

AUSTIN QUARRY PROJECT

ADDENDUM TO FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

FOR PROPOSED

SOLAR FACILITY AND PHASE ADJUSTMENT

State Clearinghouse No. 2010071036



April 11, 2023

Lead Agency:

Madera County Community and Economic Development Department
200 W. 4th Street, Madera, CA 93637

Prepared with Assistance from:

Benchmark Resources
2515 East Bidwell Street, Folsom, CA 95630

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SOLAR FACILITY AND PHASE ADJUSTMENT	1
3.	PREVIOUS AND CURRENT CEQA PROCESSES	8
4.	ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED SOLAR FACILITY AND PHASE ADJUSTMENT	2
5.	CONCLUSION	10

TABLES

Table 1 Mine Phase Areas and Anticipated Excavation Schedule.....	7
---	---

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A. Application for Minor Amendment – Austin Quarry Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is an Addendum to the 2016 Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) that was prepared for the Austin Quarry Project (Project). This Addendum describes and evaluates modifications to the Project proposed by the permittee, CalMat Co., dba Vulcan Materials Company, West Region (Vulcan). The proposed modifications involve: 1) installation and operation of a solar facility within a portion of the permitted mine area and ancillary electrical distribution and related components (Solar Facility) and 2) adjustments to the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining areas to redesignate six acres of the Phase 2 area to the Phase 1 area and for the development and use of a new haul road between the Phase 1 and Phase 6 mining areas (Phase Adjustment).

Although the proposed Solar Facility would be located within areas that were anticipated to be fully disturbed by mining in the 2016 Final EIR, the Project as described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR did not include placement of solar facilities within the Austin Quarry site. Additionally, although the proposed Phase Adjustment would reconfigure the Phase 1 and 2 mining areas without expanding their overall disturbance area footprint, the proposed configuration varies from that described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. For these reasons, the County determined that review of the proposed Solar Facility and proposed Phase Adjustment is needed to assess whether these modifications to the Austin Quarry Project would have the potential to result in new environmental impacts or have the potential to increase the severity of impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Addendum describes the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment and evaluates potential changes in environmental impacts associated with development of the Austin Quarry with the proposed modifications as compared to development of the Austin Quarry as described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15164(a) state, “[t]he lead agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in [CEQA Guidelines] Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.” The analysis set forth in this Addendum concludes that the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would not result in new significant environmental impacts and would not result in a substantial increase in the severity of impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

It is anticipated that the County will consider approval of a minor modification to the Austin Quarry conditional use permit(s) to accommodate the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment. Therefore, Madera County as CEQA lead agency for the Austin Quarry Project has prepared this Addendum to the 2016 Final EIR to document the evaluation which confirms that no subsequent or supplemental EIR is required for the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SOLAR FACILITY AND PHASE ADJUSTMENT

This section provides a summary of the background and development status of the approved Austin Quarry Project, then provides an overview of the currently proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment followed by sections providing more detailed discussion of the Solar Facility construction, operation, and permitting requirements, and additional detail of the proposed Phase Adjustment. Attachment A, “Application for Minor Amendment – Austin Quarry Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment,” of this Addendum contains Vulcan’s application to the County for a minor amendment to the Austin Quarry use permit(s) including the application form, description of proposed modifications, a figure showing the location of the proposed components, and a proposed decommissioning plan.

2.1 Background

On September 13, 2016, the Madera County Board of Supervisors certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Austin Quarry Project (Project). The Austin Quarry site is located on 671 acres in unincorporated Madera County, immediately south of SR 145 and approximately one mile west of the intersection of State Route (SR) 145 and SR 41. As approved in 2016, the following entitlements were granted for the Austin Quarry Project:

1. Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2009-017 allowing mining and processing of a hard rock deposit at a maximum sales rate of 2.5 million tons per year for a 100-year timeframe on approximately 348 acres of the 671-acre site.
2. CUP 2009-020 approving a Reclamation Plan for reclamation of the site following completion of mining in a manner that will establish agriculture and open space for future uses including, but not limited to, dry land cattle grazing and wildlife habitat.
3. Findings necessary for cancellation of Williamson Act contracts for 207 acres of the site comprising the processing plant site, entrance road, and berm area; Phase 1 mining area; Phase 6 mining area (which includes a stormwater retention/groundwater recharge basin and a temporary stockpile area; haul road; and potential disturbance area for water conveyance facilities.
4. Approval of a Height Variance for installation of the aggregate processing plant and associated facilities on land with zoning designation of ARE-40 (Agricultural, Rural, Exclusive, Forty Acre District).

In approving the Project, the County adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) with over 40 individual mitigation measures and adopted 16 conditions of approval.

As described in the 2016 Final EIR and the approved “Surface Mining and Reclamation Plan,” the Austin Quarry Project will develop up to 348 acres of the 671-acre site. Project development within the 348 acres includes an 83-acre processing plant site, a 258-acre mine (i.e., quarry) area, and approximately 7 acres of perimeter roads and safety berm areas.

The 83-acre processing plant site includes an aggregate processing and loadout facilities area, water supply components including the northwest well and process water ponds/clarifier, stormwater basin, paved site entrance road connecting with SR 145, and a 10-foot-high vegetated berm along the northwestern and northern quarry perimeter to provide visual screening.

The approved 258-acre mine area (also referred to as quarry area) is mapped in the approved Surface Mining and Reclamation Plan as composed of six contiguous areas identified as mine phase areas Phase 1 through Phase 6. Mining within the phase areas was planned to be sequential with initial mining within the Phase 1 area and subsequent expansion into the other mine phase areas. Mining of any individual phase would not be completed prior to expansion to subsequent phases as expansion to subsequent phases would be required for final excavation to the approved depth of the quarry. The approved mine area also includes development and use of a stormwater retention/groundwater recharge basin, overburden stockpile areas, and anticipated disturbance for freshwater conveyance facilities.

The remaining 323 acres of the 671-acre site would be undisturbed by the mine operation and remain as grasslands, grazing lands, natural drainage channels, and wetlands.

Development of the Austin Quarry site began in 2018 and sale of aggregate from the site began in December 2021. The processing plant site is substantially developed, the main access driveway and berms and landscaping are installed, and mining is progressing in the approved Phase 1 area.

2.2 Overview of Proposed Modifications

Vulcan proposes to construct a solar electricity generating facility (Solar Facility) within the Phase 4 mining area of the Austin Quarry to provide a renewable energy source for onsite mining and aggregate processing activities (onsite solar generation was not a component of the Austin Quarry Project evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR). The proposed Solar Facility is planned to be installed in 2023 and would be removed prior to the advancement of mining in the Phase 4 mine area. Vulcan also proposes to adjust the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining areas to add six acres of the Phase 2 area to the Phase 1 area and concurrently develop and use a new haul road between the Phase 1 and Phase 6 mining areas (“Phase Adjustment”). No change to the overall footprint of the previously approved mine area and no land disturbance outside of previously anticipated disturbance areas would result from either the proposed Solar Facility or the Phase Adjustment. Attachment A Figure 1, “Aggregate Mine Phases with Requested Modifications,” illustrates the Austin Quarry site and the location of the proposed Solar Facility components and Phase Adjustment areas.

The proposed Solar Facility includes installation of photovoltaic panels (solar arrays) on approximately 7 acres within an approximately 10-acre area of the southern portion of the approved, but not yet mined, Phase 4 mining area of the Austin Quarry site. A perimeter road and fence would be installed within the 10-acre Solar Facility site that would surround the arrays and ancillary equipment (e.g., transformers). Electricity produced by the Solar Facility would be utilized for aggregate processing and related operations at the Austin Quarry that would otherwise be powered with imported electricity via an electrical transmission line that has been installed and currently serves the site. Therefore, the Solar Facility would reduce the amount of imported electricity used at Austin Quarry and, as a renewable energy facility, the Solar Facility would contribute to the state of California meeting its Renewable Portfolio Standard of 50 percent renewable energy by 2030.

The proposed Phase Adjustment would modify the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining area boundaries, but with no change in the overall footprint of the approved mine area boundary or the overall footprint of the combined Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining areas, as shown on Figure 2. To support operational activities, including mining in Phase 1, Vulcan proposes to adjust the boundary between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining areas by moving the boundary eastward such that 6 acres currently within the Phase 2 area would be removed from the Phase 2 area and added to the Phase 1 area. The area within Phase 2 that would be reassigned to Phase 1 is termed the “Phase 1 Adjustment Area” on Figure 2. Vulcan proposes that this adjustment is necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and prepare for mining Phase 2 at a future time. Also associated with the Phase Adjustment, Vulcan would add a new haul road between the updated Phase 1 area to Phase 6. The proposed haul road would be aligned along the interior of the eastern border of the Phase 3 mining area, as shown on Figure 2. The haul road disturbance area was anticipated in the 2016 Final EIR to be disturbed by mining within the Phase 3 mining area. The haul road is necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and to provide efficient access to the Phase 6 overburden stockpile area. The proposed 6-acre addition to the Phase 1 mining area would facilitate haul road access between the Phase 1 mining area and other areas of the site.

2.3 Solar Facility Components and Construction

Installation of a solar generating facility was not a component of the Austin Quarry Project as described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Electricity for operations was anticipated to be obtained from offsite sources and imported to the site via an electrical transmission line that has been installed and currently provides electrical power to the site. Vulcan now proposes to install and operate a 2,800-kilowatt (kW) Solar Facility within an approximately 10-acre area of the Austin Quarry within the Phase 4 mining area, as shown on Figure 2. The Solar Facility would be installed, operated for approximately 25 years, and then removed prior to the progression of mining into the Phase 4 mining area.

The proposed Solar Facility would include photovoltaic (PV) arrays mounted on vibratory driven steel piles to affix the racking to the ground, single-axis tracker racking configurations, rack-mounted PV string inverters, a step-up transformer, a PV switchboard, a riser pole with disconnect, a recloser pole, a 572-kW battery system, a 20-foot-wide compacted, sand-surfaced internal access route, a perimeter security fence (chain link or similar with a minimum height of 6 feet), and one access road and double-swing gate leading into the Solar Facility site through the Phase 6 mining area, as shown on Figure 2. A 6-foot by 12-foot concrete pad would be constructed within the Solar Facility site for placement of the inverters, battery, and transformer. Above-ground wiring would be installed with minimal trenching required on the Solar Facility site. An approximately 200-foot trench would be excavated for installation of conduit and electrical connection between DC combiner boxes and the inverter pad. The trench would be backfilled and compacted following installation.

An overhead electrical transmission line would connect the Solar Facility to the overhead distribution circuit within the processing plant site, which would connect to a directional power relay with radio signal to battery management control, a recloser, and a PG&E service disconnect switch and PG&E pole meter, located near the Austin Quarry entrance along SR 145. The transmission line would be mounted on 35- to 40-foot-tall wood poles. The location of the Solar Facility and associated infrastructure (e.g., overhead transmission line, PG&E service disconnect switch, and PG&E pole meter) are designed to be primarily within the existing boundaries of Phase 4 mining area, with the overhead transmission line crossing the Phase 6 mining area and connecting with the entrance road. All disturbance areas associated with the Solar Facility were anticipated to be disturbed during development of the Austin Quarry Project.

Development of the Solar Facility would involve the use of heavy equipment for some vegetation clearing, grubbing, excavation, backfilling, stockpiling, compacting, grading, trenching, and the transport and handling of construction materials. The heavy equipment needed to accomplish development of the Solar Facility may include bulldozers, excavators, backhoes, trenchers, water trucks, front-end loaders, rollers, man lifts, artificial lighting, service trucks, cranes, and haul trucks. Construction of the Solar Facility is expected to take 12 weeks to complete. Construction would be scheduled to occur between the hours of seven a.m. and seven p.m. Monday through Friday and nine a.m. and five p.m. on Saturdays, consistent with the Madera County noise ordinance as pertains to construction activities.

2.4 ITP Amendment for Solar Facilities

To implement the Solar Facility, Vulcan intends to seek an amendment to the *California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit (No. 2081-2016-051-04) for Austin Quarry Project* previously issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). In accordance with the approved Incidental Take Permit (ITP) conditions of approval 7.4, and 8.1-8.4, the CDFW-approved *Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander (CTS) Mortality Reduction and Relocation Plan* (Mark-Release-Recapture [MRR] Plan; WRA

Environmental Consultants 2019a), and the CDFW-approved *Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander Fencing and Monitoring Plan* (CTS Fencing Plan; WRA Environmental Consultants 2019b), construction of the Solar Facility would not occur until pre-activity clearance and reporting has been conducted in the disturbance area, small mammal burrows potentially harboring CTS within 50 feet of the disturbance area have been flagged, scoped, and excavated, any CTS found have been relocated, and CTS exclusion fencing has been installed to close off the work areas associated with the solar facility from adjacent upland CTS habitat and exclude CTS from entering the active Solar Facility site, in accordance with the CDFW-approved plans noted above.

In accordance with ITP COA 7.4 and the MRR Plan, any CTS found during the burrow excavations or at any other time would be relocated. Mass grading of the Solar Facility site is not proposed as the current land topography is within an acceptable tolerance required for the solar facility, and the steel piles to affix the racking to the ground would be driven into the ground without the need to first remove existing natural vegetation. Exclusion fencing would be installed and maintained to provide a barrier to CTS prior to construction and during operation of the Solar Facility.

As shown in Figure 2, overhead electrical lines and associated infrastructure would be installed in locations within the Solar Facility site, Phase 6 and Phase 1 mining areas, and the processing plant site separated from occupied CTS habitat by exclusion fencing.

2.5 Solar Facility Operation and Maintenance

The Solar Facility would operate seven days a week and would produce electricity during daylight hours. Operation of the Solar Facility would not require permanent on-site operations personnel. Periodic monitoring and maintenance activities, planned and unplanned, would take place during daylight hours. Solar Facility operational activities would include meter reading, production reporting, and updating of operation and maintenance manuals.

Planned and unplanned preventative and corrective maintenance could occur any day, throughout the lifetime of the Solar Facility. Planned maintenance activities and unplanned maintenance activities could include ground or vegetation-disturbing activities. Planned maintenance activities within the Solar Facility would include routine inspection, repair, restoration, replacement or repair, and modification work on all Solar Facility equipment and components. Unplanned maintenance activities on all Solar Facility equipment and components could also become necessary due to unexpected damage to or failure of Solar Facility equipment or components. Operation and maintenance of the Solar Facility would involve periodic use of the same types of equipment required for construction of the facilities.

Forced outage situations, where the Solar Facility has unexpectedly stopped normal operations, could occur during the operation and maintenance period requiring immediate action. Forced outages could require immediate inspection, repair, restoration, replacement and/or modification of Solar Facility components. Forced outage activities could include ground or vegetation-disturbing activities within the Solar Facility site or in the areas of the other Solar Facility components discussed above.

Solar Facility inspections, testing, maintenance, and repairs would be performed as needed, with most activities occurring once or twice per year. Light-duty vehicles and all-terrain vehicles would be used for traversing the Solar Facility site along access roads. Specific activities for inspection and preventative maintenance include the following:

- system testing to ensure peak performance;

- visual inspections of array mechanical components, PV mounting systems, and PV modules;
- visual inspection of AC and DC electrical components, including conductors, conduit, connectors, fused and unfused disconnects, and switchgear;
- inspection of tracker control enclosures and components;
- inverter inspection and cleaning of fans and enclosures;
- annual lubrication of worm gear;
- testing of DC array circuits;
- checking of torque on electrical terminations and mechanical connections throughout system;
- meter reading;
- routine system maintenance to include correction of loose electrical connections, ground connections, replacement of defective modules found during testing, other minor maintenance and repair work; and
- vegetation maintenance.

The Solar Facility would require minimal replacement of panels and equipment, with occasional broken trackers or solar panels replaced as needed. Inverters would require replacement approximately every 10 years. Corrective maintenance that would periodically occur during Solar Facility operation would include:

- replacement of broken or non-functioning PV panels;
- tracker troubleshooting and repair;
- DC and AC circuit troubleshooting and repair, including fault situations;
- monitoring equipment and sensor troubleshooting and repair;
- major system repairs;
- system troubleshooting and repair in the field; and
- warranty repairs, retrofits, or replacements.

Support facility maintenance or repair would occur as needed when deterioration of parts or damage occurs or retrofitting is necessary. The access/fire roads would require infrequent maintenance or repair, with potential periodic re-grading, leveling, and/or filling. Supporting facilities and structures such as the security system, battery storage area, and fencing surrounding the Solar Facility could require periodic corrective maintenance or repair. The electrical transmission facilities including the power collection/transmission lines could also need periodic corrective repair or corrective maintenance. Other operation and maintenance activities include erosion control maintenance and vegetation maintenance (e.g., grazing and weed control such as herbicide spraying or mechanical removal).

2.6 Solar Facility Closure and Decommissioning

The Solar Facility is anticipated to be operated for approximately 25 years. The Solar Facility would be decommissioned prior to commencement of mining activities in the Phase 4 mining area, which is currently expected to commence in year 2055. Although timing of decommissioning may change depending on market conditions and mine progression, decommissioning of the Solar Facility is anticipated to occur in 2049 (prior to planned mining activities within Phase 4). Decommissioning would involve removal of the Solar Facility components and would require use of equipment similar to that listed above for construction and maintenance. The Phase 4 mining area would be mined subsequent to decommissioning of the Solar Facility; thus, all areas of disturbance associated with the Solar Facility within the Phase 4 mining area

would be removed during mining and no traces of the facility would remain after reclamation of the mine site.

In compliance with Public Resources Code (PRC) 2777.3 which pertains to renewable energy generating facilities on mined lands, prior to installation of the Solar Facility, Vulcan has prepared and submitted to Madera County a closure and decommissioning plan and is required to implement a separate financial assurance mechanism to ensure removal of the Solar Facility. As a renewable energy generating facility under PRC 2777.3, closure and decommissioning of the Solar Facility must occur prior to the final reclamation of the site or the termination of the mine use permit, whichever occurs later. In this case, the Solar Facility would be decommissioned and removed prior to the advancement of mining in the Phase 4 mining area, well in advance of final reclamation and closure of the Austin Quarry site.

2.7 Quarry Phase Adjustment

Vulcan proposes to modify the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mining areas by adjusting the boundary between the two phase areas without modifying the overall combined area encompassed by the two phase areas. The Phase Adjustment would add 6 acres to the Phase 1 mining area that are currently within the Phase 2 mining area, as shown on Figure 2 as the “Phase 1 Adjustment Area.” Vulcan proposes that this adjustment is necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and prepare for mining Phase 2 at a future time. Associated with the Phase Adjustment, Vulcan would add a new haul road between the adjusted Phase 1 area and the Phase 6 mining area along the western boundary of the Phase 3 mining area, as shown on Figure 2. The new haul road is proposed as necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and to provide efficient access to the Phase 6 overburden stockpile area. The proposed Phase Adjustment would not change the overall operation of the mine and would not expand or otherwise modify the disturbance area footprint anticipated and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Table 1, “Mine Phase Areas and Anticipated Excavation Schedule,” compares the phase areas of the mine plan as approved in 2016 and as proposed with the Phase Adjustment and also provides updated dates for estimated commencement of mining in each phase area.

Table 1
Mine Phase Areas and Anticipated Excavation Schedule

Mine Phase	2016 Approval Phase Acreage ¹	2016 Estimated Commencement of Excavation	Phase Acreage with Proposed Phase Adjustment ¹	Current Estimated Commencement of Excavation for Mining
1	42	2016	48 ²	Underway
2	52	2025	46 ³	2028
3	26	2043	26	2046
4	59	2052	59	2055
5	15	2069	15	2072
6	64	2080	64	2083
Total	258		258	

Notes:

1. Acreages are approximate. Changes to Phase 1 and 2, as shown. Phases 3 through 6 are unchanged.
2. Identified in 2016 approval as 42 acres, and modified by the current phase adjustment to increase by 6 acres.
3. Identified in 2016 approval as 52 acres, and modified by the current phase adjustment to decrease by 6 acres.

2.8 Austin Quarry Project Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures

In approving the Austin Quarry Project in 2016, the County adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) and 16 conditions of approval. Among other things, conditions of approval require compliance with the mitigation measures specified in the MMRP and require the Austin Quarry to be developed, operated, and reclaimed consistent with the Project as described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR and the approved Reclamation Plan.

Installation, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed Solar Facilities and mining operations with the Phase Adjustment would be required to comply with all applicable mitigation measures and conditions of approval adopted in 2016 along with any modifications or additional conditions that may be imposed by the County for the proposed Solar Facility and/or Phase Adjustment. Additional discussion of mitigation requirements as related to the proposed Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustment is provided in the resource evaluation sections of this Addendum.

3. PREVIOUS AND CURRENT CEQA PROCESSES

3.1 Overview of 2016 Final EIR

Madera County prepared a Draft EIR for the Austin Quarry Project circulated it for public review and comment from August 10 through September 25, 2012. Upon consideration of comments received on the Draft EIR, the County decided to revise the Draft EIR and recirculate the document as a Revised Draft EIR superseding the original Draft EIR. The Revised Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comment from October 21, 2014, to January 5, 2015. Addressing public comments on the Revised Draft EIR and incorporating refinements to the Project requested by Vulcan, the County prepared and a Final EIR. On September 12, 2016, the Madera County Board of Supervisors certified the Final EIR and approved the Austin Quarry Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2009-017 allowing for development of a hard rock aggregate mine and related processing facilities and activities and approved CUP 2009-020 which adopted a surface Mining and Reclamation Plan for Austin Quarry.

The resource topic areas evaluated in detail in the 2016 Final EIR included the following, each topic of which is discussed in more detail in Section 4 of this Addendum:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Traffic and Transportation
- Energy
- Cumulative Impacts
- Growth Inducement

Six Project-specific impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable in the 2016 Final EIR, as feasible mitigation was either unavailable or would not effectively reduce the severity of the impact to less than significant:

Impact 3.3-1: Project Operation Would Emit Criteria Air Pollutants, Including ROG, NO_x, CO, SO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} and Could Result in Adverse Health Effects;

Impact 3.3-2: Project Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Could Cause or Contribute to Exceedances of Ambient Air Quality Standards;

Impact 3.3-4: Plant Construction and Operation would Result in Greenhouse Gas Emissions;

Impact 3.10-4: Single-Event Noise from Project Truck Trips Could Cause Sleep Disturbance;

Impact 3.11-1: Project Traffic Would Worsen Traffic Operations Levels of Service; and

Impact 3.11-3: Project Truck Traffic Could Accelerate Damage to Off-Site Roadways. (SR 145 and SR 41 segments.)

The 2016 Final EIR analysis also determined that the Austin Quarry Project would contribute to the following cumulative impacts found to be significant and unavoidable:

Cumulative Impact 4-1: Cumulatively considerable contribution to emissions of NO_x and PM₁₀ and related health effects;

Cumulative Impact 4-2: Increase in air pollutant emissions above those considered in County General Plan and regional air quality plans;

Cumulative Impact 4-3: Cumulatively considerable contribution to emissions of GHGs;

Cumulative Impact 4-4: Cumulatively considerable contribution to single-event noise from Project truck trips potential to cause sleep disturbance;

Cumulative Impact 4-5: Cumulatively considerable contribution to traffic and unacceptable levels of service; and

Cumulative Impact 4-6: Cumulatively considerable potential for accelerated damage to off-site roadways. (SR 145 and SR 41 segments.)

3.2 Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustments CEQA Review Requirements

Madera County is the CEQA lead agency with respect to the Austin Quarry Project because Madera County has the primary discretion for land use and reclamation approvals associated with the Austin Quarry Project. (14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15367.) In considering approvals associated with the currently proposed Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustments, Madera County determined that it is appropriate for the County to prepare the CEQA documentation necessary for evaluation of the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustments.

The proposed Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustments considered herein each would result in certain variations in how the Austin Quarry site is developed and operated as compared to the Austin Quarry Project as described and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15164 provides that a lead or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions to a project are necessary but none of the conditions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 requiring the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR have occurred. (14 Cal. Code Regs § 15164.)

CEQA Guidelines section 15162(c) provides that “[o]nce a project has been approved, the lead agency’s role in project approval is completed, unless further discretionary approval on that project is required.” In this instance, the County is considering the approval of the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustments to represent a discretionary decision(s) by the County. As relevant to the County’s consideration of the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustments, CEQA Guidelines section 15162(a) provide that when an

EIR has been certified, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared unless the lead agency determines that “[s]ubstantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.” (14 Cal. Code Regs § 15162(a)(1).)

Thus, the County has undertaken the environmental analysis here to assess whether the proposed Solar Facility or the proposed Phase Adjustment would have the potential to result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of a significant impact previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

Based upon the analysis set forth below, the proposed Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustment would not modify the Austin Quarry Project in a manner that would require major revisions to the Final EIR, nor would the changes result in new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts.

As stated in Section 15164(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, “[t]he lead agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.” Thus, Madera County, as CEQA lead agency for the Austin Quarry Project, has prepared this Addendum to the 2016 Final EIR.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED SOLAR FACILITY AND PHASE ADJUSTMENT

This section documents the assessment of whether the proposed Solar Facility and/or proposed Phase Adjustment would result in new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR for the Austin Quarry Project.

4.1 Aesthetics

The 2016 Final EIR found that the Austin Quarry Project, in the absence of mitigation, would result in significant adverse effects on the quality of views along SR 41 and SR 145. Project features including landscaping along SR 145 north of the processing plant site and the 10-foot visual screening berm along the northern edge of the mine pit would reduce the visual impact of the Project. Mitigation Measure 3.1-1 was adopted which requires that the landscaping plan for the Project include strategically placed clusters of tall trees of varying native, non-invasive types of sufficient height and density to soften views of the processing plant facility from SR 145 and from SR 41 south of SR 145. Although such tree plantings would not fully screen all Project facilities from these view locations, the analysis found that an expanded planting program would be sufficient to reduce the degree of visual change caused by the introduction of the Project to less than significant. In developing the Austin Quarry, Vulcan has installed the landscape berm and is installing landscaping in accordance with the landscape plan requirements of Mitigation Measure 3.1-1.

The 2016 Final EIR also found that lighting associated with the Austin Quarry processing facilities could result in significant light and glare impacts, but the impacts would be reduced through implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 which requires the use of International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)-approved (or similar) light fixtures for Project lighting and requires that lighting be designed to minimize light spill to neighboring properties.

The proposed Solar Facility would result in the development of an approximately 10-acre portion of the Austin Quarry site with photovoltaic panels and related components, and would install electrical transmission line and ancillary facilities within the Austin Quarry site, as shown on Figure 2. The Solar

Facility would be predominantly screened from views from SR 145 due to the landscaped berm that has been installed along SR 145. The panels could be visible within views from a short segment of westbound SR 145 west of SR 41 and from SR 41 to the east of the Austin Quarry site. However, from these areas, the Solar Facility components are anticipated to be minimally noticeable and would not substantially detract from the visual quality of the Austin Quarry site as compared to the visual quality of the site anticipated in the 2016 Final EIR evaluation. Ground disturbance associated with the Solar Facilities in an area that was evaluated and previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR as being subject to visual impacts associated with surface mining and the introduction of the Solar Facility components is not anticipated to result in a new significant visual impact or a substantial increase in the severity of visual impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR. The Solar Facility would not create a substantial source of light or glare, and would not result in a new significant light or glare impact or a substantial increase in the severity of light or glare impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

The proposed Phase Adjustment would not increase the mine disturbance area or mining activities within the Austin Quarry site beyond those anticipated and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Therefore, the proposed Phase Adjustment would not have the potential to result in new significant aesthetic impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of aesthetic impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.2 Agricultural Resources

The 2016 Final EIR found that the Austin Quarry Project would not result in significant adverse effects on agricultural resources. (Final EIR Section 3.2.) The 2016 Final EIR evaluated the conversion of agricultural (grazing) land to non-agricultural uses for the entire mining area and determined that the conversion would be a less than significant impact. Additionally, the 2016 Final EIR considered the potential for the Austin Quarry Project to conflict with Williamson Act contracts and found that the Project would not conflict with Williamson Act contracts as areas subject to Williamson Act contracts at the time of the 2016 Final EIR preparation had been non-renewed and portions would be cancelled prior to site development. The former Williamson Act Contract that was applicable to the Project site expired in 2018, and the Austin Quarry site is no longer subject to a Williamson Act contract. The 2016 Final EIR anticipated that “[a]reas of the quarry site subject to excavation during subsequent phases would remain available for cattle grazing until such time as phasing extended to those areas.” (Final EIR, p. 3.2-16.) However, as discussed above, the impact analysis found that conversion of the entire quarry area to non-grazing use would result in a less-than-significant impact, irrespective of the timing of the conversion. Rather, the Final EIR reasoned that the loss of 348 acres of grazing land represents an approximately 0.09 percent of grazing land within Madera County, and even a permanent reduction of 348 acres of grazing land did not represent a substantial loss in agricultural lands. Further, the Final EIR noted that 222 acres of the quarry area would be returned to open space suitable for grazing, and that the Austin Quarry Project would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance.

The proposed Solar Facility would convert an approximately 10-acre portion of the Phase 4 mining area to non-agricultural use sooner than anticipated by in the 2016 Final EIR. Additionally, the proposed Phase Adjustment would result in an approximately 6-acre portion of the Phase 2 mining area and the proposed haul road alignment in the Phase 3 area to be converted to a non-agricultural use sooner than anticipated in the 2016 Final EIR. However, the conversion of grazing land to a non-agricultural use was anticipated in the Final EIR and the retention of areas for grazing prior to mining was not directly relied on by the Final EIR as a rationale for the less than significant impact determination. (Final EIR, pp. 3.2-15 to 3.2-17.) Conversion of these areas to non-agricultural use earlier than anticipated in the Final EIR would not result in a new significant impact nor would it increase the severity of a previously identified impact.

4.3 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The 2016 Final EIR found that air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Austin Quarry Project would be reduced to less-than-significant with implementation of mitigation. Adopted mitigation measures require equipment emissions controls, a Voluntary Emission Reduction Agreement with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), reduced production in the event of diesel generator use, particulate matter emission reduction measures, and the purchase of greenhouse gas emissions offset credits within five years of the initial sale of material. Vulcan has implemented the required equipment and particulate matter emission controls and has entered into a VERA with the SJVAPCD in compliance with the required mitigation. Grid-sourced power was installed to the site prior to initial operations and use of a diesel generator for aggregate processing was not required, thus, a reduced production requirement was not triggered. Initial sale of material was in December 2021, and the requirement for purchase of greenhouse gas emissions offset credits is to be satisfied by December 2026.

The proposed Solar Facilities and Phase Adjustment do not include any new permanent equipment that would emit criteria air pollutants or greenhouse gas and would not change operations in a manner that would increase air pollutant or greenhouse gas emissions as compared to emissions projected and evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. The Phase Adjustment would not have the potential to cause new or substantially increased significant air quality or greenhouse gas impacts, as emissions associated with mining operations in these areas were included in the 2016 Final EIR emissions analysis. Short-term construction-related emissions would be associated with development of the proposed Solar Facilities, but would be negligible in comparison to operational emissions evaluated in the Final EIR and would not have the potential to result in new significant impacts or increase the severity of impacts identified in the Final EIR.

4.4 Biological Resources

The 2016 Final EIR identified biological resources impacts including loss of California annual grassland, loss of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, loss of vernal pools and associated species, loss of rock outcrop habitat, impacts to nesting birds, loss of nesting habitat for tricolored blackbird, impacts to Western burrowing owls, impacts to California tiger salamander (CTS), impacts to off-site habitat, impacts to downstream drainages, and impacts to Swainson's hawk habitat. (Final EIR Section 3.4.) Mitigation measures were adopted that were found to be sufficient to avoid or reduce all impacts to biological resources to a level of less than significant. Vulcan was required to preserve a 765-acre area on the adjacent Fenston property as compensatory mitigation for the habitat loss associated with the Austin Quarry Project including full disturbance and mining of the Phase 4 mining area. (Final EIR p. 3.4-73; Mitigation Measures 3.4-1, 3.4-2, 3.4-3.) The conservation easement was recorded on the 765 acres in 2019. Further, in compliance with CUP conditions of approval and the MMRP, Vulcan is also required to conduct pre-construction surveys to ensure that nesting birds and other species are not impacted by any disturbance associated with the Solar Facility and the Phase Adjustment. (Mitigation Measure 3.4-5, 3.4-7, 3.4-8.)

The proposed Solar Facility and proposed Phase Adjustment would not result in any new disturbance areas that were not previously identified and evaluated for biological resources impacts in the 2016 Final EIR. Biological resources mitigation requirements of the adopted MMRP associated with Austin Quarry site development would be applicable to the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment.

As discussed above, Vulcan has advised the County that it is seeking an amendment to the *California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit (No. 2081-2016-051-04)* for Austin Quarry Project from the

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to accommodate the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment. In accordance with the approved Incidental Take Permit (ITP) conditions of approval 7.4, and 8.1-8.4, the CDFW-approved *Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander (CTS) Mortality Reduction and Relocation Plan* (Mark-Release-Recapture [MRR] Plan; WRA Environmental Consultants 2019a), and the CDFW-approved *Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander Fencing and Monitoring Plan* (CTS Fencing Plan; WRA Environmental Consultants 2019b), construction of the Solar Facility would not occur until pre-activity clearance and reporting has been conducted in the disturbance area; small mammal burrows potentially harboring CTS within 50 feet of the disturbance area have been flagged, scoped, and excavated; any CTS found have been relocated; and CTS exclusion fencing has been installed to close off the work areas associated with the Solar Facility from adjacent upland CTS habitat and exclude CTS from entering the Solar Facility site, in accordance with the CDFW-approved plans noted above.

Any CTS found during the burrow excavations or at any other time would be relocated according to ITP COA 7.4 and the MRR Plan. Mass grading of the Solar Facility site is not proposed as the current land topography is within an acceptable tolerance required for the solar facility, and the steel piles to affix the racking to the ground would be driven into the ground without the need to first remove existing natural vegetation. While grasses would be allowed to grow under the solar panels, the exclusion fencing would provide a barrier to CTS during construction and operation of the Solar Facility; consequently, CTS would not be expected to be present within the Solar Facility site after burrow excavation and the installation of exclusion fencing around the site.

As shown in Figure 2, overhead electrical lines and associated infrastructure would be installed in locations within the Solar Facility site, Phase 6 and Phase 1 mine areas, and the processing plant site which are separated from occupied CTS habitat by exclusion fencing.

The Phase Adjustment, including use of the proposed haul road, would not have the potential to cause new or substantially increased significant biological resources impacts, as these areas were all anticipated to be fully disturbed for the Austin Quarry Project as evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Mitigation measures adopted for the Austin Quarry Project, including compensatory mitigation, exclusion fencing and pre-construction surveys would ensure that no new potentially significant biological resources impacts nor any substantial increases in the severity of biological resources impacts would occur as a result of the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment.

4.5 Cultural Resources

The 2016 Final EIR identified potential cultural resources impacts including the potential for damage or destruction of known cultural resource sites and previously unidentified cultural resource sites, potential discovery of human remains, and potential damage or destruction of significant paleontological resources. (Final EIR Section 3.5.) Mitigation measures were adopted that were found to be sufficient to avoid or reduce all impacts to cultural resources to a level of less than significant.

The proposed Solar Facility and proposed Phase Adjustment would not result in any new disturbance areas that were not previously identified and evaluated for cultural resources impacts in the 2016 Final EIR. Cultural resources mitigation requirements of the adopted MMRP associated with Austin Quarry development would be applicable to the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment. Compliance with the adopted mitigation measures would ensure that no new potentially significant cultural resources impacts nor any substantial increases in the severity of previously identified potential cultural resources impacts would occur as a result of the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment.

4.6 Geology and Soils

The 2016 Final EIR identified potential geology and soils impacts including the potential to expose people or structures to strong ground shaking during seismic events, potential to exposure structures or workers to geologic hazards, potential risk of slope failures, and potential for substantial soil erosion. (Final EIR Section 3.7.) Mitigation measures were adopted that were found to be sufficient to avoid or reduce all impacts associated with geology and soils to a level of less than significant.

Installation of the Solar Facility would not create the potential for new significant soil or geology impacts and would not create the potential to increase the severity of soil and geology impacts documented in the 2016 Final EIR. Mining operations associated with the proposed Phase Adjustment and use of the proposed new haul road would be located within mining areas previously evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR and would be subject to geology and soils mitigation requirements adopted for the Austin Quarry Project. With implementation of previously adopted mitigation measures, these activities would not have the potential to cause new significant impacts and would not have the potential to substantially increase the severity of geology and soils impacts identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The 2016 Final EIR identified potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts including the potential to create hazards through handling or accidental release of fuels or other hazardous materials, increase wildland fire risk, and create hazards associated with the transport, storage, and use of blasting materials, expose people or structures to strong ground shaking during seismic events, potential to exposure structures or workers to geologic hazards, potential risk of slope failures, and potential for substantial soil erosion. (Final EIR Section 3.8) Mitigation measures were adopted that were found to be sufficient to avoid or reduce all impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials to a level of less than significant.

The construction, operation, and maintenance of the Solar Facility would involve the use of some hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels. This use would be similar to the use of fuels and other materials associated with Austin Quarry site development and operations, but would be a nominal increase in the number of vehicles and amount of fuels and material. Construction, operation, and maintenance of the Solar Facility would be subject to adopted mitigation requirements include those for fuel storage and handing, spill control and response, and other measures that would minimize the potential for hazardous material release. Solar Facility construction and operation would also be subject to the requirements of the fire safety plan that has been prepared for the site in accordance with Final EIR Mitigation Measure 3.7-2.

As the proposed Phase Adjustment would involve the same activities previously contemplated in the 2016 Final EIR and would be subject to adopted mitigation measures, the Phase Adjustment would not have the potential to cause new or substantially increased significant hazards and hazardous materials impacts. Given that the construction, operation and maintenance of the Solar Facility and the Phase Adjustment would be required to comply with the previously adopted mitigation measures , the Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would not have the potential to result in new hazards and hazardous materials impacts or to result in a substantial increase in the severity of hazards and hazardous materials impacts previously identified in the Final EIR.

4.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

The 2016 Final EIR for the Austin Quarry Project identified potential hydrology and water quality impacts including the potential to impact groundwater quality, potential effects on groundwater supplies and

recharge, erosion and siltation due to changes in onsite drainage, flooding, exceedance of stormwater capacity, and potential effects associated with levees or dam failures. (Final EIR Section 3.8.) Each of these potential impacts was found to be less than significant, with one mitigation required to ensure potential effects on groundwater quality would be less than significant.

The Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would be within areas of disturbance previously evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR would be subject to the same mitigation measures that were applied to the Austin Quarry for hydrological impacts (See FEIR p. 3.8-75.) Both the Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would also be subject to applicable regulatory requirements, including compliance with a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and implementation of stormwater runoff best management practices (BMPs) to avoid and minimize the potential for sediment and other contaminant discharges in stormwater runoff from disturbed areas. Through compliance with mitigation measures and regulatory requirements, the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would not result in new significant hydrology or water quality impacts and would not have the potential to substantially increase the severity of hydrology and water quality impacts previously identified in the Final EIR.

4.9 Land Use and Planning

The 2016 Final EIR for the Austin Quarry Project evaluated potential land use conflicts and land use plan consistency and concluded that the Austin Quarry Project, with approval of the requested height variance associated with processing plant facilities and with implementation of resource-specific mitigation measures, is consistent with the Madera County General Plan policies and applicable site zoning designation of ARE-40 (Agricultural, Rural, Exclusive, Forty Acre District). (Final EIR Section 3.9.)

The proposed Phase Adjustment is consistent with the Austin Quarry Project land use as anticipated and evaluated in the Final EIR and would not have the potential to conflict with adjacent land uses or conflict with Madera County General Plan policies or site zoning.

The proposed Solar Facility would provide for an interim change in the land use of an approximately 10-acre portion of the currently undeveloped portion of the site permitted for development of the Austin Quarry. With development of the Solar Facility, the 10-acre area would be converted to Solar Facility use for an interim approximately 25-year period prior to the initiation of mining within the Phase 4 mining area. The Solar Facility site is centrally located within the Austin Quarry site and would not conflict with land uses within the site (i.e., grazing and quarry operations) nor would the Solar Facility have the potential to conflict with land uses of adjacent properties. Thus, the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would not result in the potential for new land use impacts and would not increase the severity of previously identified land use impacts in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.10 Noise

The 2016 Final EIR for the Austin Quarry Project identified potential noise and vibration impacts including the potential for onsite noise to affect offsite sensitive receptors, the potential for onsite vibration (including blasting vibration) to affect offsite sensitive receptors and structures, the potential for project traffic noise levels to affect sensitive receptors, the potential for adverse effects associated with intermittent aggregate haul truck passby, and the potential for construction noise impacts. (Final EIR Section 3.10.) The Final EIR concluded that site development/construction and surface mining operations including operation of a quarry and processing would not result in significant noise or vibration impacts with implementation of mitigation measures, with the exception of possible nighttime sleep disturbance due to single-event truck trip passby which was found to be significant and unavoidable. (Final EIR, Impact 3.10-4.)

Construction of the proposed Solar Facility would be between the hours of seven a.m. and seven p.m. Monday through Friday and nine a.m. and five p.m. on Saturdays. These hours of construction are consistent with the Madera County noise ordinance as pertains to construction activities. Construction would be of short duration and during the hours specified, and would be located at greater distances from the nearest sensitive receptors than distances evaluated in the Final EIR for mining activities. Thus, no potential for significant noise impacts during construction of the Solar Facility is anticipated. Once constructed, Solar Facility normal operations would not have the potential to generate noise that would be audible at offsite areas. The Solar Facility would generate a small number of short-term construction-related vehicle trips and periodic maintenance-related vehicle trips to the Solar Facility. Offsite vehicle noise levels associated with these trips would not have the potential to substantially increase previously identified Austin Quarry Project offsite traffic noise levels and would not increase the potential for single-event periodic aggregate truck passby impacts identified in the Final EIR.

Mining and related activities within the proposed Phase Adjustment area would be the same as the activities planned and evaluated for these areas in the 2016 Final EIR. Thus, the proposed Phase Adjustment, including the use of a new haul road, would not have the potential to cause new noise or vibration impacts or substantially increase a noise or vibration impact previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.11 Traffic and Transportation

The 2016 Final EIR identified potential impacts associated with traffic operations (i.e., congestion and delay as measured by level of service [LOS]) at study area road segments and intersections, potential hazards associated with the Austin Quarry entrance driveway intersection with SR 145, and potential impacts associated with road damage from aggregate haul trucks. (Final EIR Section 3.11.) Mitigation measures were adopted that were deemed sufficient to reduce the Project impacts associated with driveway hazards to less than significant. Mitigation measures were also adopted to reduce traffic congestion through direct road improvements and contribution of proportional share funding toward improvements, and to provide funding for offsite road maintenance. However, the Final EIR concluded that, even with the implementation of mitigation, impacts associated with traffic operations and road damage would be significant and unavoidable. Following certification of the 2016 Final EIR and approval of the Austin Quarry Project, CEQA Guidelines were amended to require that traffic congestion may no longer be considered an environmental impact under CEQA. The amended CEQA Guidelines suggest that a more appropriate measure of transportation effects of a project is vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Construction of the proposed Solar Facility would generate a small number of short-term construction-related vehicle trips and periodic maintenance-related vehicle trips to the Solar Facility. The small increase in temporary and periodic vehicle trips associated with the Solar Facility would not substantially increase traffic volumes or result in a substantial increase in traffic delay and congestion on study area roads and intersections. Moreover, such an increase would no longer be considered an impact under CEQA. Although Madera County has not adopted specific thresholds for consideration of impacts associated with VMT, the Solar Facility does not represent a land use type that has the potential to result in a significant VMT impact. Thus, the Solar Facility would not result in a new transportation impact nor would it substantially increase the severity of a transportation impact previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

Mining and related activities within the proposed Phase Adjustment area would be the same as the activities planned and evaluated for these areas in the 2016 Final EIR. The Phase Adjustment would not increase the number of vehicle trips associated with Austin Quarry operations as compared to those

evaluated in the Final EIR and, thus, would not have the potential to cause a new transportation impact or substantially increase the severity of a transportation impact previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.12 Energy

The 2016 Final EIR evaluated potential energy consumption impacts and energy conservation potential associated with the Austin Quarry Project. The analysis concluded that the Project would not result in wasteful or inefficient consumption of energy and that the Project's impact associated with energy use was less than significant. Nevertheless, the County adopted Mitigation Measure 4.5-1 which requires installation of an electrical conveyor as the primary method of transporting material from the quarry pit to the onsite processing facilities. Pursuant to Mitigation Measure 4.5-1, the conveyor is to be in use prior to or concurrent with the initiation of mining in the Phase 2 mining area.

The proposed Solar Facility would provide an onsite source of renewable energy, producing electricity for use in Austin Quarry operations. Electricity produced by the Solar Facility would offset and reduce the amount of electricity imported to the site from PG&E facilities. The Solar Facility would not result in the wasteful or inefficient use of electricity and, instead, would provide a beneficial onsite source of renewable energy generation increasing the proportion of renewable energy use at the site and reducing transmission losses.

The proposed Phase Adjustment would expand the Phase 1 mining area by approximately 6 acres and could postpone the progress of mining into the adjusted Phase 2 mining area by up to approximately three years. As discussed above, Mitigation Measure 4.5-1 requires the installation and use of an electrical conveyor for transport of material from the quarry to the processing plant site, and the conveyor is to be in use prior to or concurrent with initiation of mining in the Phase 2 mining area. The proposed Phase Adjustment could postpone the progression of mining into the adjusted Phase 2 area which could commensurately postpone installation and use of the electrical conveyor by up to approximately three years. The potential delay in electrical conveyor use represents a minor reduction in the anticipated energy efficiency benefits of the conveyor requirement. Moreover, the 2016 Final EIR determined that the Austin Quarry Project would not result in a significant energy impact even without the use of the electrical conveyor and imposed Mitigation Measure 4.5-1 as an additional energy conservation measure that was not needed as mitigation for a significant impact. Thus, the potential delay in installation of the electrical conveyor would not result in a new energy impact and would not increase the severity of a significant energy impact previously identified in the Final EIR.

4.13 Cumulative Impacts

The 2016 Final EIR evaluated potential cumulative impacts of the Austin Quarry Project in consideration of Project impacts when combined with impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The analysis concluded that the Austin Quarry Project would result in four significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts: two associated with criteria air pollutant emissions, one associated with greenhouse gas emissions, and one associated with single-event noise from truck trips. As discussed in the resource evaluations above, the proposed Solar Facility and the proposed Phase Adjustment would not disturb any areas that were not already analyzed for disturbance in the Final EIR, and would not increase air pollutant or greenhouse gas emissions, noise, traffic, noise, or any other impacts to resource areas previously evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Thus, the proposed Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment would not have the potential to result in cumulatively considerable impacts or to substantially contribute to the cumulative impacts previously identified in the 2016 Final EIR.

4.14 Growth Inducement

The 2016 Final EIR considered the potential for the Austin Quarry Project to result in direct and indirect growth inducement. The Project was found to not be a substantial source of direct growth with employment of up to approximately 40 people, the Project would not result in a substantial increase in population or the demand for housing. The proposed Solar Facility and the proposed Phase Adjustment would not increase employment levels at the Austin Quarry site and would therefore not contribute to potential direct growth inducement. Furthermore, the potential factors associated with indirect growth associated with the Austin Quarry Project would not be altered by the proposed Solar Facility or the proposed Phase Adjustment.

5. CONCLUSION

Neither the proposed Solar Facility nor the proposed Phase Adjustment would create the potential to result in new significant impacts not previously evaluated in the 2016 Final EIR. Additionally, neither the proposed Solar Facility nor the proposed Phase Adjustment would result in a substantial increase in the severity of any impacts analyzed in the Final EIR.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1
Application for Minor Amendment –
Austin Quarry Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment
(March 15, 2023)

**APPLICATION & PERMIT
MADERA COUNTY PLANNING
COMMISSION**

200 W. 4th Street, Suite 3100

Madera, CA 93637-3593

-(559) 675-7821-FAX (559) 675-6573

Email: mc_planning@madera-county.com

☒ Conditional Use Permit (CUP)	☐ Zoning Permit	
☐ General Plan Amendment	☐ Variance	☐ Setback
☐ General Plan Text Amendment	☐ Sign Permit	☐ Master
☐ Rezoning	☐ Site Plan Review	☐ Voluntary
☐ Zoning Text Amendment	☐ Major	☒ Minor ☒ Amendment
☐ Parcel Map	☐ Time Extension	
☐ Subdivision	☐ Specific Plan	
☐ Ag. Preserve ☐ New ☐ Cancel	☐ Other	

Number _____

Date _____

Fee _____

Penalty _____

Receipt No. _____

Staff Date of Action _____

☐ Approve ☐ Denied

PC Date of Action _____

☐ Approve ☐ Denied

M.O./Res. No. _____

B. of S. Date of Action _____

☐ Approve ☐ Denied

PLEASE PRINT	PROPERTY INFORMATION
Applicant: CalMat Co., dba Vulcan Materials Company	Assessor's Parcel Number(s) (required)
Mailing Address: 40450 E Highway 145	051-183-001
City: Madera State: Ca Zip: 93636	Site Address (if applicable)
Phone: (559) 770-7793	Same as applicant
Email: marshallt@vmcmail.com	Prior Permit Approvals (if applicable)
	September 12, 2016
Property Owner	Intended Use (describe request clearly)
Mailing Address	Seek Board of Supervisors approval to install a solar facility to supply the existing aggregate operation with a renewable energy source. See attached figure for location of solar facility.
City: State: Zip:	
Phone:	
Email:	
☒ Same as Applicant	

The forgoing information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. The applicant and property owner hereby acknowledge the requirements as set forth in the Madera County Code and agree to comply with all County and state Laws: (BOTH MUST SIGN)

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of Property Owner: _____

DocuSigned by:

Terry Marshall

59BDD3A2FBFA43D...

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

☐ Site Plan Attached	Existing Zone District: _____ P/A: _____
☐ Operational/Environmental Statement Attached	Proposed Zone District: _____ Acreage: _____
☐ Variance Findings of Fact Attached	Existing General Plan (Area Plan): _____
☐ CUP Findings of Fact Attached	Proposed General Plan (Area Plan): _____
☐ Map Attached ☐ Parcel Map ☐ Subdivision	Community Area Plan: _____
☐ Other Information: _____	

MITIGATION MONITORING AND CONDCTIONS OF APPROVAL:

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL DATE: _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

FINAL APPROVAL DATE: _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

The preliminary approval date is the initial project approval by the governing body. All permits are not considered **complete** until all mitigation measures and conditions of approval, if required, have been met and confirmed by the Planning Department. Applicants should notify the Planning Department periodically to confirm that activity is ongoing for the proposed project or provide updates regarding scheduling for future activity.

Vulcan Solar and Phase Adjustment Minor Amendments Description

A. Introduction

Vulcan Materials Company (“Vulcan”) plans to construct a solar facility (“Solar Facility”) within the Phase 4 mining area of the Austin Quarry (“Quarry”) to provide a renewable energy source for onsite mining activities. The Solar Facility is planned to be installed in 2023 and would be removed prior to mining activity in the Phase 4 area. Vulcan also plans to slightly modify the Phase 1 and Phase 2 boundaries, adjust the timing of mining within these phases and add a new haul road to the mining area (“Phase Adjustment”). As the Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment are minor variations to the project as approved by the County in 2016, Vulcan requests the County’s approval of a minor modification to the Austin Quarry conditional use permits (CUP 2009-017 and 2009-020) approved by the County in 2016.

While a minor modification the CUPs may be necessary, Vulcan anticipates that the approved Reclamation Plan will not require amendment to accommodate these minor variations. In accordance with the requirements of the state Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA), Vulcan has prepared and is submitting for the County’s review and for the County’s coordination with the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation (DMR), a closure and decommissioning plan for the planned Solar Facility.

The Solar Facility includes installation of a 7-acre solar facility on up to 10 acres of land in the southern portion of Phase 4 of the planned mining disturbance area. (See Figure 1.) A perimeter fence and road would be installed surrounding the arrays and transformers, and within the overall approximately 10-acre footprint. The energy produced by the Solar Facility would be utilized at the Austin Quarry, which would reduce the amount of electricity used from offsite sources and would contribute to the state of California meeting its Renewable Portfolio Standard of 50% renewable energy by 2030.

The Phase Adjustment will modify the Phase 1 and Phase 2 boundaries of those to phase areas, but with no change in the overall Quarry footprint. To support operational activities, including mining in Phase 1, Vulcan proposes to adjust the Phase 1/2 boundary by moving it eastward to encompass 6 acres currently within the Phase 2 area (Figure 1). The area within Phase 2 that will be reassigned to Phase 1 is termed the “Phase 1 Adjustment Area” in Figure 1. This adjustment is necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and prepare for mining Phase 2 at a future time. In addition, as part of the Phase Adjustment, Vulcan will add a new haul road from the updated Phase 1 area to Phase 6. This new haul road is necessary to efficiently mine Phase 1 and to provide efficient access to the Phase 6 overburden stockpile area. The proposed haul road will be on the interior of the eastern border of Phase 3 area (Figure 1). The haul road disturbance is entirely within areas previously anticipated to be disturbed during Austin Quarry development. The expansion of Phase 1 will facilitate haul road access between phases. The timing of anticipated phasing will be adjusted to account for the revised acreage.

B. Project Components and Construction

The 2,800 kW Solar Facility will be constructed fully within the area of the Phase 4 mining area, and will include photovoltaic (PV) arrays, vibratory driven steel piles to affix the racking to the ground, single-axis tracker racking configurations, rack-mounted PV string inverters, a step-up transformer, a PV switchboard, a riser pole with disconnect, a recloser pole, a 572 kW battery system, a 20 foot wide compacted native internal access path with sand surfacing, a security fence (chain link or other fence type as approved by

the County, with a minimum height of 6 feet) surrounding the Solar Facility, and one access road and double swing gate leading into the solar facility through Phase 6. (See Figure 1.) The solar arrays will be approximately 10 feet above ground. A 6-foot by 12-foot concrete pad will be constructed for the inverters, battery, and transformer. As above-ground wiring is planned, there will be minimal trenching on the Solar Facility site, with an approximately 200-foot trench planned from the DC combiner boxes to the inverter pad.

An overhead electrical distribution line mounted on 35- to 40-foot-tall, wood poles will connect the Solar Facility in Phase 4 to the overhead distribution circuit within the processing plant site, which will connect to a directional power relay with radio signal to battery management control, a recloser, and a PG&E service disconnect switch and PG&E pole meter, located near the entrance of the mine site along SR 145. The location of the Solar Facility and associated infrastructure (e.g., overhead transmission line, PG&E service disconnect switch, and PG&E pole meter) are designed to be primarily within the existing boundaries of Phase 4 of the mine disturbance area analyzed in the 2016 FEIR, with the overhead transmission line crossing Phase 6 and connecting with the entrance road.

Development of the Solar Facility will involve the use of heavy equipment for some vegetation clearing, grubbing, excavation, backfilling, stockpiling, compacting, grading, trenching, and the transport and handling of construction materials. The heavy equipment needed to accomplish development of the Solar Facility may include bulldozers, excavators, backhoes, trenchers, water trucks, front-end loaders, rollers, man lifts, artificial lighting, service trucks, cranes, and haul trucks. Construction of the Solar Facility is expected to take 12 weeks to complete. Construction would be scheduled to occur between the hours of seven a.m. and seven p.m. Monday through Friday and nine a.m. and five p.m. on Saturdays. Construction of the haul road and adjustment to the phase boundaries will not cause a change in the Project components and construction analyzed in the 2016 DEIR.

C. ITP Amendment

To implement the Solar Facility and Phase Adjustment, Vulcan is also seeking an amendment to the California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit (No. 2081-2016-051-04) for Austin Quarry Project from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW"). In accordance with the approved Incidental Take Permit ("ITP") conditions of approval 7.4, and 8.1-8.4, the CDFW-approved Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander ("CTS") Mortality Reduction and Relocation Plan (Mark-Release-Recapture ("MRR") Plan; WRA Environmental Consultants 2019a), and the CDFW-approved Austin Quarry California Tiger Salamander Fencing and Monitoring Plan (Fencing Plan; WRA Environmental Consultants 2019b), construction of the Solar Facility will occur after pre-activity clearance and reporting has been conducted in the disturbance area, small mammal burrows potentially harboring CTS within 50 feet of the disturbance area have been flagged, scoped, and excavated, any CTS found have been relocated, and CTS exclusion fencing has been installed to close off the work areas associated with the solar facility from adjacent upland CTS habitat and exclude CTS from entering the active Solar Facility site, per the already CDFW-approved plans noted above.

Any CTS found during the burrow excavations or at any other time will be relocated according to ITP COA 7.4 and the MRR Plan. No mass grading of the Solar Facility site is planned as the current land topography is within an acceptable tolerance required for the solar facility, and the steel piles to affix the racking to the ground will be driven into existing natural vegetation. While grasses will be allowed to grow under the solar panels, the exclusion fencing will provide a project barrier to CTS during construction and operation

of the solar facility; consequently, CTS are not expected on the solar site after burrow excavation and the installation of exclusion fencing around the solar site. In addition, all overhead electrical lines and associated infrastructure will be installed in locations within the Phase 4 solar area, Phase 6, Phase 1, and the Plant Boundary of the Project footprint (Figure 1) separated from occupied CTS habitat by exclusion fencing.

D. Operation and Maintenance

The Solar Facility will operate seven days a week, and provide energy during daylight hours. While the Solar Facility will be largely self-sufficient upon completion of construction, periodic monitoring and maintenance activities, planned and unplanned, will take place during daylight hours. A major focus of the operations of the Solar Facility will be the monitoring of the overall system operational status and performance and diagnostics. Operations activities will include meter reading, production reporting, and updating of O&M manuals.

Planned and unplanned preventative and corrective maintenance could occur any day, throughout the lifetime of the Solar Facility. Planned maintenance activities and unplanned maintenance activities could include ground or vegetation-disturbing activities. Planned maintenance activities within the Solar Facility will include routine inspection, repair, restoration, replacement or repair, and modification work on all Solar Facility equipment and facilities. Unplanned maintenance activities on all Solar Facility equipment and facilities could also become necessary due to unexpected damage to or failure of Solar Facility equipment or facilities. Operation and maintenance of the Solar Facility would involve periodic use of the same types of equipment required for construction of the facilities.

Forced outage situations, where the Solar Facility has unexpectedly stopped normal operations, could occur during the operation and maintenance period requiring immediate action. Forced outage activities could occur during the operation and maintenance period. Forced outages are characterized by an unexpected failure of solar facility equipment or facilities, which requires immediate inspection, repair, restoration, replacement and/or modification. Forced outage conditions are characterized as more urgent or emergency-type work where potential for harm to persons, property or the environment exists and requires expedited action to remedy the situation to avoid such risks. Forced outage activities could include ground or vegetation-disturbing activities.

As workers cycle through the Solar Facility, inspections, testing, maintenance, and repairs will be performed on a continual basis, with most activities occurring once or twice per year for each tracker or major piece of equipment. The staff will use lightweight vehicles and all-terrain vehicles for traversing the site along access roads. Specific activities for inspection and preventative maintenance include the following:

- System testing to ensure peak performance.
- Visual inspections of array mechanical components, PV mounting systems, and PV modules.
- Visual inspection of AC and DC electrical components, including conductors, conduit, connectors, fused and unfused disconnects, and switchgear.
- Inspection of tracker control enclosures and components.
- Inverter inspection and cleaning of fans and enclosures.
- Annual lubrication of worm gear.
- Testing of DC array circuits.

- Checking of torque on electrical terminations and mechanical connections throughout system.
- Meter reading.
- Routine system maintenance to include correction of loose electrical connections, ground connections, replacement of defective modules found during testing, other minor maintenance and repair work.
- Vegetation maintenance.

The Solar Facility will require minimal replacement of panels and equipment. There will be an occasional broken tracker or solar panel that will need to be replaced. Inverters currently require replacement approximately every decade. Thus, corrective maintenance that will periodically occur during Solar Facility operation will include:

- Replacement of broken or non-functioning PV panels.
- Tracker troubleshooting and repair.
- DC and AC circuit troubleshooting and repair, including fault situations.
- Monitoring equipment and sensor troubleshooting and repair.
- Major system repairs.
- System troubleshooting and repair in the field.
- Warranty repairs, retrofits, or replacements.

Support-facility maintenance or repair will occur on an as needed basis should deterioration of parts or damage occur or retrofitting be necessary. The access/fire roads will rarely require maintenance or repair but could require re-grading, leveling, or filling. Supporting facilities and structures such as the security system, battery storage area, and fencing (around the arrays) could require corrective maintenance or repair. The electrical transmission facilities including the power collection/transmission lines may also need corrective repair or corrective maintenance. Other O&M activities include erosion control maintenance and vegetation maintenance (grazing and weed control such as herbicide spraying or mechanical removal).

The Solar Facility is anticipated to operate for approximately 25 years.

E. Closure and Decommissioning

The Solar Facility will be decommissioned prior to commencement of mining activities in the Phase 4 mining area, which mining is currently expected to start in year 2055, although timing may change depending on market conditions. Decommissioning of the solar facility is anticipated to occur in 2049 (prior to planned mining activities within Phase 4), and may involve the use of some of the same equipment listed above for construction and maintenance. The Phase 4 mining area will be mined subsequent to decommissioning of the Solar Facility; thus, all aspects of the Solar Facility within the Phase 4 mining area will necessarily be removed during mining and no traces will remain after reclamation of the mine site. In compliance with Public Resources Code 2777.3, prior to installation of the Solar Facility Vulcan has prepared and is concurrently submitting a closure and decommissioning plan with this application and a separate financial assurance mechanism to ensure removal of the renewable energy generation facility. The closure and decommissioning plan specifies that closure and decommissioning of the Solar Facility will occur prior to the final reclamation of the site or the termination of the mine use permit, whichever occurs later.

F. Quarry Phase Adjustment

The 6-acre adjustment between Phases 1 and 2 and additional haul road will not change the overall operation of the mine and does not expand or otherwise modify the disturbance area footprint anticipated and evaluated in the 2016 Final Environmental Impact Report for the Austin Quarry. The mine phase areas are adjusted to account for the 6 acres added to Phase 1 and removed from Phase 2 as follows:

Table 1 Mine Phase Areas and Anticipated Excavation Schedule				
Mine Phase	2016 Approval Phase Acreage	2016 Estimated Commencement of Excavation	Modified Phase Acreage* (ac)	Current Estimated Commencement of Excavation for Mining
1	42	2016	48 ¹	Underway
2	52	2025	46 ²	2028
3	26	2043	26	2046
4	59	2052	59	2055
5	15	2069	15	2072
6	64	2080	64	2083
Total	258		258	
*Acreages are approximate. Changes to Phase 1 and 2, as shown. Phases 3 through 6 remained unchanged. 1. Identified in 2016 approval as 42 acres, and modified by the current phase adjustment to increase by 6 acres. 2. Identified in 2016 approval as 52 acres, and modified by the current phase adjustment to decrease by 6 acres.				

G. Austin Quarry Project Mitigation Requirements and Commitments

The Solar/Phase Adjust Project will be developed in accordance with all applicable conditions of approval and mitigation measures adopted by the County in its approval of the Austin Quarry in 2016.

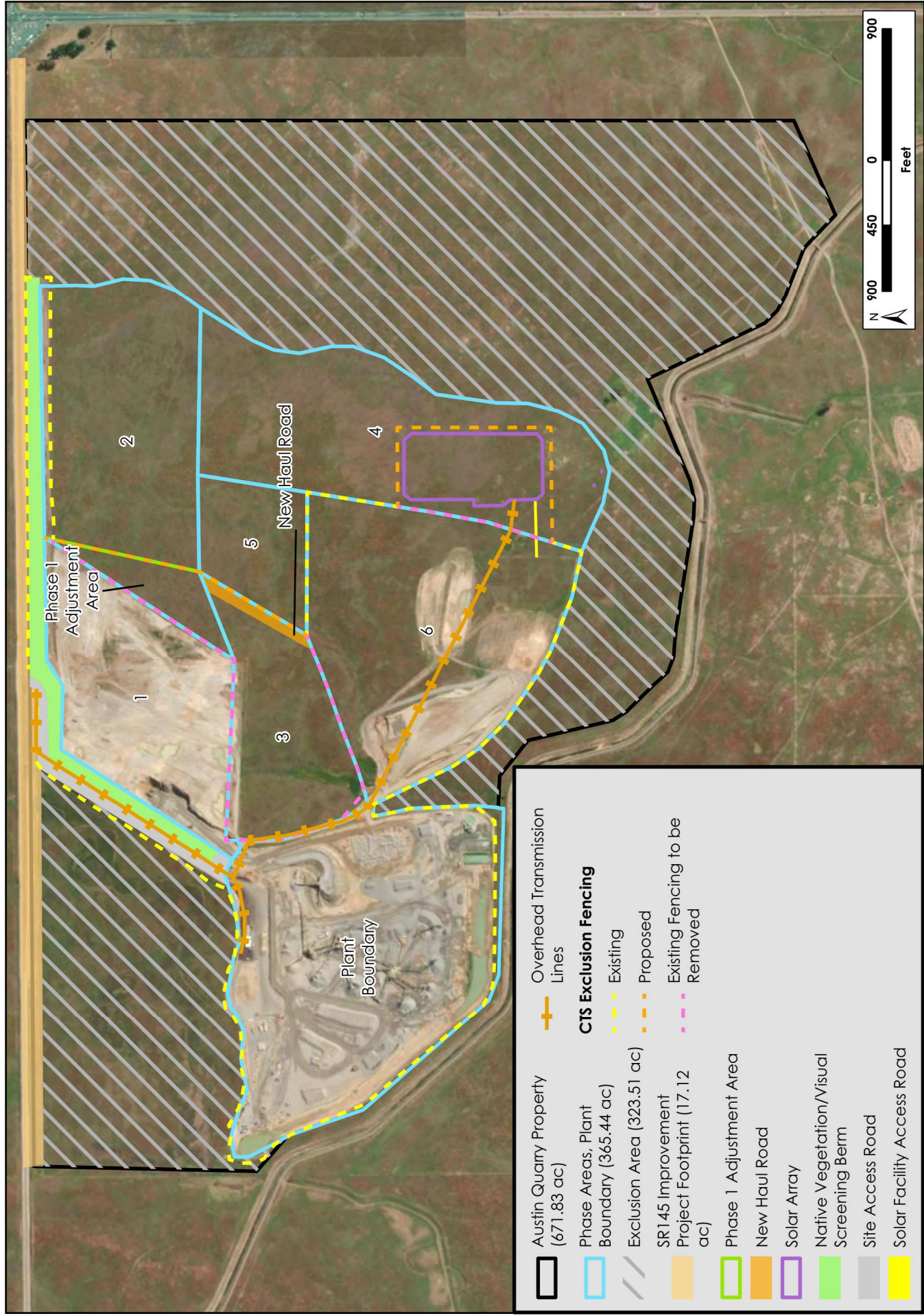


Figure 1. Aggregate Mine Phases with Requested Modifications
 Austin Quarry ITP Amendment (4571-03)
 November 2022

Vulcan Austin Quarry Solar - Decommissioning Plan

White Pine Renewables proposes the following site Decommissioning Plan for the Project at the end of the project life and termination of the solar facility operations.

Plan Objectives

The goal of the Decommissioning Plan is to make possible the cost-effective and efficient removal of the installed power generation equipment and return the site to a condition as close to a pre-construction state as feasible. The procedures described for decommissioning are designed to ensure public health and safety, environmental protection, and compliance with applicable regulations. The primary activities required for the decommissioning include removal of PV modules, batteries, one-axis tracker racks, steel I-beam posts, electrical equipment, underground wire/conduits, and fences, and then treatment of the land surface to return to the original condition.

The proposed implementation strategy includes (1) the use of industry-standard demolition methods to decrease personnel safety exposure, (2) the use of mechanized equipment (e.g., backhoe, crane) and trained operators to efficiently remove facility equipment, (3) minimization of material waste by recycling, repurposing, or refurbishment equipment as much as possible, and (4) disposal of the remaining materials in appropriate facilities for treatment and disposal.

Note that the Landlord has never used it for farming. The property was previously utilized for dryland cattle grazing until about five years ago. The property where the project will be installed has no significant natural surface water flows to be disrupted. There are no hazardous chemicals or materials on-site during construction or the operation of the solar project. Furthermore, the solar facility will not require any grade changes; the rack equipment can easily accommodate the gradual slope of the existing land surface. Therefore, it should be a relatively simple procedure to return the land to its original agricultural condition.

Plan Tasks

The Decommissioning Plan is divided into 10 tasks defined below. The tasks are typically done in sequence for the greatest efficiency with some overlap and parallel team efforts. The plan requires approximately 5 to 6 weeks to complete with 4 to 6 workers at a time. The fences will be kept in place for safety and limited access until all the facility equipment is dismantled and transported off-site.

Task List:

1. PV Modules: The facility contains photovoltaic modules of 1 meter by 2 meters in size. The first task in the plan is to remove these modules from the tracking racks; then, the facility will be much more open to complete the remaining tasks efficiently. The modules will be packed into a box truck and transported to a recycling facility that has the ability to process photovoltaic semiconductor cells, reclaim valuable materials, and safely dispose of the remaining materials.
2. Batteries: The facility will contain roughly a single shipping container of batteries. The second task is to unbolt the shipping container from its poured concrete foundation, unattach all wires and other points of connection, then lift the container onto a trailer where it will be taken for salvage and recycling.
3. Above Ground Wire: One of the major advantages of the plant design is that almost all the

DC wiring is above ground and mounted on guidewire hooks on the racks. This method makes both the construction and dismantling efforts much easier and far less costly. The wire is copper, and the guidewire and hooks are steel, so there is significant material value. The wire will be rolled up and consolidated in one area for pickup by a metal recycling or repurposing facility.

4. Racks: The facility contains tracker racks which are used to hold the modules facing the sun. These are fabricated with aluminum, so they are of high material value for recycling. The task is to remove the racks from the posts and consolidate them for pickup by an aluminum recycling facility.
5. Posts: Every rack has 12-posts. The posts are 8 -10ft long steel I-beams, hammered into the ground about 4 ft-6ft deep. The posts will be pulled out with a backhoe and consolidated for pickup by a steel recycling or repurposing facility.
6. Underground Wire: As previously stated, the facility has very little underground wire by design, saving significant reclamation costs. The AC wire and DC conduits are pulled out of the ground with a backhoe. The conduit holes will be backfilled with native soil. The wire will be rolled up and consolidated in one area for pickup by an aluminum recycling or repurposing facility. The conduits can either be repurposed or taken to the local dump.
7. Inverter: The inverters are bolted to piles 6ft to 8ft in height and can be unbolted and put into a dumpster for electronic recycling much like laptops.
8. POI Cabinet: The Point of Interconnect (POI) cabinet (3 ft by 8 ft footprint) is installed on a concrete pad (6 ft by 8 ft). The POI cabinet is easily lifted by a crane and placed on a long bed pickup truck during the same day as task 6. It can be taken to an electrical equipment recycling facility. The concrete pad can be demolished and taken to the local dump or reprocessing facility.
9. Fences: After all the equipment is removed from the facility, the next task is to remove the perimeter fence and three gates from the site. The fence poles can be pulled out with a backhoe. All the fence materials will be consolidated for pickup by a steel recycling or fence repurposing facility.
10. Surface: The last task is to clean up any remaining debris from the site and take it to the local dump. Since the site grade is not adjusted and there are minimal underground wires/conduits installed during construction, the surface is essentially the same as the original condition. The landowner may require surface smoothing, tilling, and cover seeding. We allocate 3 days for labor and tractor work.