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## CEQA Referral Initial Study And Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration

**Date:** February 25, 2026

**To:** Distribution List (See Attachment A)

**From:** Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner  
Planning and Community Development

**Subject:** USE PERMIT AND LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0103 - LAYMAN

**Comment Period:** February 25, 2026 – April 1, 2026

**Respond By:** April 1, 2026

**Public Hearing Date:** Not yet scheduled. A separate notice will be sent to you when a hearing is scheduled.

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You may have previously received an Early Consultation Notice regarding this project, and your comments, if provided, were incorporated into the Initial Study. Based on all comments received, Stanislaus County anticipates adopting a Negative Declaration for this project. This referral provides notice of a 30-day comment period during which Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other interested parties may provide comments to this Department regarding our proposal to adopt the Negative Declaration.

All applicable project documents are available for review at: Stanislaus County Department of Planning and Community Development, 1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, CA 95354. Please provide any additional comments to the above address or call us at (209) 525-6330 if you have any questions. Thank you.

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**Applicant:** Huff Energy Solutions

**Project Location:** 1400 and 1482 St. Francis Avenue, between Tully Road and Carver Road, in the Modesto area.

**APN's:** 004-017-028 and 004-017-038

**Williamson Act Contract:** 1975-1933 (APN 004-017-038)

**General Plan:** Agriculture

**Current Zoning:** General Agriculture (A-2-40)

**Project Description:** Request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm, on an 11.08± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district and adjust the lot lines between two parcels to place the solar farm entirely on a non-Williamson Act contracted parcel.

Full document with attachments available for viewing at:  
<http://www.stancounty.com/planning/pl/act-projects.shtm>



**USE PERMIT AND LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0103 - LAYMAN**

Attachment A

Distribution List

X	CA DEPT OF CONSERVATION Land Resources		STAN CO ALUC
X	CA DEPT OF FISH & WILDLIFE		STAN CO ANIMAL SERVICES
	CA DEPT OF FORESTRY (CAL FIRE)	X	STAN CO BUILDING PERMITS DIVISION
	CA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION DIST 10	X	STAN CO CEO
X	CA OPR STATE CLEARINGHOUSE		STAN CO CSA
X	CA RWQCB CENTRAL VALLEY REGION	X	STAN CO DER
	CA DEPT OF SOCIAL SERVICES		STAN CO ERC
	CA DEPT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES	X	STAN CO FARM BUREAU
	CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION	X	STAN CO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
	CITY OF:		STAN CO PARKS & RECREATION
	COMMUNITY SERVICES/SANITARY DIST	X	STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS
	COOPERATIVE EXTENSION	X	STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS - SURVEY
	COUNTY OF:		STAN CO RISK MANAGEMENT
X	DER - GROUNDWATER RESOURCES DIVISION	X	STAN CO SHERIFF
X	DISPOSAL DIST: BERTOLOTTI 1	X	STAN CO SUPERVISOR DIST 4: GREWAL
X	FIRE PROTECTION DIST: SALIDA	X	STAN COUNTY COUNSEL
X	GSA: STANISLAUS AND TUOLUMNE RIVERS GROUNDWATER BASIN ASSOCIATION		StanCOG
	HOSPITAL DIST:	X	STANISLAUS FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU
X	IRRIGATION DIST: MODESTO	X	STANISLAUS LAFCO
X	MOSQUITO DIST: EASTSIDE	X	STATE OF CA SWRCB – DIV OF DRINKING WATER DIST. 10
X	STANISLAUS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	X	SURROUNDING LAND OWNERS
	MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL:		INTERESTED PARTIES
X	PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC	X	TELEPHONE COMPANY: AT&T
	POSTMASTER:		TRIBAL CONTACTS (CA Government Code §65352.3)
	RAILROAD:		US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
X	SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY APCD	X	US FISH & WILDLIFE
X	SCHOOL DIST 1: STANISLAUS UNION		US MILITARY (SB 1462)
X	SCHOOL DIST 2: MODESTO		USDA NRCS
	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		WATER DIST:
X	STAN CO AG COMMISSIONER		

**STANISLAUS COUNTY  
CEQA REFERRAL RESPONSE FORM**

**TO:** Stanislaus County Planning & Community Development  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3400  
Modesto, CA 95354

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** USE PERMIT AND LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT APPLICATION NO. PLN2025-0103 – LAYMAN

Based on this agency's particular field(s) of expertise, it is our position the above described project:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ May have a significant effect on the environment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No Comments.

Listed below are specific impacts which support our determination (e.g., traffic general, carrying capacity, soil types, air quality, etc.) – (attach additional sheet if necessary)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Listed below are possible mitigation measures for the above-listed impacts: *PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE WHEN THE MITIGATION OR CONDITION NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED (PRIOR TO RECORDING A MAP, PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT, ETC.):*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

In addition, our agency has the following comments (attach additional sheets if necessary).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Response prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Title Date



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

1010 10<sup>TH</sup> Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, CA 95354  
Planning Phone: (209) 525-6330 Fax: (209) 525-5911  
Building Phone: (209) 525-6557 Fax: (209) 525-7759

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## CEQA INITIAL STUDY

Adapted from CEQA Guidelines APPENDIX G Environmental Checklist Form, Final Text, January 1, 2025

1. **Project title:** Use Permit and Lot Line Adjustment Application No. PLN2025-0103- Layman
2. **Lead agency name and address:** Stanislaus County  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3400  
Modesto, CA 95354
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner  
(209) 525-6330
4. **Project location:** 1400 and 1482 St. Francis Avenue, between Tully Road and Carver Road, in the Modesto area (APN's: 004-017-028 and 004-017-038).
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Huff Energy Solutions  
4917 Stoddard Road Modesto, CA 95356
6. **Williamson Act Contract:** 1975-1933 (APN 004-017-038)
7. **General Plan designation:** Agriculture
8. **Zoning:** General Agriculture (A-2-40)

**9. Description of project:**

Request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm on an 11.08± acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The facility will be unmanned with a few occasional site visits expected per year for routine maintenance and cleaning. The site will be remotely monitored, with no full-time employees reporting to the site. No permanent restrooms, offices, or other on-site structures related to the facility are proposed. The applicant has proposed enclosing the solar farm with six-foot-tall chain link fencing. If approved, construction is anticipated to occur within 18 months of project approval. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program. No battery energy storage is proposed at this time. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained St. Francis Avenue via an existing driveway. The site is served by an existing private well and septic system.

The applicant indicated that the soil is infected with Armillaria root rot (also known as oak root fungus). This fungus spreads underground through affected soil and gradually cuts off infected trees' abilities to transport water and nutrients, leading to progressive decline and eventual death of infected trees. Even after infected trees are removed, the fungus remains active in buried roots and woody debris, making complete eradication through conventional agricultural practices extremely difficult. The solar array is intended to create a long-term fallow condition that allows the fungus to naturally diminish over the course of the project's proposed 20-year lifespan. At the end of the project's lifespan, all equipment will be removed using shallow extraction methods, allowing the land to be returned to agricultural use without permanent soil disturbance.

The proposed footprint of the PV solar panel is located across both Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 004-017-028 and 004-017-038. APN 004-017-028 (11.48± acres) is uncontracted while 004-017-038 (9.6± acres) is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1975-1933. A lot line adjustment is being requested with the subject use permit application to reconfigure and adjust the two project parcels from 9.6± and 11.48± acres to 10± and 11.08± acres. If the proposed lot line adjustment is approved, a rescission of the existing Williamson Act contract will occur, which will allow the proposed solar energy farm to be placed entirely on the resultant 11.08± acre, non-Williamson Act contracted parcel and the adjusted 10± acre parcel to be enrolled into a new Williamson Act Contract.

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10. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** Irrigated orchards and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions; MID Main Canal and City of Modesto to the south
11. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):** Stanislaus County Department of Public Works  
Department of Environmental Resources
12. **Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?:** In accordance with SB 18, this project was not referred to the tribes listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the project is not a General Plan Amendment. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco (S.F.) Bay Area has requested consultation in accordance with AB 52 for all projects located west of the San Joaquin River. This project is not located in that area. Accordingly, this project is not being sent to the Muwekma Ohlone S.F. Bay Area Tribe.
13. **Attachments:** None

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture / Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology / Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards / Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology / Water Quality
- Land Use / Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population / Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities / Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

**DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature on File  
Prepared by Marcus Ruddicks, Assistant Planner

February 25, 2026  
Date

**EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration.

Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

- a) **Earlier Analysis Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) **Impacts Adequately Addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) **Mitigation Measures.** For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). References to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
  - 7) **Supporting Information Sources:** A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
  - 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
  - 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
    - a) the significant criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

ISSUES

I. AESTHETICS. Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			X	
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

**Discussion:** APN 004-017-028 is currently developed with a single-family dwelling, detached garage, barn, shack, and residential swimming pool. APN 004-017-038 is currently developed with a single-family dwelling and residential swimming pool. The solar farm is proposed to be located at the southern portion of adjusted Parcel 1 after Lot Line Adjustment, directly north of the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) Main Canal. No exterior lighting or signage exists or is proposed. No permanent restrooms, offices, or other on-site structures related to the facility are proposed. The applicant has proposed enclosing the solar farm with six-foot-tall chain link fencing.

The only scenic designation in the County is along Interstate 5, which is not near the project site. The site itself is not considered to be a scenic resource or unique scenic vista. Irrigated orchards and scattered single-family dwellings are located in all directions. The MID Main Canal and City of Modesto are located to the south. Structures within the surrounding area consist primarily of metal agricultural buildings, and residential and accessory structures with stucco, metal, and wood facades. No adverse impacts to the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings are anticipated.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

<b>II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES.</b> In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?			X	
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	

**Discussion:** The site is 11.08 acres in size and is classified as “Prime Farmland” by the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Web Soil Survey indicates that all of the project site is comprised of Class I, Grade 2 Tujunga sandy loam with 0 to 3 percent slopes (TuA), which has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 67. The California Revised Storie Index is a rating system based on soil properties that dictate the potential for soils to be used for irrigated agricultural production in California. This rating system grades soils with an index rating of 67 as good. The project site was previously planted in almond orchard and is served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for agricultural irrigation water services.

The proposed footprint of the PV solar panel is located across both Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 004-017-028 and 004-017-038. APN 004-017-028 (11.48± acres) is uncontracted while 004-017-038 (9.6± acres) is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1975-1933. A lot line adjustment is being requested with the subject use permit application to reconfigure and adjust the two project parcels from 9.6± and 11.48± acres to 10± and 11.08± acres. If the proposed lot line adjustment is approved, a rescission of the existing Williamson Act contract will occur, which will allow the proposed solar energy farm to be placed entirely on the resultant 11.08± acre, non-Williamson Act contracted parcel and the adjusted 10± acre parcel to be enrolled into a new Williamson Act Contract.

The Agricultural Element of the Stanislaus County General Plan, specifically Policy 2.5, Implementation Measure Three, encourages the development of alternative energy sources on lands located outside of the County’s “Most Productive

Agricultural Areas.” Until the term "Most Productive Agricultural Areas" is defined on a county-wide basis, the term will be determined on a case-by-case basis when a proposal is made for the conversion of agricultural land. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to soil types and potential for agricultural production; the availability of irrigation water; ownership and parcelization patterns; uniqueness and flexibility of use; the existence of Williamson Act contracts; existing uses and their contributions to the agricultural sector of the local economy.

The applicant indicated that the soil is infected with Armillaria root rot (also known as oak root fungus). This fungus spreads underground through affected soil and gradually cuts off infected trees’ abilities to transport water and nutrients, leading to progressive decline and eventual death of infected trees. Even after infected trees are removed, the fungus remains active in buried roots and woody debris, making complete eradication through conventional agricultural practices extremely difficult. The solar array is intended to create a long-term fallow condition that allows the fungus to naturally diminish over the course of the project’s proposed 20-year lifespan. At the end of the project’s lifespan, all equipment will be removed using shallow extraction methods, allowing the land to be returned to agricultural use without permanent soil disturbance.

Buffer and Setback Guidelines are applicable to new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district and are required to be designed to physically avoid conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Utilities and similar low people intensive uses which do not serve the general public shall not be subject to compliance with these guidelines; however, conditions of approval consistent with these guidelines may be required as part of the project approval. Based on the requested use consisting of an unmanned solar energy farm and no customers or other members of the general public expected to visit the site, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County’s Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is “low people intensive.”

The project site is currently served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to MID, and no response has been received to date.

Based on this information, staff believe that the proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land, nor will the project result in the conversion of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance. No forest lands or timberland exist in Stanislaus County. Therefore, this project will have no impact to forest land or timberland.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey; Stanislaus Soil Survey (1957); California State Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program - Stanislaus County Farmland 2018; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

III. AIR QUALITY. Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?			X	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people)?			X	

**Discussion:** The proposed project is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) and, therefore, falls under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). In conjunction with the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG), the SJVAPCD is responsible for formulating and implementing air pollution control strategies.

The SJVAPCD's most recent air quality plans are the 2007 PM<sub>10</sub> (respirable particulate matter) Maintenance Plan, the 2008 PM<sub>2.5</sub> (fine particulate matter) Plan, and the 2007 Ozone Plan. These plans establish a comprehensive air pollution control program leading to the attainment of state and federal air quality standards in the SJVAB, which has been classified as "extreme non-attainment" for ozone, "attainment" for respirable particulate matter (PM-10), and "non-attainment" for PM 2.5, as defined by the Federal Clean Air Act.

The primary source of air pollutants generated by this project would be classified as being generated from "mobile" sources. Mobile sources would generally include dust from roads, farming, and automobile exhausts. Mobile sources are generally regulated by the Air Resources Board of the California EPA which sets emissions for vehicles and acts on issues regarding cleaner burning fuels and alternative fuel technologies. As such, the District has addressed most criteria air pollutants through basin wide programs and policies to prevent cumulative deterioration of air quality within the Basin. The project will not substantially increase traffic in the area and thereby impact air quality. The facility will be unmanned with a few occasional site visits expected per year for routine maintenance and cleaning. The site will be remotely monitored, with no full-time employees reporting to the site.

Potential impacts on local and regional air quality are anticipated to be less than significant, falling below SJVAPCD thresholds, as a result of the nature of the proposed project and project's operation after construction. Implementation of the proposed project would fall below the SJVAPCD significance thresholds for both short-term construction and long-term operational emissions, as discussed below. Because construction and operation of the project would not exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds, the proposed project would not increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the air plans.

The Air District provided a referral response on January 12, 2026, indicating that the proposed project is below the District's thresholds of significance for emissions from construction and operation. In the same response, the Air District required an Air Impact Assessment (AIA) application be submitted by the applicant to comply with District Rule 9510 - Indirect Source Review (ISR). The District deemed the AIA application for the project complete on January 28, 2026.

The closest sensitive receptor is a single-family dwelling approximately 950 feet to the north, located on APN 004-017-034. Project activities on-site are not expected to impact this receptor as odors are not expected as a result of the proposed project.

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Air Quality should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis for evaluation under CEQA. However, the State of California - Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has issued guidelines regarding VMT significance under CEQA. The CEQA Guidelines identify vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which is the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. According to the same technical advisory from OPR, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than significant transportation impact. As the facility will be unmanned with no regular vehicle trips to the site expected, the proposed project will not exceed the screening criteria for VMT analysis. As this is below the District's threshold of significance for vehicle trips, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality are anticipated.

Construction activities associated with new development can temporarily increase localized PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, volatile organic compound (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOX), sulfur oxides (SOX), and carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations a project's vicinity. The primary source of construction-related CO, SOX, VOC, and NOX emission is gasoline and diesel-powered, heavy-duty mobile construction equipment. Primary sources of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions are generally clearing and demolition activities, grading operations, construction vehicle traffic on unpaved ground, and wind blowing over exposed surfaces.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project would consist primarily of installation of racking and electrical equipment for ground-mounted solar collectors. These activities would not require any substantial use of heavy-duty construction equipment and would require little or no demolition or grading as the site is presently unimproved and considered to be topographically flat. Consequently, emissions would be minimal. Furthermore, all construction activities would occur in compliance with all SJVAPCD regulations; therefore, construction emissions would be less than significant without mitigation.

As the project must comply with District regulations, the project’s emissions would be less than significant for all criteria pollutants, would not be inconsistent with any applicable air quality attainment plans, and would result in less than significant impacts to air quality.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; Referral response received from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated January 12, 2026; Correspondence received from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated January 28, 2026; [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org); Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			X	

**Discussion:** It does not appear this project will result in impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors. There is no known sensitive or protected species or natural community located on the site. The project is located within the Salida Quad of the California Natural Diversity Database. Fifteen species are listed federally or by the state as a threatened species or as a species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) including the tricolored blackbird, greater sandhill crane, lesser sandhill crane, Swainsons hawk, California tiger salamander - central California DPS, northwestern pond turtle, coast horned lizard, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, chinook salmon - Central Valley fall / late fall-run ESU, steelhead - Central Valley DPS, Pacific lamprey, Sacramento splittail, hardhead, Sacramento hitch, and the green sturgeon - southern DPS. Seven of these species are fish which have no potential for being on the project site due to no rivers being on-site. No rivers, creeks, pond, or canals exist on the project site. The nearest riparian habitat is the Stanislaus River which is located 1.3 miles north of the project site. There are no California Natural Diversity Database species sightings on or surrounding the project site. The property was previously planted in almond orchard; however, the orchard has been removed due to the soil being infected with Armillaria root rot (also known as oak root fungus).

The project will not conflict with a Habitat Conservation Plan, a Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other locally approved conservation plans. Impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors are considered to be less than significant.

An early consultation was referred to the CDFW, and no response was received.

Due to a lack of suitable habitat impacts to Biological Resources are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Natural Diversity Database Quad Species List; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in § 15064.5?			X	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			X	
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

**Discussion:** It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. There are no known cultural or archeological resources existing on the project site. The project site was previously planted in almond orchard, and the proposed construction is within the area which has already been disturbed. However, standard conditions of approval regarding the discovery of cultural resources during the construction process will be added to the project.

Impacts to cultural resources are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

VI. ENERGY. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	

**Discussion:** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix F states that energy consuming equipment and processes, which will be used during construction or operation such as: energy requirements of the project by fuel type and end use, energy conservation equipment and design features, energy supplies that would serve the project, total estimated daily vehicle trips to be generated by the project, and the additional energy consumed per trip by mode, shall be taken into consideration when evaluating energy impacts. Additionally, the project’s compliance with applicable state or local energy legislation, policies, and standards must be considered. The project was also referred to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), which provided a referral response on January 12, 2026, indicating that the

proposed project is below the District's thresholds of significance for emissions from construction and operation. In the same response, the Air District required an Air Impact Assessment (AIA) application be submitted by the applicant to comply with District Rule 9510 - Indirect Source Review (ISR). The District deemed the AIA application for the project complete on January 28, 2026.

The project was referred to the Modesto Irrigation District (MID), which serves the project site and surrounding area for electrical service, and no response has been received to date.

In 2015, California passed Senate Bill 350, which requires publicly owned electric utilities with an annual electrical demand exceeding 700 gigawatt-hours, to adopt an integrated resources plan to ensure the utility meets the economywide greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets established by the State Air Resources Board of 40% from 1990 levels by 2030 and procures at least 50 percent of its energy from eligible renewable energy resources by 2030 as established by Public Utilities Code Section 9621(b)(1) and (2). The project is a request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm on an 11.08± acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program, with power generated at the project site sold directly to MID to ensure the utility meets these criteria.

Senate Bill 743 (SB743) requires that the transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluate impacts by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a metric. Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, these activities would not significantly increase VMT due to the number of vehicle trips not exceeding a total of 110 vehicle trips per-day. The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with no regular visits to the site expected.

Vehicles accessing the site will be subject to applicable Air District regulations, including rules and regulations that increase energy efficiency. Accordingly, VMT impacts are anticipated to be less than significant. It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, the potential impacts to Energy are considered to be less than significant.

It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, the potential impacts to energy are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Referral response received from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated January 12, 2026; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org); Title 16 of County Code; CA Building Code; Governor's Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory, December 2018; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21); Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			X	
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			X	

**Discussion:** The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Eastern Stanislaus County Soil Survey indicates that the property is made up of Tujunga sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (TuA). As contained in Chapter 5 of the General Plan Support Documentation, the areas of the County subject to significant geologic hazard are located in the Diablo Range, west of Interstate 5; however, as per the California Building Code, all of Stanislaus County is located within a geologic hazard zone (Seismic Design Category D, E, or F) and a soils test may be required at building permit application. Results from the soils test will determine if unstable or expansive soils are present. If such soils are present, special engineering of the structure will be required to compensate for the soil deficiency.

Any structures resulting from this project will be designed and built according to building standards appropriate to withstand shaking for the area in which they are constructed. Any earth moving is subject to Public Works Standards and Specifications, which consider the potential for erosion and run-off prior to permit approval. Likewise, any addition or expansion of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system would require the approval of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) through the building permit process, which also takes soil type into consideration within the specific design requirements. The project was referred to DER, who responded with no comments on the project. The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours. DER, Public Works, and the Building Permits Division review and approve any building or grading permit

to ensure their standards are met. Conditions of approval regarding these standards will be applied to the project and will be triggered when a building permit is requested.

The project site is not located near an active fault or within a high earthquake zone. Landslides are not likely due to the flat terrain of the area.

Impacts to geology and soils are anticipated to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated January 15, 2026; Referral response from the Stanislaus County Department of Public Works dated February 11, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

**Discussion:** The principal Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and water vapor (H<sub>2</sub>O). CO<sub>2</sub> is the reference gas for climate change because it is the predominant greenhouse gas emitted. To account for the varying warming potential of different GHGs, GHG emissions are often quantified and reported as CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e). In 2006, California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] No. 32), which requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) design and implement emission limits, regulations, and other measures, such that feasible and cost-effective statewide GHG emissions are reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. Two additional bills, SB 350 and SB32, were passed in 2015 further amending the states Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) for electrical generation and amending the reduction targets to 40% of 1990 levels by 2030.

As discussed in Section VI- *Energy*, the project is a request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm on an 11.08± acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program, with power generated from the project site sold directly to MID to ensure the utility meets the criteria of Public Utilities Code Section 9621(b)(1) and (2)..

The short-term emissions of GHGs during construction, primarily composed of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O, would be the result of fuel combustion by construction equipment and motor vehicles. The other primary GHGs (HFCs, PFCs, and SF<sub>6</sub>) are typically associated with specific industrial sources and are not expected to be emitted by future construction at this project site. The use of heavy-duty construction equipment would be very limited for this project; therefore, the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from future construction would be less than significant. Any future construction resulting from the project would be required to meet mandatory planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resources efficiency, and environmental quality measures, of the California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11) which includes minimum statewide standards to significantly reduce GHG emissions from new construction. Future construction activities associated with this project would be considered less than significant as they are temporary in nature and subject to meeting San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) standards for emissions.

Direct emissions of GHGs from the operation of the proposed project are primarily due to occasional visits to the site for routine maintenance and cleaning. As required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Green House Gas Emissions should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. Total vehicle trips as a result of this project will not exceed 110 trips per-day. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, these activities would not

significantly increase VMT due to the number of vehicle trips not exceeding a total of 110 vehicle trips per-day. The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with no regular visits to the site expected.

The SJVAPCD provided a referral response on January 12, 2026, indicating that the proposed project is below the District's thresholds of significance for emissions from construction and operation. In the same response, the Air District required an Air Impact Assessment (AIA) application be submitted by the applicant to comply with District Rule 9510 - Indirect Source Review (ISR). The District deemed the AIA application for the project complete on January 28, 2026. Staff will also include a condition of approval on the project requiring that the applicant contact the SJVAPCD and be in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations. Based on project details and the conditions of approval to be placed on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District's rules and regulations, GHG emissions are considered to be less than significant for the project.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District referral response, dated January 12, 2026; Correspondence received from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated January 28, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			X	
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?			X	
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?			X	
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	

**Discussion:** The project is not anticipated to interfere with the Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. The County Department of Environmental Resources is responsible for overseeing hazardous materials. A referral response from the Hazardous Materials Division of DER indicated that the project is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the environment in terms of hazards and hazardous materials, and requested the applicant contact DER regarding regulatory requirements for

hazardous materials and/or wastes and to conduct at least a Phase I study prior to the issuance of a grading permit. The project was also referred to the Environmental Health Division of DER, who responded with no comments on the project.

Pesticide exposure is a risk in areas located in the vicinity of agriculture. Sources of exposure include contaminated groundwater from drift from spray applications. Application of sprays is strictly controlled by the Agricultural Commissioner and can only be accomplished after first obtaining permits. Additionally, agricultural buffers are intended to reduce the risk of spray exposure to surrounding people. The site itself has been recorded to use pesticides in the past, and the nearest other properties in production agriculture with records of pesticide use are a 3.93± acre farmed parcel located directly east of the project site and an 9.74± acre parcel located directly west of the project site. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, who regulates pesticide use, and no comments have been received to date. As stated in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Based on the requested use consisting of an unmanned solar energy farm, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is "low people intensive."

The project site is not listed on the EnviroStor database managed by the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control or within the vicinity of any airport. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by Salida Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the Salida Fire Protection District, and no comments have been received to date.

The project site is not within the vicinity of any airstrip, airport land use plan area, or wildlands. No significant impacts associated with hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated January 15, 2026; Referral Response received from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Hazardous Materials Division, dated January 21, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			X	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			X	
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:			X	
i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			X	
ii) substantially increase the rate of amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;			X	
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			X	
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			X	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			X	

**Discussion:** Areas subject to flooding have been identified in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA). The project site is located in FEMA Flood Zone X, which includes areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplains. All flood zone requirements will be addressed by the Building Permits Division during the building permit process. The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage via overland runoff, and the current absorption patterns of water upon this property will not be altered. The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)'s Groundwater Resources Division and Environmental Health Division, who responded with no comments.

The site is currently served by a private septic system and well. No new wells or septic tanks are proposed as part of this request. Any future wells constructed on-site will be subject to review under the County's Well Permitting Program, which will determine whether a new well will require environmental review. Any potential regulatory requirements regarding applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks can be enforced during the building permit review process. The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours. All applicable standards under Public Works and DER will be addressed under the building permit review process for any future building permit obtained for the site.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014 requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to oversee the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable management of the state's groundwater basins. Stanislaus County is a participating member in five GSA's across four groundwater subbasins, including: the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Subbasin, which covers a portion of Stanislaus County occurring north of the Stanislaus River; commonly referred to as the

“northern triangle”; the Modesto Groundwater Subbasin, which covers an area of land located between the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada foothills and east of the San Joaquin River; the Turlock Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land located between the Tuolumne and Merced rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada Foothills and occurring east of the San Joaquin River; and the Delta-Mendota Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land within Stanislaus County located west of the San Joaquin River and east of the basement rock of the Coast Range. Public and private water agencies and user groups within each of the four groundwater subbasins work together as GSA’s to implement SGMA. The project site is located in the Modesto Groundwater Subbasin, which is administered by the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association GSA. The project was referred to the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association GSA, and no comments were received regarding the proposed project.

Stanislaus County adopted a Groundwater Ordinance in November 2014 (Chapter 9.37 of the County Code, hereinafter, the “Ordinance”) that codifies requirements, prohibitions, and exemptions intended to help promote sustainable groundwater extraction in unincorporated areas of the County. The Ordinance prohibits the unsustainable extraction of groundwater and makes issuing permits for new wells, which are not exempt from this prohibition, discretionary. For unincorporated areas covered in an adopted GSP pursuant to SGMA, the County can require holders of permits for wells it reasonably concludes are withdrawing groundwater unsustainably to provide substantial evidence that continued operation of such wells does not constitute unsustainable extraction and has the authority to regulate future groundwater extraction. The site has an existing private well and septic system. There are no additional wells proposed as part of this request.

The project site is currently served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to MID, and no response has been received to date.

The solar modules on-site are proposed to be cleaned with demineralized water brought to the site by a professional solar cleaning company.

The project was referred to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and no response has been received to date.

As a result of the development standards required for this project, impacts associated with drainage, water quality, and runoff are expected to have a less than significant impact.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?			X	
b) 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?			X	

**Discussion:** The project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). The project is a request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm on an 11.08± acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The facility will be unmanned with a few occasional site visits expected per year for routine maintenance and cleaning. The site will be remotely monitored, with no full-time employees reporting to the site. No permanent restrooms, offices, or other on-site structures related to the facility are proposed. The applicant has proposed to enclose the solar farm with six-foot-tall chain link fencing. If approved, construction is anticipated to occur within 18 months of project approval. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program. No battery energy storage is proposed at this time. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained St. Francis Avenue via an existing driveway.

The proposed use is considered a Tier Three use, which are not directly related to agriculture but may be necessary to serve the A-2 district or may be difficult to locate in an urban area. As allowed under Section 21.020.030(C) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier Three uses may be allowed when the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and
2. The parcel on which such use is requested is not located in one of the county's "most productive agricultural areas," as that term is used in the agricultural element of the general plan; or the character of the use that is requested is such that the land may reasonably be returned to agricultural use in the future.

Based on the specific features and design of this project, it does not appear this project will impact the long-term productive agricultural capability of surrounding contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. There is no indication this project will result in the removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural use. With the application of conditions of approval, there is no indication that, under the circumstances of this particular case, the proposed operation will be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use or that it will be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

The Agricultural Element of the Stanislaus County General Plan, specifically Policy 2.5, Implementation Measure Three, encourages the development of alternative energy sources on lands located outside of the County's "Most Productive Agricultural Areas." Until the term "Most Productive Agricultural Areas" is defined on a county-wide basis, the term will be determined on a case-by-case basis when a proposal is made for the conversion of agricultural land. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to soil types and potential for agricultural production; the availability of irrigation water; ownership and parcelization patterns; uniqueness and flexibility of use; the existence of Williamson Act contracts; existing uses and their contributions to the agricultural sector of the local economy.

The applicant indicated that the soil is infected with *Armillaria* root rot (also known as oak root fungus). This fungus spreads underground through affected soil and gradually cuts off infected trees' abilities to transport water and nutrients, leading to progressive decline and eventual death of infected trees. Even after infected trees are removed, the fungus remains active in buried roots and woody debris, making complete eradication through conventional agricultural practices extremely difficult. The solar array is intended to create a long-term fallow condition that allows the fungus to naturally diminish over the course of the project's proposed 20-year lifespan. At the end of the project's lifespan, all equipment will be removed using shallow extraction methods, allowing the land to be returned to agricultural use without permanent soil disturbance.

As discussed in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. Based on the requested use consisting of an unmanned solar energy farm, staff believe the project can be considered low people intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The Planning Commission shall have the ultimate authority to determine if a use is "low people intensive."

The project site is not located within the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) or adopted General Plan area of any incorporated cities in Stanislaus County.

The project will not physically divide an established community nor conflict with any habitat conservation plans. This project is not known to conflict with any adopted land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project. No significant impacts associated with land use and planning are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project.

The project will not physically divide an established community nor conflict with any habitat conservation plans.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?			X	
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?			X	

**Discussion:** The location of all commercially viable mineral resources in Stanislaus County has been mapped by the State Division of Mines and Geology in Special Report 173. There are no known significant resources on the site, nor is the project site located in a geological area known to produce resources.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XIII. NOISE. Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

**Discussion:** The Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels up to 75 dB Ldn (or CNEL) as the normally acceptable level of noise for industrial and agricultural uses. Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses of up to 55 hourly Leq, dBA and 75 Lmax, dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 45 hourly Leq, dBA and 65 Lmax, dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Pure tone noises, such as music, shall be reduced by five dBA; however, when ambient noise levels exceed the standards, the standards shall be increased to the ambient noise levels. The nearest sensitive noise receptor is a residence located approximately 950 feet away, located on APN 004-017-034. Noise impacts associated with on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable level of noise. The site itself is impacted by the noise generated from traffic on St. Francis Avenue and farming operations in the surrounding area. The facility is proposed to be unmanned with only occasional site visits per year for routine cleaning and maintenance. Noise impacts associated with on-site activities will include vehicles entering and exiting the property and routine cleaning and maintenance of the equipment on-site. Such uses should be under the threshold established by the General Plan’s Noise Element and Chapter 10.46 of the County Code – Noise Control. On-site grading and construction resulting from this project may result in a temporary increase in the area’s ambient noise levels; however, noise impacts associated with on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable level of noise.

The site is not located within an airport land use plan. Noise impacts associated with the proposed project are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

**Discussion:** The site is not included in the vacant sites inventory for the County's 2023-2031 Housing Element, which covers the sixth cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the County and will therefore not impact the County's ability to meet their RHNA. No population growth will be induced nor will any existing housing be displaced as a result of this project.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:			X	
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

**Discussion:** This project was circulated to all applicable school, fire, police, irrigation, and public works departments and districts during the early consultation referral period and no concerns were identified with regard to public services including Salida Fire Protection District, the Stanislaus County Sheriff’s Office, Stanislaus Union and Modesto City Schools Districts, Stanislaus County Public Works Department, and Modesto Irrigation District (MID). Only Public Works responded with comments, which included standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The County has adopted Public Facilities Fees, as well as Fire Facility Fees on behalf of the appropriate fire district, to address impacts to public services. No structures subject to Public Facilities Fees are proposed as part of this project. However, should any such construction occur on the property in the future, all adopted public facility fees will be required to be paid at the time of building permit issuance.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated February 11, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XVI. RECREATION.	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X

**Discussion:** This project will not increase demands for recreational facilities, as such impacts typically are associated with residential development.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

**Discussion:** The project is a request to construct, operate, and maintain a 2± acre one-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar energy farm on an 11.08± acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The facility will be unmanned with a few occasional site visits expected per year for routine maintenance and cleaning. The site will be remotely monitored, with no full-time employees reporting to the site. No permanent restrooms, offices, or other on-site structures related to the facility are proposed. The applicant has proposed to enclose the solar farm with six-foot-tall chain link fencing. If approved, construction is anticipated to occur within 18 months of project approval. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program. No battery energy storage is proposed at this time. Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained St. Francis Avenue via an existing driveway. The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (a), defines VMT as the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. A technical advisory on evaluating transportation impacts in CEQA published by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in December of 2018 clarified the definition of automobiles as referring to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light trucks. According to the same OPR technical advisory, many local agencies have developed a screening threshold of VMT to indicate when detailed analysis is needed. Absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or General Plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. As the site is proposed to be unmanned, the proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with no regular visits to the site expected. As this is below the screening threshold of significance for vehicle trips, no significant impacts from vehicle trips to transportation are anticipated.

This project was referred to the Department of Public Works and the Salida Fire Protection District. Public Works responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with any transportation program, plan, ordinance or policy. Transportation impacts associated with the project are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Referral response received from the Department of Public Works, dated February 11, 2026; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code §21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California native American tribe, and that is:			X	
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			X	
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set for the in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			X	

**Discussion:** It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. In accordance with SB 18, this project was not referred to the tribes listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the project is not a General Plan Amendment. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco (S.F.) Bay Area has requested consultation in accordance with AB 52 for all projects located west of the San Joaquin River. This project is not located in that area. Accordingly, this project is not being sent to the Muwekma Ohlone S.F. Bay Area Tribe. If any resources are found during construction, construction activities would halt until a qualified survey takes place and the appropriate authorities are notified. A condition of approval regarding the discovery of cultural resources during any future construction process will be added to the project.

Impacts to tribal and cultural resources are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?			X	
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			X	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

**Discussion:** Limitations on providing services have not been identified. The project is served by a private on-site well and septic system and is served by the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) for electric and agricultural irrigation water services. The project was referred to MID, and no response has been received to date. The project will be interconnected with the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) as part of its Feed-in Tarriff program. The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER)'s Environmental Health and Groundwater Resources Divisions, both of which responded with no comments.

The project was referred to Public Works, who responded with standard conditions of approval that will be applied to the project such as an encroachment permit needing to be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way; no parking, loading, or unloading of vehicles being permitted within the County road right-of-way; that irrevocable offers of dedication be provided; and all storm drainage facilities being designed using a 100-year, 24-hour storm and being capable of dewatering the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 48 hours.

The project was also referred to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB), and no response has been received to date.

The solar modules on-site are proposed to be cleaned with demineralized water brought to the site by a professional solar cleaning company.

Impacts to utilities are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XX. WILDFIRE. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?			X	
c) Require the installation of maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			X	
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			X	

**Discussion:** The terrain of the site is relatively flat, and the site has access to County maintained St. Francis Avenue. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by Salida Fire Protection District. The project was referred to Salida Fire Protection District, and no response has been received to date. However, the project site may be required to annex into the Salida Fire Protection District's Community Finance District as a condition of approval. Installation of the solar array will be subject to building permits and will be reviewed by the County's Building Permits Division and Fire Prevention Bureau to ensure all State of California Building and Fire Code requirements are met prior to construction.

Considering the details and requirements listed above, impacts to Wildfire are considered to be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

**Discussion:** The project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Eastern Stanislaus County Soil Survey indicates that the project site consists of Tujunga sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (TuA). The site is classified as “Prime Farmland” by the California Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The remaining 2.58± acres of the project site are classified as “Prime Farmland.”

The proposed footprint of the PV solar panel is located across both Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) 004-017-028 and 004-017-038. APN 004-017-028 (11.48± acres) is uncontracted while 004-017-038 (9.6± acres) is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1975-1933. A lot line adjustment is being requested with the subject use permit application to reconfigure and adjust the two project parcels from 9.6± and 11.48± acres to 10± and 11.08± acres. If the proposed lot line adjustment is approved, a rescission of the existing Williamson Act contract will occur, which will allow the proposed solar energy farm to be placed entirely on the resultant 11.08± acre, non-Williamson Act contracted parcel and the adjusted 10± acre parcel to be enrolled into a new Williamson Act Contract.

The Agricultural Element of the Stanislaus County General Plan, specifically Policy 2.5, Implementation Measure Three, encourages the development of alternative energy sources on lands located outside of the County’s “Most Productive Agricultural Areas.” Until the term “Most Productive Agricultural Areas” is defined on a county-wide basis, the term will be determined on a case-by-case basis when a proposal is made for the conversion of agricultural land. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to soil types and potential for agricultural production; the availability of irrigation water; ownership and parcelization patterns; uniqueness and flexibility of use; the existence of Williamson Act contracts; existing uses and their contributions to the agricultural sector of the local economy.

The applicant indicated that the soil is infected with Armillaria root rot (also known as oak root fungus). This fungus spreads underground through affected soil and gradually cuts off infected trees’ abilities to transport water and nutrients, leading to progressive decline and eventual death of infected trees. Even after infected trees are removed, the fungus remains active in buried roots and woody debris, making complete eradication through conventional agricultural practices extremely difficult. The solar array is intended to create a long-term fallow condition that allows the fungus to naturally diminish over the course of the project’s proposed 20-year lifespan. At the end of the project’s lifespan, all equipment will be removed using shallow extraction methods, allowing the land to be returned to agricultural use without permanent soil disturbance.

The proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land, nor will the project result in the conversion of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance.

As the facility will be unmanned with no regular vehicle trips to the site expected, the proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips. Accordingly, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality and transportation are anticipated.

As discussed in Section XI- *Land Use and Planning*, within the A-2 zoning district, a Tier One Use Permit must be obtained to operate a firewood cutting operation. As allowed under Section 21.020.030(A) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier One uses may be allowed when the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and
2. The parcel on which such use is requested is not located in one of the county's "most productive agricultural areas," as that term is used in the agricultural element of the general plan; or the character of the use that is requested is such that the land may reasonably be returned to agricultural use in the future.

The land surrounding the project site is zoned A-2 and is subject to the permitted uses of the A-2 zoning district. Any use requiring land use entitlements would be subject to further environmental review, application of conditions of approval and necessary mitigation, and discretionary vote by the decision-making body, either the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.

The project requests to be served by an existing well and septic system; however, no impacts with respect to either have been raised.

The project site is not located within the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) or adopted General Plan area of any incorporated cities in Stanislaus County.

Review of this project has not indicated any features which might significantly impact the environmental quality of the site and/or the surrounding area.

**Mitigation:** None.

**References:** Initial Study; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation adopted in August 23, 2016, as amended. **Housing Element** adopted on December 9, 2025, Certified by Ca HCD on December 31, 2025.

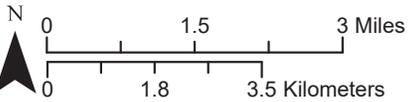
# LAYMAN

## UP LLA PLN2025-0103

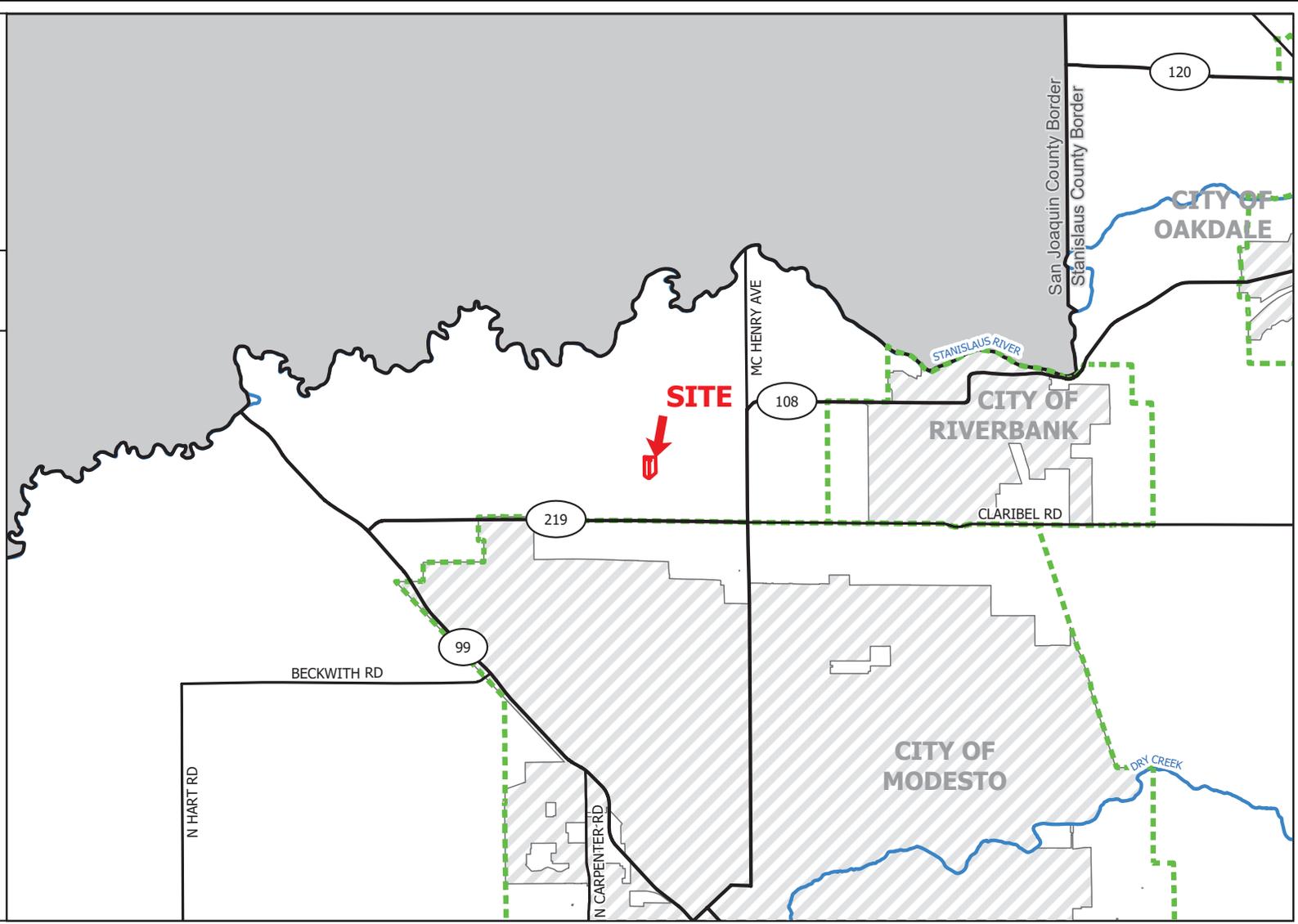
### AREA MAP

#### LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Highway
-  Major Road
-  River



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 12/4/2025





# LAYMAN

## UP LLA PLN2025-0103

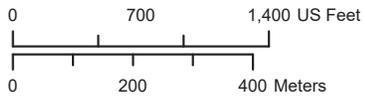
### ZONING

#### LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Street
-  Canal

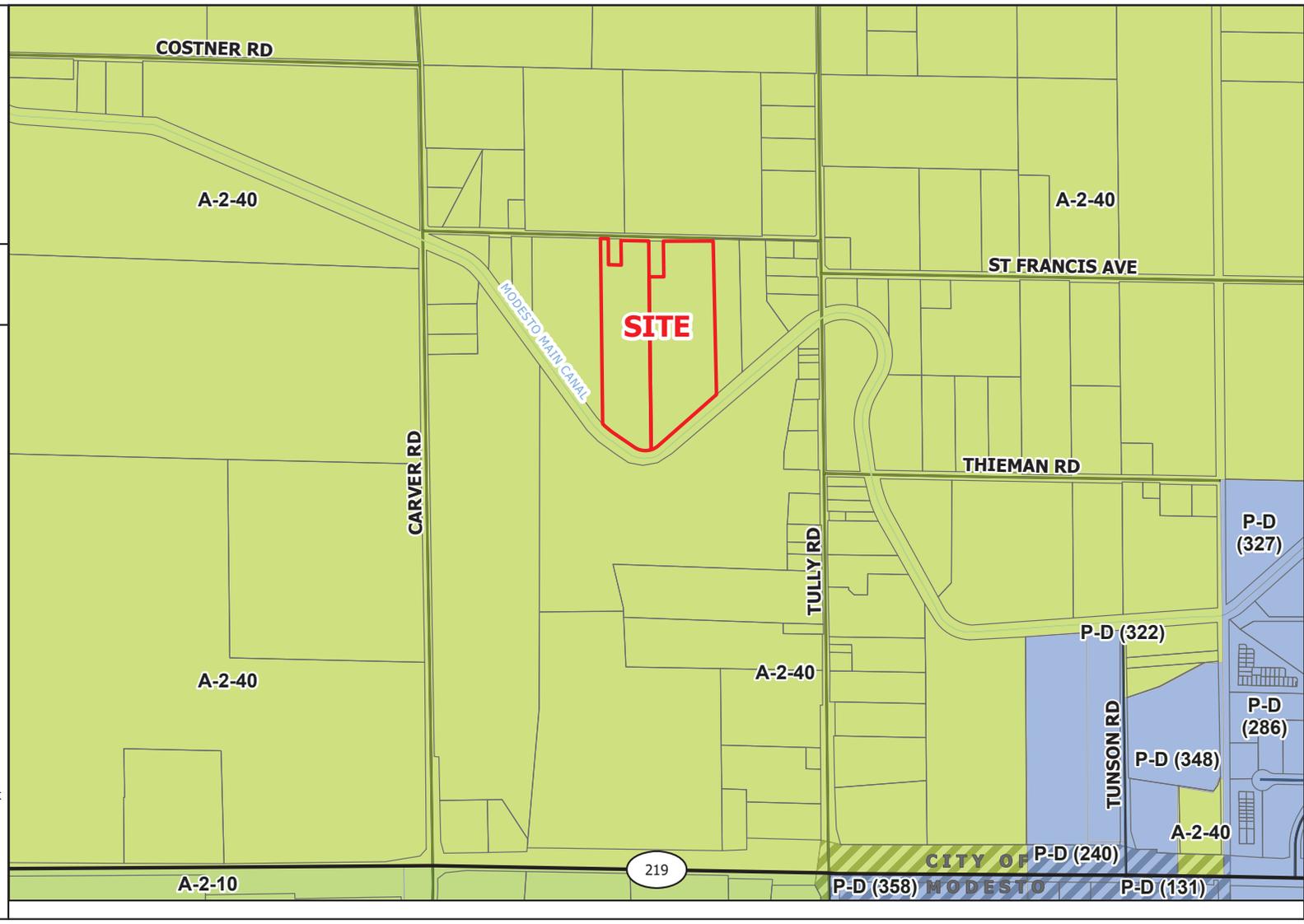
#### Zoning Designation

-  General AG 10 Acre UT (A-2-10)
-  General AG 40 Acre (A-2-40)
-  Planned Development (P-D)



Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 12/29/2025



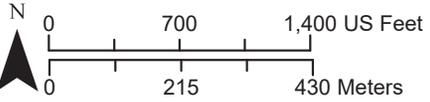
# LAYMAN

## UP LLA PLN2025-0103

### 2023 AERIAL AREA MAP

#### LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Highway
-  Street
-  Canal



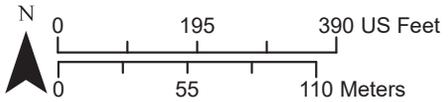
# LAYMAN

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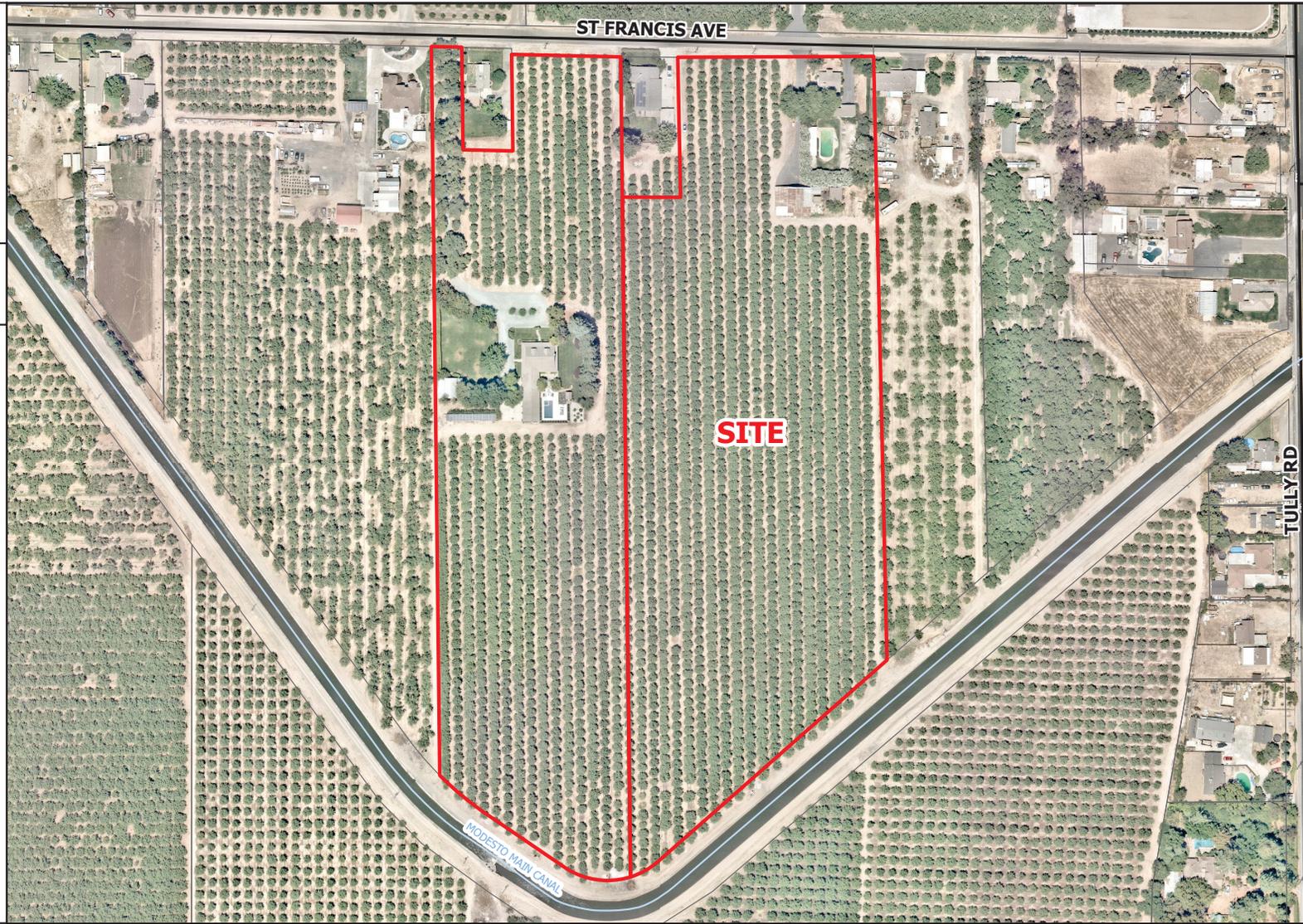
### 2023 AERIAL SITE MAP

#### LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Street
-  Canal



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 12/4/2025



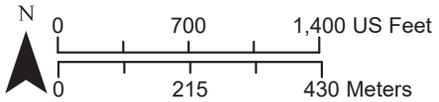
# LAYMAN

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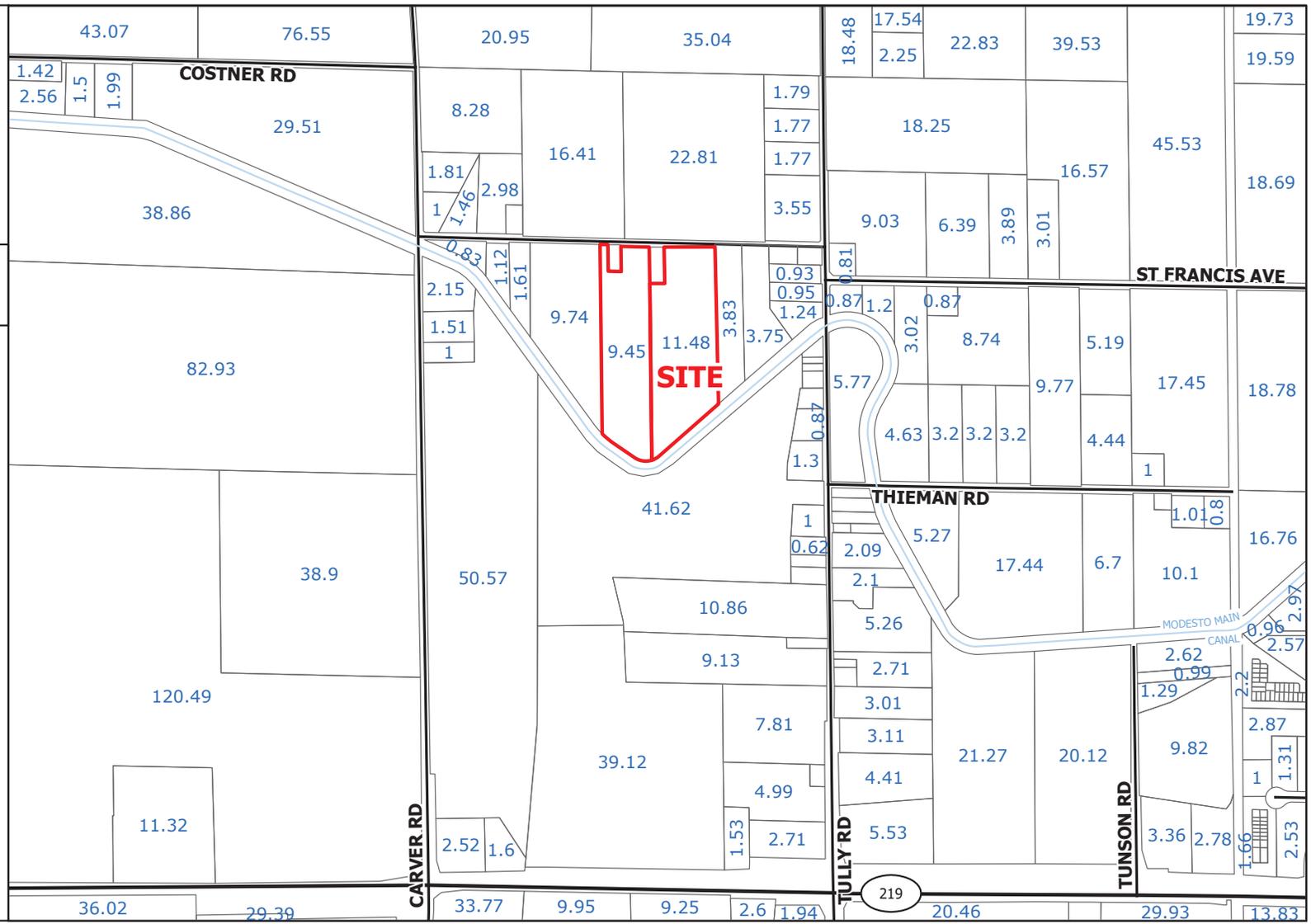
### ACREAGE MAP

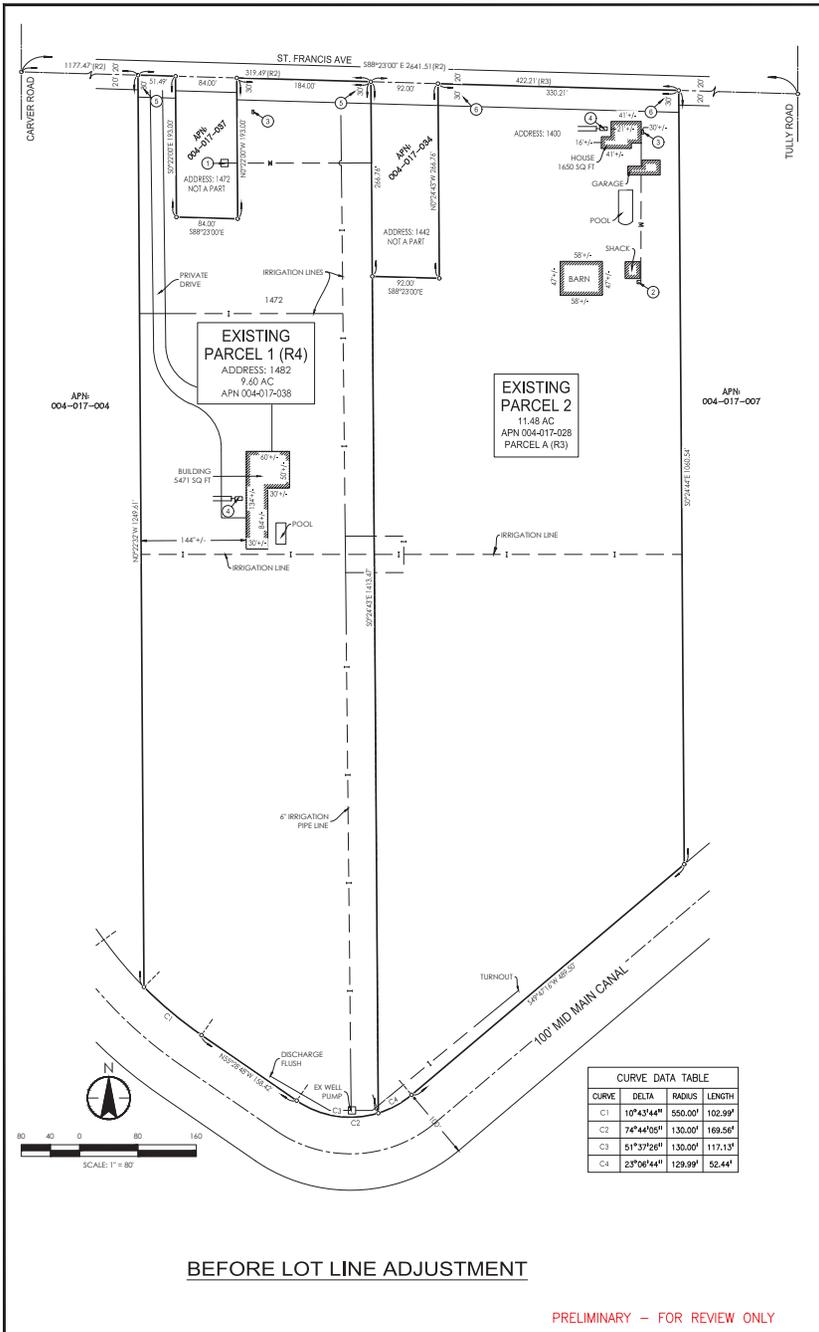
#### LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Highway
-  Street
-  Canal



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 12/4/2025

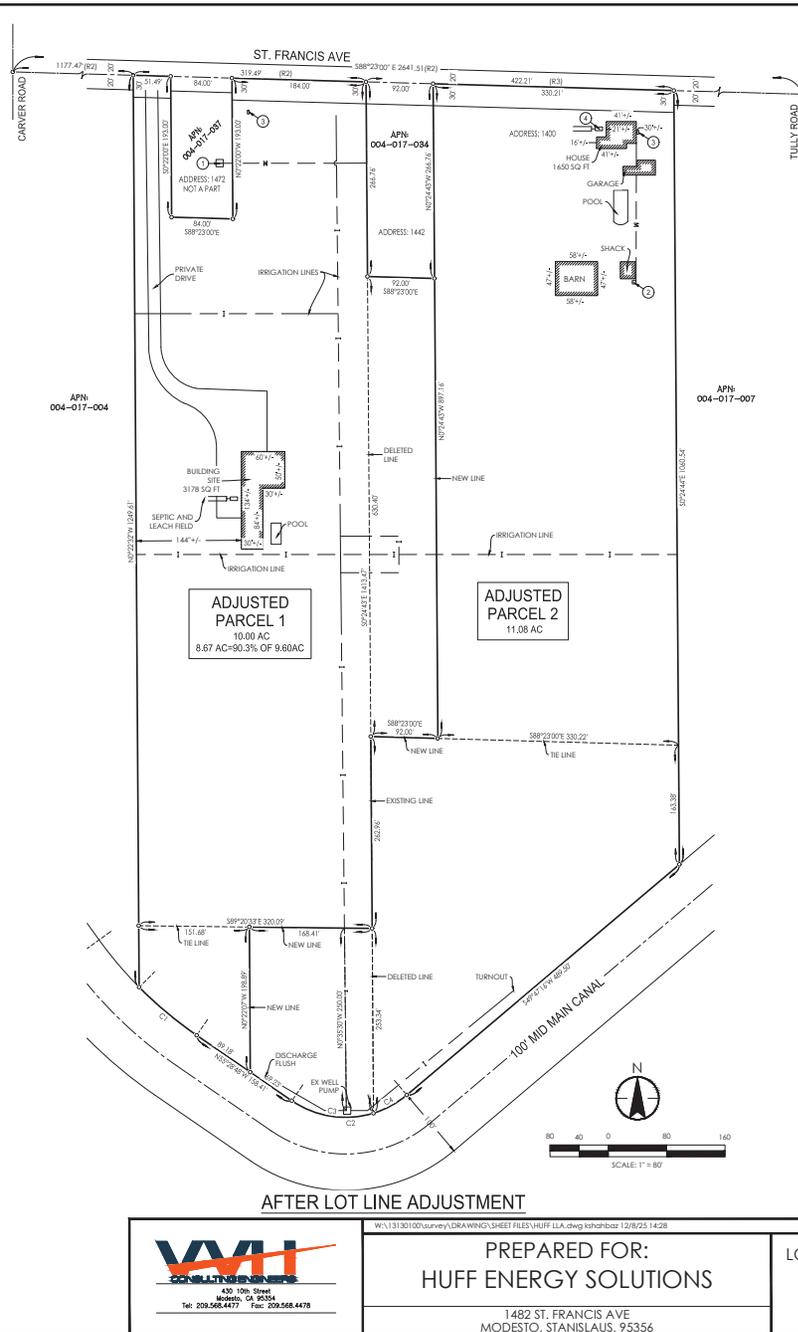




CURVE DATA TABLE			
CURVE	DELTA	RADIUS	LENGTH
C1	107°43'44"	550.00'	102.99'
C2	74°44'05"	130.00'	169.56'
C3	51°37'56"	130.00'	117.13'
C4	23°08'44"	129.99'	52.44'

BEFORE LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT

PRELIMINARY - FOR REVIEW ONLY



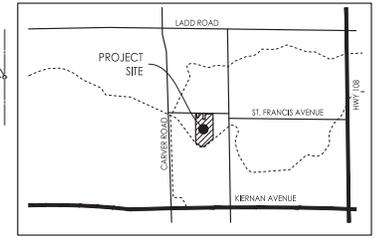
AFTER LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT



PREPARED FOR:  
**HUFF ENERGY SOLUTIONS**  
 1482 ST. FRANCIS AVE  
 MODESTO, STANISLAUS, 95356

LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT NO. XX-XX PLAT  
 APN 004-017-028 & 038  
 1482 ST. FRANCIS AVE  
 MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

MT 10/01/2025  
 EXHIBIT 1



VICINITY MAP  
 NOT TO SCALE

PROPERTY OWNER:  
 ERIC LAYMAN, TRUSTEE  
 SUE LAYMAN, TRUSTEE  
 ERIC AND SUE LAYMAN REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST  
 1482 SAINT FRANCIS AVENUE MODESTO, CA 95356  
 APN 004-017-038 AND 038

ABBREVIATION:  
 BK BOOK  
 SCR STANISLAUS COUNTY RECORD  
 APN ASSessor'S PARCEL NUMBER  
 VOL VOLUME

AGRICULTURAL LAND:  
 ALMOND ORCHARD  
 IRRIGATED WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM

SUMMARY OF ADJUSTMENTS:  
 EX PARCEL 1 = 9.60 AC  
 EX PARCEL 2 = 11.48 AC  
 TOTAL = 21.08 AC  
 ADJ PARCEL 1 = 10.00 AC  
 ADJ PARCEL 2 = 11.08 AC  
 TOTAL = 21.08 AC

REFERENCES:

- (R1) BOOK 7 OF MAPS, PAGE 45, SCR
- (R2) BOOK 27 OF SURVEYS, PAGE 53, SCR
- (R3) BOOK 3 OF PARCEL MAPS, PAGE 53, SCR
- (R4) GRANT DEED, BOOK 1506 OR PAGE 430, INST. 54-2500, SCR

BASIS OF BEARINGS:

A BEARING OF NORTH 88°23'00" EAST FOR THE CENTERLINE OF SAINT FRANCIS AVENUE, AS SHOWN ON BOOK 27 OF SURVEYS, PAGE 53, STANISLAUS COUNTY RECORDS

ZONING INFORMATION:

EXISTING PARCELS ARE ZONED: AG-40 AND IN WILLIAMSON ACT ZONE A-2-10

FLOOD INFORMATION:

THE PARCELS ARE WITHIN ZONE X; 0.2% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD. AREAS OF 1% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD WITH AVERAGE DEPTH LESS THAN ONE FOOT OR WITH DRAINAGE AREAS OF LESS THAN ONE SQUARE MILE, AS SHOWN ON FEMA MAP 06099C0310E, EFFECTIVE DATE OF September 26, 2008

LABEL NOTES:

- ① EXISTING DOMESTIC WATER WELL SERVING THE ADDRESSES 1482, 1472 & 1482 ST. FRANCIS AVENUE
- ② EXISTING DOMESTIC WATER WELL SERVING THE ADDRESS 1400 ST. FRANCIS AVENUE
- ③ EXISTING GAS METER
- ④ EXISTING SEPTIC AND LEACH FIELD
- ⑤ 30' WIDE ROAD EASEMENT DEED PER DN 92-048899, SCR
- ⑥ 30' WIDE ROAD EASEMENT DEED PER DN 1967-10599



Eric Layman  
 12/08/2025



HUFF ENERGY SOLUTIONS  
4917 STODDARD ROAD  
MODESTO, CA 95356

**PROJECT**

**LAYMAN**

1482 ST FRANCIS AVENUE  
MODESTO, CA 95356

DATE	REV	DETAILS
1/27/26	A	AHJ REDLINES

**PROPERTY PLAN**



DC SYSTEM SIZE: 999.54 kW  
AC SYSTEM SIZE: 750.00 kW

**PV-02**

AHJ: STANISLAUS COUNTY  
UTILITY: MID  
DRAWN BY: MZV  
DATE: 5/27/25



HUFF ENERGY SOLUTIONS  
4917 STODDARD ROAD  
MODESTO, CA 95356

**PROJECT**

**LAYMAN**

1482 ST FRANCIS AVENUE  
MODESTO, CA 95356

DATE	REV	DETAILS
1/27/26	A	AHJ REDLINES

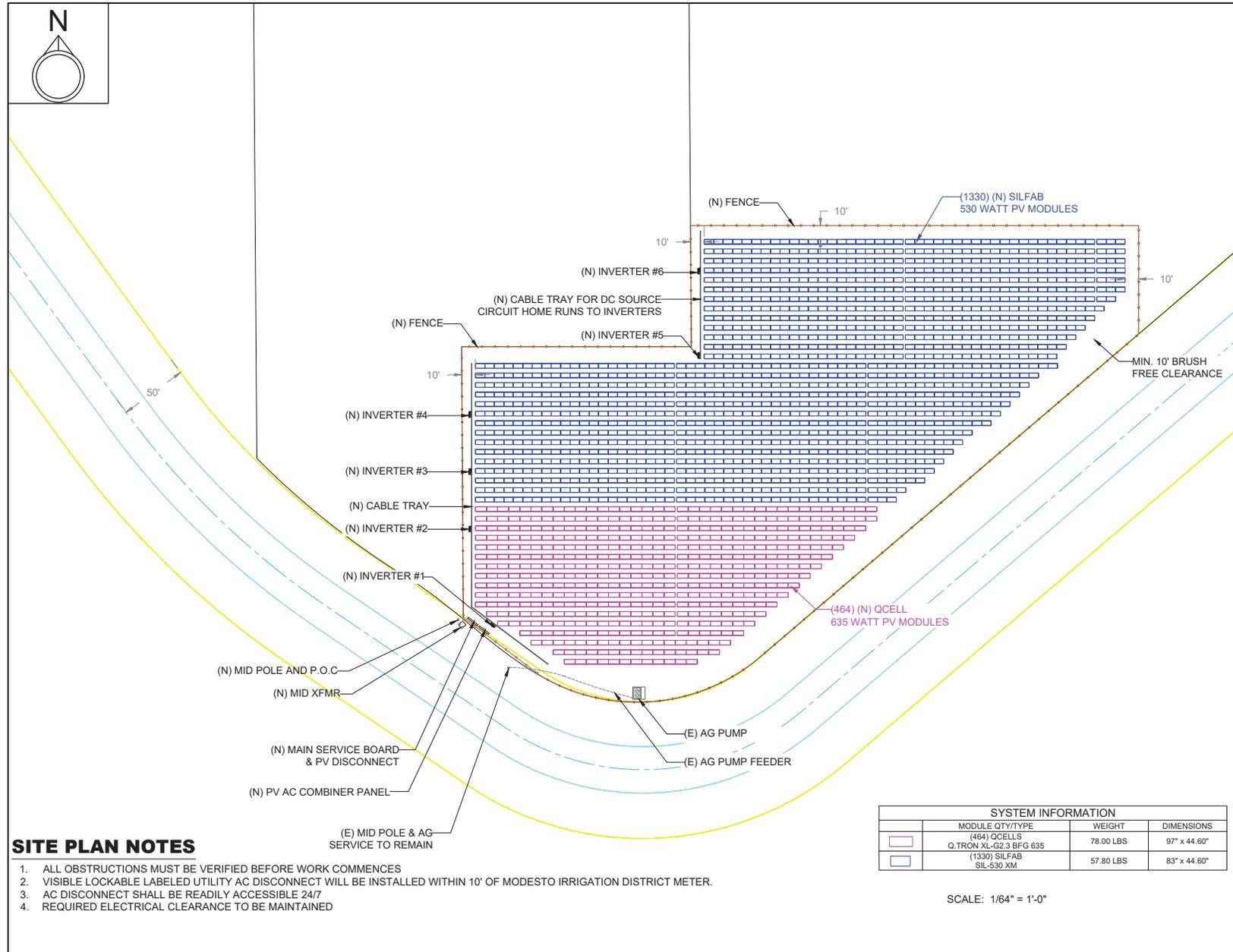
**SITE PLAN**



DC SYSTEM SIZE: 999.54 kW  
AC SYSTEM SIZE: 750.00 kW

**PV-03**

AHJ: STANISLAUS COUNTY  
UTILITY: MID  
DRAWN BY: MZV  
DATE: 5/27/25



**SITE PLAN NOTES**

1. ALL OBSTRUCTIONS MUST BE VERIFIED BEFORE WORK COMMENCES
2. VISIBLE LOCKABLE LABELED UTILITY AC DISCONNECT WILL BE INSTALLED WITHIN 10' OF MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT METER.
3. AC DISCONNECT SHALL BE READILY ACCESSIBLE 24/7
4. REQUIRED ELECTRICAL CLEARANCE TO BE MAINTAINED

SYSTEM INFORMATION			
MODULE QTY/TYPE	WEIGHT	DIMENSIONS	
(464) OCELLS Q.TRON XL-G2.3 BFG 635	78.00 LBS	97" x 44.60"	
(1330) SILFAB SIL-530 XM	57.80 LBS	83" x 44.60"	

SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

