

Plan Area: North County Land Use Plan

Flagged and Staked: No

SUMMARY:

The subject property is located approximately 1 mile north of the community of Moss Landing. The applicant requests to install a 415 kW ground mount photovoltaic system (solar array) to provide renewable energy to the existing agricultural support facilities on the site. The 20.30 acre parcel contains several agriculturally related uses; row crops, agricultural support facilities, paved and non-paved parking and farm equipment storage areas, and an irrigation pond. The property is encumbered by a William Act Contract (No. 68-011) which provides a list of compatible uses. Monterey County reference material indicates that there is potential for archaeological resources to exist on site. These issues are analyzed in the discussion below.

DISCUSSION:

The property contains two zoning designations: Agricultural Conservation, Coastal Zone or “AC(CZ)” and Resource Conservation, Coastal Zone or “RC(CZ)”. The area being proposed for development is wholly zoned AC(CZ). The project has been analyzed for consistency with the existing agricultural uses (row-crop farming and cold storage and shipping facilities) and the long-term viability of agricultural resources in North County. In addition, analysis of the project included consistency with policies for the protection of archaeological resources.

The intended use of the solar array, which is to provide power to on-site agriculture operations, allows it to be considered as an agricultural support facility, which is an allowed use in the AC(CZ) zoning district and is consistent with Policy 2.6.4.3 of the North County Land Use Plan (NC LUP) which recommends alternative energy resources be provided for agricultural support facilities. In addition, placement of the solar array is proposed in an area designated as “Urban and Built Up Land” in the Monterey County Geographic Information System. Furthermore, the development site has not been farmed and has been a dirt area used for parking and storage of farm equipment for the last 14 years, consistent with Policy 2.6.3.3 of the NC LUP. Since the purpose of the project is to provide renewable energy to existing cold storage and shipping agricultural support facilities on the site, it is consistent with the compatible uses listed in Exhibit B of the Williamson Act Contract.

As required by Section 20.144.110.a.1 of the North County Coastal Implementation Plan, the applicant was required to submit an archaeological report (Monterey County File No. LIB180252). This report concluded that although resources have been found in proximity of the subject property, there are no known/or identified resources in the development area. To ensure protection of any resources which are accidentally uncovered during construction, the project has been conditioned to require all work be stopped if resources are found until they be evaluated by a professional archaeologist and the project planner to determine the extent of those resources and develop proper procedures for recovery (Condition No. 3).

CEQA

No environmental impacts have been identified. The proposed solar array will provide a renewable energy resource to only the existing agricultural processing facilities located on the subject property, which qualifies the project as a Class “3” Categorical Exemption pursuant to section 15303(e) of the CEQA Guidelines. No issues remain.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following agencies have reviewed the project, have comments, and/or have recommended conditions:

- Environmental Health Bureau
- RMA-Public Works
- RMA-Environmental Services

Water Resources Agency
North County Fire Protection District
County of Monterey Agricultural Commissioner's Office
California Coastal Commission

FINANCING:

Funding for staff time associated with this project is included in the FY17-18/FY18-19 Adopted Budgets for RMA-Planning.

Prepared by: Anna V. Quenga, Senior Planner, x5175
Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager
Approved by: John M. Dugan, FAICP, Deputy Director of Land Use and Development Services

The following attachments are on file with the RMA:

- Exhibit A Project Data Sheet
- Exhibit B Draft Resolution including:
 - Conditions of approval
 - Site Plans

cc: Front Counter Copy; Zoning Administrator; California Coastal Commission; Brandon Swanson, RMA Services Manager; Anna V. Quenga, Senior Planner; Enable Energy, Agent; MFJK Partnership, Owner; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Executive Director); Project File PLN180115.