

# WELCOME

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**Bureau of Land Management  
Public Comment Meeting  
Ocotillo Sol Solar Project  
Draft EIS/Draft CDCA Plan Amendment**

BLM Right-of-way Application CACA-51625

May 23, 2012

Noel Ludwig, BLM Project Manager

# INTRODUCTIONS

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## **Bureau of Land Management (BLM):**

Noel Ludwig, Project Manager, California Desert District

Brian Paul, Co-Project Manager, El Centro

Lynnette Elser, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)  
Coordinator, California Desert District

Jane Arteaga, Acting Field Office Manager, El Centro

Daniel Steward, Natural Resources Branch Chief, El Centro

Christine McCollum, Archaeologist, El Centro

# INTRODUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

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## **RECON Environmental (NEPA Contractor):**

Susy Morales, Senior Environmental Planner and  
NEPA Lead

Sharon Wright-Harris, Writer/Editor

Carmen Zepeda-Herman, Project Archaeologist

## **Gordley Group (Public Meeting Contractor):**

Alice Templeton, Public Comment Facilitator

# INTRODUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

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## **San Diego Gas & Electric (Applicant):**

Edalia Olivio-Gomez, Senior Environmental Specialist

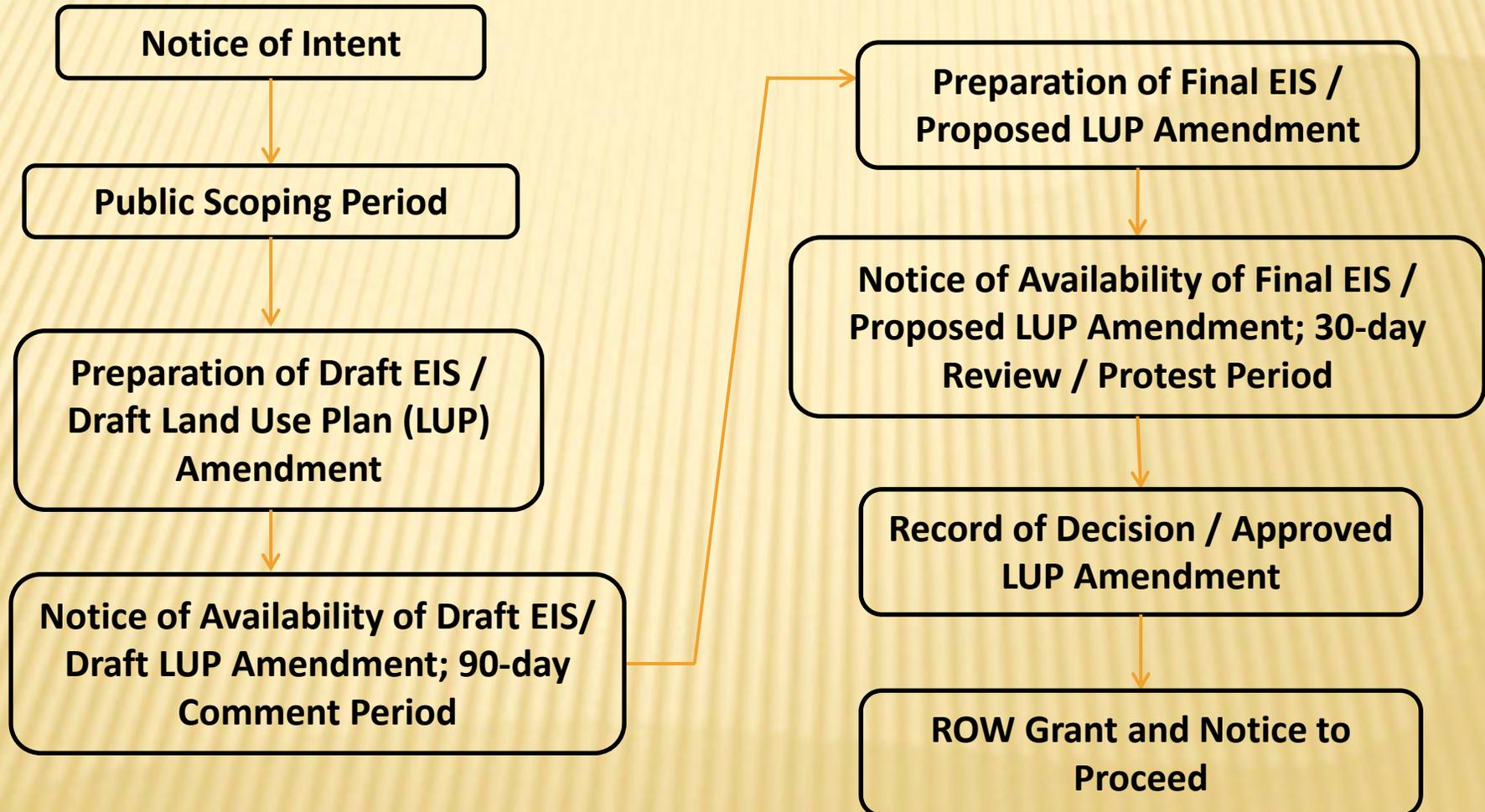
Frank Thomas, Project Development Manager

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

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- Ocotillo Sol Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan Amendment: *published April 20, 2012*
- Formal public comment period: *April 20 – July 19, 2012*
- Overview of the NEPA and land use amendment process
- Description of the project and alternatives
- Public comment period

# BLM EIS / LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS



# OCOTILLO SOL SOLAR PROJECT

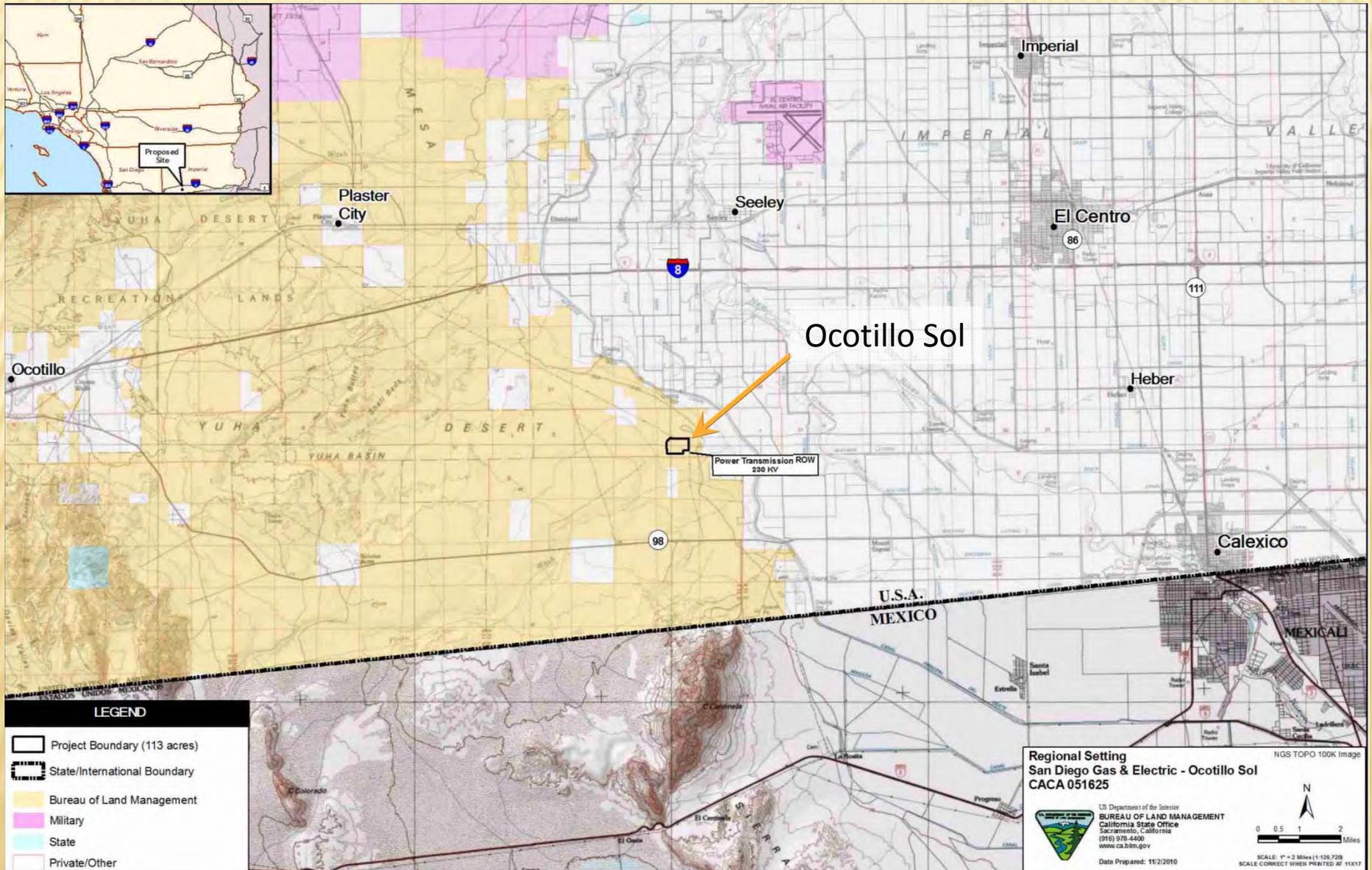
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San Diego Gas & Electric has applied for a right-of-way (ROW) on public lands to construct the Ocotillo Sol project, a photovoltaic (PV) solar power facility on approximately 115 acres in Imperial County, California.

The site is adjacent to the Imperial Valley Substation, 4 miles south of Interstate 8, 5 miles south of the community of Seeley, 9 miles southwest of El Centro, and 82 miles east of San Diego.



# OCOTILLO SOL PROJECT LOCATION



# NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

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## ➤ **ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION/NO CDCA PLAN AMENDMENT**

- No project approval
- No ROW grant
- No CDCA Plan Amendment

## ➤ **ALTERNATIVE 4: NO PROJECT/AMEND CDCA PLAN TO IDENTIFY AREA AS SUITABLE FOR SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

- No project approval
- No ROW grant
- CDCA Plan Amendment: *Area is suitable for solar energy development*

## ➤ **ALTERNATIVE 5: NO PROJECT/AMEND CDCA PLAN TO IDENTIFY AREA AS UNSUITABLE FOR SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

- No project approval
- No ROW grant
- CDCA Plan Amendment: *Area is unsuitable for solar energy development*

# PROJECT ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

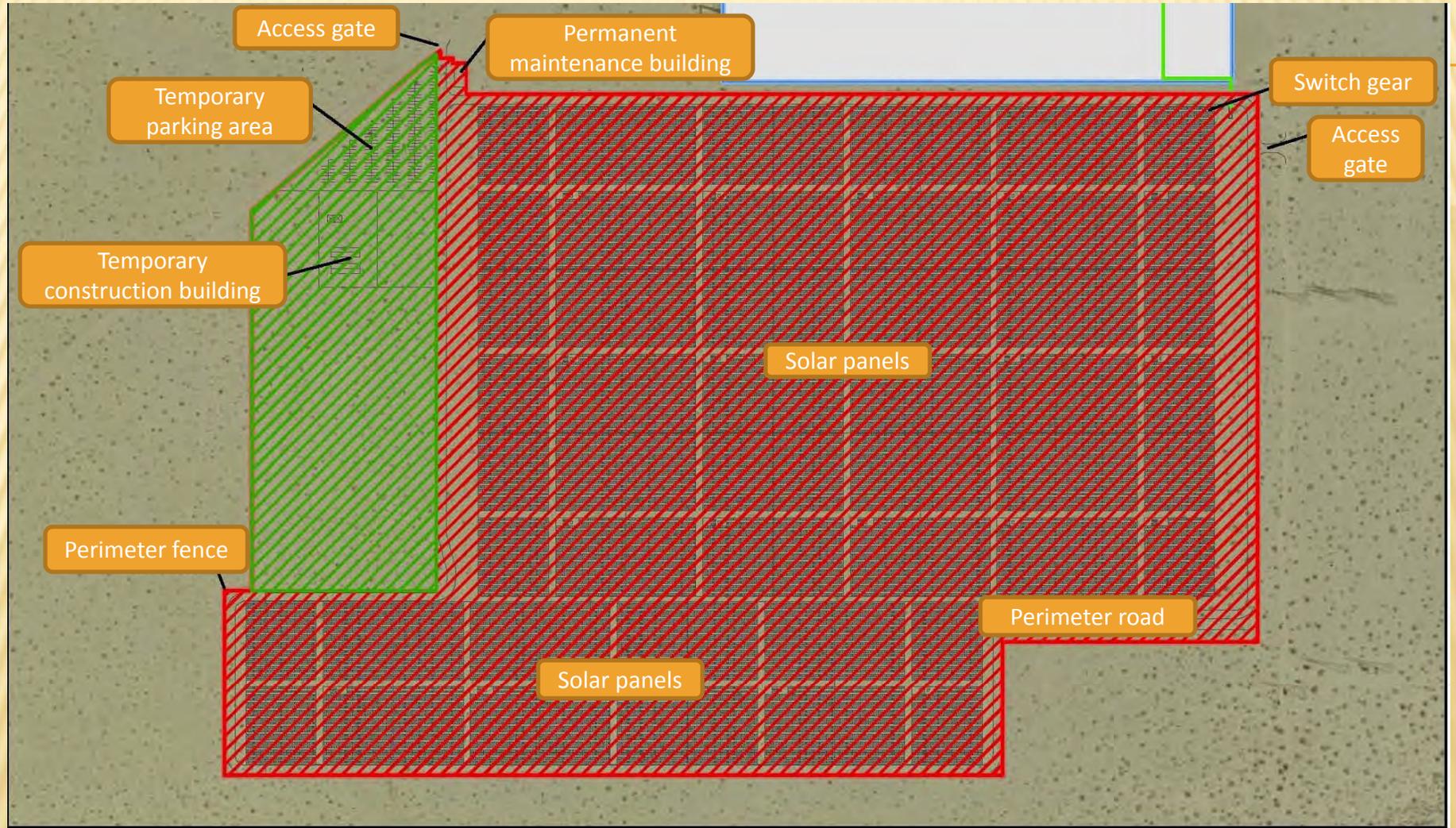
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## ALTERNATIVE 2

### APPLICANT'S PROPOSED PROJECT WITH CDCA PLAN AMENDMENT

- The Applicant would construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a 100-acre, up to 20-megawatt solar PV facility on BLM-managed lands
- 15-acre temporary ROW for use as construction laydown area
- 12.47-kilovolt, 2,000-foot underground generation tie line from solar PV facility to Imperial Valley Substation
- CDCA Plan Amendment: *all 115 acres suitable for solar energy development*

# ALTERNATIVE 2 (APPLICANT'S PROJECT)



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Site Boundary              | <b>Impacts</b>  |
|  Plan Lines                 |  Permanent |
|  New Transmission Line      |  Temporary |
|  Imperial Valley Substation |   |

0 Feet 400 

FIGURE 2-3

Alternative 2 Ocotillo Sol  
Project Facility Layout

# PROJECT ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED (CONT'D)

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## ALTERNATIVE 3

### REDUCED CONSTRUCTION FOOTPRINT (BLM PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

- Modified to 102 acres, reducing total Yuha Desert disturbance
- Project construction and laydown/staging would occur within 100 acres
- 2-acre temporary area for construction workforce parking
- CDCA Plan Amendment: *all 102 acres suitable for solar energy development*
- Otherwise the same as Alternative 2

# ALTERNATIVE 3 (BLM PREFERRED)

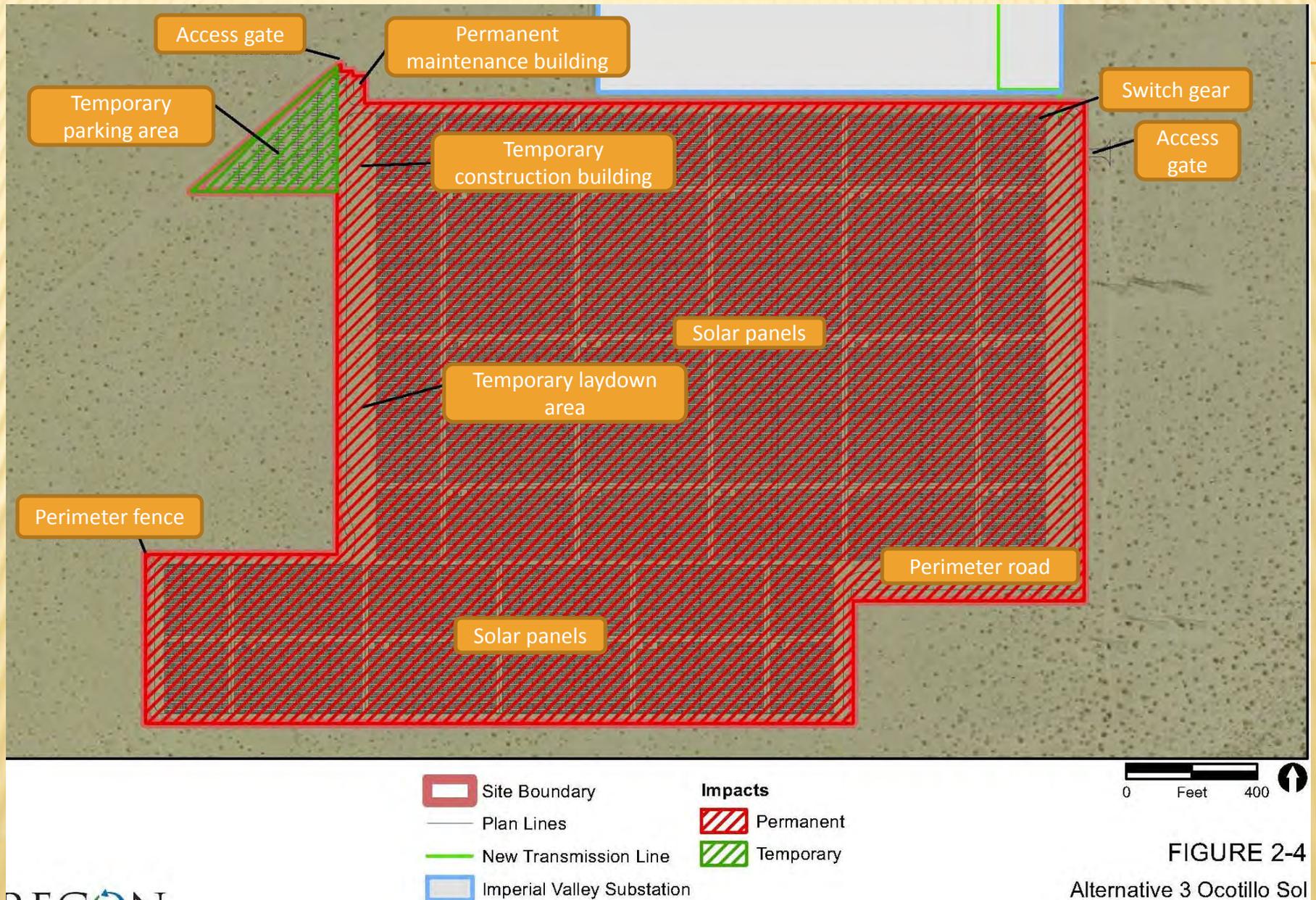


FIGURE 2-4

Alternative 3 Ocotillo Sol Project Facility Layout

# IMPACTS OF NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

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- Under **Alternatives 1, 4, and 5**, the Ocotillo Sol Project would not be approved or constructed.
- No direct or indirect impacts associated with the Ocotillo Sol Project would occur under **Alternatives 1, 4, and 5**.
- **Alternatives 1, 4, and 5** would not contribute to cumulative impacts when added to other reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

# IMPACTS OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

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- **Alternative 2** would have the highest level of ground disturbance (115 acres) and the highest level of impacts.
- **Alternative 3** would have a lower level of ground disturbance (102 acres) and impacts than Alternative 2.
- Impacts under **Alternatives 2 and 3** would be minimal overall. *Mitigation measures* and *best management practices* would be used to further reduce the level of impacts.

# IMPACTS OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES (CONT'D)

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- **Alternatives 2 and 3** could result in adverse impacts to:
  - vegetation resources
  - flat-tailed horned lizard
  - burrowing owl
  - raptor species
  - special status small mammals and reptiles
- With the implementation of *mitigation measures* and *best management practices*, **Alternatives 2 and 3** would not contribute to cumulative impacts to these resources when added to other reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

# IMPACTS OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES (CONT'D)

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Under **Alternatives 2 and 3**, negligible impacts would occur related to:

- air quality
- greenhouse gases
- soil resources
- paleontological resources
- wildland fire
- recreation
- visual resources

# IMPACTS OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES (CONT'D)

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Under **Alternatives 2 and 3**, no adverse impacts are expected to occur related to any of the following:

- cultural resources or historic properties
- geologic features
- water resources
- jurisdictional waters
- special status plant species
- lands and realty
- special designation areas
- transportation and access
- noise sensitive receptors
- public health and safety
- local socioeconomic impact area
- minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes

# MITIGATION MEASURES

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Section 1508.20 of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA defines mitigation as follows:

- a) ***Avoiding the impact*** altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action
- b) ***Minimizing impacts*** by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation
- c) ***Rectifying the impact*** by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment
- d) ***Reducing or eliminating the impact*** over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action
- e) ***Compensating for the impact*** by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments

# MITIGATION MEASURES (CONT'D)

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The mitigation measures proposed for Alternatives 2 and 3 include a combination of the following:

- Measures proposed by the Applicant
- Regulatory requirements of other federal, state, and local agencies
- BLM-proposed mitigation measures, standard ROW grant terms and conditions, and best management practices

# MITIGATION MEASURES (CONT'D)

RESOURCE/ISSUE	# OF MITIGATION MEASURES OR BMPs (see Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS)
Vegetation resources	5
Flat-tailed horned lizard	8
Burrowing owl	7
Raptor species	2
Special status small mammals and reptiles	8
Air quality	1 (dust control)
Soil resources	2
Paleontological resources	1 (impact mitigation program)
Wildland fire	2
Visual resources	4
Water resources (no impact)	3 (includes SWPPP)
Cultural resources (no impact)	3

# WHAT'S NEXT?

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- **Preparation and Publication of Final EIS/Proposed CDCA Plan Amendment**

BLM will review public comments to determine what changes and clarifications are needed. Once the revisions have been made, BLM will publish the Final EIS/Proposed CDCA Plan Amendment.

- **30-day Review/Protest Period**

Only those who have standing (previously commented on the document) may file a protest.

- **Record of Decision/Approved CDCA Plan Amendment**

- **ROW Grant and Notice to Proceed**

- **Construction of Ocotillo Sol Project**

The anticipated date for construction to begin, should the project be approved, is sometime during the third quarter of 2013.

# PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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- Complete a Speaker Card if you would like to verbally present your comments.
- Commenters will be called to the microphone in the order the Speaker Cards are received.
- Please speak clearly and respectfully.
- Each commenter will have 5 minutes to give their comment.
- Once everyone has had the opportunity to comment, and as time allows, anyone who was not able to complete their comment will be given the opportunity to do so.

# WANT MORE INFORMATION?

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## **BLM WEB SITE**

Public notices and documents will be posted on the BLM Web site at:

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html>

## **PHONE**

You may contact the BLM Project Manager, Noel Ludwig, at **951-697-5368** to request more information about the project and to be added to the project mailing list

## **E-MAIL**

You may send e-mail requests for information to: **BLM\_CA\_Ocotillo\_Sol@blm.gov**

## **U.S. MAIL**

The BLM Project Manager may also be contacted at the following address to receive more information or to be added to the project mailing list:

**Bureau of Land Management  
California Desert District Office  
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA 92553**