

1.0 Introduction

This document provides an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed Hellman Solar PV Electrical System Project. The proposed Project would consist of the installation and operation of a 1.5 megawatt (MW) fixed-tilt ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system. This system would interconnect with the Hellman Property's electrical infrastructure and operate in parallel with the utility grid to provide sustainable clean energy in support of the facilities operations and export any excess power to the utility grid.

The proposed Project would require a Minor Use Permit (MUP) from the City of Seal Beach. The proposed Project requires compliance with environmental procedures (CEQA and CEQA Guidelines), with the City of Seal Beach serving as CEQA Lead Agency. The proposed Project would also require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the California Coastal Commission.

The preparation of the Initial Study and MND is governed by two principal sets of documents: The California Environmental Quality Act (hereinafter "CEQA," *California Public Resources Code* §21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (*California Code of Regulations* §15000, et seq.). The environmental analysis presented in this document primarily focuses on the changes in the environment that would result from the proposed Project. The environmental analysis also evaluates all phases of the Project, including construction and operation.

In compliance with state law and procedures, the City has determined that an MND is the appropriate environmental compliance document for the proposed Project. The Initial Study checklist form and explanation discussion format meets the requirements of the CEQA. Section 15063(d)(3) requires that the entries on the Initial Study checklist identifying environmental effects be briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries. An Initial Study/MND is not intended or required to include a level of detail that would be provided in an EIR. Therefore, in compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the IS/MND is not intended to be a lengthy, detailed document.

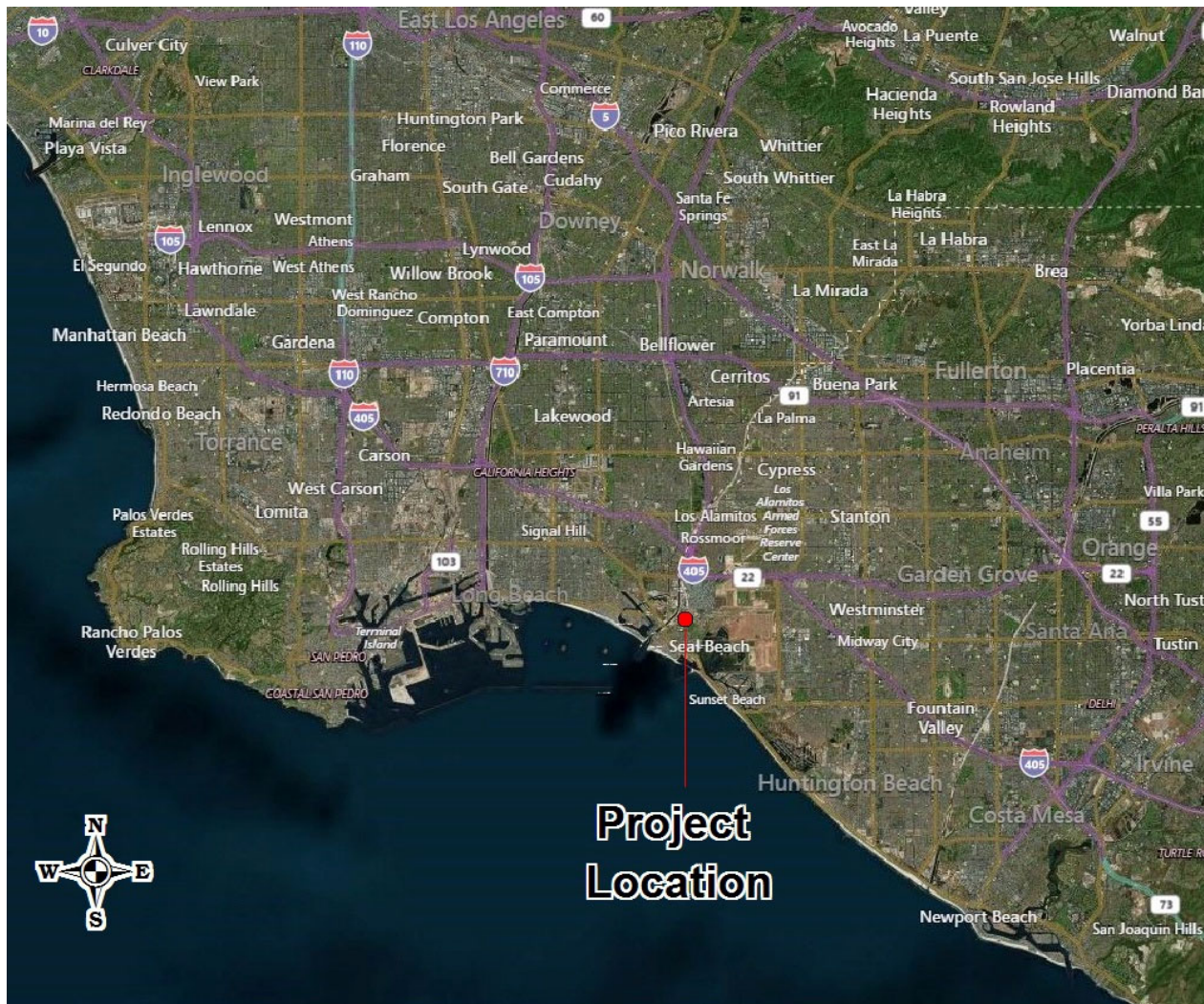
The CEQA Initial Study Checklist is used throughout Section 3.0, Environmental Analysis to assess the impacts of the proposed Project. Certain documents are incorporated by reference into this Initial Study/MND pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15150. These documents are included in the references listed in Section 4.0 of the document and are available for inspection at the City of Seal Beach offices. Several technical reports were used in developing the Initial Study/MND. These technical reports are included as Appendices to the Initial Study/MND.

1.1 Project Location and Surrounding Land Uses

The proposed Project site is located just north of First Street in the City of Seal Beach on parcel APN 95-010-68. The proposed Solar PV Electrical System would be located on a 4.66 acre site within the existing Hellman Ranch Oil and Gas Production Facility (OGPF). The existing Hellman Ranch OGPF site is located east of the San Gabriel River, and north of Pacific Coast Highway in the City of Seal Beach and covers about 57 acres. Seal Beach is located in the northwest portion of the County of Orange. A "Regional Map" is provided as Figure 1-1. Hellman Properties, LLC owns and operates the OGPF on the Hellman Ranch in Seal Beach, California, and would be the owner and operator of the proposed Solar PV Electrical System. A project area map is provided in Figure 1-2, that shows the location of the Hellman Ranch Oil and Gas facility property. The Hellman Ranch property is located within The City's Planning Area 2 and is zoned as Oil Extraction (OE).

The property to the south of the proposed Project site is owned by the Los Cerritos Wetland Authority. This property is about 100 acres in size and is zoned open space-natural (OS-N). The property to the north of the proposed Project site is owned by the County of Orange and serves as a regional retention basin. This property is about 43 acres in size and is zoned open space-natural (OS-N). To the west of the proposed Project site is the Department of Water and Power Haynes Cooling Channel. On the far west side of the channel is property owned by the Los Cerritos Wetland Authority, which is about 71 acres in size covering both sides of the San Gabriel River. This property is located within the City of Long Beach.

Figure 1-1 Regional Map



Source: Google, Google Earth data © Google 2023.

To the east of the proposed project property site is a small open space area that contains the Hellman Ranch Trail. This area is zoned open-space natural (OS-N). Just to the east of this open space is residential housing comprised of all single-family homes. This area is zoned Residential Low Density-9 (RLD-9).

1.2 Purpose and Need for Project

Currently, the electrical power used for the Hellman Ranch Oil and Gas facilities, and the other associated facilities, such as the offsite gas plant, production wells, pump stations, etc. is provided by an onsite gas turbine generator and Southern California Edison via a direct connection with their electrical grid system.

Figure 1-2 Project Area Map



Source: Google, Google Earth data © Google 2023.

Hellman Properties is proposing to install a 1.5 MW Solar PV Electrical System, which would interconnect with the Hellman Property's electrical infrastructure and operate in parallel with the utility grid to provide sustainable clean energy in support of the various Hellman Property facilities operations. Use of solar power to provide electrical power for the facility operations would serve to reduce overall air emissions associated with electrical power generation and reduce the overall operating cost of the Hellman facilities.

1.3 Public Agency Approvals Required

Table 1-1 provides a list of agencies that would need to issue permits for the proposed Solar PV Electrical System. The remainder of this section discusses the key public agencies that have permitting authority over the various operations at the Hellman Ranch Property.

City of Seal Beach

The proposed Project would be located within the City of Seal Beach, and the project would require a minor use permit (MUP) from the City. Section 11.2.15.010 of the City Municipal Code covers use regulations for the oil extraction district. Table 11.2.15.010 shows that a MUP is required for major utility projects within the oil extraction zone. The MUP would be subject to approval by the Planning Commission, whose decision can be appealed to the City Council.

Table 1-1 Permits or Other Actions Required for Implementation of the Proposed Project

Agency	Jurisdiction	Permit/Action
City of Seal Beach	CEQA Lead Agency, Land Use Authority	Certification of the IS/MND Minor Use Permit (MUP) Compliance Review and Construction Permits Operations Compliance
California Coastal Commission	Land Use Authority Under the Coastal Act for Projects within the Coastal Zone	Coastal Development Permit (CDP)
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Control of Stormwater Runoff from Construction Sites Greater than 1 Acre	Construction General Permit (CGP) and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

The City of Seal Beach, as the CEQA lead agency, will act first on the Project before any of the responsible agencies act on the Project. The City of Seal Beach decision-makers (Planning Commission and on appeal, the City Council) will use the IS/MND for decision-making regarding the proposed Project. If the proposed Project is approved by all required permitting agencies, the City would be responsible for reviewing and approving all pre-construction compliance plans and ensuring that the proposed Project modifications and operations are conducted in accordance with the Development Plan conditions.

California Coastal Commission (CCC)

The CCC issues Coastal Development Permits (CDP) for development within the City of Seal Beach's coastal zone since the City does not have an approved Local Coastal Plan (LCP). All the Hellman Ranch OGPf property is within the Coastal Zone. Coastal Development Permits are the regulatory mechanism by which proposed developments in the coastal zone are brought into compliance with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. The CCC has issued previous CDPs for the Hellman Ranch OGPf facilities, including the Hellman Ranch Tank Farm Replacement Project.

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

The Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (SARWQCB) is responsible for regulating stormwater at the Hellman Ranch OGPf. The existing Hellman Ranch OGPf operations currently operate under General Permit CAS000001 for Industrial Activities, which have Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) requirements. In the Orange County area, the stormwater program covers discharges from construction sites with land disturbance of 1 acre or more. Since the project site is larger than one-acre in size the Applicant would be required to submit a Notice of Intent to use the statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit. The existing SWPPP should be adequate to cover the construction and operation of the Solar PV Electrical System Project.

Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA)

The property is within the jurisdiction of the OCFA. The OCFA regulates combustible materials in Seal Beach. Hellman LLC has permits from the OCFA that allow the installation, construction, alteration and operation of oil and gas processing facilities. The OCFA also regulates the requirements for vegetation clearing at the Hellman Ranch OGP. Hellman is required to clear vegetation within about 100 feet of all active oil and gas operating facilities, including production and injection wells. The installation and operation of the proposed Solar PV Electrical System would not require any modification of the current OCFA permits.

The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)

CalGEM permits and oversees the production of oil and gas at the Hellman Ranch facility. Their primary focus of CalGEM is on the construction and operation of the oil/gas production wells and water injection wells, as well as reservoir issues. CalGEM would not regulate the construction and operation of Solar PV Electrical System. Therefore, the proposed Project would not require any permits for CalGEM.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)

The Hellman Ranch OGP has several permits with the SCAQMD covering various air emitting equipment. No new air permits would be required for the construction and operation of the proposed Solar PV Electrical System since the project would have minimal operational air emissions and the construction emissions are below the threshold that would require a construction permit.