within the JSG's jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda. (Speakers are limited to 2 minutes and no action can be taken on non-agenda items.)
- E. Action items:** (Agenda items may be taken out of order upon request)
- 1. Discuss/vote on Katrina Westley's application for Seat #5 (currently vacant).**
 - 2. Discuss the County DPW (Department of Public Works) road resurfacing program. Review Jacumba's existing roads list, develop and submit a prioritization list of Jacumba roads that require resurfacing over the next several years.**
 - 3. Discuss the timeline and status of proposed Jacumba Valley Ranch Energy Park project.**

The project involves the construction and operation of a proposed 90 megawatt (MW) solar energy facility in the Jacumba Valley on the 1,356 acre property formerly known as Ketchum Ranch. This project would place solar panels immediately east, north, and south of the community of Jacumba Hot Springs; north, south, and west of the Jacumba Airport, for about a mile along both sides of scenic Highway 80; and south of the I-8 corridor near the Jacumba exit/Carriso Gorge Road. The project includes the following:

- approximately 300,000 photovoltaic modules (12-feet high and up to 300 feet in length) mounted on single axis trackers which follow the sun from east to west.
- 75 battery storage containers-three containers at each of the 25 sites (55-feet long, 19-feet wide and 10-feet high) These containers are shown as orange squares on map below.
- 25 inverter/transformer metal platforms on skids (8-feet wide and 20-feet long) installed adjacent to the battery storage containers.
- 5,000-feet of underground electrical collection system.
- an on-site collector substation (152-feet by 180-feet) and a 200-foot-long 65-foot-high overhead slack span transmission line that connects the collector substation to the switchyard.

--a 138kV switchyard (3.2-acres) (adjacent to the collector substation) with 1,860-feet of overhead transmission lines strung on (five) 70-115 feet high steel poles which will loop the switchyard into the existing SDG&E Boulevard-East County Transmission Line. While this project is described as an “interim” land use, the project life is projected as 35-37 years. Given that the switchyard will be turned over to SDG&E at the decommissioning of the solar project, one can surmise that another industrial scale energy project would replace it.
--The project area will be enclosed with a 6-foot high slatted chain link fence with one foot of barbed wire on top.
--A landscaping plan will be implemented along Old Hwy 80, next to the town, and along portions of Carriso Gorge Road.

During the estimated 13-month construction period, up to 500 workers will arrive at the site. Construction hours will likely be 7 am to 4pm Monday through Saturday. The solar site will be unmanned when completed.

Some DEIR solar project alternatives: 1. No project alternative; 2. Community buffer alternative; 3. Reduced project alternative; and ECO Substation (No switchyard) alternative. It also dismisses alternatives such as roof top solar, and alternative project locations because the project developer has no control other those alternatives and would not financially benefit from them.

A brief discussion of JVR alternatives follows:

1. No project alternative—no solar panels are installed. (The land could be used for a mix of agriculture, low-income residences, ranches, open space, and possibly even a future international border crossing.)

2. Community buffer alternative—widens setback from 75 feet to 300 feet north of Old Hwy 80 adjacent to the community. This reduces energy production to 82.5 MW. No change to the 40-foot setback along the senior center and residential properties south of Old Hwy 80.

3. Reduced project alternative—Shrinks the site area by 142 acres in the northern area of the project, reducing it to 68MW. It would reduce project visibility from I-8. It does not create a wider buffer near Jacumba or the glider port. It also does nothing to mitigate visual impact to residents of Jacumba, airport users, or motorists travelling along state designated scenic Hwy 80.

4. ECO Substation (No Switchyard) alternative—This could eliminate the requirement for a 3.2-acre switchyard similar to the one pictured right. This alternative would send power to the electric grid via SDG&E’s ECO Substation preferably via underground transmission lines.



At our Jacumba Sponsor meeting held on March 16, 2021, we voted to support a much smaller solar facility (200 acres) located well north of the town with 1,500-foot setbacks from residences and all public roads. This smaller facility would utilize an underground transmission line to feed its generated green energy directly into the power grid via SDG&E’s ECO substation, thereby eliminating the need for a switchyard.

On April 12, 2021, Planning & Development Services (PDS) project manager Nicholas Koutoufidis (nicholas.koutoufidis@sdcounty.ca.gov or 858-495-5329) provided our group with a revised JVR project plan that makes some very minor changes to the original 643 acre solar project previously described in the DEIR. These changes include a project footprint reduction of 20 acres and increased setbacks. The revised 20-page JVR project plan can be viewed at: [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/DEIR/AdditionalDocs/JVR0Plot%20Plans%20\(Optimized\).pdf](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/DEIR/AdditionalDocs/JVR0Plot%20Plans%20(Optimized).pdf).

The residents of Jacumba need to be informed about the revised project plan BEFORE the sponsor group votes to approve, or conditionally approve, or deny the project, at an upcoming special sponsor group virtual meeting to be held during the week of May 10, 2021. **Discuss/identify possible dates and times for a socially-distanced community gathering to be held in the Highland Center. Confirm the May 2021 special sponsor group virtual meeting date and time.**

F. Group business and Project Updates-discussion only:

1. Announcements and correspondence.
2. Community interface and other reports
 - a. Fire Safe Council
 - b. Revitalization

G. Adjournment:

The next special sponsor group virtual meeting is TBD.

Purpose of Planning and Sponsor Groups:

Advise the County on discretionary projects as well as on planning and land use matters that are proposed within their respective community planning or sponsor group area.