

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING FOR THE
SCARLET SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT**

Date: September 12, 2018

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

From: County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services and Capital Projects Division
2220 Tulare Street, Sixth Floor
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Scarlet Solar Energy Project (Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3555)

Action: The County of Fresno (County) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Scarlet Solar Energy Project. The EIR will analyze potential environmental impacts of the proposed project (EIR No. 7230).

Project Title: Scarlet Solar Energy Project

Project Applicant: RE Scarlet LLC

Project Summary:

RE Scarlet LLC (Applicant), a wholly owned subsidiary of Recurrent Energy (RE) LLC, has submitted to the County Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3555 to construct, operate, maintain, and ultimately decommission a 400-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility and 400 MW energy storage system and associated infrastructure to be known as the Scarlet Solar Energy Project (Project). The Project would provide solar power to utility customers by interconnecting to the regional electricity grid at Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) Tranquillity Switching Station. The approximately 4,089-acre Project site is in unincorporated Fresno County, approximately 3.5 miles west-southwest of the community of Tranquillity and approximately 6.5 miles east of Interstate 5. The Project site is primarily dry-farmed agriculture that has been intermittently irrigated. A more detailed description is provided below.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are summarized in the attachment. A copy of the Initial Study is not attached, but is available at the following locations:

- Fresno County Public Works and Planning Department, 2220 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93721
- Fresno County website: www.co.fresno.ca.us/EIR

Written Comments:

As required by Section 15082 and CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared and distributed to solicit comments from potential Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other public agencies so that Project-related concerns relevant to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project can be addressed in the EIR, as well as any related issues from interested parties other than potential Responsible and Trustee Agencies, including other agencies and affected members of the public. The EIR will be the environmental document of reference for Responsible and Trustee Agencies when considering subsequent discretionary approvals.

The County requests that any potential Responsible or Trustee Agencies responding to this NOP reply in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, which allows for submittal of any comments in response to this notice no later than 30 days after receipt of the NOP. Comments in response to this NOP will be accepted through **5:00 p.m., Monday, October 15, 2018.**

Please send your written comments to:

Attn: Christina Monfette
Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services and Capital Projects Division
2220 Tulare Street, Sixth Floor
Fresno, CA 93721
Phone: (559) 600-4245 Fax: (559) 600-4200
Email: cmonfette@FresnoCountyCA.gov

Please reference EIR No. 7230, Scarlet Solar Energy Project. Please include your name, address, and phone number and/or email address so that we may contact you for clarification, if necessary.

Public Scoping Meeting:

Consistent with the California Public Resources Code and Section 15083(c)(1), (2)(A) to (D) of the CEQA Guidelines, a public scoping meeting will be held to solicit public and agency comments on the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The Public Scoping Meeting will be held on:

Date: October 11, 2018
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Place: Mendota Library

The meeting is an opportunity to gather information from the public regarding the potential environmental impacts of the project that need to be evaluated in the EIR. It is not intended to be a hearing on the merits of the project. Therefore, members of the public should focus their comments on potential significant changes to the environment that may occur as a direct result of the Project.

Signature: _____
Marianne Mollring, Senior Planner

Date: _____

NOTICE OF PREPARATION ATTACHMENT SCARLET SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT

Project Location:

The Project site is located in unincorporated Fresno County, approximately 3.5 miles west-southwest of the community of Tranquillity and approximately 6.5 miles east of Interstate 5. The site includes up to 33 parcels¹ located generally south of West South Avenue, north of West Dinuba Avenue, east of Ohio Avenue and State Route 33 (SR 33, South Derrick Avenue), and west of South San Mateo Avenue. See Figure 1, Scarlet Solar Project Site Location.

Physical Setting:

The Project site consists of disturbed agricultural land that is primarily dry-farmed, typically for grain or forage crops. The site is subject to high levels of selenium and a water table with drainage insufficient for most commercially-irrigated crops. All of the parcels, except for one, are currently owned by Westlands Water District and are part of Westlands Water District settlements. Eleven of the site's Westlands Water District parcels are currently under a non-irrigation covenant; over at least the past five years, some of these parcels have been farmed but none have been irrigated. Upon transfer of ownership, non-irrigation covenants will apply to all the parcels that had been owned by Westlands Water District. For the portion of the Project site that is cultivated without the benefit of irrigation, the productivity of these crops depends entirely on rainfall.

A small portion of the Project area is located on the Tranquillity Solar Project site and is currently developed with the Tranquillity Switching Station. Two existing PG&E overhead transmission lines are located on the north side of Dinuba Avenue, along the southern portion of the Project site. There are also existing PG&E utility lines at the site that would remain in place with an easement granted to PG&E for access.

Adjacent land uses include agriculture to the north, east, and west of the Scarlet Solar Energy Project site and two rural residences and the Tranquillity Solar Facility to the south.

General Plan Designation: Agriculture

Zoning: AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size)

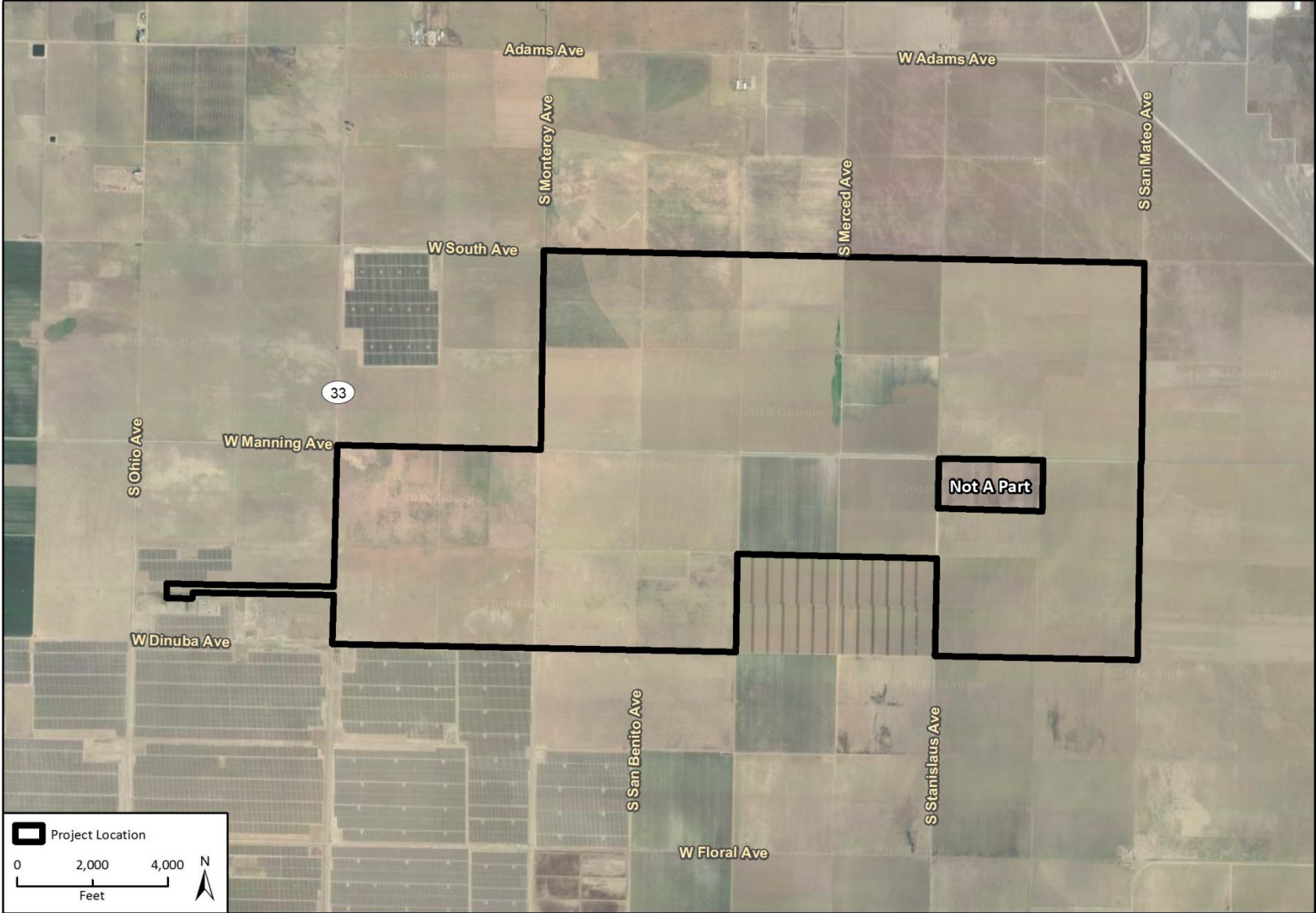
Major Components of the Project:

The Project consists of two major components: the solar facility and the PG&E improvements. The solar facility would include solar PV modules, support structures, electrical inverters, intermediate voltage transformers, two electrical substations, and a switchyard, and a generation intertie (gen-tie) transmission line. Each substation area would include an electrical control building. Other necessary infrastructure would include a permanent operation and maintenance building, a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system, up to 400 MW of on-site battery storage, meteorological data system, telecommunications infrastructure, access roads, and security fencing. The solar PV modules at the site would operate year-round to generate solar electricity during daylight hours and would generate up to 400 MW of solar power.

¹ The Project would be constructed on any or all of assessor parcels 028-07-134, 028-07-139, 028-07-140, 028-07-141, 028-07-143, 028-07-144, 028-07-145, 028-07-147, 028-07-148, 028-07-149, 028-08-166, 028-11-101, 028-11-102, 028-11-104, 028-11-106, 028-11-107, 028-11-109, 028-11-110, 028-11-112, 028-11-113, 028-11-114, 028-11-115, 028-11-116, 028-11-117, 028-11-119, 028-11-120, 028-12-061, 028-12-062, 028-10-074, 028-10-072, 028-10-082, 028-10-081, and 028-101-75S.

Improvements to PG&E electrical infrastructure would include expansion of PG&E's Tranquillity Switching Station and approximately 1,900 feet of 230 kV transmission line to connect the solar facility's 230 kV gen-tie line to the Tranquillity Switching Station.

Figure 1: Scarlet Solar Energy Project Site Location



Imagery provided by Google and its licensors © 2018.

Fig 1 Project Location_DemoSample_Stack

Alternatives to be Analyzed in the EIR:

In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Draft EIR will assess a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project. The range of alternatives to be addressed will include a No Project Alternative as well as other alternatives that would attain most of the basic objectives of the Project while avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects. Potential alternatives will be identified during the coordinated consultation and scoping process.

Potential Environmental Effects and Issues Scoped for EIR:

The Initial Study describes the proposed Project's potential environmental effects. Issue areas that may be determined to be potentially significant include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Issues determined not to be significant under CEQA thresholds of significance include:

- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources