

## DRAFT MINUTES

**Meeting Date: July 07, 2025 – Monday**

**Time: 1:00 PM**

**To be approved by SEATAC at a future meeting**

### SEATAC MEMBERS

Ty Garrison  
Wendy Katagi, Ph.D.  
Edgar De La Torre (alternate)  
Cassy Aoyagi (absent)  
Jennifer Lentz, Ph.D. (absent)  
Greg Pauly, Ph.D. (absent)

### LA COUNTY PLANNING STAFF

Tyler Montgomery, Senior Planner  
Karla Moreno, Biologist  
Cameron Robertson, SEATAC  
Coordinator

### PART I – PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. Roll Call

### PART II – MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Motion to approve the June 2, 2025 minutes made by Garrison and seconded by Katagi. De La Torre abstained. The motion passed.

### PART III – OLD BUSINESS

[none]

### PART IV – NEW BUSINESS

2. PROJECT: Catalina Airport Solar Project  
Project No.: PRJ2022-004233  
Permit Nos.: CUP RPPL2022013117, CDP RPPL2022013100  
APNs: 7480-041-042  
LOCATION: Catalina Airport in the Sky  
USGS QUAD: Santa Catalina North  
APPLICANT: Emily Mallonee  
BIOLOGIST: Gretchen Cummings, Cummings Environmental, Inc.  
DRP PLANNER: Tyler Montgomery  
DRP BIOLOGIST: Karla Moreno

**Project Description:** The application is a request to authorize an approximately 10,400-square-foot ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system installation, enclosed by perimeter chain-link fencing. The project requires a coastal development permit ("CDP") as well as a significant ecological area conditional use permit ("SEA-CUP"), as

development is proposed on the same lot as the Buffalo Springs Significant Ecological Area ("SEA"). The proposed solar PV system will be located on a south-facing slope between Airport in the Sky and Airport Road. The site is surrounded by existing development, including airport facilities to the north, a utility road to the west, and Airport Road to the south and east. The project site is approximately 790 feet south of the Buffalo Springs SEA, which is located north of Airport in the Sky.

## **SEATAC Comments:**

### Site Analysis

- SEATAC asked about the alternative sites analyzed during the site development phase, whether the applicant analyzed the parking or other barren areas set back from the airport runway. The applicant's representative, Joshua Fyfe with Golden State Renewable Energy, responded that a solar structure over the parking area was considered but was not appropriate. The proposed location was selected due to its proximity to a local utility interconnection and existing disturbance from runaway debris.
- SEATAC commented that existing debris was not discussed in the report nor was it mapped but including the analysis of the existing disturbance would have been helpful for the analysis.
- SEATAC stated the temporary trenching impacts did not provide an adequate description of impacts and requested an impacts discussion of trench dimensions, spoils, shoring, etc.

### Fencing

- SEATAC asked how the fencing gap spacing was determined. The project biologist was not present to respond to questions and the applicant's representative was not familiar with how the space was determined but confirmed that the gap could be modified to be higher to allow for wildlife movement.
- SEATAC stated that the 7-inch fence gap should have a safety design to keep collared Santa Catalina Island foxes (Island fox) from being hung or stuck on the bottom hooks of the fence.
- SEATAC asked about protective fencing for Palmer's grapplehook being installed pre-construction rather than post-construction. The applicant's representative confirmed fencing will be installed before construction activities start.

### Mitigation

- SEATAC asked if there was a mitigation area plan drafted to ensure mitigation success. The applicant stated a five-year monitoring period will showcase success but proposed to re-evaluate the site before the monitoring period ends.
- SEATAC stated the mitigation area appears to contain existing native vegetation. The native vegetation acreage within the mitigation area should be excluded from the mitigation area acreage calculation because the existing patch of native

vegetation does not need to be restored and it should not be considered part of the mitigation.

- In addition, all seeds and plants used within the mitigation area shall be local native stock from Santa Catalina Island.

#### Flora and Fauna Analysis

- SEATAC discussed Island fox movement and their curiosity for water buffalo tanks on construction sites. SEATAC discussed a mitigation measure to state that all water buffalo tanks are kept lidded when not being filled to keep Island foxes from falling in and drowning.
- SEATAC commented on the number of observed bird species is minimal and the wildlife study was lacking.
- SEATAC stated the desktop review for the potential presence of snails was too limiting and requested a survey to confirm snails are not present on the site.
- SEATAC disagreed with the reasoning of elevation ranges to dismiss the potential occurrence of plants on site. They discussed that the biological report needed to perform a plant survey of the entire site to provide adequate plant analysis or if the entire site was surveyed, be explicit in stating every square foot of the site was surveyed and discuss the species with the potential to occur but were not observed and the species that were observed.
- SEATAC disagreed with the analysis dismissing the potential for Island foxes to be present on site. Update the report to address the potential for presence of Island foxes on the site.
- SEATAC stated that the applicant and the Conservancy should work with wildlife agencies for an adaptive management and monitoring plan. Include monitoring of the fence, educational signs, and wildlife movement to ensure no animal is harmed by passing under the fence.
- SEATAC asked to elaborate on the method of solar panel cleaning and maintenance activities including impacts from cleaning chemical used.
- SEATAC requested the italic emphasis of the word “outside” be removed within the Project Consistency with SEA CUP Compatibility Criteria section of the biological constraints analysis.
- SEATAC requested the biological constraints analysis be re-organized to create a more logical flow and to include a separate section focused on discussing the mitigation measures rather than combining both the analysis with the mitigation.

#### **Motion/second by Katagi/De La Torre:**

I move that the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee continue the review of Project No. PRJ2022-004233, Permit Nos. CUP RPPL2022013117 and CDP RPPL2022013100 to a later date to allow for the following project modifications and additional information:

- Update the flora and fauna study lists and analysis throughout the report.

- The impact discussion section in the bio report is to be structured in a clear way where the organization is as follows: a) existing conditions; b) impacts; c) avoidance measures or components; d) mitigation measures.
- Describe the cleaning methods related to the solar system to analyze the cleaning methods and impacts.
- Describe in detail the trenching construction activities to analyze impacts of the trench dimensions and where spoils go.
- Adjust the Mitigation Area to exclude native vegetation from the total mitigation area acreage, describe the restoration activities, and update the discussion on setting aside resources. All seed and plant stock used shall come from the island.
- Remove the italics of the word 'outside' within the Project Consistency with SEA CUP Compatibility Criteria section of the report.
- Update the design of the fence to include safety features to keep wildlife safe, specifically to keep Island foxes that are collared from being stuck or caught within the 7-inch opening, and provide more clearance, if allowable.
- Perform a snail survey and provide updated analysis.
- Plants shall be surveyed more thoroughly or if they were surveyed thoroughly, that it be described.
- The statement of Island foxes having a low potential to occur on site is not accurate. Update the report to acknowledge the Island fox activity.
- Add a requirement to keep water buffalo tanks lidded at all times to avoid drowning of Island fox or other wildlife.
- Provide a monitoring plan that shall include monitoring of the mitigation area and the project site fenced area to ensure wildlife safety. The monitoring plan shall be subject to County review.
- Provide an adaptive management plan and agreement of who is the responsible party doing the monitoring.
- Include in the monitoring plan that the exclusionary fencing shall be installed around sensitive plants before construction activities start.

**Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.

#### PART V – PUBLIC COMMENT

4. **Public comment pursuant to Section 54954.3 of the Government Code:**  
There was no public comment.

#### PART VI – ADJOURNMENT

5. Adjournment to 1:00 pm, August 4, 2025.

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**MEETING MATERIALS:** The agenda package is accessible on the Department's website at <https://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac>. Any meeting-related writings or documents provided to a majority of the SEATAC after distribution of the agenda package, unless exempt from disclosure pursuant to California law, are available online or retained as noted above.

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