

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Introduction

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed Environmental Education and Sustainability Park Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2012072038). This document is prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000, et seq.). This Draft EIR is intended to serve as an informational document for the public agency decision makers and the public regarding the proposed project.

1.1.1 - Overview of the Proposed Project

The proposed project consists of the development of an Environmental Education and Sustainability Park and adjacent 5-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) facility at Grasslands Regional Park in Yolo County (Grasslands site). The Environmental Education and Sustainability Park would be used for educational fieldtrips for K-12 students of Yolo County. In addition, an 0.8-MW PV solar array would be constructed at the County's Beamer Cottonwood Campus in the City of Woodland (Beamer/Cottonwood site). Electricity produced at the Grasslands site would be fed into the grid at two Pacific Gas & Electricity interconnection points. Electricity produced at the Beamer/Cottonwood site would be used at the adjacent Yolo County Health Department building, Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services building and JPA building. Power generated at both sites would further the goals of the California Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and the Yolo County Climate Action Plan. Section 2, Project Description provides a complete description of the proposed project.

1.1.2 - Purpose and Authority

This Draft EIR provides a project-level analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed Environmental Education and Sustainability Park Project. The environmental impacts of the proposed project are analyzed in the EIR to the degree of specificity appropriate, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15146. This document addresses the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that may be associated with the planning, construction, or operation of the proposed project. It also identifies appropriate and feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to significantly reduce or avoid these impacts.

CEQA requires that an EIR contain, at a minimum, certain specific elements. These elements are contained in this Draft EIR and include:

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary

- Introduction
- Project Description
- Environmental Setting, Significant Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures
- Cumulative Impacts
- Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Effects Found Not To Be Significant
- Areas of Known Controversy

While the entirety of the proposed project would be constructed and operated by Yolo County Department of General Services, the Beamer/Cottonwood site is within the incorporated limits of the City of Woodland and, therefore, is within the Woodland General Plan land use boundaries. However, consistent with California case law, property owned by a county within an incorporated area is not subject to the zoning requirements of that city when the county is acting in its governmental or proprietary capacity.

1.1.3 - Lead Agency Determination

The County of Yolo is designated as the lead agency for the proposed project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 defines the lead agency as “. . . the public agency, which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” The County is responsible for approving the building permit for the proposed project and would oversee maintenance and operation of the project once constructed. Therefore, the County is the most appropriate authority to act as CEQA lead agency for this project. Other public agencies may use this Draft EIR in the decision-making or permit process and consider the information in this Draft EIR along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process. Section 2.5.1 in Section 2, Project Description contains a list of Yolo County approvals and permits, as well as other responsible and trustee agencies likely to require review and issuance of permits for the project.

This Draft EIR was prepared by Michael Brandman Associates (MBA), an environmental consultant. This Draft EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County of Yolo as required by CEQA. Lists of organizations and persons consulted and the report preparation personnel are provided in Section 8 of this Draft EIR.

1.1.4 - Basis for Draft EIR

According to CEQA:

The purpose of an EIR is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided (Public Resources Code 21002.1(a)).

This EIR does not express County policy about the desirability of the proposed project, but it is an informational document that evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the project and identifies mitigation measures that would reduce or eliminate said impacts. It also provides an analysis of feasible alternatives to the project that would reduce or avoid those impacts. This document will be used by decision makers, public agencies, and the public. During the development review process, the County must consider implementation of all feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed to be able to lessen anticipated environmental impacts of the project.

1.2 - Scope of the EIR

This Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The County of Yolo issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the proposed project on July 20, 2012, which circulated between July 20, 2012 and August 20, 2012, for the statutory 30-day public review period. The scope of this Draft EIR includes the potential environmental impacts identified in the NOP and issues raised by agencies and the public in response to the NOP. The NOP is contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

Five comment letters were received in response to the NOP. They are listed in Table 1-1 and provided in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

Table 1-1: NOP Comment Letters

Agency/Affiliation	Signatory	Date
Public Agencies		
Caltrans, District 3, Division of Planning and Local Assistance	Arthur Murray	July 30, 2012
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Gregor Blackburn	August 9, 2012
Yolo County Resource Conservation District	Jeanette Wrysinski	August 14, 2012
Private Parties		
Friends of the Swainson’s Hawk	Judith Lamare, President	July 26, 2012
SAIC	John Gerlach Jr.	August 1, 2012
Source: MBA 2012.		

1.2.1 - Environmental Issues Determined Not To Be Significant

An Initial Study was prepared concurrently with the NOP and identified topical areas that were determined not to be significant. An explanation of why each area is determined not to be significant is provided in Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant. These topical areas are as follows:

- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Transportation/Traffic

In addition, certain subjects within various topical areas were determined not to be significant. Other potentially significant issues are analyzed in these topical areas; however, the following impacts are not analyzed:

- State Scenic Highways (Section 3.1, Aesthetics, Light, and Glare)
- Loss or Conversion of Forest Land (Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources)
- Other Farmland or Forest Land Conversion (Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources)
- Objectionable Odors (Section 3.3, Air Quality)
- Exposure to a Known Earthquake Fault (Section 3.6, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity)
- Exposure to Landslides (Section 3.6, Geology, Soils, and Seismicity)
- Hazardous Materials Site (Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Airports (Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Private Airstrips (Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Interference With Emergency Response Plans (Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials)
- Erosion or Siltation (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Surface Runoff (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Housing within a 100-Year Flood Hazard Area (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Structures within a 100-Year Flood Hazard Area (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Seiche, Tsunami, or Mudflow Hazards (Section 3.9, Hydrology and Water Quality)
- Division of an Established Community (Section 3.10, Land Use)
- Aviation Noise (Section 3.11, Noise)
- Private Airstrip Noise (Section 3.11, Noise)
- Schools (Section 3.12, Public Services)
- Other Public Facilities (Section 3.12, Public Services)
- Stormwater Facilities (Section 3.14, Utilities and Services)
- Landfill Capacity (Section 3.14, Utilities and Services)
- Solid Waste Regulations (Section 3.14, Utilities and Services)

An explanation of why each issue is determined not to be significant is provided in Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant.

1.2.2 - Potentially Significant Environmental Issues

As set forth in the NOP the following topical areas may contain potentially significant environmental issues that will require further analysis in the EIR. The following sections are analyzed in this DEIR:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

1.3 - Organization of the EIR

This Draft EIR is organized into the following main sections:

- **Section ES: Executive Summary.** This section includes a summary of the proposed project and alternatives to be addressed in the Draft EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues to be resolved, and overview of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, in addition to a table that summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation, are also included in this section.
- **Section 1: Introduction.** This section provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose of this Draft EIR, its scope and components, and its review and certification process.
- **Section 2: Project Description.** This section includes a detailed description of the proposed project, including its location, site, and project characteristics. A discussion of the project objectives, intended uses of the Draft EIR, responsible agencies, and approvals that are needed for the proposed project are also provided.
- **Section 3: Environmental Impact Analysis.** This section analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed project. Impacts are organized into major topic areas. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, methodology, significance criteria, impacts, mitigation measures, and significance after mitigation. The specific environmental topics that are addressed within Section 4 are as follows:
 - **Section 3.1 – Aesthetics, Light, and Glare:** Addresses the potential visual impacts of development intensification and the overall increase in illumination produced by the project.
 - **Section 3.2 – Agricultural Resources:** Addresses the potential impacts on agricultural resources on the sites and in surrounding areas.
 - **Section 3.3 – Air Quality:** Addresses the potential air quality impacts associated with project implementation, as well as consistency with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District 2005 Ozone Strategy.
 - **Section 3.4 – Biological Resources:** Addresses the project’s potential impacts on habitat, vegetation, and wildlife; the potential degradation or elimination of important

- habitat; and impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.
- **Section 3.5 – Cultural Resources:** Addresses the potential impacts of project development on known historical resources and potential archaeological and paleontological resources.
 - **Section 3.6 – Geology, Soils, and Seismicity:** Addresses the potential impacts the project may have on soils and assesses the effects of project development in relation to geologic and seismic conditions.
 - **Section 3.7 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Addresses the potential impacts associated with the emissions of greenhouse gasses during project construction and operation.
 - **Section 3.8 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Addresses the potential for the presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the project site and in the project area that may have the potential to impact human health.
 - **Section 3.9– Hydrology and Water Quality:** Addresses the potential impacts of the project on local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas, and changes in the flow rates.
 - **Section 3.10 – Land Use and Planning:** Addresses the potential land use impacts associated with division of an established community and consistency with the Yolo County General Plan, Yolo County Code, City of Woodland General Plan and City of Woodland Municipal Code as applicable.
 - **Section 3.11 – Noise:** Addresses the potential noise impacts during construction and at project buildout from mobile and stationary sources. The section also addresses the impact of noise generation on neighboring uses.
 - **Section 3.12 – Public Services:** Addresses the potential impacts upon service providers, including fire protection, law enforcement, parks and other public services.
 - **Section 3.13 – Recreation:** Addresses the potential impacts upon existing recreation facilities and the effects of constructing new recreation facilities.
 - **Section 3.14 – Utilities and Service Systems:** Addresses the project’s potential impacts upon utility providers, including water supply and wastewater providers.
- **Section 4: Cumulative Impact Analysis.** This section analyzes the proposed project’s environmental impacts in combination with the impact of other, past, present, and probable future projects.
 - **Section 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project.** This section compares the impacts of the proposed project with three land-use project alternatives: the No Project Alternative, the 25-Percent Reduction Alternative, and the PV Facility Only Alternative. An environmentally superior alternative is identified. In addition, alternatives initially considered but rejected from further consideration are discussed.

- **Section 6: Other CEQA Considerations.** This section provides a summary of significant environmental impacts, including unavoidable and growth-inducing impacts. This section discusses the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project, including the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects. In addition, the proposed project's energy demand is discussed.
- **Section 7: Effects Found Not To Be Significant.** This section contains analysis of the topical sections not addressed in Section 3.
- **Section 8: Organizations and Persons Consulted/List of Preparers.** This section contains a full list of persons and organizations that were consulted during the preparation of this Draft EIR, as well as the authors who assisted in the preparation of the Draft EIR, by name and affiliation.
- **Section 9: References.** This section contains a full list of references that were used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- **Appendices:** This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the Draft EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.4 - Documents Incorporated by Reference

As permitted by CEQA Guidelines Section 15150, this Draft EIR has referenced several technical studies, analyses, and previously certified environmental documentation. Information from the documents, which have been incorporated by reference, has been briefly summarized in the appropriate section(s). The relationship between the incorporated part of the referenced document and the Draft EIR has also been described. The documents and other sources that have been used in the preparation of this Draft EIR include but are not limited to:

- Yolo County General Plan
- Yolo County Parks Master Plan
- Yolo County Grasslands Park Master Plan
- Yolo County Code
- City of Woodland General Plan
- City of Woodland Municipal Code

These documents are specifically identified in Section 9, References, of this Draft EIR. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15150(b), the General Plan, County Code, and the referenced documents and other sources used in the preparation of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Yolo County General Services Office at the address shown in Section 1.6 below.

1.5 - Documents Prepared for the Project

The following technical studies and analyses were prepared for the proposed project:

- Air Quality Analysis, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.3, Air Quality; modeling data is provided in Appendix C.)
- Biological Resources Assessment, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.4, Biological Resources; supporting information is provided in Appendix D.)
- Cultural Resource Assessment, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates (Appendix E).
- Greenhouse Gas Analysis, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions; modeling data is provided in Appendix F.)
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates (Appendix G).
- Noise Assessment, prepared by Michael Brandman Associates. (The analysis is wholly contained in Section 3.11, Noise; modeling data is provided in Appendix H.)

1.6 - Review of the Draft EIR

Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the County of Yolo filed a Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code, Section 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, this Draft EIR has been distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties, as well as all parties requesting a copy of the Draft EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code 21092(b)(3). During the public review period, the Draft EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at the Yolo County Department of General Services, the Woodland Public Library, and the Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch Library. The address for each location is provided below:

Yolo County Department of General Services
120 W. Main Street, Suite C
Woodland, CA 95695

Woodland Public Library
250 First Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Hours:
Monday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hours:
Monday–Thursday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Friday: Closed
Saturday: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch Library
315 E. 14th Street
Davis, CA 95616

Hours:

Monday: 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Tuesday–Thursday: 10:00 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday–Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Agencies, organizations, and interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period. Written comments on this Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Terry Vernon, Deputy Director
Yolo County Department of General Services
120 W. Main Street, Suite C
Woodland, CA 95695
Phone: 530.406.4870
Fax: 530.668.1801
Email: terry.vernon@yolocounty.org

Submittal of electronic comments in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format is encouraged. Upon completion of the public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and made available for review by the commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to the public hearing before the decision makers on the project, at which the certification of the Final EIR will be considered. Comments received and the responses to comments will be included as part of the record for consideration by decision makers for the project.

