

CITY OF WESTMORLAND

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: January 7, 2026

FROM: Laura Bryant

SUBJECT: Staff Report – Part-Time Manager

City Future Public Safety Building:

Congressional Funding has been approved for \$1M. Our local USDA office is now open and we will be meeting soon. We have prepared a press release for the project, but we will wait until January for releasing. I am currently working on the RFP for design engineering of the building.

REAP Grant. This item is on the agenda for a verbal update with a sample letter for community engagement.

Expedited Drinking Water Grant (EDWG).

The Water Board approved including all of the items we requested into the EDWG grant, which will increase our grant amount significantly. Additionally, we asked that some discretionary funds be released so we could update our design and plans to include the new items in the plans. These funds were released.

The bid for construction can be submitted as soon as Council authorizes the Prop 218 public hearing which we plan on holding on April 1, 2026. The Holt Group is working on modifying the designs and plans, and preparing the bid documents and should have them ready by the April 1st date.

Rate Study.

Staff has been working with LT Municipal Consultants to develop our rate study. This item is on the agenda for 1/7/26.

Possible New Grants to Apply:

AB 617 SEP grant for Jake James Park. This application needs to be started soon if we want to apply for an all inclusive application for the park. The SEP application is due in April.

Open Grants Awarded:

The City has several grants open including:

Water – Drought Relief Funding of new filter at Water Plant and pipeline install - \$2.9 M

Mr. Hamby is in the process of closing out this project. He may have some details to share at the next meeting.

Water – Expedited Drinking Water Grant for Non-Compliance / New Tanks - \$11 M

Ramiro will have an update for Council as well as my notes above. Our next virtual meeting is later this month.

Fire/Police – USDA Disaster Relief Grant for Public Safety Building \$2.7 M

The USDA offices are open and Congressman Ruiz' office has approved \$1M for the project. Our Boost partners, Institute for Local Government has secured a consultant to prepare the

Architectural Significance Evaluation of the building, which is part of the USDA requirements for funding. We have drafted a press release to be issued after the USDA offices are re-opened. We have asked our Police Department to take photos to send along with the press release.

Parks - PER Capita Grant – near completion of new restrooms at park - \$176,952. Closed. Completed

Planning -REAP Grant – Planning and Development for Housing - \$176,000. Meet with consultant regularly. Information on agenda for 1/7/26.

Sidewalk - CMAQ – The City has a CMAQ project due by the end of 2026, which includes sidewalk curb and gutter on various areas in the city. The Holt Group has been engaged to design the project and to coordinate with ICTC for funding requirements. As soon as the plans are completed we will bid this project and should be one time for funding.

Parks - IID Tree for All Grant Opportunity. We have issued the Notice to Proceed for the tree removal and tree planting; the contractor has submitted all of the necessary documentation to meet our requirements. Ramiro is working with the contractor to schedule work and to ensure public safety. We received word from IID that they second half of the funds will be released. This project is closed.

AB 617:

We have put together a team to work on these applications. Hanna from ILG, Fumi from THG, Ramiro and I are working on the applications. We are meet weekly, or more if needed, to prepare the narrative, get measurements, cost estimates and other information needed. Three applications were submitted on Thursday, October 30, 2025.

We were asked to modify some emission calculations on our applications, and we resubmitted them on time. We are waiting to hear if our applications will be funded.

The AB617 Committee has an opening and it would be beneficial for a representative from the city be on the committee. Please consider applying.

Finance:

Public Safety ½ Cent Sales Tax. We have received a total of \$58,646 for three years. That is an additional \$29,323 in Fire and the same amount in Police. The next submission for FY 25-26 is due to the County. I received the forms for this year via email and will work on getting them submitted.

Auditors and Accountants. I have received a data request from the firm preparing our audit and have executed and sent the Agreement with our new auditing firm. Staff is working with our accounting firm to get our trial balances submitted.

Rate Study. The Rate Study for the Water Fund is paid for out of the 515 fund, water treatment plant improvement project. The Rate Study for the sewer fund is being paid for out of fund 520.

Imperial County Transportation Commission. Attend monthly meetings to stay informed about street funding and projects.

Imperial County City County Managers Association. Attend monthly meetings.

Other administrative items in the works.

- RDA ROPS –
- REAP – meeting in person with MIG – data collection – UPDATE ON AGENDA
- Rate Study – teleconference with LT – data collection – UPDATE ON AGENDA
- USDA – ILG and USDA to review status – On going
- Audit – data collection – draft – DATA PROVIDED – ON GOING
- Annual Street Report – virtual meeting and data collection list – COMPLETED
- CMAQ – engineers THG and Ramiro – engaged engineers – THG WORKING ON THE DESIGN
- Loves – Company officials virtual – COMPLETED – PAYMENT MADE
- PLHA & ILG – attended meeting ILG is working on the application for funds. – ON GOING
- RDA – ROPS Administration – virtual with Steve Dukett – ON GOING
- ICTC & City Managers – on going projects – ON GOING MONTHLY

Hours worked.

My timecard submitted on 12/29/25 recorded 14.5 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Bryant

**Imperial County
Planning & Development Services Department
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT PROGRAM EIR FOR THE
LITHIUM VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN, REVISED LITHIUM VALLEY SPECIFIC PLAN, PROPOSED
GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE/MAP AMENDMENTS, AND CONSTRUCTION
WORKFORCE ORDINANCE**

The Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2023120104), including a Water Supply Assessment, for the proposed Lithium Valley Specific Plan Project (Project or LVSP), as described below. These documents have been prepared in accordance with, and pursuant to, the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), as amended; Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.; and the "Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act" (State CEQA Guidelines), California Code of Regulation, Title 14, Chapter 15000 et seq. Also included is a revised version of the Draft Lithium Valley Specific Plan updated from the draft made available in February 2025, and draft proposed General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments. The County has also prepared a Construction Workforce Ordinance which includes prevailing wage provisions for the construction workforce and a local hiring goal of 40%, with exemptions for agricultural and other uses. The County is also referring the Draft PEIR, the revised LVSP, General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments, and Workforce Ordinance to citizens, California Native American Indian tribes, public agencies, public utility companies, water suppliers, and civic, education, and other community groups identified in Government Code Section 65352.

SUBJECT: Lithium Valley Specific Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT LOCATION: The Lithium Valley Specific Plan is located in Imperial County, California, specifically covering an approximate area of 51,622 acres (Plan Area) adjacent to the southeastern shore of the Salton Sea (see Figure 1). This area is in unincorporated Imperial County land, situated within the basin of the Salton Sea, with the Alamo River channel running through the center of the Study Area, draining into the Salton Sea. The Study Area extends from the Imperial Wildlife Area Wister Unit in the north to the City of Calipatria in the south, bounded by the New River on the southwest. It covers shoreline and open water portions of the Salton Sea and extends slightly into the alluvial fans at the base of the Chocolate Mountains. The topography is generally flat but sloping from east to west towards the Salton Sea, and below sea level. The land use in the Study Area primarily consists of agriculture, the Salton Sea, existing geothermal energy facilities, with some limited residential and recreational uses. The proximity to the Salton Sea, National Wildlife Refuges, and abundant open space promotes recreational and commercial farming activities. The Plan Area contains hazardous sites enumerated under Gov. Code Section 65962.5, as detailed in Draft PEIR Section 4.9 and Figures 4.9-1 and 4.9-2.

The Project is located in the Section, Range, and Townships within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles of Frink, Iris Wash, Niland, Obsidian Butte, Westmorland East, Westmoreland West and Wister Quadrangles. See attached map – Figure 1).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: On June 30, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 125 authorizing the state to assist in developing Imperial County's lithium resource in an area that is a part of the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area, known as Lithium Valley. SB 125 appropriated funding to develop a Lithium Valley Specific Plan and PEIR and adopted a lithium excise tax to fund Salton Sea restoration efforts and to fund affected communities. The LVSP facilitates renewable energy development, lithium extraction, associated infrastructure, commercial, and related manufacturing industries, which provide quality local jobs, while minimizing adverse effects on the environment and public health. The LVSP would serve as the land use and zoning regulations on the southeastern side of the Salton Sea. The Project would change the permissible land uses to include Green Industrial (e.g. geothermal energy, lithium/mineral extraction), Manufacturing (e.g. lithium batteries), Logistics, Renewables, Community

Opportunity Areas, Solar, Playa Restoration, Floodplains, and Conservation, with an Agricultural Overlay. This Project would be a pivotal step for Imperial Valley towards a more sustainable and localized economy and support the nations' ability to produce sustainable energy and technologies.

The Project also includes amendments to the County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING: The Project area's existing land use designations include "Recreation and Open Space" and "Agriculture."

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT: District 4, Supervisor, Ryan E. Kelly.

Summary of environmental Impacts: The Draft PEIR identifies that implementation of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to Aesthetics, Agriculture/Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise, Population and Housing, Transportation, and Tribal Cultural Resources. All other environmental factors, including Energy, Geology/Soils, Hazards/Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Public Services, Recreation, Mineral Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire would result in no impacts, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with mitigation.

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing on the LVSP and the Final PEIR will be scheduled before the Imperial County Board of Supervisors at a time and date to be determined subsequent to the close of the Draft PEIR public review period.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:

The formal public review period for the Draft PEIR, the revised LVSP, the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments will be from **December 30, 2025 to March 2, 2026 (60 days) at 5.00 pm** (comments must be **received by** this time). Any person wishing to comment on the Draft PEIR must provide **written** comments to the Imperial County Planning & Development Services Department, 801 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243 or via email to publiccomment@co.imperial.ca.us. All comments must be clearly identified in the subject line with the "**LVSP 2025**." Mailed or emailed submissions to the above email or address are the only options for submittal and no oral comments or submissions elsewhere will be included or responded to as part of the Final PEIR.

AVAILABILITY: Copies of the Draft PEIR, documents incorporated by reference, the revised LVSP, the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance/Map Amendments, and the Construction Workforce Ordinance are available at the County of Imperial Planning and Development Services offices at 801 Main Street El Centro, CA 92243, and online at: <https://lithiumvalley.imperialcounty.org/>. Copies of the Draft PEIR are also available at Imperial County Free Library, Calipatria Branch, at 105 S Lake Ave, Calipatria, CA 92233.