

3.1.6 Land Use and Planning

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) discusses and analyzes potential land use conflicts resulting from the implementation of the project. The analysis is based on the review of existing resources, technical data, and applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, as well as the following technical studies prepared for the project:

- *Visual Resources Assessment for the Starlight Solar Project* (SWCA Environmental Consultants [SWCA] 2024a) (Appendix C of this EIR).
- Climate Action Plan Consistency Review Checklist for Starlight Solar (SWCA 2025) (Appendix H.3 of this EIR).

Comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) include concerns regarding the project's location near conflicting land uses (residential and agricultural), cumulative impacts of the proposed project with existing and future solar projects in the area, changes in the community character, and impacts to land value in Boulevard. These concerns are addressed in this section of the EIR where applicable. Copies of the NOP and comment letters received in response to the NOP are included in Appendix A, NOP, Initial Study, and Public Comments, of this EIR.

3.1.6.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Land Uses

The project site is on privately owned land in southeastern unincorporated San Diego County within the Boulevard Subregional Planning Area, a subarea of the Mountain Empire Subregion. The Boulevard Subregional Planning Area encompasses about 55,350 acres and includes the communities of Boulevard, Manzanita, Live Oak Springs, Tierra Del Sol, Crestwood, Jewel Valley, McCain Valley, Miller Valley, and a portion of Bankhead Springs (County of San Diego 2013). The Mountain Empire Subregion is the third largest planning area in unincorporated San Diego County, covering approximately 303,900 acres (County of San Diego 2016). This subregion is bounded by Mexico to the south, Imperial County to the east, the Jamul/Dulzura Community Planning Area (CPA) to the west, the Alpine CPA to the northwest, and the Central Mountain and Desert Subregions to the north. It extends along Interstate 8 (I-8) from south of Buckman Springs to the Imperial County line and along State Route 94 east of Barrett Junction. Approximately 27,000 acres within this subregion are under tribal ownership by the Campo, Cuyapaipe, La Posta, and Manzanita Indian Tribes.

Project Site

The project site consists of a 588-acre portion of the 3,874-acre property known as Empire Ranch, which has historically been used for ranching and recreation. Empire Ranch includes a ranch compound, located directly south of Jewel Valley Road, with several single-family homes, bunkhouses, and corrals, as well as a private airstrip. The private airstrip has been used periodically by the owner of the property, but it is no longer in use. Livestock have been raised at varying levels over the years. The Empire Ranch property has no significant usage other than by the ranch manager and is undeveloped.

The project site includes 18 parcels both north and south of the residential compound and includes the airstrip. The majority of the land is undeveloped, has no existing structures, and is predominantly covered with natural vegetation, particularly chaparral. See Section 2.2, Biological Resources, for additional information regarding vegetation communities on-site. In addition to natural vegetation, the project site includes some roadways, railroad tracks, and field/pasture areas. These areas may have hosted cattle in the past.

Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is in an unincorporated area within southeastern San Diego County, in the Mountain Empire Subregional Planning Area. The northernmost point of the project site is approximately 1 mile southeast of the community of Boulevard. Boulevard is a linear community containing commercial development, residences, and semi-rural land uses clustered along Old Highway 80, south of the I-8 corridor. Large rural properties, single-family homes, small-scale agriculture, recreational opportunities, and areas of undeveloped lands surround the town center to the east, south, and west (Figure 3.1.6-1).

The project site is located south of I-8 and Old Highway 80, and east of Tierra Del Sol Road (Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1.0, Project Description, Location, and Environmental Setting). Access to the project site would be provided by Jewel Valley Road, which connects to Old Highway 80. Jewel Valley Road is a local community roadway that bisects the project site into north/south sections and connects residences south of the project site to the community of Boulevard and I-8. Old Highway 80 is a two-lane local travel route that passes in proximity to the site and is adjacent to the San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E) Boulevard substation. Private non-paved roads serve as ingress and egress access for the majority of residences and properties in the Boulevard area.

The project site includes an easement for the Desert Line of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway (SD&AE), which originates in San Diego and terminates in El Centro. The project would span the railroad in the southern portion of the site. Construction of the railway was initiated in 1907; the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) has owned the Desert Line portion of the railway since 1979 (MTS 2013). Although portions of the SD&AE are in use, the Desert Line, which runs from Tecate, Mexico to Plaster City, California, has been shut down since 2008. The segment within the project site is considered an active freight rail; however, the line has not been used in years due to safety concerns and general disrepair. The MTS has been seeking to reopen the Desert Line; however, the line is in poor condition and would require extensive repairs and rebuilding (*San Diego Tribune* 2021; *Trains* 2021).

The SDG&E Boulevard substation, related transmission line infrastructure, and a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) materials yard are approximately 0.75 mile northeast of the project site along Old Highway 80. A high-voltage transmission line connects to the SDG&E Boulevard substation and comes within 0.35 mile of the northern project site boundary. The transmission line runs west between residences on Old Highway 80 and the project boundary and continues west along Jewel Valley Way, crossing Jewel Valley Road.

General Plan Land Use and Zoning

The *San Diego County General Plan: A Plan for Growth, Conservation, and Sustainability* (General Plan) (County of San Diego 2011a) designates a majority of the project site (16 of the 18 parcels) as Rural Lands 80 (RL-80) (see Figure 3.1.6-1). RL-80 indicates a permitted density of one dwelling unit (DU) per 80 acres. The Rural Lands category is applied to large open space and very low-density private and publicly owned lands that provide for agriculture, managed resource production, conservation, and recreation, and thereby retain the rural character for which much of unincorporated San Diego County is known. Rural areas are not appropriate for intensive residential or commercial uses due to significant topographical or environmental constraints, limited access, and the lack of public services. Two parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 612-092-1300 and 612-090-59) are designated Semi-Rural Residential (SR-10) which allows a density of one DU per acre (Appendix B.1, Major Use Permit Site Plans). These parcels contain the existing Boulevard substation and part of the generation-tie (gen-tie) line that would connect the solar array to the substation. The SR-10 category identifies areas of San Diego County that are appropriate for lower-density residential neighborhoods, recreation areas, agricultural operations, and related commercial uses that support rural communities (County of San Diego 2025a).

Under the County of San Diego (County) Zoning Ordinance, the entire project site is zoned as General Rural (S92), as shown in Figure 3.1.6-2 (County of San Diego 2025a). No portion of the project site is subject to any Special Area Regulations. The S92 Use Regulations provide appropriate controls for land that is rugged terrain, watershed, dependent on ground water for a water supply, desert, susceptible to fires and erosion, or subject to other environmental constraints (County of San Diego 2020a). Agricultural use types including horticulture (all types), tree crops, and row and field crops are permitted by the S92 Use Regulations.

The entire project site is bounded by lands designated as RL-80, Rural Lands 40 (RL-40, one DU per 40 acres), or SR-10, and all are zoned S92. To the east of the project site are several parcels owned by California State Parks, zoned S-80 and designated Public Agency Lands. The S-80 zoning district is intended for recreation areas or areas with severe environmental constraints. Portions of the community of Boulevard along Jewel Valley Way and Fisher Road are designated as RL-40 and SR-10.

3.1.6.2 *Regulatory Setting*

Federal Regulations

No relevant federal policies concerning land use would be applicable to the proposed project.

State Regulations

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter contracts with private landowners to restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. The landowners receive property tax assessments that are much lower than normal because they are based on farming and open space uses instead of full market value (California Department of Conservation 2024).

California Planning and Zoning Law

The legal framework in which California cities and counties exercise local planning and land use functions is provided in the California Planning and Zoning Law Sections 65000 through 66499.58. Under state planning law, each city and county must adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan. State law gives cities and counties wide latitude in how a jurisdiction may create a general plan, but there are fundamental requirements that must be met. These requirements include the inclusion of seven mandatory elements described in the Government Code. Each of the elements must contain text and descriptions setting forth objectives, principles, standards, policies, and plan proposals; diagrams and maps that incorporate data and analysis; and mitigation measures.

Local Regulations

San Diego County 2024 Climate Action Plan Update

The County has developed the 2024 Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update, a comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in its unincorporated communities. In July 2024, the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the final CAP to the County Board of Supervisors. On September 11, 2024, the County Board of Supervisors adopted the CAP (County of San Diego 2025b). The 2024 CAP Update identifies strategies, measures, and actions to meet the County's targets to reduce GHG emissions by 2030 and 2045, consistent with the state's 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality and

legislative GHG reduction targets and demonstrates progress toward the state's 2045 net zero GHG emissions goal. The CAP's attainment of the County's GHG reduction targets is the result of (1) several initiatives to be directly implemented by the County and (2) incorporation of GHG reduction features into the construction and operation of development projects (including County-initiated and privately-initiated projects).

In order to demonstrate consistency with the 2024 CAP Update, the County has developed a CAP Consistency Checklist. The checklist establishes a two-step process to determine if a project is consistent with the CAP. Step 1 of the checklist evaluates a project's consistency with the growth projections used in the CAP to estimate future GHG emissions from activities in unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Since the CAP uses growth projections based on the adopted General Plan, the first step in determining a project's consistency with the CAP is to demonstrate its alignment with the regional categories and land use designations of the General Plan. All projects must show consistency with the existing General Plan regional categories, land use designations, and the uses and development density and intensity allowed under the Zoning Ordinance. If a project is consistent with the General Plan, then Step 2 of the checklist should be completed. If a project is not consistent with the regional categories or land use designations of the General Plan, it cannot use the CAP Consistency Checklist for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining. Step 2 of the checklist outlines CAP measures and actions as "consistency requirements" that project proponents must incorporate into their projects to demonstrate compliance with the CAP. Projects are required to show consistency with the CAP requirements or explain why the requirements are not applicable. Appendix H.3 presents the project's 2024 CAP Consistency Checklist.

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance (County of San Diego 2025a) is the primary way that the County administers the General Plan. The General Plan identifies general land use designations, while the Zoning Ordinance identifies specific uses and development standards within these land use designations. Future development is required to comply with the Zoning Ordinance and would therefore be consistent with the General Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance regulates land uses in the unincorporated portions of San Diego County and specifies permitted uses on established land use zones. As stated previously, the entire project site is zoned General Rural (S92). As outlined in Section 2920 through Section 2929, the S92 zone is intended for residential and agricultural development and is typically applied to environmentally constrained lands (e.g., rugged terrain, watershed, groundwater-dependent, susceptible to fire or erosion). Permitted development in the S92 zone includes low-intensity recreational uses, residences on large parcels, and animal grazing. Minor and major impact utilities may be allowed with approval of a use permit. The applicable setbacks associated with the S92 zone are 60 feet (front yard), 15 feet (interior side yard), 35 feet (exterior side yard) and 25 feet (rear yard).

Section 1350 of the County Zoning Ordinance defines Major Impact Services and Utilities, and Section 1355 defines Minor Impact Utilities. Major Impact Services and Utilities are defined as "public or private services and utilities which have substantial impact" and minor utilities are defined as "public utilities which have a local impact on surrounding properties and are necessary to provide essential services", including electrical distribution substations. Minor Impact Utilities require a Minor Use Permit, while Major Impact Services and Utilities require a Major Use Permit (MUP). Upon issuance of either a Minor Use Permit or MUP, Minor Impact Utilities and Major Impact Services and Utilities are permitted uses within each of the County-designated zones. However, as noted in Section 1350, Major Impact Services and Utilities may be conditionally permitted in any zone if it is determined that public interest supersedes the usual limitations placed on land use and transcends the usual restraints of zoning for reasons of necessary location and community-wide interest.

Section 6954(b)(2) of the County Zoning Ordinance provides direction for the development of photovoltaic (PV) solar energy systems for off-site use. According to the Zoning Ordinance, “A photovoltaic solar energy system for off-site use with a project area of 10 acres or more, or a combination of parcels with a combined area of 10 acres or more is a Major Impact Service and Utility in all zones and shall require a Major Use Permit permitted in accordance with the use permit procedure commencing at section 7350”.

Section 6954(b)(3) states, “All other types of solar energy systems of solar power plants including concentrating solar power plants, parabolic troughs, concentrating linear Fresnel reflectors, Stirling solar dish, or a solar power tower are a Major Service and Utility in all zones and shall require approval of a Major Use Permit in accordance with section 7350 and the following requirements on any parcel of land”:

- a. Setback. A system or plant shall meet all of the setback requirements of the zone.
- b. Height. A system or plant of more than 200 feet in height is required to comply with Federal Aviation Administration safety height requirements.
- c. Visual. The following measures shall be followed in order to minimize the visual impact of the project:
 - i. Removal of existing vegetation shall be minimized.
 - ii. Internal roads shall be graded for minimal size and disruption.
 - iii. Any accessory buildings shall be painted or otherwise visually treated to blend with the surroundings.
 - iv. A structure shall be non-reflective in all areas possible to blend with the surroundings.
- d. Security. The operator shall provide security in the form and amount determined by the Director to ensure removal of the Solar Energy System. The security shall be provided to the Department of Planning and Development Services (PDS) prior to building permit issuance. Once the Solar Energy System has been removed from the property pursuant to a demolition permit to the satisfaction of the Director, the security may be released to the operator of the Solar Energy System” (County of San Diego 2014a).

Section 7358 states that before any use permit may be granted or modified, it shall be found:

- a. That the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use will be compatible with adjacent uses, residents, buildings, or structures, with consideration given to:
 - i. Harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density;
 - ii. The availability of public facilities, services and utilities;
 - iii. The harmful effect, if any, upon desirable neighborhood character;
 - iv. The generation of traffic and the capacity and physical character of surrounding streets;
 - v. The suitability of the site for the type and intensity of use or development which is proposed; and to
 - vi. Any other relevant impact of the proposed use; and
- b. That the impacts, as described in paragraph "a" of this section, and the location of the proposed use will be consistent with the San Diego County General Plan.
- c. That the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act have been complied with.
- d. That the applicant has provided the County with an owner consent letter demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Director that the operator of the Solar Energy System is authorized to use the

property for a Solar Energy System, unless the operator owns the land upon which the Solar Energy System will be located.

Solar Energy System, Off-site Use, is defined by Ordinance No. 10072 (New Series) as “a solar energy conversion system consistent with the requirements of section 6954 for off-site energy use. The energy generated is predominately used off site” (County of San Diego 2010).

Section 4835 of the Zoning Ordinance states that a PV solar energy system is permitted to encroach in the front yard setback (as long as it is not more than 30 inches above grade), the interior side yard (may not exceed 12 feet in height), the exterior side yard (as long as it is not more than 30 inches above grade), and the rear yard (as long as it does not exceed 12 feet in height nor cover more than 50% of the required yard in combination with all detached accessory structures).

However, Section 4813 of the Zoning Ordinance states, “When a major use permit for a use or structure is granted, the use permit may authorize an exception to the Setback Regulations and establish other setback and spacing requirements as a condition thereof.”

San Diego County Noise Ordinance

The San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances Title 3, Division 6, Chapter 4, Sections 36.401–36.435, Noise Ordinance (Noise Ordinance) establishes prohibitions for disturbing, excessive, or offensive noise, as well as provisions such as sound level limits to secure and promote the public health, comfort, safety, peace, and quiet for its citizens. Planned compliance with sound level limits and other specific parts of the Noise Ordinance allows presumption that the noise is not disturbing, excessive, or offensive. Limits are specified depending on the zoning placed on a property (e.g., varying densities and intensities of residential, industrial, and commercial zones). Where two adjacent properties have different zones, the sound level limit at a location on a boundary between two properties is the arithmetic mean of the respective limits for the two zones, except for extractive industries. It is unlawful for any person to cause or allow the creation of any noise that exceeds the applicable limits of the Noise Ordinance at any point on or beyond the boundaries of the property on which the sound is produced. Section 36.404 of the Noise Ordinance contains sound level limits specific to receiving land uses.

County Board of Supervisors Policies

The County Board of Supervisors has the responsibility of establishing policy to guide the various functions of the County and, where necessary, to establish procedures by which functions are performed. Regulatory policies established by the board usually are adopted by ordinance and included in the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances. Other policy matters are included by ordinance in the Administrative Code. A third group of policies that by their nature do not require adoption by ordinance are adopted by statement of action of the board. These policies are consolidated in the *San Diego County Board of Supervisors Policy Manual* (County of San Diego 2025c). The Board of Supervisors serves as the primary legal authority to approve legal documents on behalf of the County.

The following County Board of Supervisors policies are applicable to the project (County of San Diego 2025c):

- Policy I-18: Right-of-Way Dedication and Public Improvement Requirements in Connection with Major and Minor Use Permits
 1. Where application is made pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance for a Major or Minor Use Permit and it is found that road improvements, drainage, sewage, fire protection, or other public facilities and improvements (including the land, easements and rights-of-way therefore) are necessary to insure that the establishment or maintenance of the requested use will not be

materially detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare or to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located, such use permit shall be issued only upon conditions that provision be made for such improvements and facilities (including the land, easements and rights-of-way therefore).

- Policy I-49: Distribution of Notification of Land Use Hearings
 1. Notices of permit applications shall be posted on site in a manner set forth by the Director of Planning & Development Services. The notices and posting guidelines will be provided to each applicant by Planning & Development Services at the time of project submittal.
 2. Residents of all apartment buildings and mobile home parks within 300 feet of the project site. Such notice shall be by posting in a conspicuous area approved by the management of the apartment building or mobile home park. The posted notice shall include information as to the nature and location of the project and a telephone number where interested parties may call for additional information. This notice shall be posted by the applicant within ten days of payment of processing fees. In the event that the posting of the notice is not allowed by the owner or management of any premises, the applicant shall notify Planning & Development Services within ten days.
- Policy I-60: Prohibition of Grading Until Annexation or Other Discretionary Actions are Completed
 1. A grading permit for any project requiring discretionary approvals shall not be issued until all discretionary permits or approvals that can be determined as necessary in light of the project detail shown on the plan or permit application or known or reasonably inferred by the County Official, including those by other governmental agencies, such as Special Districts, or the Coastal Commission have been obtained. Where the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS) or Zoning Administrator approval is conditional on discretionary actions by other governmental agencies, the resolution should note which actions, if any, are prerequisite to the issuance of a grading permit.
 2. PDS will inform the applicant after an initial review of a project application, of all County discretionary permits or approvals which will be necessary for the project and will ensure that the requirement for obtaining such permits or approvals is incorporated in any associated conditional approval. The applicant should be encouraged to seek relating County discretionary approvals by concurrent processing of appropriate applications.
- Policy I-73: Hillside Development Policy
 1. Development of building sites in hillside areas be planned and constructed in such a manner as to preserve, enhance or improve the physical features of the area consistent with providing building sites while at the same time optimizing the aesthetic quality of the final product. The design process set forth below shall be used as a guide to achieve the best possible hillside development. The guidelines set forth in this policy are purposely expressed in general terms to allow for flexibility in their application. It is recognized that at times difficulties may be encountered in interpreting some of these guidelines, but it is anticipated that appropriate decisions will be reached by the persons involved in the overall spirit and intent of this policy is respected. This policy is not intended to inhibit or restrict development, but rather to result in the best potential use of any site. This policy shall not apply to projects for which development applications have been filed, and fees paid, to the Department of Environmental Health or Planning & Development Services prior to the effective date of this policy. Where applicants are required to file first with the Department of Environmental Health, the applicant shall submit his full application to Planning & Development Services within 1 year of the date the application was first filed with the Department of Environmental Health.

- Policy I-74: Enforcement of Permitted and Non-Permitted Grading on Private Property
 - B. Problem Grading Performed Under Permit: Permits issued for grading shall include and provide the County with:
 - Permits to enter property for correction if necessary;
 - Timing control over work done by permittee;
 - Security sufficient to complete work guaranteed by instrument of credit or cash;
 - Proof of ownership or owner's permission to grade; and
 - Administrative tools used for control of non-permitted grading shall be used to secure compliance with grading permits. This shall include withholding of building permits if necessary.

- Policy I-92: Undergrounding of Utilities – Waiver Requests

The purpose of undergrounding is to improve the appearance of communities by removing unsightly overhead wires and poles and to increase reliability of service by placing these lines underground where they are less subject to incurring damage. Sections 81.404(a)(7), 81.707(b)(3), and 51.312 of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances require undergrounding of new and existing utility distribution facilities, of up to 34.5 kV, including cable television lines, within the boundary or abutting half street of any new subdivision or centerline project. The developer is responsible for complying with these requirements.

This requirement to underground utilities may be completely or partially waived only when it is deemed that undergrounding would be impossible or impractical. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for reviewing such waiver requests.

1. Undergrounding may be waived if any of the following criteria are met:
 - a. All other properties in the immediate area are completely “built out” to planned densities and uses and the established utility system for that area is overhead, OR
 - b. Undergrounding would result in no reduction in the number of poles on or adjacent to the project, OR
 - c. The cost of undergrounding is prohibitively high based on utility company estimates.

- Policy I-111: Discretionary Permits Adjacent to the International Border

The policy is applicable for discretionary permits that are located within 150 feet from the international Border and provides for DHS [Department of Homeland Security] notification of such projects. The ordinance provides the opportunity for DHS to purchase rights or fee title to properties within 150 feet of the border in order to keep an open corridor to facilitate Border patrol movement. The policy does not apply to actions which do not propose building pads, structures or fencing within 150 feet of the border.

County of San Diego General Plan

The General Plan guides future growth in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County and considers projected growth anticipated to occur within various communities. Goals and policies from several General Plan elements were determined to be applicable to the project and are discussed in the sections that follow.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element provides a framework to accommodate future development in an efficient and sustainable manner that is compatible with the character of unincorporated communities and the protection

of valuable and sensitive natural resources (County of San Diego 2011b). Currently, the County is faced with both significant growth pressures and severe environmental constraints. While population continues to grow, the supply of land capable of supporting development continues to decrease. In accommodating this growth, the land use plan encourages the provision of diverse housing choices while protecting the established character of existing urban and rural neighborhoods. The Land Use Element provides a description of all land use designations applicable to land within the County and specifies the permitted uses on those land use designations.

The following policies of the Land Use Element are applicable to the proposed project:

- **LU-2.8: Mitigation of Development Impacts.** Require measures that minimize significant impacts to surrounding areas from uses or operations that cause excessive noise, vibrations, dust, odor, aesthetic impairment and/or are detrimental to human health and safety.
- **LU-4.6: Planning for Adequate Energy Facilities.** Participate in the planning of regional energy infrastructure with applicable utility providers to ensure plans are consistent with the County's General Plan and Community Plans and minimize adverse impacts to the unincorporated County.
- **LU-5.3: Rural Land Preservation.** Ensure the preservation of existing open space and rural areas (e.g., forested areas, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and corridors, wetlands, watersheds, and groundwater recharge areas) when permitting development under the Rural and Semi-Rural Land Use Designations.
- **LU-5.5: Projects that Impede Non-Motorized Travel.** Ensure that development projects and road improvements do not impede bicycle and pedestrian access. Where impacts to existing planned routes would occur, ensure that impacts are mitigated and acceptable alternative routes are implemented.
- **LU-6.1: Environmental Sustainability.** Require the protection of intact or sensitive natural resources in support of the long-term sustainability of the natural environment.
- **LU-6.5: Sustainable Stormwater Management.** Ensure that development minimizes the use of impervious surfaces and incorporates other Low Impact Development [LID] techniques as well as a combination of site design, source control, and stormwater best management practices, where applicable and consistent with the County's LID Handbook.
- **LU-6.6: Integration of Natural Features into the Project Design.** Require incorporation of natural features (including mature oaks, indigenous trees and rock formations) into proposed development and require avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.
- **LU-6.9: Development Conformance with Topography.** Require development to conform to the natural topography to limit grading; incorporate and not significantly alter the dominant physical characteristics of the site; and to utilize natural drainage and topography in conveying stormwater to the maximum extent practicable.
- **LU-6.10: Protection from Hazards.** Require that development be located and designed to protect property and residents from the risks of natural and man-induced hazards.
- **LU-8.2: Groundwater Resources.** Require development to identify adequate groundwater resources in groundwater dependent areas as follows:
 - In areas dependent on currently identified groundwater overdrafted basins, prohibit new development from exacerbating overdraft conditions.
 - Encourage programs to alleviate overdraft conditions in Boulevard.
 - In areas without current overdraft conditions, prohibit new groundwater-dependent development where overdraft conditions are foreseeable.

- **LU-8.3: Groundwater Dependent Habitat.** Discourage development that would significantly draw down the groundwater table to the detriment of groundwater-dependent habitat, except in the Borrego Valley.
- **LU-10.2: Development—Environmental Resource Relationship.** Require development in Semi-Rural and Rural areas to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character and avoid sensitive or intact environmental resources and hazard areas.
- **LU-12.1: Concurrency of Infrastructure and Services with Development.** Require the provision of infrastructure, facilities, and service needed by new development prior to that development, either directly or through fees. Where appropriate, the construction of infrastructure and facilities may be phased to coincide with project phasing.
- **LU-12.2: Maintenance of Adequate Services.** Require development to mitigate significant impacts to existing service levels of public facilities or services for existing residents and businesses. Provide improvements for the Mobility Element roads in accordance with the Mobility Element Network Appendix matrices, which may result in ultimate buildout conditions that achieve an improved Level of Service (LOS) but do not achieve a LOS or D or better.
- **LU-13.2: Commitment of Water Supply.** Require new development to identify adequate water resources, in accordance with state law, to support the development prior to approval.
- **LU 18.1: Compatibility of Civic Uses with Community Character.** Locate and design Civic uses and services to assure compatibility with the character of the community and adjoining uses, which pose limited adverse effects. Such uses may include libraries, meeting centers, and small swap meets, farmers markets, or other community gatherings.

Mobility Element

The Mobility Element provides a framework for a balanced, multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods within the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. The Mobility Element identifies the County road network so that rights-of-way can be preserved for future motorized and non-motorized roadway purposes (County of San Diego 2011c).

The following policies from the Mobility Element are applicable to the proposed project:

- **M-2.3: Environmentally Sensitive Road Design.** Locate and design public and private roads to minimize impacts to significant biological and other environmental and visual resources. Avoid road alignments through floodplains to minimize impacts on floodplain habitats and limit the need for constructing flood control measures. Design new roads to maintain wildlife movement and retrofit existing roads for that purpose. Utilize fencing to reduce road kill and to direct animals to under crossings.
- **M-2.5: Minimize Excess Water Runoff.** Minimize Excess Water Runoff. Require road improvements to be designed and constructed to accommodate stormwater in a manner that minimizes demands upon engineered stormwater systems and to maximize the use of natural detention and infiltration techniques to mitigate environmental impacts.
- **M-3.3: Multiple Ingress and Egress.** Require development to provide multiple ingress/egress routes in conformance with State law, and local regulations.
- **M-4.4: Accommodate Emergency Vehicles.** Design and construct public and private roads to allow for necessary access for appropriately sized fire apparatus and emergency vehicles while accommodating outgoing vehicles from evacuating residents.

- **M-4.5: Context Sensitive Road Design.** Design and construct roads that are compatible with the local terrain and the uses, scale and pattern of the surrounding development. Provide wildlife crossings in road design and construction where it would minimize impacts in wildlife corridors.
- **M-12.4: Land Dedication for Trails.** Require development projects to dedicate and improve trails or pathways where the development will occur on land planned for trail or pathway segments shown on the Regional Trails Plan or Community Trails Master Plan.

Conservation and Open Space Element

The primary focus of the Conservation and Open Space Element is to provide direction to future growth and development in San Diego County with respect to conservation, management, and utilization of natural and cultural resources, protection and preservation of open space, and provision of park and recreation resources (County of San Diego 2011d).

The following policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element are applicable to the proposed project:

- **COS-1.1: Coordinated Preserve System.** Identify and develop a coordinated biological preserve system that includes Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas, Biological Resource Core Areas, wildlife corridors, and linkages to allow wildlife to travel throughout their habitat ranges.
- **COS-2.1: Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement.** Protect and enhance natural wildlife habitat outside of preserves as development occurs according to the underlying land use designation. Limit the degradation of regionally important natural habitats within the Semi-Rural and Rural Lands regional categories, as well as within Village lands where appropriate.
- **COS-2.2: Habitat Protection through Site Design.** Require development to be sited in the least biologically sensitive areas and minimize the loss of natural habitat through site design.
- **COS-3.1: Wetland Protection.** Require Development to preserve existing natural wetland areas and associated transitional riparian and upland buffers and retain opportunities for enhancement.
- **COS-3.2: Minimize Impacts of Development.** Require development projects to:
 - Mitigate any unavoidable losses of wetlands, including habitat functions and values; and
 - Protect wetlands, including vernal pools, from a variety of discharges and activities, such as dredging, adding fill material, exposure to pollutants such as nutrients, hydromodification, land and vegetation clearing, and the introduction of invasive species.
- **COS-4.1: Water Conservation.** Require development to reduce waste of potable water through use of efficient technologies and conservation efforts that minimize the County's dependence on imported water and conserve groundwater resources.
- **COS-4.2: Drought-Efficient Landscaping.** Require efficient irrigation systems and in new development encourage the use of native plant species and non-invasive drought tolerant/low water use plants in landscaping.
- **COS-4.3: Stormwater Filtration.** Maximize stormwater filtration and/or infiltration in areas that are not subject to high groundwater by maximizing the natural drainage patterns and the retention of natural vegetation and other pervious surfaces. This policy shall not apply in areas with high groundwater, where raising the water table could cause septic system failures, moisture damage to building slabs, and/or other problems.
- **COS-5.2: Impervious Surfaces.** Require development to minimize the use of directly connected impervious surfaces and to retain stormwater run-off caused from the development footprint at or near the site of generation.

- **COS-5.3: Downslope Protection.** Require development to be appropriately sited and to incorporate measures to retain natural flow regimes, thereby protecting downslope areas from erosion, capturing runoff to adequately allow for filtration and/or infiltration, and protecting downstream biological resources.
- **COS-5.5: Impacts of Development to Water Quality.** Require development projects to avoid impacts to the water quality in local reservoirs, groundwater resources, and recharge areas, watersheds, and other local water sources.
- **COS-7.1: Archaeological Protection.** Preserve important archaeological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.
- **COS-7.2: Open Space Easements.** Require development to avoid archeological resources whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to fully mitigate impacts to archaeological resources.
- **COS-7.3: Archaeological Collections.** Require the appropriate treatment and preservation of archaeological collections in a culturally appropriate manner.
- **COS-7.4: Consultation with Affected Communities.** Require consultation with affected communities, including local tribes to determine the appropriate treatment of cultural resources.
- **COS-7.5: Treatment of Human Remains.** Require human remains be treated with the utmost dignity and respect and that the disposition and handling of human remains will be done in consultation with the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) and under the requirements of Federal, State and County Regulations
- **COS-9.1: Preservation.** Require the salvage and preservation of unique paleontological resources when exposed to the elements during excavation or grading activities or other development processes.
- **COS-9.2: Impacts of Development.** Require development to minimize impacts to unique geological features from human related destruction, damage, or loss.
- **COS-11.1: Protection of Scenic Resources.** Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes.
- **COS-11.2: Scenic Resource Connections.** Promote the connection of regionally significant natural features, designated historic landmarks, and points of regional historic, visual, and cultural interest via designated scenic corridors, such as scenic highways and regional trails.
- **COS-11.3: Development Siting and Design.** Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:
 - Creative site planning
 - Integration of natural features into the project
 - Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape
 - Minimal disturbance of topography
 - Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character.
 - Creation of contiguous open space networks

- **COS-11.4: Collaboration with Agencies and Jurisdictions.** Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to protect scenic resources and corridors that extend beyond the County's land use authority, but are important to the welfare of County residents.
- **COS-11.5: Collaboration with Private and Public Agencies.** Coordinate with the California Public Utilities Commission, power companies, and other public agencies to avoid siting energy generation, transmission facilities, and other public improvements in locations that impact visually sensitive areas, whenever feasible. Require the design of public improvements within visually sensitive areas to blend into the landscape.
- **COS-11.7: Underground Utilities.** Require new development to place utilities underground and encourage "undergrounding" in existing development to maintain viewsheds, reduce hazards associated with hanging lines and utility poles, and to keep pace with current and future technologies.
- **COS-12.2: Development Location on Ridges.** Require development to preserve the physical features by being located down and away from ridgelines so that structures are not silhouetted against the sky.
- **COS-13.1: Restrict Light and Glare.** Restrict outdoor light and glare from development projects in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands and designated rural communities to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.
- **COS-13.3: Collaboration to Retain Night Skies.** Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.
- **COS-14.4: Sustainable Technology and Projects.** Require technologies and projects that contribute to the conservation of resources in a sustainable manner, that are compatible with community character, and that increase the self-sufficiency of individual communities, residents, and businesses.
- **COS-14.7: Alternative Energy Sources for Development Projects.** Encourage development projects that use energy recovery, photovoltaic, and wind energy.
- **COS-14.8: Minimize Air Pollution.** Minimize land use conflicts that expose people to significant amounts of air pollutants.
- **COS-14.9: Significant Producers of Air Pollutants.** Require projects that generate potentially significant levels of air pollutants and/or GHGs such as quarries, landfill operations, or large land development projects to incorporate renewable energy, and the best available control technologies and practices into the project design.
- **COS-14.10: Low-Emission Construction Vehicles and Equipment.** Require County contractors and encourage other developers to use low - emission construction vehicles and equipment to improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions.
- **COS-14.11: Native Vegetation.** Require development to minimize the vegetation management of native vegetation while ensuring sufficient clearing is provided for fire control.
- **COS-15.6: Design and Construction Methods.** Require development design and construction methods to minimize impacts to air quality.

- **COS-17.1: Reduction of Solid Waste.** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and future landfill capacity needs through reduction, reuse, or recycling of all types of solid waste that is generated. Divert solid waste from landfills in compliance with State law.
- **COS-17.2: Construction and Demolition Waste.** Require recycling, reduction and reuse of construction and demolition debris.
- **COS-18.1: Alternate Energy Systems Design.** Work with San Diego Gas and Electric and non-utility developers to facilitate the development of alternative energy systems that are located and designed to maintain the character of their setting.
- **COS-18.3: Alternate Energy Systems Impacts.** Require alternative energy system operators to properly design and maintain these systems to minimize adverse impacts to the environment.
- **COS-19.1: Sustainable Development Practices.** Require land development, building design, landscaping, and operational practices that minimize water consumption.

Safety Element

The purpose of the Safety Element is to provide safety considerations that will help minimize the risk of personal injury, loss of life, property damage, and environmental damage associated with natural and human-made hazards within the County (County of San Diego 2021). The County Board of Supervisors adopted the Safety Element in 2021.

The following policies of the Safety Element are applicable to the proposed project:

- **S-4.1: Defensible Development.** Require development to be located, designed, and constructed to provide adequate defensibility and minimize the risk of structural loss and life safety resulting from wildland fires.
- **S-4.2: Development in Hillsides and Canyons.** Require development located in wildland areas, near ridgelines, top of slopes, saddles, or other areas where the terrain or topography affects its susceptibility to wildfires to be located and designed to account for topography and reduce the increased risk from fires. Density reduction may be necessary to reduce fire hazards if the location and design of the development cannot reduce the threat effectively.
- **S-4.3: Minimize Flammable Vegetation.** Site and design development to minimize the likelihood of a wildfire spreading to structures by minimizing pockets or peninsulas, or islands of flammable vegetation within a development.
- **S-4.4: Service Availability.** Plan for development where fire and emergency services are available or planned.
- **S-4.5: Access Roads.** Require development to provide additional access roads where feasible to provide for safe access of emergency equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently. The width, surface, grade, radius, turnarounds, turnouts, bridge construction, vegetative management and brush clearance around roadways, and lengths of fire apparatus access roads shall meet the requirements of the State and San Diego County Consolidated Fire Codes. All requirements and any deviations will be at the discretion of the Fire Code Official.
- **S-4.6: Fire Protection Plans.** Ensure that development located within fire hazard areas implement measures in a Fire Protection Plan that reduce the risk of structural and human loss due to wildfire.
- **S-4.7: Fire Resistant Construction.** Require all new, remodeled, or rebuilt structures to meet current ignition resistance construction codes and establish and enforce reasonable and prudent standards that support retrofitting of existing structures in high fire hazard areas.

- **S-7.1: Water Supply.** Ensure that water supply infrastructure adequately supports existing and future development and provides adequate water flow to combat structural and wildland fires. Water systems shall equal or exceed the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, or, where a municipal-type water supply is unavailable, the latest edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1142, "Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting."
- **S-7.2: Funding Fire Protection Services.** Require development to contribute its fair share towards funding the provision of appropriate fire and emergency medical services as determined necessary to adequately serve the project.
- **S-8.1: Development Location.** Locate development in areas where the risk to people or resources is minimized. In accordance with the California Department of Conservation Special Publication 42, require development be located a minimum of 50 feet from active or potentially active faults, unless an alternative setback distance is approved based on geologic analysis and feasible engineering design measures adequate to demonstrate that the fault rupture hazard would be avoided.
- **S-8.2: Risk of Slope Instability.** Prohibit development from causing or contributing to slope instability.
- **S-10.3: Development in Floodplains.** Limit development in designated floodplains to decrease the potential for property damage and loss of life from flooding and to avoid the need for engineered channels, channel improvements, and other flood control facilities. Require development to conform to federal flood proofing standards and siting criteria to prevent flow obstruction.
- **S-11.4: Stormwater Management.** Require development to incorporate low impact design, including site design, source control, and other measures to minimize stormwater impacts on drainage and flood control facilities and promote groundwater recharge, where feasible. In addition, require projects that are classified as Priority Development Projects to also incorporate pollutant control and hydromodification management measures.
- **S-11.5: Development Site Improvements.** Require development to provide necessary on- and off-site improvements to stormwater runoff and drainage facilities.
- **S-11.6: Stormwater Hydrology.** Ensure development avoids diverting drainages, increasing velocities, and altering flow rates to off-site areas to minimize adverse impacts to the area's existing hydrology.
- **S-13.5: Development Adjacent to Agricultural Operations.** Require development adjacent to existing agricultural operations in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands to adequately buffer agricultural areas and ensure compliance with relevant safety codes where pesticides or other hazardous materials are used.

Noise Element

The Noise Element of the General Plan provides for the control and abatement of environmental noise to protect citizens from excessive exposure. The Noise Element establishes Noise Compatibility Guidelines that characterize the noise environment in San Diego County, sets limitations on sound levels to be received by noise sensitive land uses, and outlines goals and policies to achieve these standards. The Noise Element also describes the County's goals for achieving the standards and introduces policies designed to implement the goals. The Noise Compatibility Guidelines indicate ranges of compatibility between land uses and proposed development projects and are intended to be flexible enough to apply to a range of projects and environments.

The following policies from the Noise Element (County of San Diego 2011e) are relevant to the project:

- **N-1.1: Noise Compatibility Guidelines.** Use the Noise Compatibility Guidelines (Table N-1) and the Noise Standards (Table N-2) as a guide in determining the acceptability of exterior and interior noise for proposed land uses.
- **N-1.2: Noise Management Strategies.** Require the following strategies as higher priorities than construction of conventional noise barriers where noise abatement is necessary:
 - Avoid placement of noise sensitive uses within noisy areas
 - Increase setbacks between noise generators and noise sensitive uses
 - Orient buildings such that the noise sensitive portions of a project are shielded from noise sources
 - Use sound-attenuating architectural design and building features
 - Employ technologies when appropriate that reduce noise generation (i.e., alternative pavement materials on roadways).
- **N-2.1: Development Impacts to Noise Sensitive Land Uses.** Require an acoustical study to identify inappropriate noise level where development may directly result in any existing or future noise sensitive land uses being subject to noise levels equal to or greater than 60 CNEL [community noise equivalent level] and require mitigation for sensitive uses in compliance with the noise standards listed in Table N-2 of the County's General Plan Noise Element.
- **N-3.1: Ground-Borne Vibration.** Use the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration guidelines, where appropriate, to limit the extent of exposure that sensitive uses may have to ground-borne vibration from trains, construction equipment, and other sources.
- **N-6.2: Recurring Intermittent Noise.** Minimize impacts from noise in areas where recurring intermittent noise may not exceed the noise standards listed in Table N-2, but can have other adverse effects.
- **N-6.4: Hours of Construction.** Require development to limit the hours of operation as appropriate for non-emergency construction and maintenance, trash collection, and parking lot sweeper activity near noise sensitive land uses.

Mountain Empire Subregional Plan

The *Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, San Diego County General Plan* (Mountain Empire Subregional Plan) (County of San Diego 2016) establishes goals and policies to guide development within the areas of Tecate, Potrero, Boulevard, Campo/Lake Morena, Jacumba, and the Mountain Empire Balance (including the community of Tierra del Sol). The project site lies within the Mountain Empire Subregion. The Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, which was adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in 2011 and amended in 2016, is a part of and is consistent with all other parts of the County's General Plan. Community and subregional plans thus provide a framework for addressing the critical issues and concerns that are unique to a community and are not reflected in the broader policies of the General Plan. The goals and policies of the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan are intended to be more specific than those of the County General Plan as they consider the distinct history, character, and identity of Mountain Empire communities.

The Mountain Empire Subregional Plan contains nine elements: Community Character, Land Use, Housing, Mobility, Public Facilities and Services, Conservation, Recreation, Energy Conservation, and Scenic Highways. Each element contains goals and policies intended to responsibly direct the development of the subregion. The following policies of the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan are applicable to the proposed project:

- **Community Character Goal:** encourage the development of land in a manner that reinforces the unique identity of the Mountain Empire Subregion and its communities.
- **Land Use Element Goal:** provide a land use pattern consistent with the subregional population forecast.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 1:** The landforms of the Subregion are an important environmental resource that should be respected in new development. Hillside grading shall be minimized and designed to blend in with the existing natural contours.
- **Commercial Goal:** provide for the orderly growth of business and professional services and optimize convenience for local and highway-related shopping needs.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 7:** Ensure that all development be planned in a manner that provides adequate public facilities prior to or concurrent with need.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 9:** Parking lots for commercial uses may utilize permeable surfacing materials such as gravel or decomposed granite, in order to minimize surface runoff and maximize groundwater recharge.
- **Public Facilities and Services:** provide the facilities and level of service necessary to satisfy the needs of the subregion.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 1:** Maintain unobstructed access to and along the path of existing power transmission facilities and lines.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 2:** Any proposed grading, improvements, or other encroachments to the substation or transmission rights-of-way must be reviewed by SDG&E.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 3:** Any alteration of drainage patterns affecting the substation or transmission rights-of-way must be reviewed by SDG&E.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 4:** Uses proposed for the property adjacent to substations or transmission line rights-of-ways should be reviewed for possible impacts to the power facilities and vice versa.
- **Conservation Policy – Environmental Resources Goal:** Ensure that there is careful management of environmental resources in the area in order to prevent wasteful exploitation or degradation of those resources and to maintain them for future needs.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 6.1:** All development shall demonstrate a diligent effort to retain as many native oak trees as possible.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 6.3:** Floodways shall be maintained in their natural unless findings can be made that a threat to public safety exists.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 6.4:** The dark night sky is a significant resource for the Subregion and appropriate steps shall be taken to preserve it.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 6.5:** Development shall not adversely affect the habitat of sensitive plant and wildlife species or those areas of significant scenic value.
- **Energy Conservation Goal:** Ensure the conservation of non-renewable energy resources is pursued in a way that is not detrimental to the rural lifestyle.
 - **Policy and Recommendation 8.1:** New development should utilize alternative energy technologies, especially active and passive solar energy systems.

Boulevard Subregional Plan

The *Boulevard Subregional Planning Area, Mountain Empire Subregional Plan* (Boulevard Subregional Plan) (County of San Diego 2013) provides specific policy guidance for over 55,000 acres, which includes the communities of Boulevard, Live Oak Springs, and Tierra del Sol. The Boulevard Subregional Plan contains five elements: Land Use, Circulation and Mobility, Conservation and Open Space, Safety, and Noise. Each element contains goals and policies intended to responsibly direct the development of the subregion.

Boulevard Land Use Element

The Land Use Element of the Boulevard Subregional Plan guides the application of County-wide land use designations, goals, and policies to reflect the distinguishing characteristics and objectives for the community. These may address objectives, such as a specific mix of uses; priority development locations and projects; needed community facilities; development form and scale; architectural, landscape, and public realm design characteristics; land use compatibility; and similar topics (County of San Diego 2013).

The following policies from the Land Use Element are relevant to the project:

- **Policy LU 1.1.2.** Encourage development to protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water resources, air quality, dark skies, visual resources, and low ambient noise levels, as well as retain and protect the existing natural and historic features characteristic of the community's landscape and natural environment.
- **Policy LU 1.1.3.** Encourage development to respectfully incorporate existing topography and landforms, watersheds, riparian areas, oaks, and other native vegetation and wildlife, ridgelines, historic and cultural resources, views, and sustainability design factors.
- **Policy LU 1.1.4.** Require commercial and public development along scenic and historic routes to apply design standards that will blend the development in with the terrain and rustic southwestern nature of the community character, while keeping outdoor lighting to an absolute and well shielded minimum.
- **Policy LU 1.2.3.** Require development, including regional infrastructure and public facilities, to comply and maintain a rural bulk and scale in accordance with Boulevard's community character. Renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar projects, are not "regional infrastructure or public facilities" for purposes of this policy.
- **Policy LU 3.1.1.** Encourage development to preserve dark skies with reduced lighting and increased shielding requirements.
- **Policy LU 3.2.1.** Require development to minimize impacts to the native and riparian habitat.
- **Policy LU 6.1.1** Require commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to mitigate adverse impacts to the rural community character, charm, quiet ambiance and lifestyle, or the natural resources, wildlife, and dark skies of Boulevard, if feasible, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.
- **Policy LU 6.1.2.** Encourage commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to create and maintain adequate buffers between residential areas and incompatible activities that create heavy traffic, noise, infrasonic vibrations, lighting, odors, dust and unsightly views and impacts to groundwater quality and quantity.

- **Policy LU 6.1.3.** Encourage commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to provide buffers from public roads, adjacent and surrounding properties and residences, recreational areas, and trails.

Boulevard Circulation and Mobility Element

The Circulation and Mobility Element of the Boulevard Subregional Plan delineates the roadways, transit corridors, bicycle paths, equestrian paths, and pedestrian trails that supplement and complete the road networks defined by the County-wide Mobility Element. Policies may also address unique community issues, such as neighborhood traffic intrusion, commercial district parking, local public transit, and infrastructure improvements.

The following policies from the Circulation and Mobility Element are relevant to the project:

- **Policy CM 2.1.3.** Encourage the use of permeable pavement and design factors that allow for local recharge of precious rainwater and help prevent runoff and erosion.
- **Policy CM 3.1.1.** Require secondary fire access/egress routes to connect to a public road, when feasible.
- **Policy CM 6.1.1.** Make it a priority to investigate and coordinate with appropriate agencies to restrict potentially illegal airport activities.
- **Policy CM 8.1.1.** Prohibit development and the exportation or sale of groundwater that would adversely impact the ground and surface water resources.
- **Policy CM 8.3.1** Require that the source and quality of water that is imported into the area via tanker trucks or other means, for use on major construction projects, will be verified and validated to avoid contamination of local surface and groundwater resources.
- **Policy CM 8.5.1.** Prohibit development from altering natural drainage patterns.
- **Policy CM 8.5.2.** Require all engineered drainage projects to maximize stormwater filtration on-site to prevent the loss groundwater recharge and unnecessary erosion.
- **Policy CM 8.6.1.** Encourage the use of existing right-of-way when construction of new transmission lines is required, where technically and economically feasible. Additionally, encourage existing right-of-way over new right-of-way alignments for construction of new transmission lines when existing right-of-way is insufficient.

3.1.6.3 *Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance*

The County does not have guidance for determining significance to land use and planning beyond using the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G checklist questions. Therefore, for the purposes of this EIR, the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, Issue XI are used to assess the project's direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. A significant impact would result if the project would:

- Physically divide an established community
- 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

Physically Divide an Established Community

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant impact would result if the project would:

- Physically divide an established community

Analysis

As described in Section 3.1.6.1, Existing Conditions, the project site is located in rural, unincorporated southeast San Diego County, approximately 1 mile south of the community of Boulevard. The project would construct a solar energy generation and storage facility with PV modules, underground collection system, gen-tie line, substation, and battery energy storage containers on 588 acres of land. Large portions of the project site are currently unimproved and are not served by public roads. The project components would be located on vacant portions of the site and would not disrupt use of the existing residential complex off Jewel Valley Road.

Typically, the division of an established community would result from the construction of a physical barrier to neighborhood access or the removal of a means of access, including public roads. As the project is located south of the community of Boulevard, it would not transect or divide the main village residential and commercial areas. As all the public roads connecting the rural residential community to the south of Boulevard would remain intact, this community would not be divided either from each other or from the main town. There are approximately 22 rural single-family residences to the northwest, north, and east of the project site. These residences are connected by Jewel Valley Boulevard, Fisher Road, Fady Lane, McCain Lane, and Tule Jim Lane which surround the project to the north, west, and east. Except for the Empire Ranch residential complex, there are no residences to the south or west of the project. As described in Section 3.1.9, Transportation and Traffic, during the construction and decommissioning phases, there may be construction work or construction-related traffic that could temporarily impede movement of vehicles, transit, bicyclists and/or pedestrians along Jewel Valley Road. Project design features **PDF-TR-1**, **PDF-TR-2**, and **PDF-TR-3** (see Section 3.1.9) would prepare a traffic control plan, direct construction traffic, and notify nearby property owners. All access roads through the project site would be maintained; therefore, no access to the Empire Ranch residences or surrounding parcels would be hindered.

Access to the solar facility would be provided via Jewel Valley Road. The limits of the PV solar development areas would be adjacent to public roads throughout the vicinity of the project site but would not disrupt access to these roads. Although there are no public roads within the Empire Ranch residential complex and the project site, there are several private lanes and tracks on the private property that can be accessed by off-road vehicles. The solar arrays would be fenced but the vehicle access roads connecting the arrays would be unfenced and therefore would provide east-west access for off-road vehicles for maintenance activities during operations and for emergency vehicles. These vehicle access roads would not be open to the public. Jewel Valley Road, an existing 60-foot-wide access road, would connect the north and south solar development areas. The project would not remove any existing publicly used means of access.

The on-site private substation, an approximate 3-acre footprint, and battery energy storage systems (BESS) would be constructed in the northeastern portion of the project site. A gen-tie line consisting of two lines would connect the BESS and substation to the existing SDG&E Boulevard substation. The gen-tie line would be underground except for an overhead section which would cross Tule Jim Lane from the on-site substation. The gen-tie line and associated easement (75 to 105 feet in width) would avoid the residence located on the east side of Tule Jim Lane and south of the Boulevard substation. Construction and operation of the gen-tie line would also be regulated by **PDF-TR-1**, **PDF-TR-2**, and **PDF-TR-3** (see Section 3.1.9)

to minimize disruption of access to any public roads in the vicinity of the project site, including Tule Jim Lane and Eady Lane. As described in Section 2.2, Biological Resources, an unfenced biological open space easement would be granted over 448 acres south of the MUP project site. Granting of this open space would authorize the County and its agents to periodically access the land to perform management and monitoring activities for the purposes of species and habitat conservation. Granting of this biological open space easement would not physically divide an established community as the area is unfenced, private property, and otherwise undeveloped.

In addition, the project would include 17 fenced cultural open space easement areas designed to protect sensitive cultural resources within the MUP project site. Each open space easement area would include a gated entrance, and no development or disturbance would occur. These cultural open space easement areas would not physically divide an established community as they are scattered throughout the project facilities on private property and do not prevent public access or movement.

The project would not physically divide an established community as the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the proposed project do not propose any features that would create a physical barrier that would hinder existing community access. Therefore, the project would have **less than significant impacts** with regard to physically dividing an established community.

Conflict with an Applicable Land Use Plan, Policy, or Regulation

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

This impact analysis considers the following guideline from the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G:

- Would the proposed project 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?

Analysis

Zoning

The project site is located on parcels currently zoned General Rural (S92). S92 zoning is intended to “provide appropriate controls for land which is: rugged terrain, watershed, dependent on ground water for a water supply, desert, susceptible to fires and erosion, or subject to other environmental constraints.” Permitted uses within the S92 zone include family residential, essential fire protection services, horticulture, tree and row crops, and field crops packing and processing. All other uses are subject to some type of limitations depending on the use and the type of permit required (County of San Diego 2014a: Sections 2020–2926). Therefore, discretionary actions from the County would be required to develop the proposed project.

The proposed project would be considered a Major Impact Service and Utility and, under Section 1355 of the Zoning Ordinance, would require approval of a MUP. As noted above, Major Impact Services and Utilities may be conditionally permitted in any zone if it is determined that public interest supersedes the usual limitations placed on land use and transcends the usual restraints of zoning for reasons of necessary location and community-wide interest (County of San Diego 2014a: Section 1350). The MUP process considers the location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed use and must find that the project would be compatible with adjacent uses with consideration given to the following: harmony in scale; availability of public facilities, services and utilities; effect on desirable neighborhood character; generation of traffic; and suitability of the site for type and intensity of use (Section 7358).

The application for a MUP would be processed according to Section 7350 of the Zoning Ordinance, including making required findings pursuant to Section 7358. In accordance with Section 6954(b)(3), the project would be subject to requirements related to setback, height, visual, and security. The MUP would also be referred to the Boulevard Community Design Review Board, pursuant to Section 7355. The project site is not subject to a Special Area Designation or Special Area Regulations. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the County's Zoning Ordinance.

Climate Action Plan

The *CAP Consistency Checklist and Guidelines for Determining Significance for Climate Change* states that "a proposed project would have a less than significant cumulatively considerable contribution to climate change impacts if it is found to be consistent with the County's Climate Action Plan" (County of San Diego 2024b). As such, a CAP Consistency Review Checklist was prepared for the project, based on the template provided by the County, demonstrating that the project would be consistent with the County's CAP (see Appendix H.3).

Land Use Plans and Policies

The consistency analysis of the applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations considers the holistic impacts associated with implementation of the project. Based on the evaluation of the project's potential consistency with relevant plans and policies, the project would have the potential to result in inconsistencies with applicable policies pertaining to impacts to visual resources and community character.

Table 3.1.6-1 evaluates the project's consistency with policies from the County Board of Supervisors (County of San Diego 2024c), Table 3.1.6-2 evaluates the project's consistency with policies from the San Diego County General Plan (County of San Diego 2011a), and Table 3.1.6-3 evaluates the project's consistency with policies from the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan (County of San Diego 2016) as well as the Boulevard Subregional Plan (County of San Diego 2013). The project would be consistent with the policies identified in these tables.

Table 3.1.6-1. Project Consistency with County Board of Supervisors Policies

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
<p>I-18. Right-of-Way Dedication and Public Improvement Requirements in Connection with Major and Minor Use Permits</p> <p>Where application is made pursuant to The Zoning Ordinance for a Major or Minor Use Permit and it is found that road improvements, drainage, sewage, fire protection or other public facilities and improvements (including the land, easements and rights-of-way) are necessary to insure that the establishment or maintenance of the requested use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare or to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located such use permit shall be issued only upon conditions that provision be made for such improvements and facilities including the land, easements and rights-of-way.</p>	<p>Consistent: The project would be unoccupied and would not require improvements to sewer and potable water systems. Improvements to roadways required to facilitate construction and operation of the project would be constructed pursuant to County standards for the intended use of the roadways. Additionally, a fire protection plan (FPP) (SWCA 2024b; Appendix L) has been prepared for the project to address any fire suppression design measures and emergency access requirements for the project. Nonpotable water would be supplied by Jacumba Community Services District (Highland Center Well and/or Park Well) or the Padre Dam Municipal Water Company.</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
<p>I-49. Distribution of Notification of Land Use Hearings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notices of permit applications shall be posted on site in a manner set forth by the Director of Planning & Development Services. The notices and posting guidelines will be provided to each applicant by Planning & Development Services at the time of project submittal. 2. Residents of all apartment buildings and mobile home parks within 300 feet of the project site. Such notice shall be by posting in a conspicuous area approved by the management of the apartment building or mobile home park. The posted notice shall include information as to the nature and location of the project and a telephone number where interested parties may call for additional information. This notice shall be posted by the applicant within ten days of payment of processing fees. In the event that the posting of the notice is not allowed by the owner or management of any premises, the applicant shall notify Planning & Development Services within ten days. 	<p>Consistent. All noticing for project would be conducted in compliance with County regulations and guidelines. Additionally, residences within an expanded 3,200-foot boundary of the project were notified of the project during the initial MUP application process.</p>
<p>I-60. Prohibition of Grading Until Annexation or Other Discretionary Actions are Completed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A grading permit for any project requiring discretionary approvals shall not be issued until all discretionary permits or approvals that can be determined as necessary in light of the project detail shown on the plan or permit application or known or reasonably inferred by the County Official, including those by other governmental agencies, such as Special Districts, or the Coastal Commission have been obtained. Where the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS) or Zoning Administrator approval is conditional on discretionary actions by other governmental agencies, the resolution should note which actions, if any, are prerequisite to the issuance of a grading permit. 2. PDS will inform the applicant after an initial review of a project application, of all County discretionary permits or approvals which will be necessary for the project and will ensure that the requirement for obtaining such permits or approvals is incorporated in any associated conditional approval. The applicant should be encouraged to seek relating County discretionary approvals by concurrent processing of appropriate applications. 	<p>Consistent. Grading would be performed; therefore, grading permits from the County would be required for development of the project. The project would also obtain all necessary and required discretionary permits and approvals for the project before a grading permit is issued.</p>
<p>I-73. Hillside Development Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of building sites in hillside areas be planned and constructed in such a manner as to preserve, enhance or improve the physical features of the area consistent with providing building sites while at the same time optimizing the aesthetic quality of the final product. The design process set forth below shall be used as a guide to achieve the best possible hillside development. The guidelines set forth in this policy are purposely expressed in general terms to allow for flexibility in their application. It is recognized that at times difficulties may be encountered in interpreting some of these guidelines, but it is anticipated that appropriate decisions will be reached by the persons involved in 	<p>Consistent. Overall development would respect the existing topography and contours within the project boundary and does not propose "hillside subdivision" development, as described in this policy. The project would be required to obtain a grading permit prior to construction; therefore, the project would be required to comply with the hillside grading requirements of this policy should portions of the project be subject to a hillside grading permit.</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
<p>the overall spirit and intent of this policy is respected. This policy is not intended to inhibit or restrict development, but rather to result in the best potential use of any site. This policy shall not apply to projects for which development applications have been filed, and fees paid, to the Department of Environmental Health or Planning & Development Services prior to the effective date of this policy. Where applicants are required to file first with the Department of Environmental Health, the applicant shall submit his full application to Planning & Development Services within 1 year of the date the application was first filed with the Department of Environmental Health.</p>	
<p>I-74. Enforcement of Permitted and Non-Permitted Grading on Private Property</p> <p>B. Problem Grading Performed Under Permit: Permits issued for grading shall include and provide the County with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Permits to enter property for correction if necessary; o Timing control over work done by permittee; o Security sufficient to complete work guaranteed by instrument of credit or cash; o Proof of ownership or owner's permission to grade; and o Administrative tools used for control of non-permitted grading shall be used to secure compliance with grading permits. This shall include withholding of building permits if necessary. 	<p>Consistent. Grading would be performed; therefore, grading permits from the County would be required for development of the project. The project would also obtain all necessary and required discretionary permits and approvals for the project before a grading permit is issued.</p>
<p>I-92. Underground Utilities – Waiver Requests</p> <p>This policy provides criteria for reviewing and approving waivers of the code requirement to underground existing and new utilities for new subdivisions and centerline projects as authorized by Sections 81.308, 81.316, 81.614, and 51.312 of the San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project is exempt from this policy as the transmission line is in excess of 34.5 volts.</p>
<p>I-111. Discretionary Permits Adjacent to the International Border</p> <p>The policy is applicable for discretionary permits that are located within 150 feet from the international Border and provides for DHS notification of such projects. The ordinance provides the opportunity for DHS to purchase rights or fee title to properties within 150 feet of the border in order to keep an open corridor to facilitate Border patrol movement. The policy does not apply to actions which do not propose building pads, structures or fencing within 150 feet of the border.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project includes open space easement lands for the protection of biological resources adjacent to the border. These lands would not be developed or fenced. The following activities would be prohibited: grading; excavation; placement of soil, sand, rock, gravel, or other material; clearing of vegetation; construction, erection, or placement of any building or structure; vehicular activities; trash dumping; or use for any purpose other than as open space.</p>

Table 3.1.6-2. Project Consistency with General Plan Policies

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Land Use Element (County of San Diego 2011b)	
LU-2.8: Mitigation of Development Impacts. Require measures that minimize significant impacts to surrounding areas from uses or operations that cause excessive noise, vibrations, dust, odor, aesthetic impairment and/or are detrimental to human health and safety.	Consistent. Implementation of mitigation measures discussed would reduce project-generated impacts to the extent feasible. As described in Section 3.1.1, Air Quality, the proposed project would be consistent with San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) guidelines and regulations and would not cause excessive amounts of odors, dust, or toxic air contaminants during construction. As described in Section 2.5, Noise, project noise levels would comply with the County's Noise Ordinance.
LU-4.6: Planning for Adequate Energy Facilities. Participate in the planning of regional energy infrastructure with applicable utility providers to ensure plans are consistent with the County's General Plan and Community Plans and minimize adverse impacts to the unincorporated County.	Not Applicable. The project would be consistent with the County General Plan and community plans, and would minimize impacts to unincorporated San Diego County through various mitigation measures, as discussed throughout this EIR. The project would not be required to participate in the planning of regional energy infrastructure; however, the project would add approximately 100 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy that would connect to the SDG&E power grid and ultimately be distributed to the California electrical grid.
LU-5.3: Rural Land Preservation. Ensure the preservation of existing open space and rural areas (e.g., forested areas, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and corridors, wetlands, watersheds, and groundwater recharge areas) when permitting development under the Rural and Semi-Rural Land Use Designations	Consistent. The project site includes 15 existing open space easement areas which would be fenced and protected from development. In addition, the project includes a new 448-acre open space easement area to provide protection in perpetuity for natural resources and maintain wildlife movement at a landscape level that would be granted to the County or other approved conservation entity in perpetuity. The project site does not contain any County Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) wetlands. The project site includes 0.81 acre of California State Water Resources Control Board and Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) waters of the State, 0.01 acre of wetland waters of the State, and 2.35 acres of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) jurisdictional resources, impacts to which will be permitted accordingly. However, the project also has several wetland habitat areas on-site that would be avoided. See Section 2.2, Biological Resources, for further information regarding open space and rural areas. Groundwater recharge on the project site would not be significantly altered, as the project site would consist of primarily permeable surfaces to allow for groundwater recharge similar to that under current conditions. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information regarding groundwater recharge.
LU-5.5: Projects that Impede Non-Motorized Travel. Ensure that development projects and road improvements do not impede bicycle and pedestrian access. Where impacts to existing planned routes would occur, ensure that impacts are mitigated and acceptable alternative routes are implemented.	Consistent. The project does not propose any features or improvements that would impede bicycle and pedestrian access. There are currently no existing bicycle or pedestrian access points to the project site or on surrounding access roads and Jewel Valley Road. Primary access to the project site would be provided via an improved access road from Jewel Valley Road.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
<p>LU-6.1: Environmental Sustainability. Require the protection of intact or sensitive natural resources in support of the long-term sustainability of the natural environment.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project would be consistent with this policy. The project site contains sensitive biological habitats with the potential for use by sensitive and/or protected species, although no threatened or endangered species have been identified on the project site. All project impacts to sensitive natural resources (biological and cultural resources) would be mitigated to below a level of significance. Refer also to the biological resources report (SWCA 2024c; Appendix D.1) and the cultural resources survey and inventory report (SWCA 2024d; Appendix E.1). Mitigation for habitat impacts would be located in areas that contribute significant resources to an integrated preserve system. The 488-acre open space easement area is proposed as part of the project and would promote resource protection in perpetuity.</p>
<p>LU-6.5: Sustainable Stormwater Management. Ensure that development minimizes the use of impervious surfaces and incorporates other Low Impact Development techniques as well as a combination of site design, source control, and stormwater best management practices, where applicable and consistent with the County's LID Handbook.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project would be consistent with this policy. Solar development has been determined to be a non-priority development project by the County and the local RWQCB; therefore, the project is not subject to hydromodification requirements and major stormwater management program requirements. The use of impermeable surfaces would be minimized to the extent practicable; however, concrete foundations for the substation components and the energy storage facility would include impervious surfaces and would effectively alter existing drainage patterns and would potentially result in an increase in erosion and siltation. The project would include stormwater detention basins and facilities in accordance with the County's hydraulic design manual (County of San Diego 2014b). Preparation, and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) would require the Applicant to incorporate low-impact development features into the project design to ensure that existing drainage patterns are not significantly altered.</p> <p>The project would produce approximately 10.49 acres of impervious area. The drainage report determined that the additional impervious area represents 0.0068% of the watershed that is contributing to the drainage passing through the proposed site (Michael Baker International 2024; Appendix G.1). This increase in impervious area constitutes a small enough area that would not change the overall drainage pattern. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information regarding stormwater management.</p>
<p>LU-6.6: Integration of Natural Features into the Project Design. Require incorporation of natural features (including mature oaks, indigenous trees and rock formations) into proposed development and require avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.</p>	<p>Consistent. Native vegetation communities within the project site include granitic northern mixed chaparral, redshank chaparral, granitic chamise chaparral, montane buckwheat scrub, field/pasture, big sagebrush scrub, open coast live oak woodland, nonnative grassland, southern riparian scrub, freshwater, coast live oak woodland, tamarisk scrub, freshwater seep, and alkali marsh. Approximately 24.4 acres within the project site would be protected under open space easements. In addition, approximately 448 acres would be dedicated as an open space easement. The project is designed to not require removal of existing rock outcroppings. Rock outcroppings present on the property occur within the area to be included in the open space easement.</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
<p>LU-6.9: Development Conformance with Topography. Require development to conform to the natural topography to limit grading; incorporate and not significantly alter the dominant physical characteristics of the site; and to utilize natural drainage and topography in conveying stormwater to the maximum extent practicable.</p>	<p>Consistent. Grading required for the construction of the project would be consistent with the requirements of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 8, Division 7 (Grading Ordinance). The project does not propose major grading that would create major landform modifications. During construction, the implementation of required erosion control plans, stormwater management plans, and best management practices (BMPs) would minimize potential erosion and sedimentation impacts to a less-than-significant level.</p> <p>Blasting activities may be required to facilitate the siting of arrays, the gen-tie, and other equipment foundations. The necessity and extent of blasting would not be known until surface clearing is completed. Blasting would primarily be used for the installation of equipment foundation and would not create major landform modifications. It is preliminarily estimated that approximately 5,000 cubic yards of rock would be blasted during the early stages of excavation and mass grading for Phase I and Phase II. Blasting would occur at 2- to 3-day intervals, with no more than one blast per day.</p> <p>Further, all blast planning shall be done by a San Diego County Sheriff approved blaster, with the appropriate San Diego County Sheriff blasting permits, and all other applicable local, state, and federal permits, licenses, and bonding. The blasting contractor or owner shall conduct all notifications, inspections, monitoring, major or minor blasting requirements planning, with seismograph reports as necessary.</p> <p>The drainage study (Michael Baker International 2024; Appendix G.1) determined that the project would produce approximately 10.49 acres of impervious area. However, as discussed in Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, the proposed drainage improvements would adequately convey stormwater flows and would maintain general topography to the extent feasible.</p>
<p>LU-6.10: Protection from Hazards. Require that development be located and designed to protect property and residents from the risks of natural and man-induced hazards</p>	<p>Consistent. Based on a site visit and regulatory database search, the project site has not been subject to a release of hazardous substances that would create a significant hazard to the public or environment. The project site is not included in any of the following lists or databases: the State of California Hazardous Waste and Substances sites list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, the San Diego County Hazardous Materials Establishment database, the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health Site Assessment and Mitigation Case Listing, the Department of Toxic Substances Control Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program Database (CalSites EnviroStor Database), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System listing, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Superfund Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) database, or the EPA's National Priorities List (Michael Baker International 2023; Appendix I).</p> <p>Proposed development of the site would not interfere with implementation of emergency responses in the area. With the implementation of the site-specific FPP (SWCA 2024b; Appendix L), the project would be compliant with applicable fire codes and would reduce potential impacts associated with wildfire hazards. In addition, compliance with the California Building Code would ensure that the development is protected from risks associated with geologic hazards. Equipment on the site may be ignition sources during operation and maintenance; these include transformers, capacitors, electric transmission lines, substations, vehicles, and gas- or electric-powered hand tools. Inverters, batteries, and solar panels represent potential ignition sources that are considered to have low likelihood of causing fires. The recommendations and</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
	measures included in the FPP incorporate considerations for electrical components.
<p>LU-8.2: Groundwater Resources. Require development to identify adequate groundwater resources in groundwater dependent areas as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In areas dependent on currently identified groundwater overdrafted basins, prohibit new development from exacerbating overdraft conditions. • Encourage programs to alleviate overdraft conditions in Boulevard. • In areas without current overdraft conditions, prohibit new groundwater-dependent development where overdraft conditions are foreseeable. 	<p>Consistent. The proposed project has an estimated annual water demand of 0.81 acre-feet per year for panel washing during operation (INTERA Incorporated 2025a; Appendix G.4). The project would also prepare a groundwater monitoring and mitigation plan to ensure that pumping does not significantly impact existing well users and groundwater-dependent habitat. As discussed in the groundwater resources investigation report (INTERA Incorporated 2025b; Appendix G.2), the Jacumba Community Services District would have sufficient water supplies to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development. The project would not significantly draw down the groundwater table.</p>
<p>LU-8.3: Groundwater Dependent Habitat. Discourage development that would significantly draw down the groundwater table to the detriment of groundwater-dependent habitat, except in the Borrego Valley.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project would not significantly draw down the groundwater table. Project operation would require approximately 0.81 acre-feet of water per year for panel washing.</p>
<p>LU-10.2: Development—Environmental Resource Relationship. Require development in Semi-Rural and Rural areas to respect and conserve the unique natural features and rural character and avoid sensitive or intact environmental resources and hazard areas.</p>	<p>Consistent. While the project site contains native habitat, no endangered species were identified on the project site. No highly sensitive or sensitive habitat lands as identified by the RPO were identified on-site that warrant avoidance measures. The project includes a large on-site proposed open space area that would mitigate all impacts to natural habitat to a less-than-significant level. The project site does not contain any unique natural features or hazard areas that require avoidance. The open space easement would maintain a rural character for the most visible proportion of the property.</p>
<p>LU-12.1: Concurrency of Infrastructure and Services with Development. Require the provision of infrastructure, facilities, and service needed by new development prior to that development, either directly or through fees. Where appropriate, the construction of infrastructure and facilities may be phased to coincide with project phasing.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project is not expected to significantly alter the demand for schools, parks, or police facilities. With regard to fire protection, the FPP prepared for the project (SWCA 2024b; Appendix L) determined that there is not a need for new or altered fire protection facilities. Following the recommendations in the FPP would ensure that adequate fire protection facilities are provided concurrent with development of the project. Such measures and recommendations for fire safety and access are listed and discussed in Section 2.7, Wildfire.</p>
<p>LU-12.2: Maintenance of Adequate Services. Require development to mitigate significant impacts to existing service levels of public facilities or services for existing residents and businesses. Provide improvements for the Mobility Element roads in accordance with the Mobility Element Network Appendix matrices, which may result in ultimate buildout conditions that achieve an improved Level of Service (LOS) but do not achieve a LOS D or better.</p>	<p>Consistent. Primary access to the project site would be provided via an improved access road—Jewel Valley Road—with emergency access provided by Tule Jim Lane. These roads are wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic of emergency vehicles and connect to Old Highway 80 in the community of Boulevard. All entrance gates would feature a Knox Box to allow ease of access for emergency service providers. The project would include dual-purpose internal fire response access and service access roads. The perimeter internal access within the fenced solar facility would be constructed to a minimum improved width of 24 feet. The interior on-site vehicle access roads would be constructed to a minimum improved width of 20 feet.</p> <p>According to the Mountain Empire Mobility Element Network Map, Old Highway 80 is classified as a Mobility Element Road and the project does not propose any alterations to Old Highway 80. Therefore, improvements of these Mobility Element roads are not required. Additionally, the project would contribute funds to fire and emergency medical services to improve response capabilities in the area (see Section 2.7, Wildfire).</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
LU-13.2: Commitment of Water Supply. Require new development to identify adequate water resources, in accordance with state law, to support the development prior to approval	Consistent. The project would use water provided by the Jacumba Community Services District (Highland Center Well and/or Park Well). The Padre Dam Municipal Water Company would also be a viable water source. As discussed in the groundwater resources investigation report (INTERA Incorporated 2024; Appendix G-2), the Jacumba Community Services District would have sufficient water supplies to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information.
LU 18.1: Compatibility of Civic Uses with Community Character. Locate and design Civic uses and services to assure compatibility with the character of the community and adjoining uses, which pose limited adverse effects. Such uses may include libraries, meeting centers, and small swap meets, farmers markets, or other community gatherings.	Not Applicable. The project would not impact such uses as mentioned in Policy LU-18.1. Although the character of the greater Boulevard community has been rural in the past, recent developments have resulted in a variable physical setting that includes both rural and renewable energy elements. The character of the community is evolving into a mix of rural and renewable energy uses with recent developments, including the Tule Wind project, SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink, Boulevard substation, and other renewable energy projects.
Mobility Element (County of San Diego 2011c)	
M-2.3: Environmentally Sensitive Road Design. Locate and design public and private roads to minimize impacts to significant biological and other environmental and visual resources. Avoid road alignments through floodplains to minimize impacts on floodplain habitats and limit the need for constructing flood control measures. Design new roads to maintain wildlife movement and retrofit existing roads for that purpose. Utilize fencing to reduce road kill and to direct animals to under crossings.	Consistent. The project would include construction of private permanent access roads within the project boundary to allow for continuity between transmission poles, switchyard, and the collector substation, but would not create any new public roadways. The project is located within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Zone D, which indicates that flood risk is possible but undetermined because the agency has not conducted a flood hazard analysis. However, as discussed in Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, the on-site drainage has been designed to approximate preconstruction drainage patterns to the extent feasible, and the project would not impede or redirect flows.
M-2.5: Minimize Excess Water Runoff. Minimize Excess Water Runoff. Require road improvements to be designed and constructed to accommodate stormwater in a manner that minimizes demands upon engineered stormwater systems and to maximize the use of natural detention and infiltration techniques to mitigate environmental impacts.	Consistent. Access roads constructed throughout the project would be located away from steep slopes and erodible soils to the extent practicable and have been designed to maintain current surface water runoff patterns to prevent erosion. During construction of the project, implementation of required erosion control plans, stormwater management plans, and BMPs would minimize potential erosion and sedimentation impacts.
M-3.3: Multiple Ingress and Egress. Require development to provide multiple ingress/egress routes in conformance with State law, and local regulations.	Consistent. The project would have one primary access road off Jewel Valley Road and an emergency access road off Tule Jim Lane. All interior roads would be built to fire department standards.
M-4.4: Accommodate Emergency Vehicles. Design and construct public and private roads to allow for necessary access for appropriately sized fire apparatus and emergency vehicles while accommodating outgoing vehicles from evacuating residents.	Consistent. The project would include dual-purpose internal fire response access and service roads, and all access roads would be constructed to County Fire Code standards. The perimeter road and array-connecting roads would be 24 feet on a 28-foot graded area. Other interior roads would be 20 feet wide on a 24-foot graded area.
M-4.5: Context Sensitive Road Design. Design and construct roads that are compatible with the local terrain and the uses, scale and pattern of the surrounding development. Provide wildlife crossings in road design and construction where it would minimize impacts in wildlife corridors.	Consistent. The project would be consistent with this policy. Refer to the Policy M-2.3 consistency analysis above.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
M-12.4: Land Dedication for Trails. Require development projects to dedicate and improve trails or pathways where the development will occur on land planned for trail or pathway segments shown on the Regional Trails Plan or Community Trails Master Plan.	Consistent. The Community Trails Master Plan proposes a community trail and community pathway along Jewel Valley Road, which is adjacent to and intersects the project site (County of San Diego 2020b). The project does not include construction of this trail. The proposed community plan trail and pathway may be temporarily impacted during construction, assuming the trail is established by then; however, impacts would be temporary and inconsequential, if they occur at all. The community pathway is entirely on County land and would not be affected by operation of the project.
Conservation and Open Space Element (County of San Diego 2011d)	
COS-1.1: Coordinated Preserve System. Identify and develop a coordinated biological preserve system that includes Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas, Biological Resource Core Areas, wildlife corridors, and linkages to allow wildlife to travel throughout their habitat ranges.	Not Applicable. This policy requires action by the County and does not imply action by the project developer.
COS-2.1: Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement. Protect and enhance natural wildlife habitat outside of preserves as development occurs according to the underlying land use designation. Limit the degradation of regionally important natural habitats within the Semi-Rural and Rural Lands regional categories, as well as within Village lands where appropriate.	Consistent. Development of the project would result in impacts to sensitive vegetation communities. Development of the project would result in potentially significant short-term and long-term direct and/or indirect impacts to special-status plants, special-status wildlife species, and wildlife habitat, as well as short-term direct impacts to wildlife movement. Mitigation would include preservation of similar habitat types; construction monitoring, flagging, and other BMPs; nesting bird surveys; avian and bat monitoring; fire protection; access control; and federal and state agency permits. All significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures.
COS-2.2: Habitat Protection through Site Design. Require development to be sited in the least biologically sensitive areas and minimize the loss of natural habitat through site design.	Consistent. The project is designed to avoid biologically sensitive areas. Approximately 24.4 acres within the project site would be protected under open space easements. In addition, approximately 448 acres would be dedicated as an open space preserve.
COS-3.1: Wetland Protection. Require development to preserve existing natural wetland areas and associated transitional riparian and upland buffers and retain opportunities for enhancement.	Consistent. Short-term direct impacts to special-status upland vegetation communities would primarily result from construction activities. Clearing, trampling, or grading of special-status vegetation communities beyond the limits of work could occur without implementation of avoidance and mitigation measures. Long-term direct impacts to special-status upland vegetation communities could occur as a result of project implementation. However, implementation of mitigation measures M-BI-1 through M-BI-11 would reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant after mitigation.
COS-3.2: Minimize Impacts of Development. Require development projects to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate any unavoidable losses of wetlands, including habitat functions and values; and Protect wetlands, including vernal pools, from a variety of discharges and activities, such as dredging, adding fill material, exposure to pollutants such as nutrients, hydromodification, land and vegetation clearing, and the introduction of invasive species. 	Consistent. The project is designed to avoid aquatic resources. However, the project would result in permanent and temporary impacts of 0.81 acre (16,320 linear feet) of waters of the State, 0.01 acre (25 linear feet) of wetland waters of the State, and 2.35 acres (16,505 linear feet) of CDFW Jurisdictional Resources. County RPO wetlands do not occur within the project site boundaries but one RPO wetland was observed within 50 feet of the site and would be flagged for avoidance. Permits required include a Waste Discharge Requirements permit from the Colorado River RWQCB under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and submittal of a CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement notification. Compensatory mitigation would be an expected requirement from the applicable agencies.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
COS-4.1: Water Conservation. Require development to reduce waste of potable water through use of efficient technologies and conservation efforts that minimize the County's dependence on imported water and conserve groundwater resources.	Consistent. Operation of the project would not require potable water. Water would be required for panel washing a few times a year and would be obtained from the Jacumba Community Services District or the Padre Dam Municipal Water Company.
COS-4.3: Stormwater Filtration. Maximize stormwater filtration and/or infiltration in areas that are not subject to high groundwater by maximizing the natural drainage patterns and the retention of natural vegetation and other pervious surfaces. This policy shall not apply in areas with high groundwater, where raising the water table could cause septic system failures, moisture damage to building slabs, and/or other problems.	Consistent. Impervious surfaces would be limited to concrete pads for the substation and battery facilities. The remainder of the site would be pervious surfaces to maximize natural drainage patterns. Roads would be of decomposed granite and semipermeable. Existing contours in the site topography would be softened to support installation of the PV panels and reduce the potential for rill erosion, without diverting flow, as compared to pre-development conditions.
COS-5.2: Impervious Surfaces. Require development to minimize the use of directly connected impervious surfaces and to retain stormwater run-off caused from the development footprint at or near the site of generation.	Consistent. Impervious surfaces would be limited to battery storage area, substation area, and inverter pads. The remainder of the site would be pervious surfaces to maximize natural drainage patterns. Roads would consist of decomposed granite and semipermeable. The project would incorporate the construction of detention basins for the purposes of infiltrating runoff. A series of stormwater piping is proposed in the north and northeastern portions of the project site that would include but not be limited to storage piping, conveyance piping, headwalls, cleanouts, and riprap. The detention basins and storage piping would provide stormwater detention to limit water flowing from the site due to new impervious surface resulting from the BESS facilities and substation.
COS-5.3: Downslope Protection. Require development to be appropriately sited and to incorporate measures to retain natural flow regimes, thereby protecting downslope areas from erosion, capturing runoff to adequately allow for filtration and/or infiltration, and protecting downstream biological resources.	Consistent. The project site is hydrologically connected to the Salton Sea because it is within its watershed. However, due to the arid climate and the site's distance from the Salton Sea (approximately 45 miles), stormwater runoff from the project site is unlikely to reach these features before infiltrating into the ground or evaporating. The project would incorporate the construction of detention basins for the purposes of infiltrating runoff. A series of stormwater piping is proposed in the north and northeastern portions of the project site that would include but not be limited to storage piping, conveyance piping, headwalls, cleanouts, and riprap. The detention basins and storage piping would provide stormwater detention to limit water flowing from the site due to new impervious surface resulting from the BESS facilities and substation.
COS-5.5: Impacts of Development to Water Quality. Require development projects to avoid impacts to the water quality in local reservoirs, groundwater resources, and recharge areas, watersheds, and other local water sources.	Consistent. The project would implement a SWPPP during construction. The SWPPP would include the proposed project risk determination, identification of site runoff sampling locations, discussion of potential site pollutants, minimum BMPs, construction site monitoring plan and the water pollution control drawings. The project's stormwater quality management plan (SWQMP) includes details of construction and postconstruction BMPs to address potential and anticipated water quality impacts. By implementing the pollution control measures to be included in the SWPPP and SWQMP, as well as the appropriate monitoring program included there within, the proposed project would limit the possibility of contributing contaminants that might exceed local water quality objectives or contribute to the degradation of beneficial uses. Groundwater recharge on the project site would not be significantly altered, as the project site would consist of primarily permeable surfaces to allow for groundwater recharge similar to that under current conditions. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information regarding groundwater recharge.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
COS-7.1: Archaeological Protection. Preserve important archaeological resources from loss or destruction and require development to include appropriate mitigation to protect the quality and integrity of these resources.	Consistent. SWCA completed a cultural resources survey and report that identified approximately 35 archaeological sites within the project site that could be disturbed or damaged by construction and operation of the project. The project has been designed to avoid or mitigate impacts to all 35 sites. The project was redesigned to preserve 21 sites in place with dedicated open space easements. The remaining 15 sites would require archeological and tribal monitoring during construction. If cultural resources are identified during construction, the Project Archaeologist would contact the County Archaeologist and, if necessary, implement a Research Design and Data Recovery Program to preserve unique cultural resources. Tribal outreach under Assembly Bill 52 was initiated in February 2023 and is ongoing. Four tribes (Campo, Jamul, San Pasqual, and Viejas) have requested formal government-to-government consultation. The County has met with Campo, Jamul, and San Pasqual. To date, no tribal cultural resources have been identified. A Cultural Resources Treatment Agreement and Preservation Plan shall be developed between the Applicant and the consulting Native American Tribes. This agreement would ensure appropriate treatment of cultural resources.
COS-7.2: Open Space Easements. Require development to avoid archeological resources whenever possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, require development to fully mitigate impacts to archaeological resources.	
COS-7.3: Archaeological Collections. Require the appropriate treatment and preservation of archaeological collections in a culturally appropriate manner.	
COS-7.4: Consultation with Affected Communities. Require consultation with affected communities, including local tribes to determine the appropriate treatment of cultural resources	
COS-7.5: Treatment of Human Remains. Require human remains be treated with the utmost dignity and respect and that the disposition and handling of human remains will be done in consultation with the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) and under the requirements of Federal, State and County Regulations.	
COS-9.1: Preservation. Require the salvage and preservation of unique paleontological resources when exposed to the elements during excavation or grading activities or other development processes.	Consistent. Based on the results of the Preliminary Geotechnical Site Evaluation Report (Bruin Geotechnical Services, Inc. 2022; Appendix F), ground-disturbing activities associated with the project are expected to remain in deposits with no or low paleontological sensitivity and are unlikely to extend deep enough to reach deposits with high paleontological sensitivity. Additionally, mitigation measure M-GE-1 would require that in the event paleontological resources are encountered, work in the immediate area of the discovery shall be halted, and a professional paleontologist who meets the qualifications established by the County, in consultation with the County, should be retained to assess the discovery and make appropriate recommendations regarding handling the resources and subsequent paleontological work.
COS-9.2: Impacts of Development. Require development to minimize impacts to unique geological features from human related destruction, damage, or loss.	Consistent. The project is designed to minimize impacts to significant existing rock outcroppings. Rock outcroppings present on the property occur within the area to be included in the Open Space Preserve.
COS-11.1: Protection of Scenic Resources. Require the protection of scenic highways, corridors, regionally significant scenic vistas, and natural features, including prominent ridgelines, dominant landforms, reservoirs, and scenic landscapes.	Consistent. The solar facility would be visible from portions of I-8 and Old Highway 80. The project would substantially alter the existing quality of views available to highway motorists and passengers because racks of solar panels would be visible from I-8 for brief periods and would be aligned along Old Highway 80. The solar panel's wide distribution across relatively flat and open desert terrain would reduce existing visual quality. However, neither the project site nor the surrounding area has been designated by local, state or federal agencies or organizations as containing or being of "significant" scenic value. Since the project area has not been designated or described by agencies as containing "significant" scenic value, the project would not conflict with this policy. Further, the project has been designed to minimize impacts to the scenic value of the area to the extent practicable. Despite I-8's and Old Highway 80's inclusion in the County's scenic highway system, there are no current local regulations governing development of lands along these roads. For example, the existing energy infrastructure including the Boulevard substation, Boulevard battery storage project, the approved Rugged Solar and Boulder Brush projects,

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
	<p>transmission lines, and the East County substation 138-kilovolt (kV) line is currently visible from I-8 and Old Highway 80.</p> <p>Implementation and operation of the project would not prevent the County from continuing to establish and designate scenic highways and would not inhibit the County from establishing regulations and/or development standards geared towards the protection and enhancement of scenic highways.</p> <p>Due to the inclusion of existing energy infrastructure in the I-8 and Old Highway 80 viewsheds, the brief duration of views to the project site from I-8, screening of solar panels from view of Old Highway 80 motorists and because the project does not inhibit the County from establishing regulations and/or development standards geared towards the protection and enhancement of scenic highways, the project would not be inconsistent with this policy.</p>
<p>COS-11.2: Scenic Resource Connections. Promote the connection of regionally significant natural features, designated historic landmarks, and points of regional historic, visual, and cultural interest via designated scenic corridors, such as scenic highways and regional trails.</p>	<p>Consistent. The proposed project would be located in an area where existing renewable energy and infrastructure are already located and/or are approved to be located. Refer to the response for COS-11.1 for discussion of scenic highways.</p>
<p>COS-11.3: Development Siting and Design. Require development within visually sensitive areas to minimize visual impacts and to preserve unique or special visual features, particularly in rural areas, through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative site planning • Integration of natural features into the project • Appropriate scale, materials, and design to complement the surrounding natural landscape • Minimal disturbance of topography • Clustering of development so as to preserve a balance of open space vistas, natural features, and community character. • Creation of contiguous open space networks 	<p>Consistent. Visual impacts associated with the project would be minimized through site design. As part of the project design, additional permanent access roads would be constructed to facilitate construction of the project. These roadways have been designed to conform with the topography to the greatest extent possible, and grading required to construct these roadways would be minimized.</p>
<p>COS-11.4: Collaboration with Agencies and Jurisdictions. Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to protect scenic resources and corridors that extend beyond the County's land use authority, but are important to the welfare of County residents.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project developer is in direct coordination with federal and state agencies, County departments, and local tribal governments as part of the CEQA process.</p>
<p>COS-11.5: Collaboration with Private and Public Agencies. Coordinate with the California Public Utilities Commission, power companies, and other public agencies to avoid siting energy generation, transmission facilities, and other public improvements in locations that impact visually sensitive areas, whenever feasible. Require the design of public improvements within visually sensitive areas to blend into the landscape.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project is coordinating with SDG&E on the interconnection with the Boulevard substation and all other affected interested private and public agencies. Although the project vicinity has been historically of rural character, there has been a recent increase in renewable energy development in the region that has changed the character to a mix of rural and solar/wind generation facilities. The project are proposed in an area that is in the vicinity of other energy facilities, including the Boulevard substation, Boulevard battery storage project, the approved Rugged Solar and Boulder Brush projects, transmission lines, and the East County substation 138-kV line is currently visible from I-8 and Old Highway 80.</p>
<p>COS-11.7: Underground Utilities. Require new development to place utilities underground and encourage "undergrounding" in existing development to maintain viewsheds, reduce hazards associated with hanging lines and utility poles, and to keep pace with current and future technologies.</p>	<p>Consistent. The project includes one gen-tie line from the on-site substation, along Tule Jim Lane, to the Boulevard substation. The majority of the gen-tie line would be underground, with the exception of the Tule Jim Lane crossing.</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
COS 12.2: Development Location on Ridges. Require development to preserve the physical features by being located down and away from ridgelines so that structures are not silhouetted against the sky.	Consistent. A ridgeline is the plateau or maximum elevation that extends along the top of Steep Slope Lands. A ridgeline may increase or decrease in elevation as it extends along the top of Steep Slope Lands. The arrays of PV panels would generally follow the existing topography.
COS-13.1: Restrict Light and Glare. Restrict outdoor light and glare from development projects in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands and designated rural communities to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.	Consistent. All lighting would have bulbs that do not exceed 100 watts or equivalent, and all lights would be shielded, directed downward, and would comply with the County of San Diego Light Pollution Code, also known as the Dark Sky Ordinance. Additionally, lighting for the project would be designed in accordance with the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Performance Standards Section 6320, 6322, and 6324, which guide performance standards for glare, and controls excessive or unnecessary outdoor light emissions.
COS-13.3: Collaboration to Retain Night Skies. Coordinate with adjacent federal and State agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments to retain the quality of night skies by minimizing light pollution.	Consistent. See the above consistency analysis for Policy COS-13.1. In addition, coordination with adjacent agencies and tribal governments would occur as necessary.
COS-14.4: Sustainable Technology and Projects. Require technologies and projects that contribute to the conservation of resources in a sustainable manner, that are compatible with community character, and that increase the self-sufficiency of individual communities, residents, and businesses.	Consistent. The project would provide infrastructure for a renewable energy project in proximity to existing transmission infrastructure and existing renewable energy. The project would develop approximately 100 MW of renewable solar energy that can offset the need for additional energy production from fossil fuels, assist the state in meeting its air quality goals, and reduce GHG emissions in conformance with Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 32.
COS-14.7: Alternative Energy Sources for Development Projects. Encourage development projects that use energy recovery, photovoltaic, and wind energy.	Consistent. The project would produce solar power eligible for the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard that would be used by existing or future development.
COS-14.8: Minimize Air Pollution. Minimize land use conflicts that expose people to significant amounts of air pollutants.	Consistent. Potential air quality impacts associated with ground-disturbing activities during construction would be short-term. The project would result in negligible operational emissions and the project includes construction of a renewable energy resource that would result in an overall net reduction in air emissions when compared to energy generated from a non-renewable energy source.
COS-14.9: Significant Producers of Air Pollutants. Require projects that generate potentially significant levels of air pollutants and/or GHGs such as quarries, landfill operations, or large land development projects to incorporate renewable energy, and the best available control technologies and practices into the project design.	Consistent. Potential air quality impacts associated with ground-disturbing activities during construction would be short-term. The project is a renewable energy project and therefore by its nature would comply with this policy.
COS-14.10: Low-Emission Construction Vehicles and Equipment. Require County contractors and encourage other developers to use low-emission construction vehicles and equipment to improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions.	Consistent. The project would be constructed by private developers who would use low-emission construction vehicles and equipment to improve air quality and reduce GHG emissions. See Sections 3.1.1, Air Quality, and 3.1.4, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, for additional information.
COS-14.11: Native Vegetation. Require development to minimize the vegetation management of native vegetation while ensuring sufficient clearing is provided for fire control.	Consistent. As described in the FPP (SWCA 2024b; Appendix L), Fuel Modification Zones (FMZs) would be implemented and maintained as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An FMZ will be in place before any combustible material is brought on-site. • Designated areas will be mowed, brushed, chipped, or otherwise reduced to a vegetation height of less than 6 inches. Material may remain on-site, as long as it is spread out to a depth of no more than 6 inches. Alternative methods of vegetation control include manual removal, herbicide application,

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
	<p>prescribed herbivory, or installation of weed barriers in certain areas, such as beneath the PV modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 30-foot FMZ around the solar panels (between the panels and native vegetation) will reduce vegetation to less than 6 inches and be regularly maintained. • Vegetation will be maintained to 10 feet on either side of every interior access road, ensuring minimum unobstructed vertical clearance of 13 feet and 6 inches. • A 100-foot FMZ around each BESS will reduce vegetation to less than 6 inches in height and be regularly maintained. • A 30-foot FMZ around the collector substation pad will reduce vegetation to less than 6 inches in height and be regularly maintained. • Vegetation under PV modules will be maintained to a vertical height of no more than 6 inches. • Vegetation within the 15 internal open space easements will be maintained to a vertical height of no more than 6 inches.
COS-15.6: Design and Construction Methods. Require development design and construction methods to minimize impacts to air quality.	<p>Consistent. Construction of the project would result in a temporary addition of pollutants to the local air basin caused by soil disturbance, dust emissions, and combustion pollutants from on-site construction equipment and off-site trucks hauling construction materials, including water, to the site. However, the project would not result in any significant impacts related to air quality. In addition, the project would include fugitive dust BMPs to minimize air quality impacts during construction and ensure that impacts remain at a less-than-significant level.</p> <p>The project would adhere to County Code Section 87.428, Dust Control Measures and SDAPCD Rule 55 for fugitive dust emissions during construction and operation of the project. See Section 3.1.1, Air Quality, for additional information.</p>
COS-17.1: Reduction of Solid Waste. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and future landfill capacity needs through reduction, reuse, or recycling of all types of solid waste that is generated. Divert solid waste from landfills in compliance with State law.	<p>Consistent. Solid waste generated from construction would be minimized through efficient construction practices. Although nonrecyclable wastes would be collected and transported to a local landfill, construction waste would be recycled to the extent feasible to reduce impacts to landfills. Finally, development of the project would not involve the development of residential, commercial, or industrial uses common with substantial solid waste increases, and operational waste generated by the project would be minimal.</p>
COS-17.2: Construction and Demolition Waste. Require recycling, reduction and reuse of construction and demolition debris.	<p>Consistent. Recycling, reduction, and reuse of construction and demolition debris would be required during construction. In compliance with County Construction Demolition and Debris Management Plan requirements and in accordance with County Ordinance 68.508-68.518, recycling would be conducted during construction activities.</p>
COS-18.1: Alternate Energy Systems Design. Work with San Diego Gas and Electric and non-utility developers to facilitate the development of alternative energy systems that are located and designed to maintain the character of their setting	<p>Consistent. The County has worked with the Applicant to design the project to maintain the character of the setting to the maximum extent possible, including locating the solar facility adjacent to an existing substation. However, as identified in Section 2.1, Aesthetics, the project would result in a significant and unmitigable impact to the visual character.</p>
COS-18.3: Alternate Energy Systems Impacts. Require alternative energy system operators to properly design and maintain these systems to minimize adverse impacts to the environment.	<p>Consistent. The project has been fully analyzed in this EIR, and mitigation has been provided where applicable to reduce environmental impacts.</p>

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
COS-19.1: Sustainable Development Practices. Require land development, building design, landscaping, and operational practices that minimize water consumption.	Consistent. Construction of the project would require the use of water; however, water usage would be limited to the extent practicable. No landscaping is proposed, and water use during operation of the Boulder Brush Facilities would be limited to usage for cleaning and emergency purposes.
Safety Element (County of San Diego 2021)	
S-4.1: Defensible Development. Require development to be located, designed, and constructed to provide adequate defensibility and minimize the risk of structural loss and life safety resulting from wildland fires.	Consistent. The project would implement design features and mitigation measures that would meet or exceed all applicable state and county codes. These design features and action measures would mitigate increased human activity and potential for ignitions leading to a wildfire in the project and surrounding area.
S-4.2: Development in Hillside and Canyons. Require development located in wildland areas, near ridgelines, top of slopes, saddles, or other areas where the terrain or topography affects its susceptibility to wildfires to be located and designed to account for topography and reduce the increased risk from fires. Density reduction may be necessary to reduce fire hazards if the location and design of the development cannot reduce the threat effectively.	Consistent. The project contains some steep slopes and ridgelines. However, an FPP has been prepared for the project, and design features would be implemented to reduce wildfire risk.
S-4.3: Minimize Flammable Vegetation. Site and design development to minimize the likelihood of a wildfire spreading to structures by minimizing pockets or peninsulas or islands of flammable vegetation within a development.	Consistent. The project includes an FMZ around solar arrays, new structures, interior roads, and the project perimeter. The FMZ would change fire behavior, reduce fuels in critical areas where new fire starts are likely, and create defensible space from off-site fuels to prevent large spread of a new fire regardless of the rate of spread.
S-4.4: Service Availability. Plan for development where fire and emergency services are available or planned.	Consistent. Fire protection for the portion of the project would be primarily provided by the San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). SDCFA and CAL FIRE are collocated at the closest fire station, Station 47 in Boulevard, approximately 1 mile north of the project. The project meets the consolidated Fire Code and General Plan response time and distance requirements for rural land use zoning.
S-4.5: Access Roads. Require development to provide additional access roads where feasible to provide for safe access of emergency equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently. The width, surface, grade, radius, turnarounds, turnouts, bridge construction, vegetative management and brush clearance around roadways, and lengths of fire apparatus access roads shall meet the requirements of the State and San Diego County Consolidated Fire Codes. All requirements and any deviations will be at the discretion of the Fire Code Official.	Consistent. The project would be consistent with this policy. Each site entrance would feature a manual swing gate, and a sign with a lighted directory map and contact information. All entrance gates would feature a 'Knox Box' for emergency access. Interior site roads would be constructed as suitable for fire access roads and would be constructed to a minimum width of approximately 20 feet improved width.
S-4.6: Fire Protection Plans. Ensure that development located within fire hazard areas implement measures in a Fire Protection Plan that reduce the risk of structural and human loss due to wildfire.	Consistent. The project would implement an FPP (SWCA 2024b; Appendix L) that meets all County requirements and building codes. The project design and construction plan would meet all building codes for ignition-resistant structures, fire protection systems, placement of structures, and FMZs around structures, including PV modules and equipment. Additionally, the project would include additional measures such as extra water supply and hookups for firefighting resources, adequate emergency response resources in the vicinity, multiple fire access roads that meet fire codes, and FMZs around interior
S-4.7: Fire Resistant Construction. Require all new, remodeled, or rebuilt structures to meet current ignition resistance construction codes and establish and enforce reasonable and prudent standards that support retrofitting of existing structures in high fire hazard areas.	

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
S-7.1: Water Supply. Ensure that water supply infrastructure adequately supports existing and future development and provides adequate water flow to combat structural and wildland fires. Water systems shall equal or exceed the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations, or, where a municipal-type water supply is unavailable, the latest edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1142, "Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting."	project roads to ensure there is no vertical obstruction of roads. The project would have a completed County of San Diego PDS Project Facility Availability – Fire Form (PDS-399F Form) and a Fire and Emergency Services Agreement.
S-7-2: Funding Fire Protection Services. Require development to contribute its fair share towards funding the provision of appropriate fire and emergency medical services as determined necessary to adequately serve the project.	Consistent. Per the project's approved fire service agreement, the project would contribute its fair share towards funding the provision of appropriate fire and emergency medical services as required by the County.
S-8.1: Development Location. Locate development in areas where the risk to people or resources is minimized. In accordance with the California Department of Conservation Special Publication 42, require development be located a minimum of 50 feet from active or potentially active faults, unless an alternative setback distance is approved based on geologic analysis and feasible engineering design measures adequate to demonstrate that the fault rupture hazard would be avoided.	Consistent. No part of the project is near a known earthquake fault zone. The nearest known fault, the Elsinore Fault, is 10 miles distant.
S-8.2: Risk of Slope Instability. Prohibit development from causing or contributing to slope instability.	Consistent. Global slope stability is not anticipated to be a design consideration at the project due to the relatively competent nature of the subsurface materials.
S-10.3: Development in Floodplains. Limit development in designated floodplains to decrease the potential for property damage and loss of life from flooding and to avoid the need for engineered channels, channel improvements, and other flood control facilities. Require development to conform to federal flood proofing standards and siting criteria to prevent flow obstruction.	Consistent. The project is designed to limit development within designated floodways and floodplains. Proposed structures (invertors, buildings, BESS, and substation) are not located within a designated floodplain or floodway. A few solar arrays would be located within a floodplain; however, they would be raised 1 foot above the base flood elevation. In addition, the project site is not downstream of a dam or located in an area likely to be affected by mudflows or debris flows. The project also does not propose any habitable structures.
S-11.4: Stormwater Management. Require development to incorporate low impact design, including site design, source control, and other measures to minimize stormwater impacts on drainage and flood control facilities and promote groundwater recharge, where feasible. In addition, require projects that are classified as Priority Development Projects to also incorporate pollutant control and hydromodification management measures.	Consistent. The project would minimize impervious surface areas, which would be limited to concrete pads for the substation and battery modules. The project would incorporate two detention basins and a series of stormwater piping which would provide stormwater detention to limit water flowing from the site due to new impervious surface resulting from the BESS facility and substation. The detention basins would be designed in accordance with the County of San Diego's hydraulic design manual (County of San Diego 2014b).
S-11.5: Development Site Improvements. Require development to provide necessary on- and off-site improvements to stormwater runoff and drainage facilities.	Groundwater recharge on the project site would not be significantly altered, as the project site would consist of primarily permeable surfaces to allow for groundwater recharge similar to that under current conditions. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information regarding groundwater recharge.
S-11.6: Stormwater Hydrology. Ensure development avoids diverting drainages, increasing velocities, and altering flow rates to off-site areas to minimize adverse impacts to the area's existing hydrology.	Consistent. Refer to the Policy S-11.4 consistency analysis, above.
S-13.5: Development Adjacent to Agricultural Operations. Require development adjacent to existing agricultural operations in Semi-Rural and Rural Lands to adequately buffer agricultural areas and ensure compliance with relevant safety codes where pesticides or other hazardous materials are used.	Consistent. There are no agricultural operations in the vicinity of the project site. The closest Williamson Act Contract or County Agricultural Preserve is located approximately 1.1 miles southwest of the project site. Therefore, the project would not impact existing agricultural operations. Additionally, the project would abide by all setbacks and buffers required by the County Zoning Ordinance.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Noise Element (County of San Diego 2011e)	
<p>N-1.1: Noise Compatibility Guidelines. Use the Noise Compatibility Guidelines (Table N-1) and the Noise Standards (Table N-2) as a guide in determining the acceptability of exterior and interior noise for proposed land uses.</p>	<p>Consistent. An acoustical study and noise analysis report (dBF Associates 2024; Appendix J) was prepared to analyze noise impacts of the project. The project would not exceed any Noise Compatibility Guidelines (County of San Diego 2011e: Table N-1) or Noise Standards (County of San Diego 2011e: Table N-2) at the nearest sensitive receptors and would be in compliance with the County Noise Ordinance. See Section 2.5, Noise, for details of the noise analysis. Therefore, the project would not be required to implement noise management strategies.</p>
<p>N-1.2: Noise Management Strategies. Require the following strategies as higher priorities than construction of conventional noise barriers where noise abatement is necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid placement of noise sensitive uses within noisy areas • Increase setbacks between noise generators and noise sensitive uses • Orient buildings such that the noise sensitive portions of a project are shielded from noise sources • Use sound-attenuating architectural design and building features • Employ technologies when appropriate that reduce noise generation (i.e., alternative pavement materials on roadways). 	
<p>N-2.1: Development Impacts to Noise Sensitive Land Uses. Require an acoustical study to identify inappropriate noise level where development may directly result in any existing or future noise sensitive land uses being subject to noise levels equal to or greater than 60 CNEL and require mitigation for sensitive uses in compliance with the noise standards listed in Table N-2 of the County's General Plan Noise Element.</p>	
<p>N-3.1: Groundborne Vibration. Use the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration guidelines, where appropriate, to limit the extent of exposure that sensitive uses may have to ground-borne vibration from trains, construction equipment, and other sources.</p>	
<p>N-4.9: Airport Compatibility. Assure the noise compatibility of any development projects that may be affected by noise from public or private airports and helipads during project review by coordinating, as appropriate, with appropriate agencies such as the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).</p>	<p>Consistent. The nearest public airport is Jacumba Airport, approximately 7 miles east of the project site and the project site is not within its Airport Influence Area. There is an existing private airstrip within the project site which is located in an existing streambed and would no longer be in use. Therefore, the project would not be affected by noise from a public or private airport or helipad.</p>
<p>N-6.2: Recurring Intermittent Noise. Minimize impacts from noise in areas where recurring intermittent noise may not exceed the noise standards listed in Table N-2 but can have other adverse effects.</p>	<p>Consistent. An acoustical study and noise analysis report was prepared to analyze noise impacts of the project (dBF Associates 2024; Appendix J). The project would not exceed any Noise Compatibility Guidelines (County of San Diego 2011e: Table N-1) or Noise Standards (County of San Diego 2011e: Table N-2) at the nearest sensitive receptors and would be in compliance with the County Noise Ordinance. See Section 2.5, Noise, for details of the noise analysis. Therefore, the project would not be required to implement noise management strategies.</p>
<p>N-6.4: Hours of Construction. Require development to limit the hours of operation as appropriate for non-emergency construction and maintenance, trash collection, and parking lot sweeper activity near noise sensitive land uses</p>	

Table 3.1.6-3. Project Consistency with Subregional Plan Policies

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, County of San Diego General Plan (County of San Diego 2016)	
<i>Land Use</i>	
Policy and Recommendation 1. The landforms of the Subregion are an important environmental resource that should be respected in new development. Hillside grading shall be minimized and designed to blend in with the existing natural contours.	Consistent. The solar facility (i.e., all components of the project) would be consistent with this policy. The general topography within the project site consists of flat land and gently rolling hills. Grading would be necessary for the construction of access and service roads and the installation of solar arrays; trenching for the underground electrical DC and AC collection system, including the telecommunication lines; and construction of the project substation. Hillside grading would be minimized and designed to conform to the existing contours to the extent feasible.
Policy and Recommendation 4. Ensure that all development be planned in a manner that provides adequate public facilities prior to or concurrent with need.	Consistent. The project would be unoccupied and would not require potable water or wastewater services. Nonpotable water (primarily for panel washing) would be purchased from the Jacumba Community Services District.
Policy and Recommendation 9. Parking lots for commercial uses may utilize permeable surfacing materials such as gravel or decomposed granite, in order to minimize surface runoff and maximize groundwater recharge.	Consistent. All internal roads and parking areas would be constructed of decomposed granite, in order to minimize surface runoff and maximize groundwater recharge. Groundwater recharge on the project site would not be significantly altered, as the project site would consist of primarily permeable surfaces to allow for groundwater recharge similar to that under current conditions. See Section 2.4, Hydrology and Water Quality, for further information regarding groundwater recharge.
<i>Public Facilities and Services</i>	
Policy and Recommendation 1. Maintain unobstructed access to and along the path of existing power transmission facilities and lines.	Consistent. SDG&E has reviewed and approved the transmission line right-of-way and plans and improvements to the Boulevard substation.
Policy and Recommendation 2. Any proposed grading, improvements, or other encroachments to the substation or transmission rights-of-way must be reviewed by SDG&E	
Policy and Recommendation 3. Any alteration of drainage patterns affecting the substation or transmission line right-of-ways should be reviewed and approved by SDG&E.	
Policy and Recommendation 4. Uses proposed for the property adjacent to substations or transmission line rights-of-ways should be reviewed for possible impacts to the power facilities and vice versa.	
<i>Conservation</i>	
Policy and Recommendation 1. All development shall demonstrate a diligent effort to retain as many native oak trees as possible.	Consistent. The project has prepared a biological impact report that demonstrates appropriate design, avoidance, and mitigation to demonstrate that many native oak trees have been avoided.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Policy and Recommendation 3. Floodways shall be maintained in their natural unless findings can be made that a threat to public safety exists.	Consistent. Development of the project would include the construction of private permanent access roads within the project to allow for continuity between transmission poles, switchyard, and collector substation, but would not create any new public roadways. The project is not located within a 100-year flood hazard area such that development of the project that would impede or redirect flood flows. Drainage channel crossings on project access roads would be constructed to convey the 100-year storm runoff flows.
Policy and Recommendation 4. The dark night sky is a significant resource for the Subregion and appropriate steps shall be taken to preserve it.	Consistent. Lighting installed at the project for the operational phase would be hooded, directed downward, and turned off when not required, and substation equipment would feature a low reflectivity finish to minimize glare. Lighting for the project would be fully compliant with the County's Light Pollution Code.
Policy and Recommendation 5. Development shall not adversely affect the habitat of sensitive plant and wildlife species or those areas of significant scenic value.	Consistent. The project would result in impacts to sensitive vegetation communities. The project would result in potentially significant short-term and long-term direct and/or indirect impacts to special-status plants, special-status wildlife species, and wildlife habitat, as well as short-term direct impacts to wildlife movement and migratory birds. Mitigation for the project includes off-site preservation of similar habitat types; construction monitoring, flagging, and other BMPs; nesting bird surveys; avian and bat monitoring; fire protection; access control; and federal and state agency permits. All significant impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures. Regarding scenic value, the project has been designed to minimize impacts to the scenic value of the area.
<i>Energy Conservation</i>	
Policy and Recommendation 8.1. New development should utilize alternative energy technologies, especially active and passive solar energy systems.	Consistent. The project would deliver renewable energy to the power grid. This solar energy would be eligible for the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard and would be used by existing or future development.
<i>Boulevard Subregional Planning Area, Mountain Empire Subregional Plan (County of San Diego 2013)</i>	
Policy LU 1.1.2. Encourage development to protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water resources, air quality, dark skies, visual resources, and low ambient noise levels, as well as retain and protect the existing natural and historic features characteristic of the community's landscape and natural environment.	Consistent. Potential impacts associated with quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water, air quality, dark skies, visual resources, and noise have all been analyzed and disclosed within this EIR. Mitigation measures have been provided to mitigate potential impacts to the extent feasible.
Policy LU 1.1.3. Encourage development to respectfully incorporate existing topography and landforms, watersheds, riparian areas, oaks, and other native vegetation and wildlife, ridgelines, historic and cultural resources, views, and sustainability design factors.	Consistent. The project facilities have been designed to minimize impacts to existing topography, landforms, riparian areas, oaks, native vegetation and wildlife, ridgelines, cultural resources, and views to the extent practicable.
Policy LU 3.1.1. Encourage development to preserve dark skies with reduced lighting and increased shielding requirements.	Consistent. The project would comply with the County of San Diego Light Pollution Code, also known as the Dark Sky Ordinance (San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Section 51.201 et seq.). Additionally, lighting for the project would be designed in accordance with the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance, Performance Standards Section 6320, 6322, and 6324, which guide performance standards for glare, and controls excessive or unnecessary outdoor light emissions. Lighting for the project would use shielded bulbs, with motion detection, and a maximum of 100 watts.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Policy LU 3.2.1. Require development to minimize impacts to the native and riparian habitat.	Consistent. The project site includes 15 existing open space easement areas which would be fenced and protected from development. In addition, the project includes a new 448-acre open space easement area to provide protection in perpetuity for natural resources and maintain wildlife movement at a landscape level that would be granted to the County or other approved conservation entity in perpetuity. While the project site does consist of rural lands, the project site does not contain wetland habitats. The project has several wetland areas on-site that would be protected from development.
Policy LU 3.3.1. Encourage the designation, protection, and long-term management of historic sites in the Boulevard area.	Consistent. The project includes 15 open space easement areas within the MUP project site, totaling 24.4 acres. These areas are designed to protect historic resources and would be fenced and gated.
Policy LU 6.1.1. Require commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to mitigate adverse impacts to the rural community character, charm, quiet ambiance and lifestyle, or the natural resources, wildlife, and dark skies of Boulevard, if feasible, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.	Consistent. The project proposes a large-scale energy facility evaluated in accordance with CEQA. Although the land within the project site has been historically of rural character, there has been a recent increase in renewable energy development in the region. Regarding impacts to natural resources and wildlife, potential impacts would occur as a result of the project; however, mitigation for the project has been provided that would reduce impacts to below a level of significance. Regarding lighting and potential impacts to dark skies, outdoor lighting would be hooded, directed downward, turned off when not required, and kept to a minimum for safety purposes.
Policy LU 6.1.2. Encourage commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to create and maintain adequate buffers between residential areas and incompatible activities that create heavy traffic, noise, infrasonic vibrations, lighting, odors, dust and unsightly views and impacts to groundwater quality and quantity.	Consistent. The project proposes a large-scale energy facility, and adequate buffers would be provided, as required, to shield residential areas from incompatible activities that could result in environmental impacts, including traffic, noise, vibration, lighting, odor, dust, unsightly views, and groundwater quality and quantity. Each of these potential environmental impacts and their effect on sensitive receptors have been analyzed in this EIR.
Policy LU 6.1.3. Encourage commercial, industrial development and large-scale energy generation projects to provide buffers from public roads, adjacent and surrounding properties and residences, recreational areas, and trails.	Consistent. Adequate buffers would be provided, as required, from public roads, surrounding properties, recreational areas, and trails. The project would comply with the setback regulations as indicated in the Zoning Ordinance (Setback Regulations, Section 4800).
Policy CM 8.1.1. Prohibit development and the exportation or sale of groundwater that would adversely impact the ground and surface water resources.	Consistent. The project would purchase nonpotable water from the Jacumba Community Services District for use on-site. No water would be exported.
Policy CM 8.3.1. Require that the source and quality of water that is imported into the area via tanker trucks or other means, for use on major construction projects, will be verified and validated to avoid contamination of local surface and groundwater resources.	Consistent. Nonpotable water would be supplied by the Jacumba Community Services District and used to supply construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the project. The project would implement a groundwater monitoring and mitigation plan to provide protection of groundwater resources of the Jacumba Valley Groundwater Basin underlying the community of Jacumba Hot Springs, California.

Policy	Project Consistency with Policy
Policy CM 8.5.1. Prohibit development from altering natural drainage patterns.	Consistent. The project would result in an increase of 10.49 acres of impervious surfaces, and thus would not result in substantial changes to the rate, volume, and location of stormwater runoff. The project would intersect the Boundary Creek watercourse and an unnamed tributary of the creek; however, these features have been altered and are now discontinuous or disconnected within the survey area. The project would also implement the required Standard SWQMP, SWPPP, and requirements to obtain permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and RWQCB pursuant to the Clean Water Act.
Policy CM 8.6.1. Encourage the use of existing right-of-way when construction of new transmission lines is required, where technically and economically feasible. Additionally, encourage existing right-of-way over new right-of-way alignments for construction of new transmission lines when existing right-of-way is insufficient.	Consistent. The gen-tie line is located in an existing right-of-way.

As demonstrated above, the project would be consistent with all applicable County policies. Therefore, the project would be consistent with the identified land use policies and impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.1.6.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

While land use and planning impacts are generally localized and specific to particular actions, the project may potentially interact with other past, present, or future projects, leading to unintended land use impacts, such as reducing available open space or diminishing the visual character of the community. The cumulative analysis for land use and planning impacts was performed using the projects listed in Table 1-4, in Chapter 1, Project Description, Location, and Environmental Setting. Cumulative projects in the area include several existing and proposed wind and solar renewable energy projects, public facilities improvement projects, and the Rough Acres Ranch Campground, all within the Mountain Empire Subregion.

Cumulative, Physically Divide an Established Community

Implementation of the project, along with existing and future cumulative projects, would not disrupt or divide the established community of Boulevard or any other communities within the Mountain Empire Subregion. Adequate access to roadways and other rights-of-way would be maintained throughout construction, operation, and decommissioning of each project. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulative impact** on the physical division of an established community.

Cumulative, Conflict with an Applicable Land Use Plan, Policy, or Regulation

The project would not conflict with the applicable land use policies in the County General Plan, the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, and the Boulevard Subregional Plan, as demonstrated in Tables 2.6-1, 2.6-2, and 2.6-3.

While the project is located in an area which includes some interstate and local roadway development, regional electrical infrastructure, and utility-scale energy projects, the predominant characteristic of existing development in the cumulative study area is that of a rural residential community and environment. Cumulative projects in the planning stage, including Campo Wind and Rugged Solar, similarly were found to be consistent with applicable land use policies. In conjunction with the project, the cumulative projects would not result in a cumulative conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations. Therefore, the proposed project **would not contribute to a cumulative impact** related to conflicts with applicable land use plans and policies.

3.1.6.5 Conclusion

Physically Divide an Established Community

The proposed project is a solar energy generation and storage facility. The project site is directly south of the community of Boulevard. Access to the Boulevard community and Old Highway 80 would not be disrupted or divided by the project. Since the project would not divide the adjacent established community of Boulevard, it would have **less than significant** impacts in terms of physically dividing an established community.

Conflict with an Applicable Land Use Plan, Policy, or Regulation

As shown above in Tables 2.6-1, 2.6-2, and 2.6-3, the project would be consistent with all applicable land use policies found in the County General Plan, the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan, and the Boulevard Subregional Plan. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant** in terms of conflicting with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations.

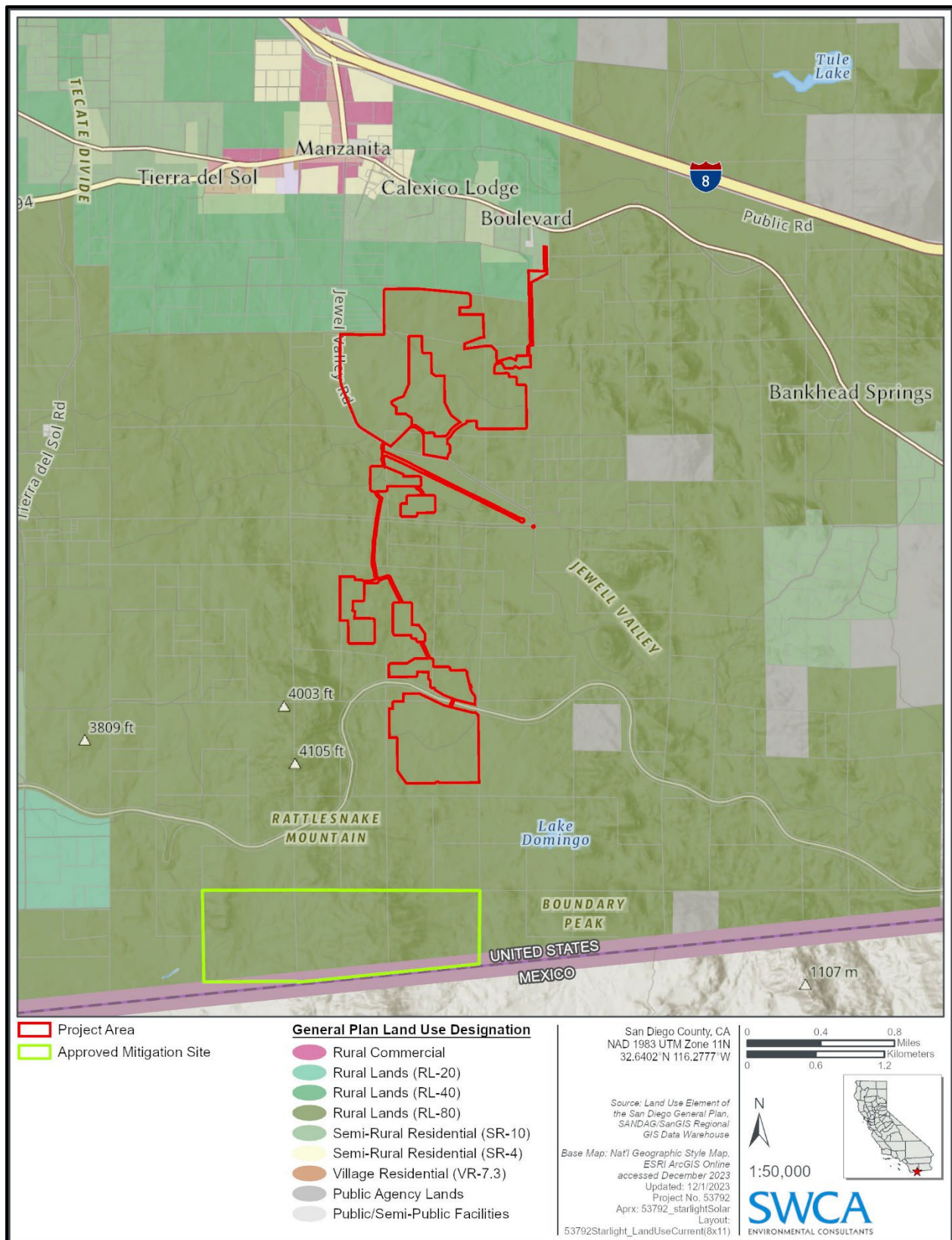


Figure 3.1.6-1. Land Use Designations Map

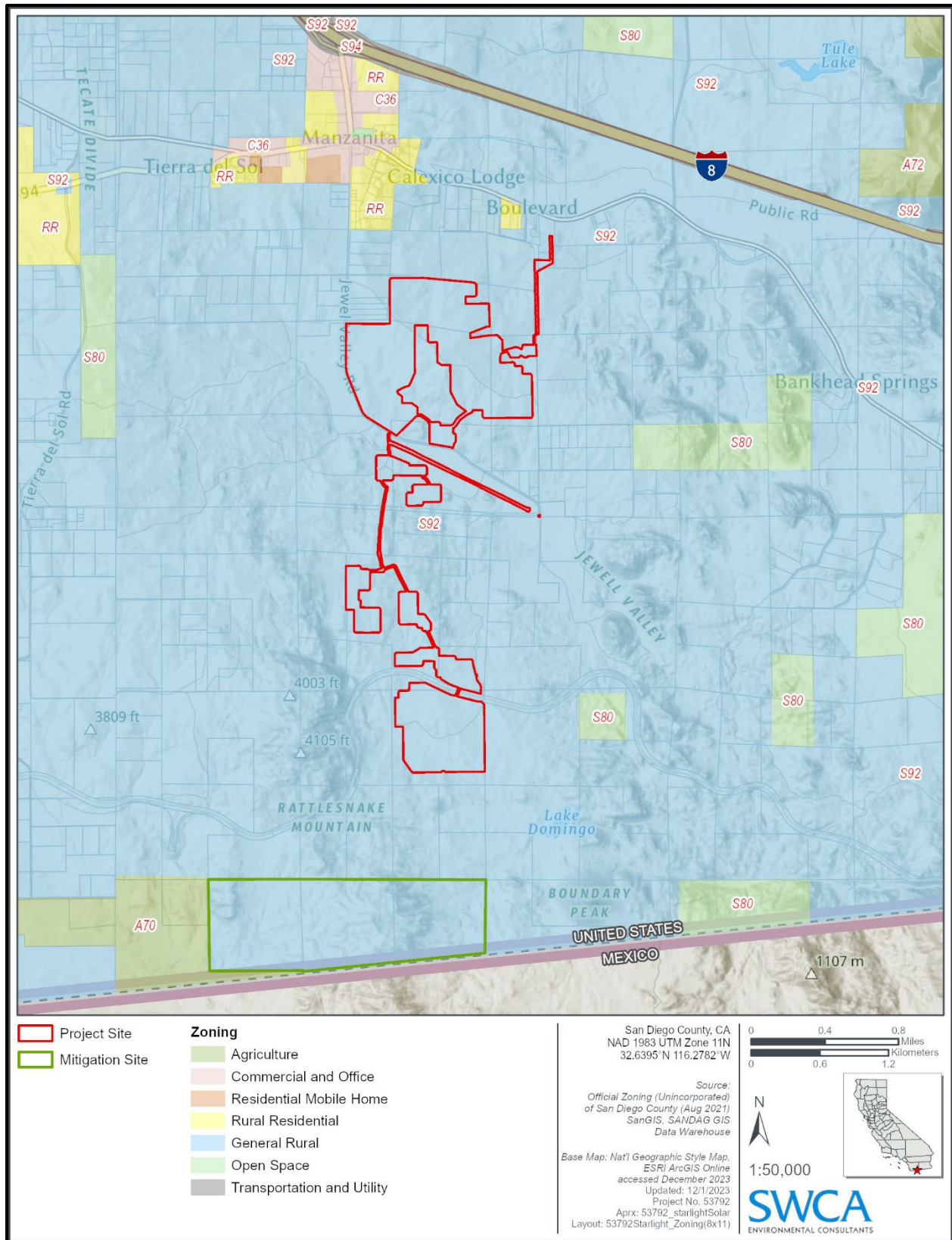


Figure 3.1.6-2. Zoning Map

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