



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT EIR AND SCOPING MEETING

Date: August 23, 2022

To: Responsible Agencies and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of San Bernardino (County) must conduct a review of the environmental impacts of the proposed Sienna Solar and Storage Project (Project). Implementation of the Project will require discretionary approvals from state and local agencies, and therefore, the Project is subject to the environmental review requirements of CEQA. As the lead agency under CEQA, and due to the involvement of potentially significant impacts to the environment, the County is therefore issuing this Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project.

Project Title: Sienna Solar and Storage Project

Project Applicant: 99MT 8ME, LLC

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 0452-071-10, 11, 19, 20 and 25; 0452-062-21, 22, 23 and 24; 0452-112-17, 18, 19, 20, 24, and 25; 0452-113-17; 0452-121-12, 38, 39, 42, 48, and 52; 0452-361-46 and 47; 0452-371-01, and; 0452-391-08 and 09.

Project Description

99MT 8ME, LLC (Applicant) plans to construct and operate the Sienna Solar and Storage Project (Project), a utility scale, solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation facility that would produce up to 525 megawatts (MW) of solar power and include up to 525 MW of energy storage capacity rate in a battery energy storage system (BESS) within an approximately 1,854-acre Project site. The Project will be processed under one Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The Project consists of the installation of a PV solar facility, BESS, Project substation, operations and maintenance building(s), underground collection system, 230 kV gen-tie line (on- and off-site), and other ancillary facilities. The Project will interconnect at the Southern California Edison (SCE) Calcite Substation (currently pending final permits and construction) via a proposed overhead and/or underground 230-kV gen-tie line in addition to other ancillary facilities utilizing private and potentially public rights-of-way (ROW). The proposed Calcite Substation is located northwest of the Project area, within a 77-acre parcel (Assessor Parcel Number 0453-041-07) that occupies land both east and west of State Route (SR) 247 (Barstow Road). Approximately 39 miles of collector lines and gen-tie alternatives will be analyzed in the EIR, although not all routes will be developed.

Project Objectives

The following are the Project objectives:

- Use proven and established PV and energy storage technology that is efficient and requires low maintenance

- Assist California in meeting greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by 2030 as required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act (Assembly Bill 32), as amended by Senate Bill 32
- Support California's Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) Program consistent with the timeline established by Senate Bill 100, which requires that by December 31, 2030, 60 percent of all electricity sold in the State shall be generated from renewable energy sources
- To provide energy to the electric grid to meet increasing demand for in-state generation
- Interconnect directly to the SCE electrical transmission system
- Promote the County's role as the State's leading producer of renewable energy
- Utilize a location that is in close proximity to an existing SCE substation and powerlines

Project Site

The proposed Project is located on approximately 1,854-acres in the southwestern portion of the Mojave Desert and includes the Lucerne Dry Lake, in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. The Project is predominately located east of SR 247 (Barstow Road), north of the unincorporated community of Lucerne Valley, with portions of the gen-tie alternative corridors that include possible connections along Haynes Road, Huff Road, and Northside Road to the east of Barstow Road. The site is generally located approximately 35 miles south of Barstow, 45 miles northwest of the town of Yucca Valley, 15 miles southeast of the town of Apple Valley, and 20 miles north of the City of Big Bear Lake.

Project Overview and Design

The Project involves the construction and operation of a utility scale, solar PV electricity generation facility that would produce up to 525 MW of solar power with an integrated 525 MW BESS. The Project would be fenced to prevent access by the public. Gates would be installed at the roads entering the Project site. Limiting access to the Project site would be necessary both to ensure the safety of the public and to protect the equipment from potential theft and vandalism. The Project consists of the following components:

Photovoltaic Panels/Solar Arrays. The proposed Project will use PV panels or modules (including but not limited to bi-facial or concentrated PV technology) on mounting frameworks to convert sunlight directly into electricity. Individual panels will be installed on either fixed-tilt or tracker mount systems (single- or dual-axis, using galvanized steel or aluminum). If the panels are configured for fixed tilt, they will be oriented toward the south. For tracking configurations, the panels will rotate to follow the sun over the course of the day. The solar panels will be consistent with panel dimensions that are widely used in commercial solar installations in California and will conform to County building code requirements.

Battery Energy Storage System. The Project may include one or more BESS', located at or near a substation/switchyard (onsite or shared) and/or at the inverter stations, or elsewhere onsite. Such large-scale BESSs would be up to 525 megawatt alternating current (MWac) in capacity and up to 45 acres in total area. BESS' consist of modular and scalable battery packs and battery control systems that conform to U.S. national safety standards. The BESS modules, which could include commercially available lithium, flow, or other batteries, typically consist of standard containers housed in pad- or post-mounted, stackable metal structures, but may also be housed in a dedicated building(s), in compliance with applicable regulations. The maximum height of a dedicated structure is not expected to exceed 45 feet. The actual dimensions and number of

energy storage modules and structures vary depending on the application, supplier, and configuration chosen, as well as on offtaker/power purchase agreement requirements and on County building standards. The Project may share a BESS with one or more nearby or future solar projects or may operate one or more standalone BESS facilities within the Project site.

Inverters. Direct current energy would be delivered from the panels via cable to inverter stations, generally located near the center of each block. Inverter stations convert the DC energy to AC energy which can be dispatched to the transmission system. Inverter stations are typically comprised of one or more inverter modules with a rated power of up to approximately 5-MW each, a unit transformer, and voltage switch gear. The unit transformer and voltage switch gear are housed in steel enclosures, while the inverter module(s) are housed in cabinets. Depending on the model ultimately selected, the inverter station may lie within an enclosed or canopied metal structure, typically on a skid or concrete mounted pad. The final location(s) of each component would be determined before the issuance of building permits.

Substations. Output from inverter stations would be transferred via electrical conduits and electrical conductor wires to one or more Project substations or switchyards (collectively referred to as “substations” herein), and then onward via “gen-tie line(s).” The Project would have its own dedicated substation equipment located within the Project area. Dedicated equipment may incorporate several components, including auxiliary power transformers, distribution cabinets, revenue metering systems, a microwave transmission tower, and voltage switch gear. Each substation would occupy an area of up to approximately five (5) acres, secured separately by a chain-link fence. The final location(s) of each component would be determined before the issuance of building permits.

Substations typically include a small control building (roughly 500 square feet) standing approximately 10 feet in height. The building is typically either prefabricated concrete or steel housing with rooms for the voltage switch gear and the metering equipment, a room for the station supply transformer, and a separate control technology room in which the main computer, the intrusion detection system, and the main distribution equipment are housed.

Gen-Tie Line. The Project will interconnect at the SCE Calcite Substation (currently pending final permits and construction) via a proposed overhead and/or underground 230-kV gen-tie line in addition to other ancillary facilities utilizing private and potentially public rights-of-way. The proposed Calcite Substation is located northwest of the Project area, within a 77-acre parcel (Assessor Parcel Number 045-304-107) that occupies land both east and west of SR 247 (Barstow Road). The substation would be designed, constructed, owned, operated, and maintained by SCE and subject to California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulations. Approximately 39 miles of collector lines and gen-tie alternatives will be analyzed in the EIR, although not all routes will be developed.

Operations and Maintenance Building. The Project may include an operations and maintenance (O&M) building, typically 40 feet x 80 feet in size, with designated parking. If constructed, the O&M building would likely be steel framed, with metal siding and roof panels. An O&M building may include the following: office, repair building/parts storage, control room, restroom, and septic tank and leach field.

Site Security and Fencing. The Project area would be enclosed within a chain link fence measuring up to eight feet in height from finished grade. An intrusion alarm system comprised of sensor cables integrated into the perimeter fence, intrusion detection cabinets placed approximately every 1,500 feet along the perimeter fence, and an intrusions control unit, located

either in the substation control room or at the O&M building, or similar technology, may be installed. Additionally, the Project may include additional security measures including, but not limited to, warning reflective signage, controlled access points, security camera systems, and security guard vehicle patrols to deter trespassing and/or unauthorized activities that could interfere with operation of the Project.

Controlled access gates would be maintained at the main entrances to the Project Site. Project area access would be provided to offsite emergency response teams that respond in the event of an after-hours emergency. Enclosure gates would be manually operated with a code or key provided in an identified key box location.

Construction

The construction period for the Project is anticipated to occur over 12 to 24 months, utilizing an estimated (up to) 500 workers per day (during peak construction periods). Heavy construction is expected to occur between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. Additional hours may be necessary to make up schedule deficiencies or to complete critical construction activities. Some activities may continue 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Any construction work performed outside of the normal work schedule would be coordinated with the appropriate agencies and would conform to the County Noise Ordinance.

Operations

Once constructed, maintenance of the solar facility would generally be limited to the following: Cleaning of PV panels, monitoring electricity generation, providing site security, facility maintenance - replacing or repairing inverters, wiring, electrical components, and PV modules. It is expected that the Project would require an operational staff of up to 15 full-time employees. The solar farm would operate seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Maintenance activities may occur seven days a week, 24 hours a day to ensure PV panel output when solar energy is available.

Decommissioning

At the end of the Project's operational term (anticipated to be approximately 40 years), the Project Applicant may choose to update site technology and recommission, or decommission the site and remove the systems and components. All decommissioning and restoration activities would adhere to the requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and be in accordance with all applicable federal, State, and County regulations. The Applicant will work with the County to ensure decommissioning of the Project after its productive lifetime complies with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements best management practices (BMPs).

EIR SCOPE

As set forth in the California Public Resources Code Section et seq., and the CEQA Guidelines, codified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq, the County has determined, based on substantial evidence and in light of the whole record before the lead agency, that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Report shall be prepared for the Project. (PRC Sections 21080(d) and (e); 21802.2(d); 21083(b); and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(d) and 15081).

The lead agency has initially identified the following environmental considerations as potentially significant effects of the Project:

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

The EIR will assess the effects of the Project on the environment, identify potentially significant impacts, identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts, and discuss potentially feasible alternatives to the Project that may accomplish basic Project objectives while lessening or eliminating any potentially significant Project impacts.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

A responsible agency means a public agency other than the lead agency, which has permitting authority or approval power over some aspect of the overall Project. This Notice provides a description of the Project and solicits comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal, State and local agencies, and other interested parties on the scope and content of the environmental document to be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of the Project.

Comments received in response to this Notice will be reviewed and considered by the lead agency in determining the scope of the EIR. Due to time limits, as defined by CEQA, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than thirty (30) days after publication of this notice. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to you or to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Project.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The NOP is available for public review on the County's website at:
<https://lus.sbcounty.gov/planning-home/environmental/desert-region/>

Additionally, a copy of the NOP is available for public review at the following locations:

San Bernardino County High Desert Government Center
15900 Smoke Tree Street, Suite 1331
Hesperia, CA 92345

San Bernardino County Government Center
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, Second Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415

San Bernardino County Library Barstow Branch
304 E. Buena Vista Street
Barstow, CA 92311

We would like to hear what you think. Comments and/or questions should be directed to Jim Morrissey, Planner, via U.S. mail or email **by no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 22, 2022.**

County of San Bernardino, Land Use Services Department
Attn: Jim Morrissey, Planner
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415
Email: Jim.Morrissey@lus.sbcounty.gov

Please include name, phone number, and address of your agency's contact person in your response.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The CEQA process encourages comments and questions from the public throughout the planning process. Consistent with Section 21083.9 of the CEQA Statute, a Public Scoping Meeting will be held to solicit public comments on the scope and content of the EIR. A virtual scoping meeting will be held for this Project. The date and meeting details are as follows:

Date and Time: September 14, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Place: Via Zoom:

<https://hdrinc.zoom.us/j/99875981798?pwd=VHJtU2J4MFBzVjR4TUR2RVI2VTV3Zz09>

The zoom meeting may also be accessed through the zoom website by using the following:

Webinar ID: 998 7598 1798

If you require additional information please contact Jim Morrissey, Planner, at (909) 387- 4234.

Figure 1. Regional Vicinity Map

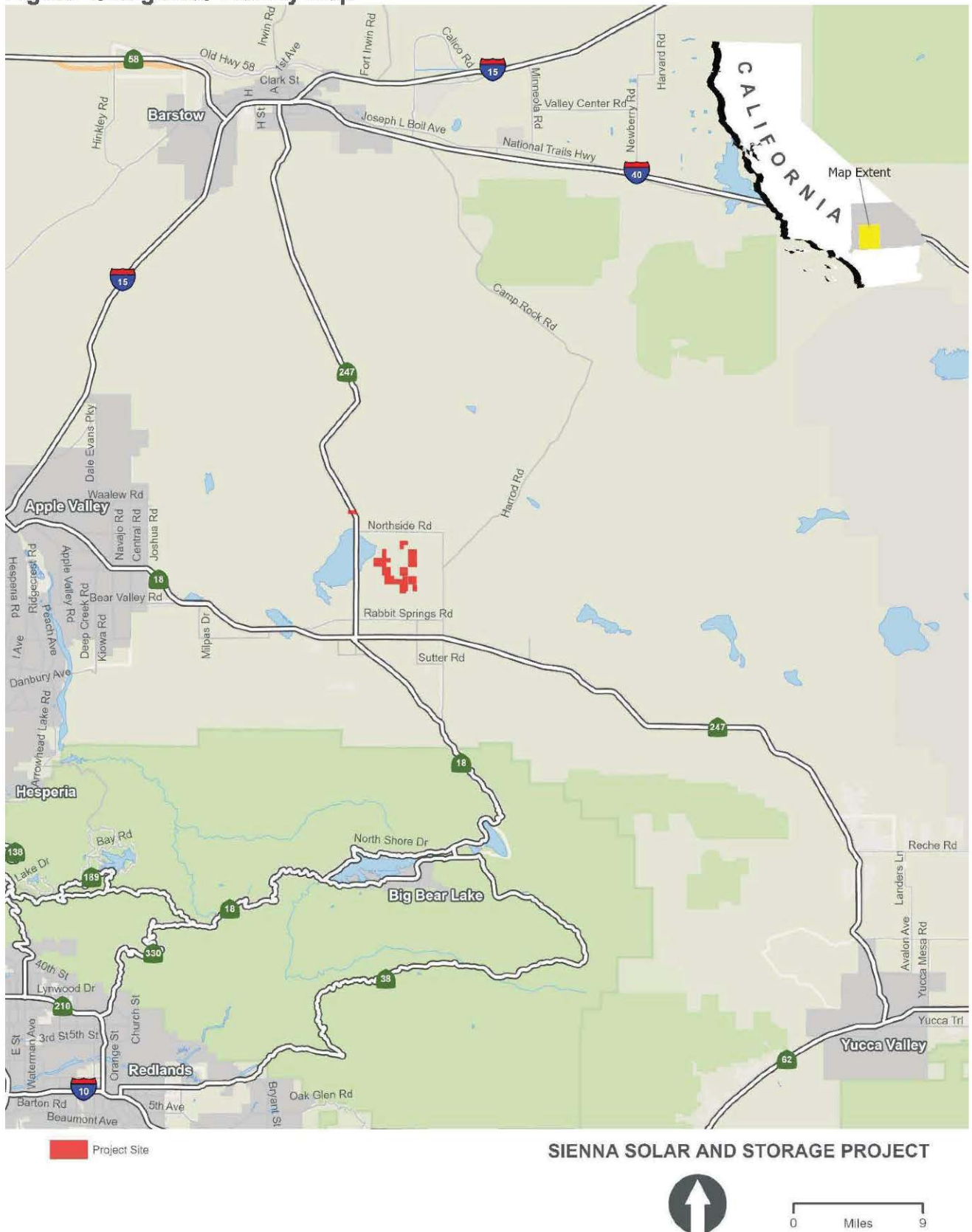
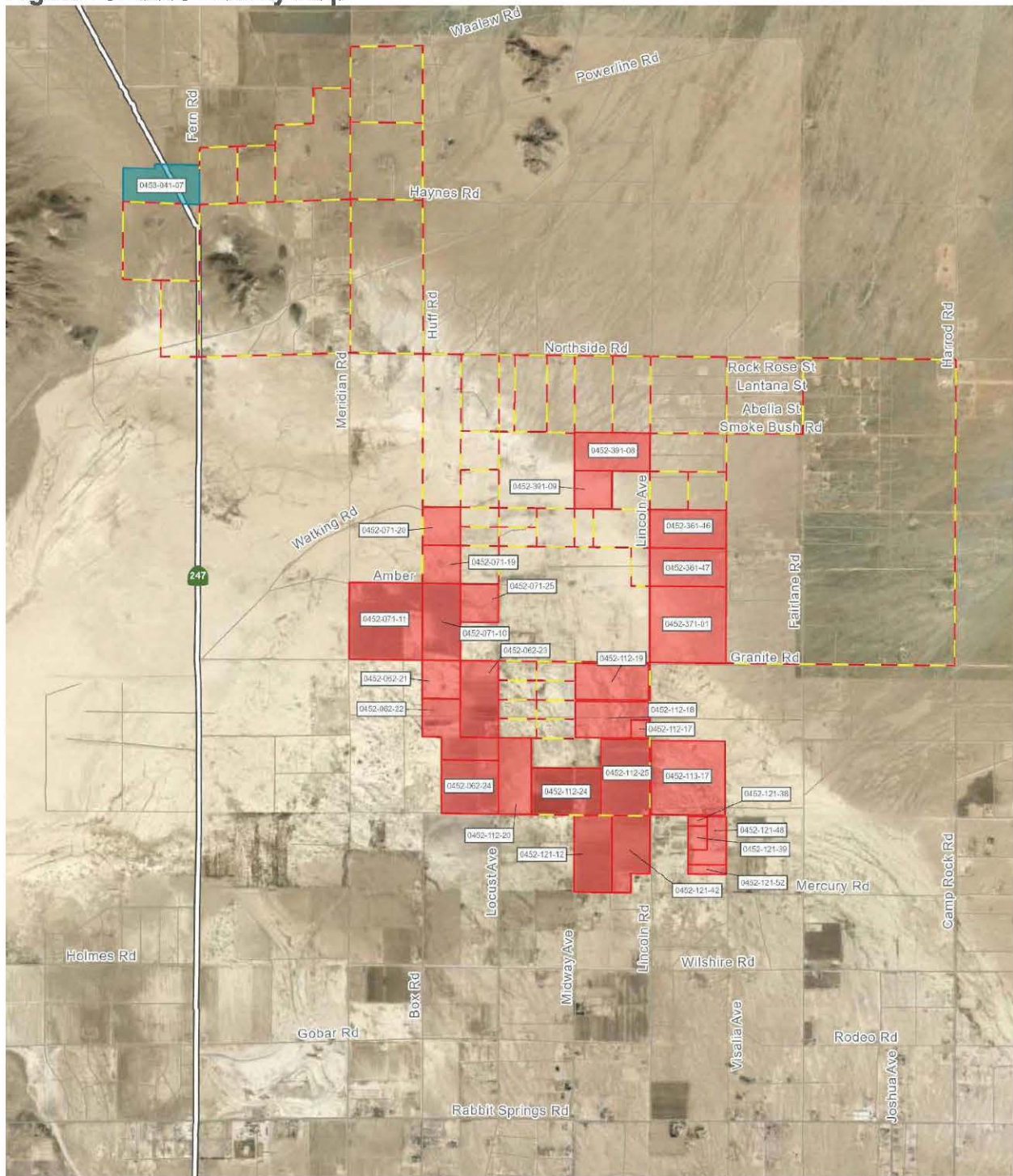


Figure 2. Local Vicinity Map



Project Site Component

- Project Site
- Future location of Southern California Edison Calcite Substation
- Gen-Tie Line and/or Collector Line Alternatives

SIENNA SOLAR AND STORAGE PROJECT



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