

5.0 ALTERNATIVES

5.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the seven County-owned sites would be expected to remain in their current condition, operating as parking lots for the four governmental sites (S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-7) and the three LIRR train stations (Sites S-4, S-5, S-6). While the proposed action does not change the existing use at any of the seven sites (as all seven sites would remain parking lots), the no action alternative would not provide the added benefits of the proposed action, including providing clean renewable energy to LIPA's customers.

The No Action Alternative would involve no construction at the parking lot sites, including no construction of electric distribution lines to connect to the LIPA grid. Accordingly, there would be no construction impacts or other impacts, such as changes to the visual landscape, under this alternative. However, as discussed in Section 3.0, the Proposed Action also does not result in significant adverse impacts in any of these impact areas.

The No Action Alternative does not achieve LIPA's objectives of diversifying Long Island' energy resources with renewable resources or foster economic development in the green sector as described in Section 1.0. Moreover, the advantages of providing partial shading and rain protection to persons parking their cars under the newly constructed carports at the Suffolk County-owned sites would also not be realized under the No Action Alternative. Because the No Action Alternative does not achieve the overall environmental and economic benefits of the Proposed Action, it is not the preferred course of action.

5.2 Other Alternatives

enXco also explored the development of solar PVs on existing commercial rooftops. However, building larger SGFs at the County-owned parking lot sites was determined to be more cost-effective; it also avoids issues regarding the feasibility of installing the solar PV arrays with respect to roofing structural stability and logistics with respect to existing mechanical equipment. The environmental impacts of a rooftop project would be similar to those addressed in Section 3.0 in that there would be very localized and minimal visual changes, some tree cutting to avoid shading, and minor construction impacts. These impacts would be even less intrusive for a rooftop proposal since the construction of ground-mounted carports would not be required. However, to achieve the 14.75 to 17 MW of power, construction at more sites would be necessary under the rooftop development alternative.

While the construction of solar PVs on rooftops is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts to the environment, as presented in Section 3.0, construction of solar PVs on newly constructed carports also does not result in significant environmental impacts. Accordingly, the preferred action is to proceed with constructing solar PVs at seven County-owned parking lot sites, the enXco Solar Project.