Visual Assessment

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CITY OF BENICIA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Executive Summary

The Initial Study found the project will result in Less Than Significant Impacts to Aesthetic Resources. No mitigation was recommended through the CEQA analysis.

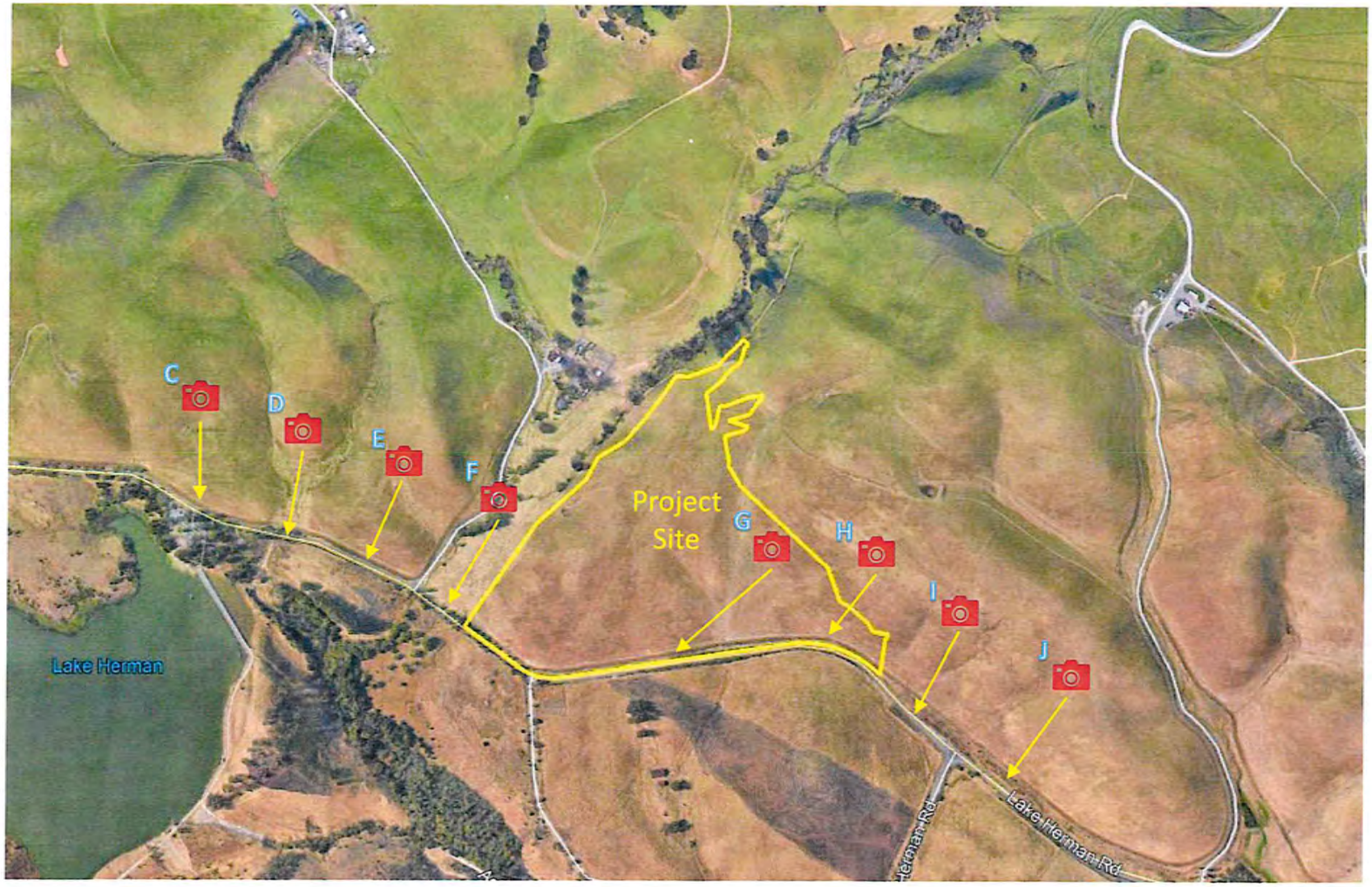
This Visual Assessment confirms the findings of the Initial Study by providing:

1. An inventory of views from Lake Herman Road in relation to the project site, and;
2. A series of visual renderings depicting future conditions once the project is built.

This Visual Assessment demonstrates the project will not substantially contrast with the dominant form of the existing landscape. Key elements of visual form include: form, line, color, and texture. The existing visual character of the site and surrounding area is defined by horizontal trending ridgelines. The project will not obstruct views of ridgelines and will harmonize with the dominant horizontal form created by these features.

The findings above are based on methods used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contrast rating system (BLM Manual 8431, Visual Resource Contrast Rating (1986)).

Section 1: Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road



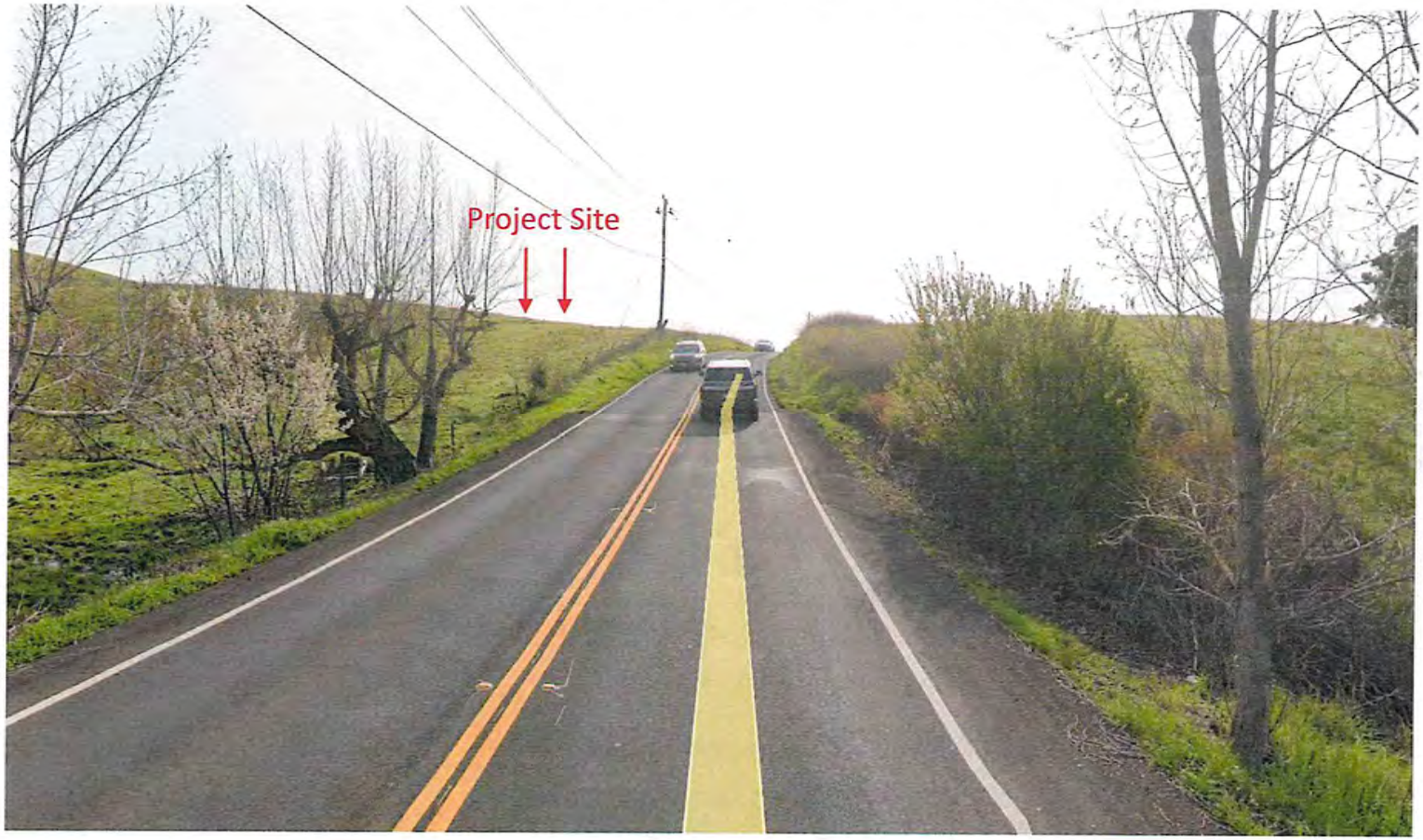
Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

- **View C:** Approaching the project from the West heading East along Lake Herman Road

The project site is primarily shielded from view by physical location and natural topographic barrier

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View D: Approaching the project from the West heading East along Lake Herman Road; The Project is not visible due to the hill ahead.



The project site is shielded from view by physical location and natural topographic barrier

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View E: Approaching the project from the West heading East along Lake Herman Road

The project site is shielded from view by physical location and natural topographic barrier

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View F: Approaching the project from the West heading East along Lake Herman Road

The project site is primarily shielded from view by the natural vegetative buffer along the road, but some of the array is visible from this vantage point

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View G: Looking North into the Project; View direction is 90 degrees from the direction of travel

The project site is visible from this location, but will be shielded from view by the planned vegetative buffer

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View H: Approaching the project from the East heading West along Lake Herman Road

The project site is visible from this location, but will be shielded from view by a vegetative buffer

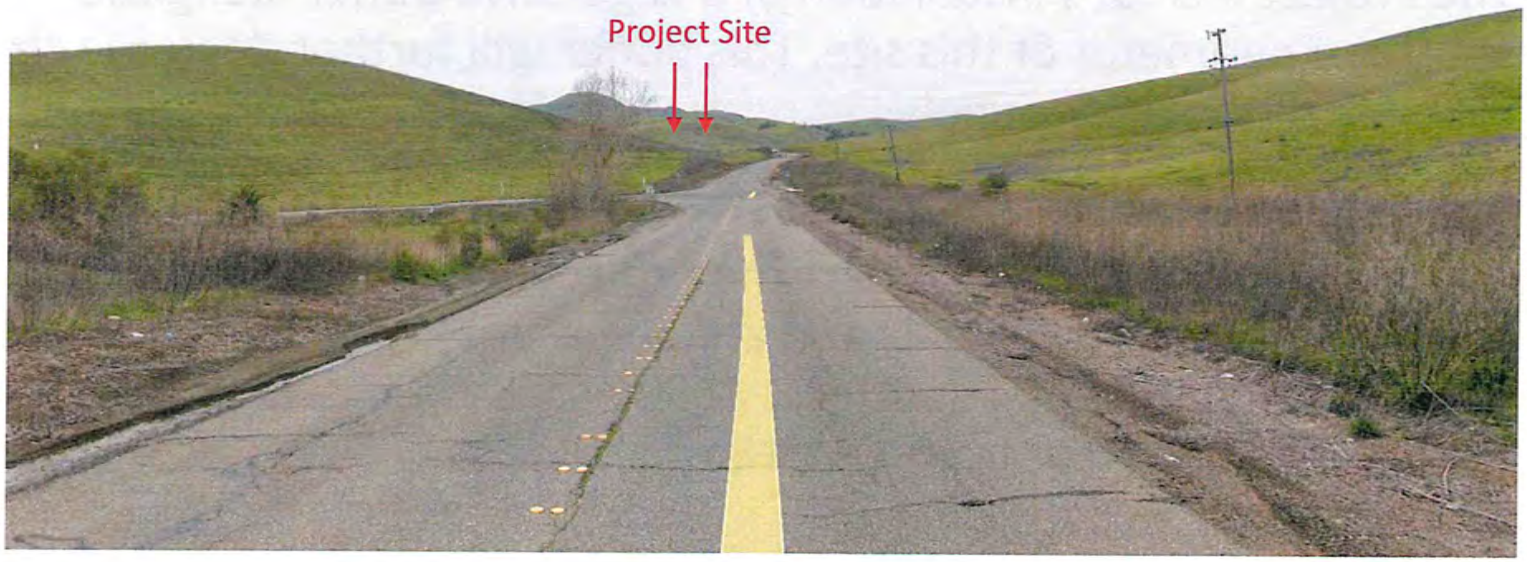
Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View I: Approaching the Project from the East heading West along Lake Herman Road; The Project is not visible due to the hill ahead.

The project site is shielded from view by physical location and natural topographic barrier

Inventory of Views from Lake Herman Road

View J: Approaching the project from the East heading West along Lake Herman Road



The project site is primarily shielded from view by physical location and natural topographic barrier

Section 2: Visual Renderings from Lake Herman Road

- **Existing Visual Character:** The area around the Project has rolling hills that will block or screen views of the solar panels. Also, some portions of Lake Herman Road have a natural vegetative barrier along its edge that will obstruct views of the Project from the road. The Project includes installation of a vegetative buffer along the southern perimeter of this site. This buffer will further decrease the visibility of the solar panels.

- The following renderings depict the project and landscape plan at the time of planting (year 1) and at full maturity (years 3-6 depending on the plant species). At its nearest point, the Project fence is over 115 feet from Lake Herman Road.

Figure 1. Aerial Image (Year 1)

Figure 2. Aerial Image (Year 3-6)

Figure 3. Aerial Image (Year 1)

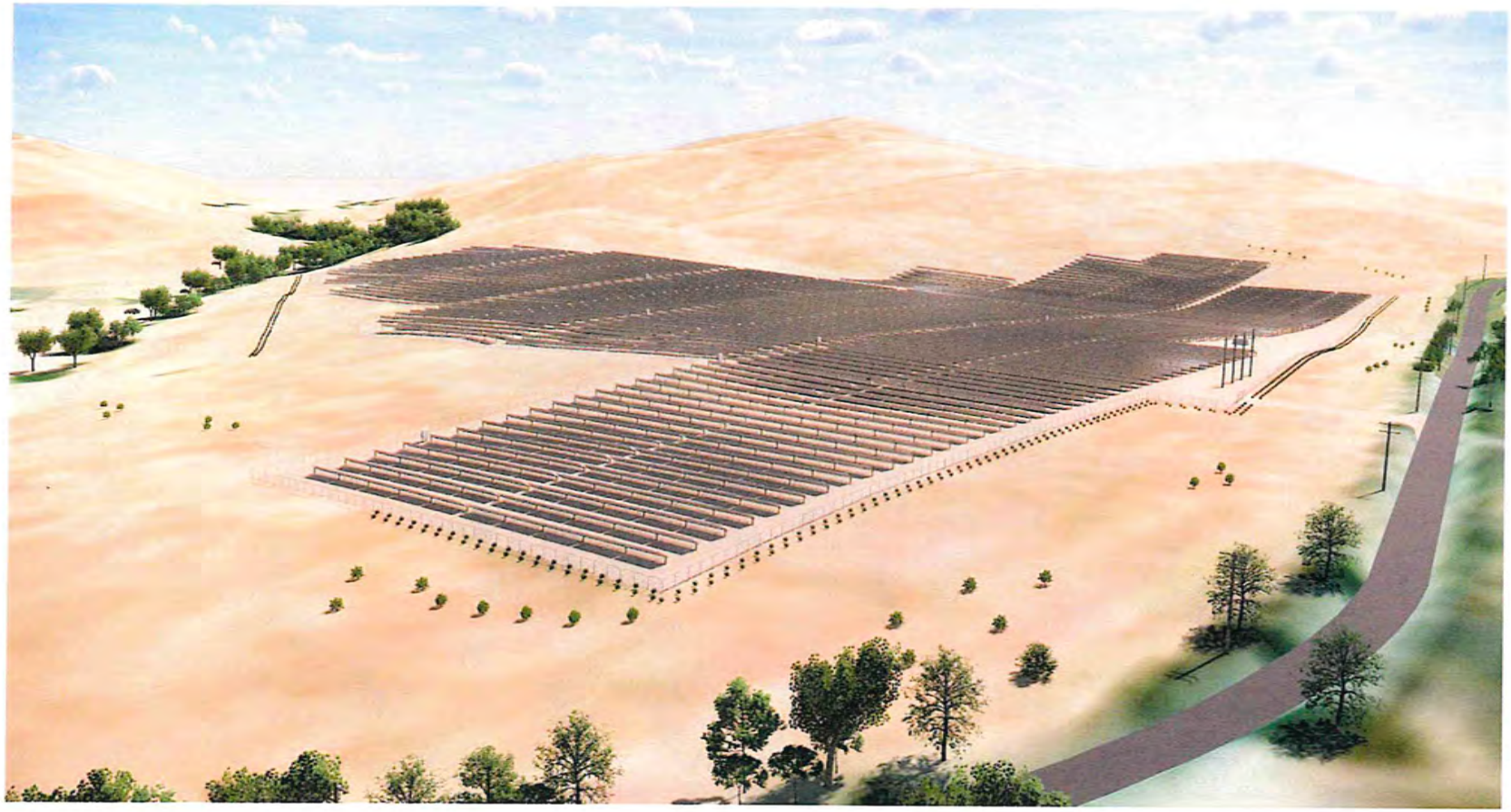


Figure 4. Aerial Image (Year 3-6)

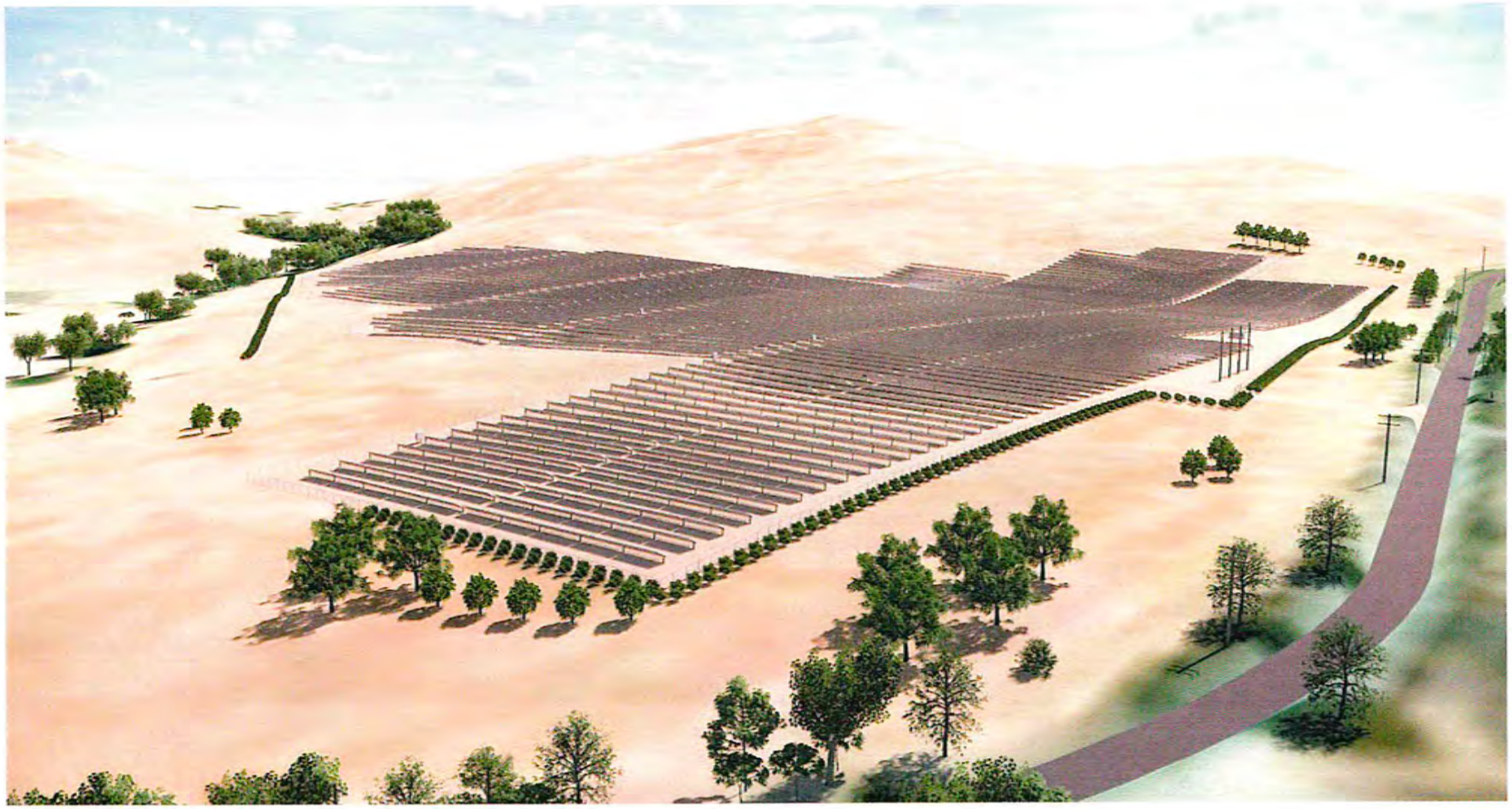


Figure 5. Aerial Image (Year 1)

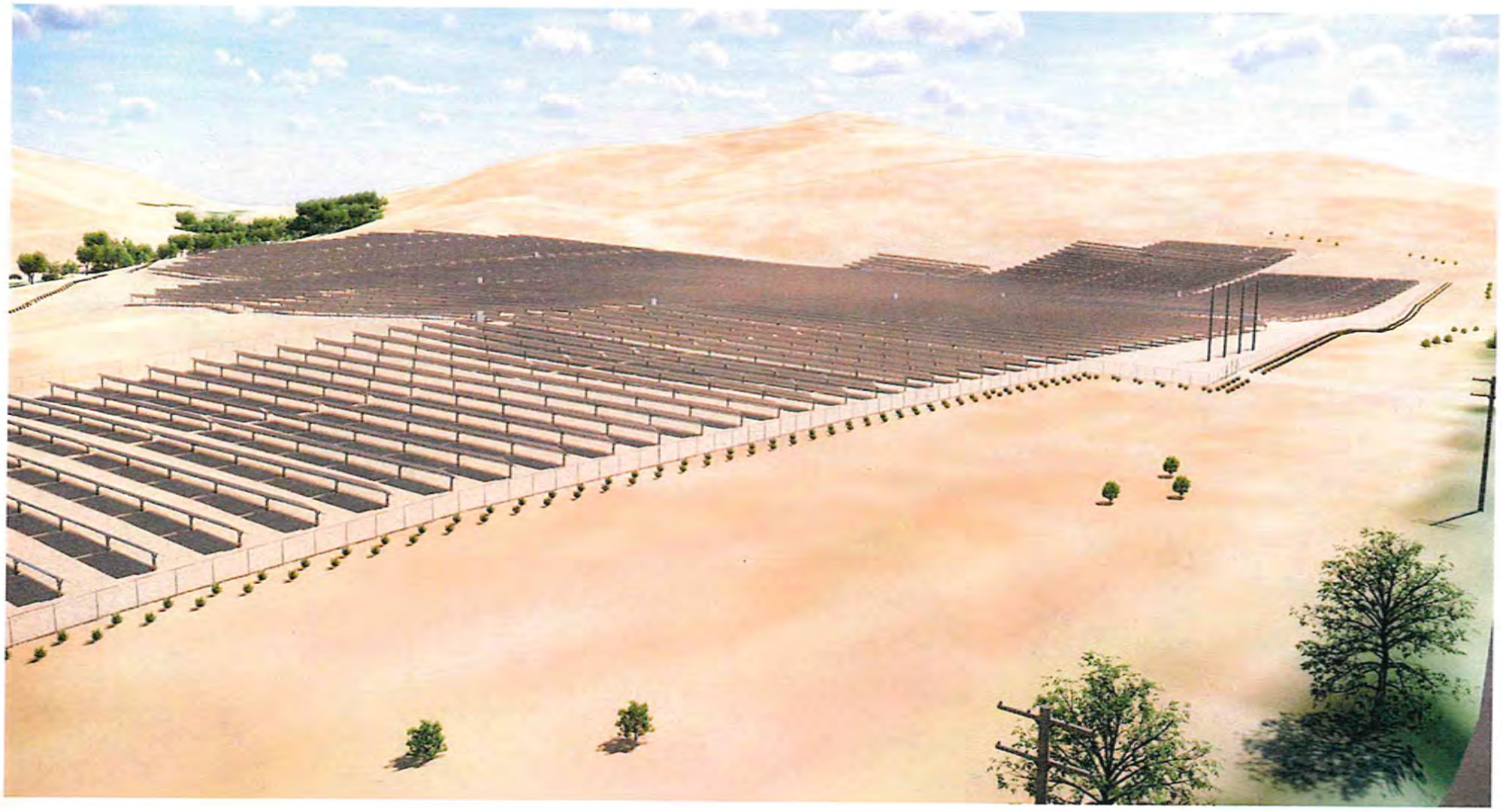


Figure 6. Aerial Image (Year 3-6)

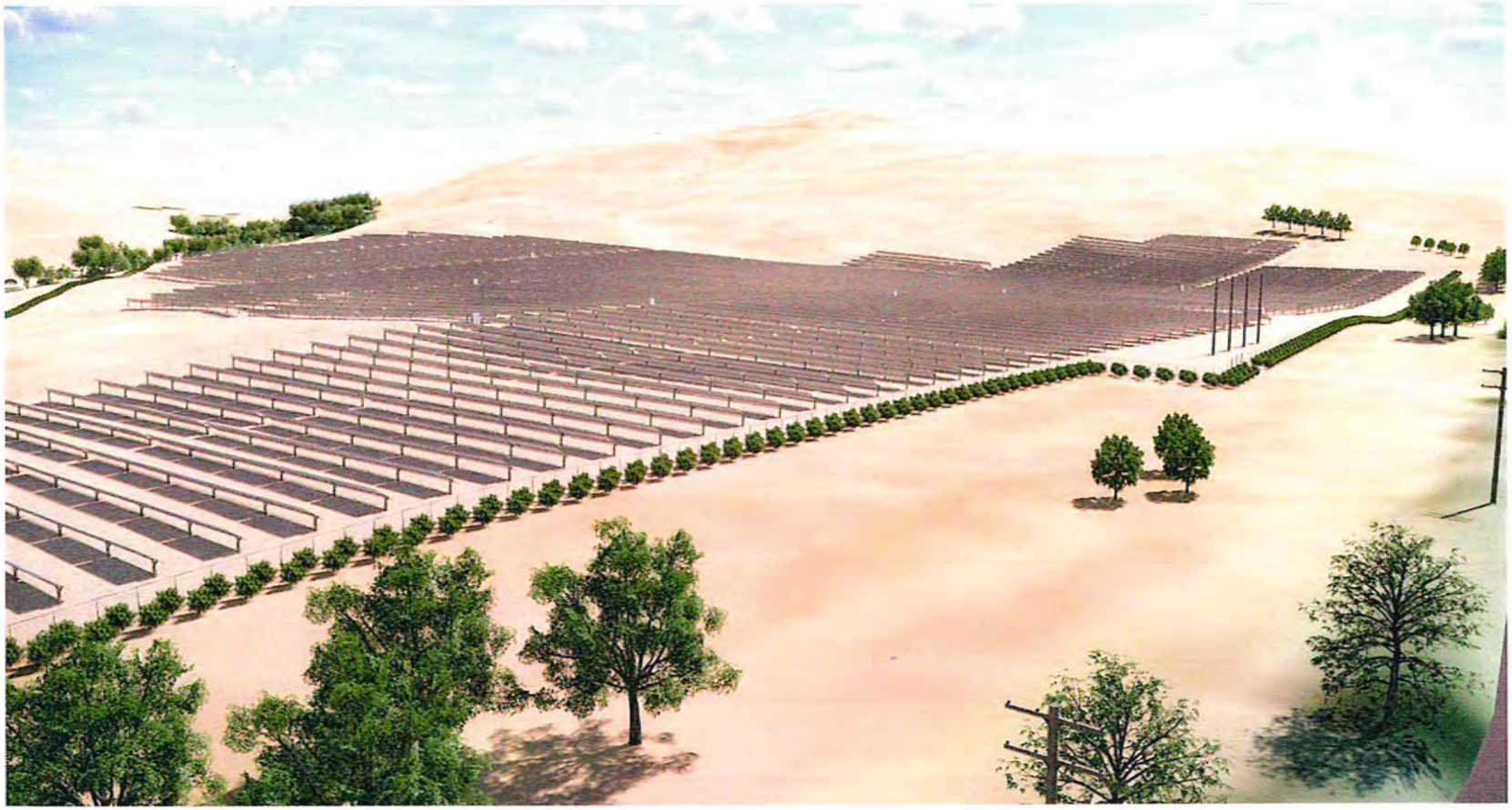


Figure 7. View C: Approaching the Project from the West Heading East along Lake Herman Road (Year 1)

Figure 8. View C: Approaching the Project from the West Heading East along Lake Herman Road (Year 3-6)

Figure 9. View F: Approaching the Project from the West Heading East along Lake Herman Road (Year 1)

Figure 10. View F: Approaching the Project from the West Heading East along Lake Herman Road (Year 3-6)

Figure 11. View G: Looking North into the Project; View Direction is 90 Degrees from the Direction of Travel (Year 1)

Figure 12. View G: Looking North into the Project; View Direction is 90 Degrees from the Direction of Travel (Year 3-6)

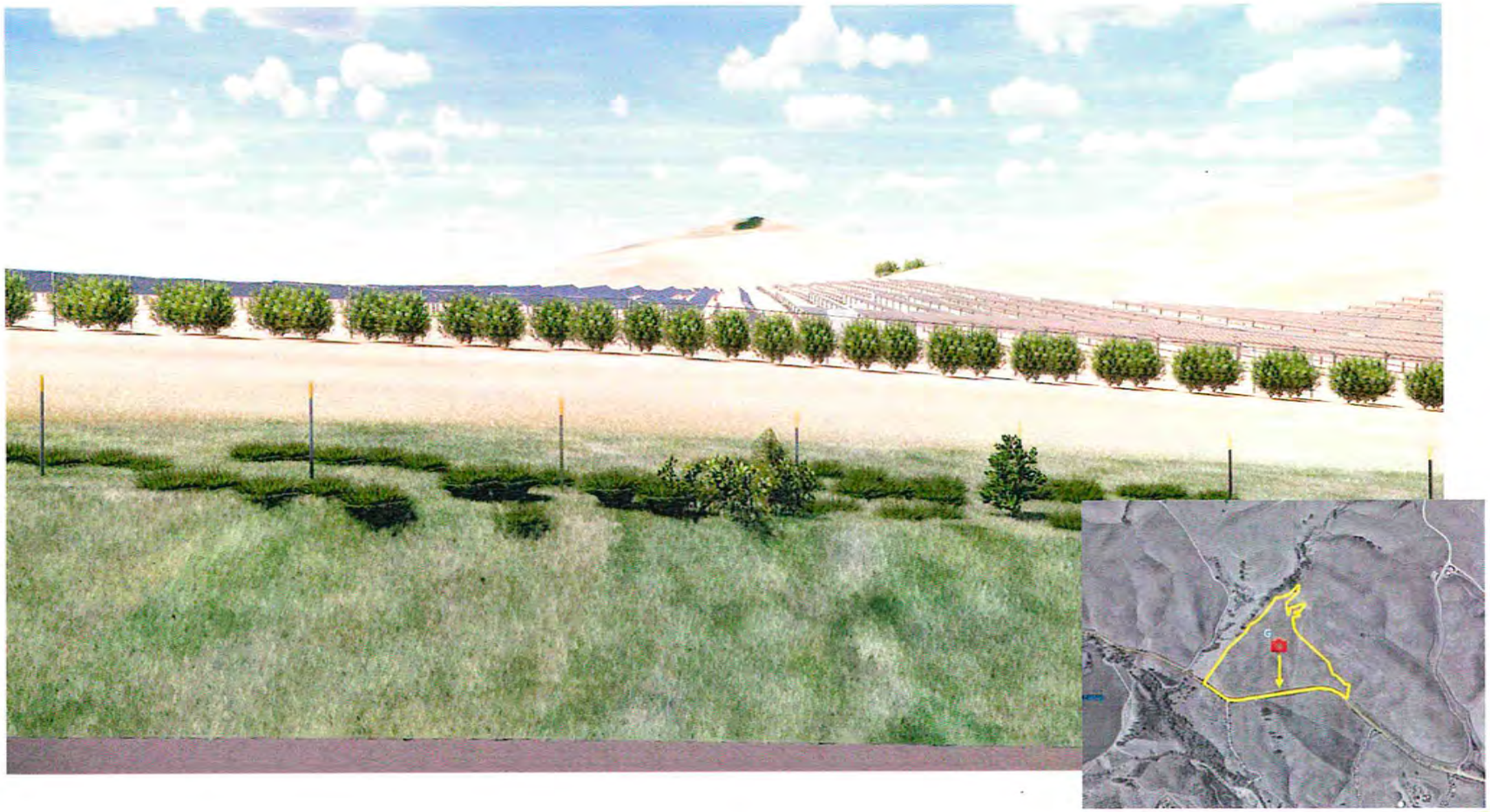


Figure 13. View H: Approaching the Project from the East Heading West along Lake Herman Road (Year 1)

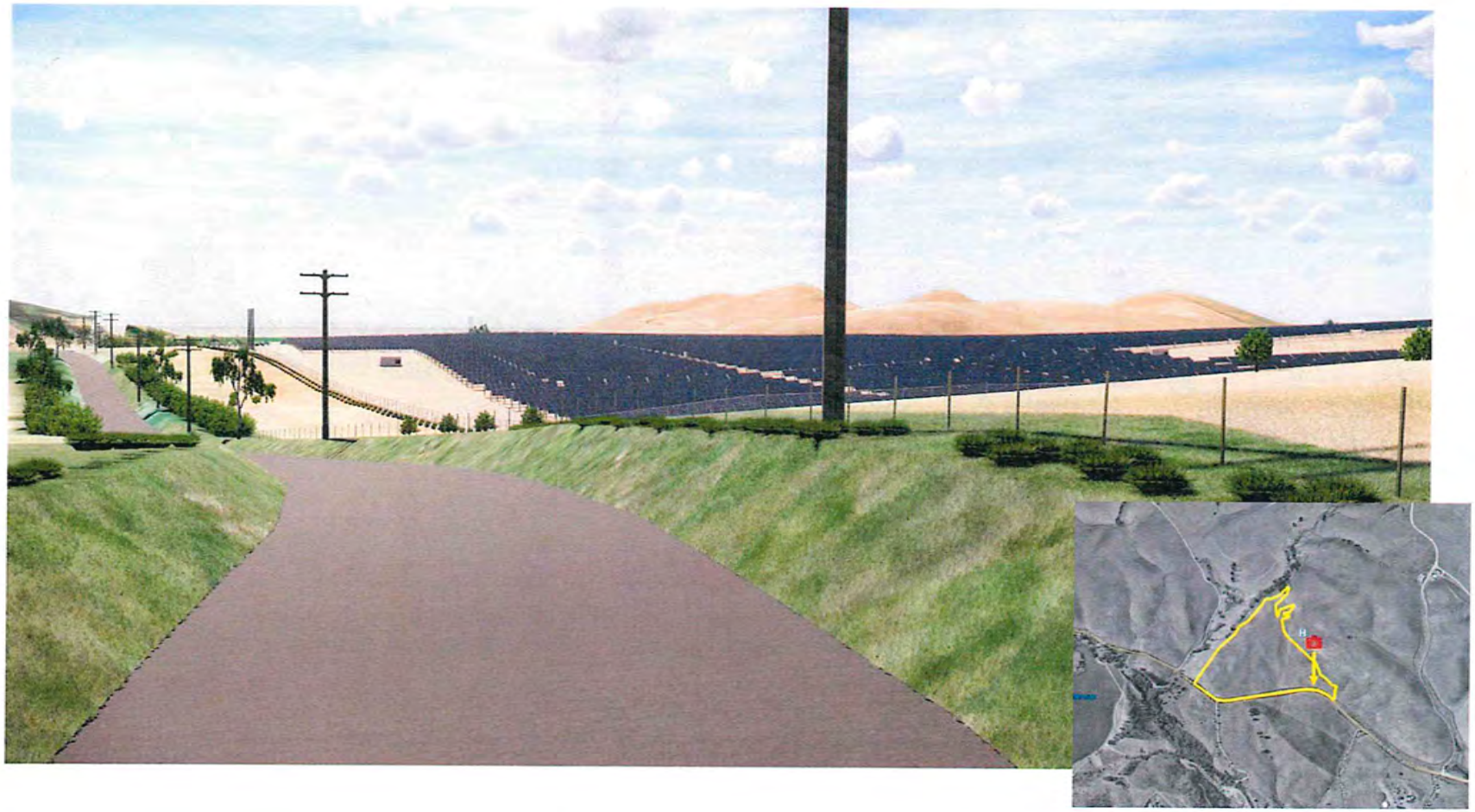


Figure 14. View H: Approaching the Project from the East Heading West along Lake Herman Road (Year 3-6)

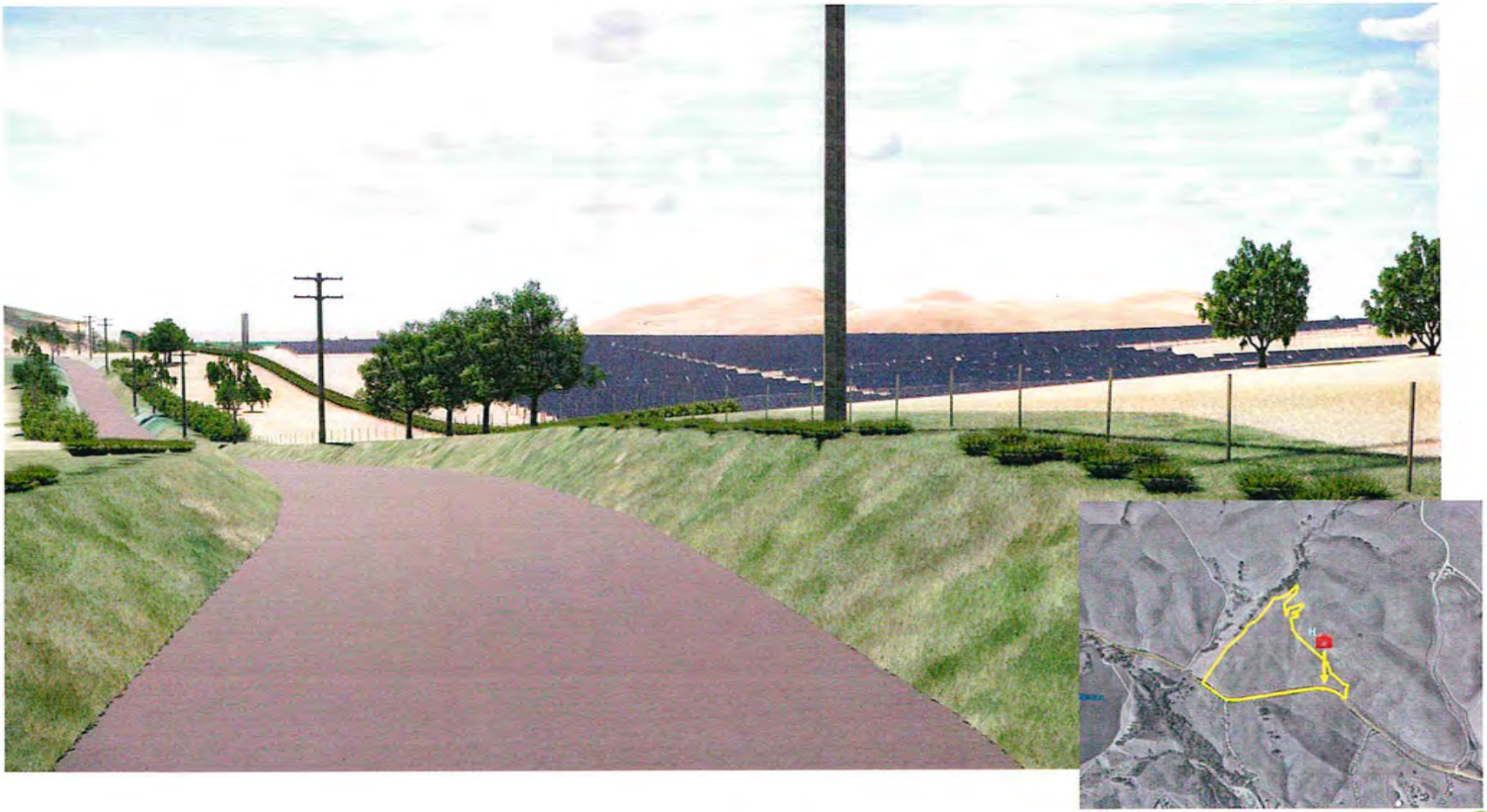


Figure 15. View K: Approaching the Project from the East Heading West along Lake Herman Road (Year 1)

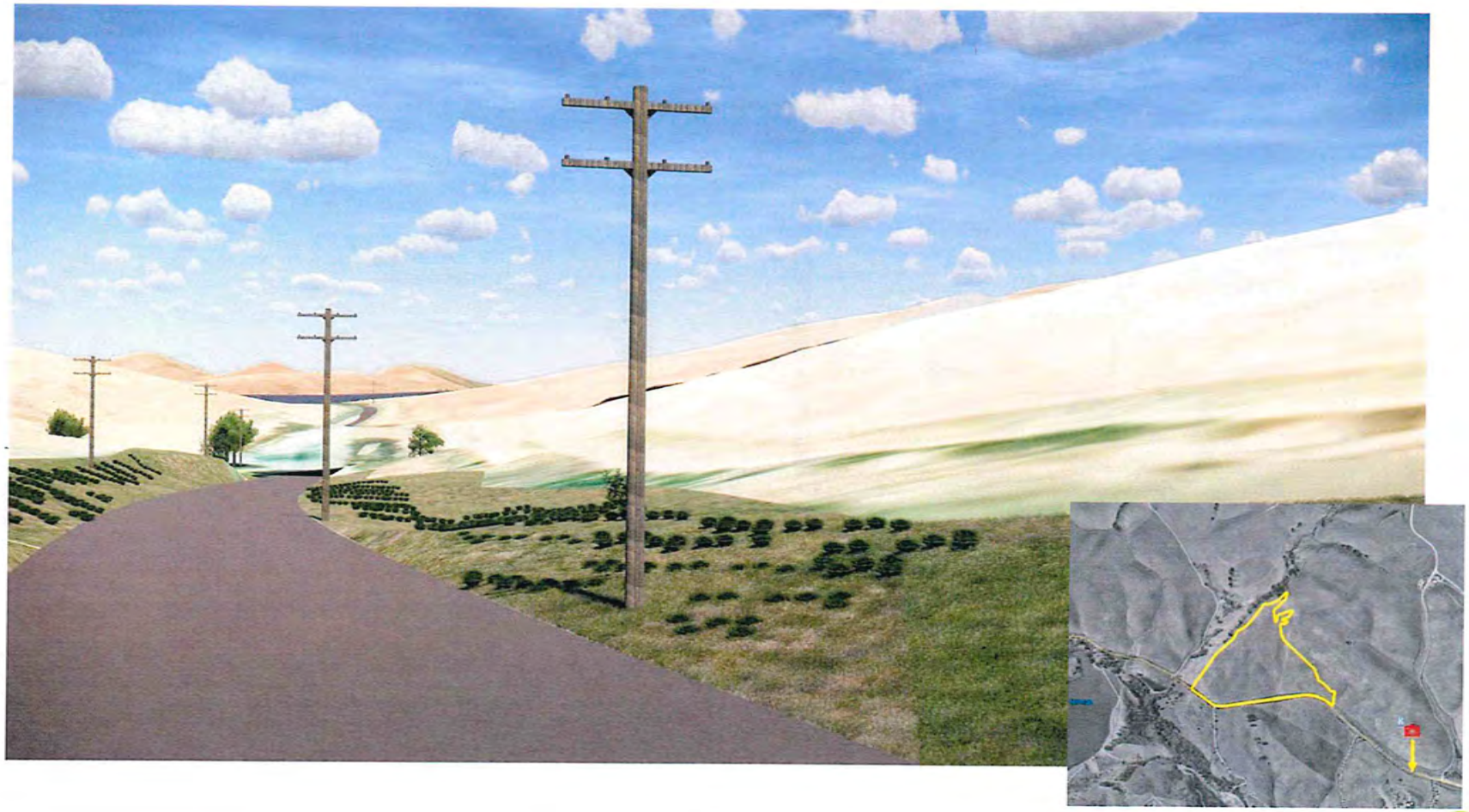
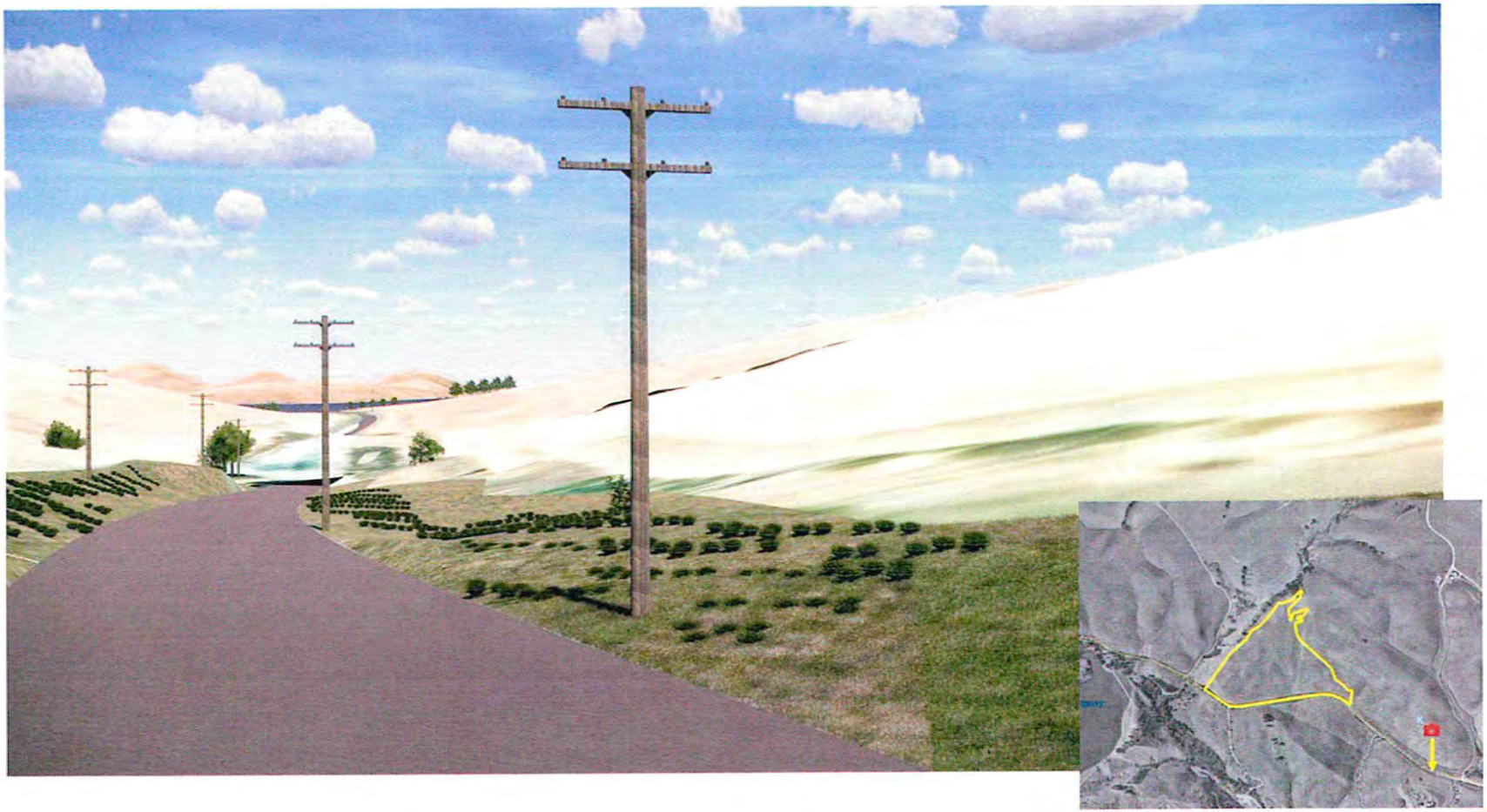


Figure 16. View K: Approaching the Project from the East Heading West along Lake Herman Road (Year 3-6)



Conclusion:

- The Project will be visible from multiple locations along a portion of Lake Herman Road (less than 1.5 miles of the ~5.5-mile road). With implementation of required setbacks and vegetative buffering along the southern perimeter of the Project, construction and operation of the project will not substantially alter the existing visual character of those views.
- The renderings show that even in year one, when the project is most visible and vegetative screening in infancy, the character of the project will not contrast with the existing dominant elements of form, line, color, and texture of views from Lake Herman Road. Furthermore, when landscaping reaches full maturity (years 3-6), the renderings suggest the vegetative buffering will further screen the project from Lake Herman Road.
- Based on the above, the project footprint represents a small fraction of individual and panoramic views seen by motorists traveling on Lake Herman Road. Construction and operation of the project will not substantially contrast with the dominant form and rural visual character of the area.