



AGENDA MEMO - PLANNING

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: JUNE 11, 2013

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: APPLICANT: LAS VEGAS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT -

OWNER: USA

** STAFF RECOMMENDATION **

<i>CASE NUMBER</i>	<i>RECOMMENDATION</i>	<i>REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL</i>
SDR-48456	Staff recommends APPROVAL, subject to conditions:	

** CONDITIONS **

SDR-48456 CONDITIONS

Planning

1. This approval shall be void two years from the date of final approval, unless exercised pursuant to the provisions of LVMC Title 19.16. An Extension of Time may be filed for consideration by the City of Las Vegas.
2. All development shall be in conformance with the site plan and profile sections, date stamped 05/01/13, except as amended by conditions herein.
3. All necessary building permits shall be obtained and final inspections shall be completed in compliance with Title 19 and all codes as required by the Department of Building and Safety.
4. These Conditions of Approval shall be affixed to the cover sheet of any plan set submitted for building permit.
5. A fully operational fire protection system, including fire apparatus roads, fire hydrants and water supply, shall be installed and shall be functioning prior to construction of any combustible structures.
6. All City Code requirements and design standards of all City Departments must be satisfied, except as modified herein.

Conditions Page Two
June 11, 2013 - Planning Commission Meeting

Public Works

7. An Update to the previously approved Drainage Plan and Technical Drainage Study must be submitted to and approved by the Department of Public Works prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, submittal of construction drawings or the submittal of a Final Map for this site, whichever may occur first. Provide and improve all drainageways as recommended in the approved drainage plan/study.
8. Site development to comply with all applicable conditions of approval for SDR-3900 and all other applicable site-related actions.

Staff Report Page One
June 11, 2013 - Planning Commission Meeting

**** STAFF REPORT ****

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to construct 28, 16-foot tall solar panel arrays and a 33-foot tall weather tower within an enclosed pumping station. The solar panels will generate electrical power onsite to offset the costs and infrastructural burden of routing high-voltage power on site and the weather tower will provide monitoring and testing equipment for the Nevada Regional Test Center (NRTC). The proposed equipment will have negligible visual and audible impact, and will provide an alternative means of meeting the high energy demands of water conveyance without depending on emission-intensive power sources such as coal or natural gas. Staff supports this request, as it meets the stated goals of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan – Conservation Element. If denied, the applicant will not be allowed to install the requested solar power panels or the weather tower.

ISSUES

- The requested solar power use and antenna (weather tower) are ancillary to the existing water facility and is a permissible use, as the proposal is not subject to the Cliff's Edge/Providence Master Plan.
- Per Title 19.08.040(H)(2)(c)(ii), municipal utility facilities are exempt from the maximum height provisions typically required for residential adjacency setbacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by P&D, Fire, Bldg., etc</i>	
07/16/03	The City Council approved a Rezoning from the U (Undeveloped) [PCD (Planned Community Development) General Plan Designation] zoning district to the PD (Planned Development) zoning district on 704 acres adjacent to the south side of Grand Teton Drive, between Hualapai Way and Puli Road. Planning Commission and staff recommended approval.
04/08/04	The Planning Commission approved a Site Development Plan Review (SDR-3900) for a Reservoir and Pumping Station on 20.0 acres at the northwest corner of the Elkhorn Road and Alpine Ridge Way. Staff recommended approval.
06/14/11	The Planning Commission approved a Site Development Plan Review (SDR-41591) for a Solar Power Generating Facility consisting of two 93-foot tall solar collection towers at 7210 Shaumber Road. Staff recommended approval.

Staff Report Page Two
June 11, 2013 - Planning Commission Meeting

04/09/13	The Planning Commission approved the request to abey the Site Development Plan Review (SDR-48456) request for a Solar Power Generating Facility to the 06/11/13 Planning Commission meeting. The applicant requested the abeyance in order to allow time to revise the proposal with smaller solar panel arrays.
----------	--

Most Recent Change of Ownership

The subject parcel is owned by the Federal government and operates under a long-term lease to the Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD).

Related Building Permits/Business Licenses

09/22/04	A Building Permit (#27484) was issued for perimeter walls for a reservoir and pumping station. This permit was finalized 02/11/07.
----------	--

Pre-Application Meeting

01/23/13	Staff met with the applicant to discuss the Site Development Plan Review submittal requirements for the proposed solar panels and weather tower.
----------	--

Neighborhood Meeting

03/13/13	A voluntary neighborhood meeting was held from 4:00 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Centennial Hills YMCA, 6601 North Buffalo Drive. The five representatives for the applicant, one city staff member, and eight members of the public were present. General concerns were raised regarding the height of the solar panels and weather tower; the applicant explained that the panels would rarely be in a full upright position and would be maintained in a horizontal mode at night. There were also concerns raised regarding blocked views; the applicant responded that only three of the panels would be constructed in the first phase and that the panels installed during later stages would be smaller in size.
05/30/13	A second voluntary neighborhood meeting was held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Providence Master Plan Homeowner Association Offices, 7181 N. Hualapai Way, Suite #150. There were no city staff members in attendance and seven members of the public. The applicant discussed that the 27-foot tall panels originally proposed have been changed out for lower-profile 16-foot tall solar panels that do not impact views from surrounding homes.

Field Check	
02/28/13	The existing municipal utility facility (covered water reservoir) is screened from view by an eight-foot perimeter wall and features a well-maintained 20-foot wide landscape buffer along Shaumber Road with mature plants and meandering sidewalk that adjoins the neighboring parcels to the east and west.

Details of Application Request	
Site Area	
Net Acres	20.69

Surrounding Property	Existing Land Use Per Title 19.12	Planned or Special Land Use Designation	Existing Zoning District
Subject Property	Utility Station, Other Than Listed	PCD (Planned Community Development)	PD (Planned Development)
North	Single Family, Detached	PCD (Planned Community Development)	PD (Planned Development)
South	Single Family, Detached	PCD (Planned Community Development)	PD (Planned Development)
East	Single Family, Detached	PCD (Planned Community Development)	PD (Planned Development)
West	Undeveloped	PCD (Planned Community Development)	PD (Planned Development)

Master Plan Areas	Compliance
Cliff's Edge	Y
Special Purpose and Overlay Districts	Compliance
PD (Planned Development)	Y
Other Plans or Special Requirements	Compliance
Trails	N/A
Las Vegas Redevelopment Plan Area	N/A
Project of Significant Impact (Development Impact Notification Assessment)	N/A
Project of Regional Significance	N/A

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Pursuant to The Cliff's Edge Master Development Plan and Design Guidelines, there are no established development standards for the PF (Public Facility) Cliff's Edge Special Land Use Designation). The development standards are established upon approval of the requested Site Development Plan Review, and referenced by the Site Plans and Elevations submitted by the applicant. This proposal features 28, 16-foot tall solar panel arrays that are placed at the western side of the subject property, set back approximately 150 feet south of the north property line, 197 feet north of the south property line, and 60 feet east of the west property line. There are two banks of 16-foot tall photovoltaic arrays. The north bank of arrays consist of 14 rows of 45 photovoltaic modules each, approximately 200 feet by 150 feet. The southern bank has 14 rows with 30 modules per row, approximately 200 feet by 122 feet.

All of the photovoltaic panels are substantially screened from view of the neighboring residential properties by the existing eight to 12-foot high screen walls.

<i>Proposed Array Configuration</i>				
Bank	PV Modules	Array Height	Array Width	Array Depth
North	630	16 feet	200 feet	150 feet
South	420	16 feet	200 feet	122 feet

ANALYSIS

The proposed facilities will provide an alternative means of meeting the high energy demands of water conveyance without depending on emission-intensive power sources such as coal or natural gas. The applicant states that the solar power generating facility will generate approximately 300 kW of electrical energy using an array of photovoltaic panels. The proposed structures meet the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan goals by satisfying Action Item EC6, as listed in the Conservation Element. The policy states, "The City shall investigate ways of promoting the development and use of alternative sources of energy." This proposal meets the intent of the stated action item and is handled in a manner that provides a positive contribution in the quality of life of the Cliff's Edge Master Plan Area and the greater Las Vegas Valley. Staff recommends approval of this request with conditions.

FINDINGS (SDR-48456)

In order to approve a Site Development Plan application, per Title 19.16.100(E) the Planning Commission and/or City Council must affirm the following:

Staff Report Page Five
June 11, 2013 - Planning Commission Meeting

1.The proposed development is compatible with adjacent development and development in the area;

The proposed solar power installation is compatible with the PF (Public Facility) land use designation, is appropriate along this segment of Shaumber Road and will be compatible with future, adjacent development in the area.

2.The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan, this Title, the Design Standards Manual, the Landscape, Wall and Buffer Standards, and other duly-adopted city plans, policies and standards;

The proposed project actively supports the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan goals by satisfying Action Item EC6, as listed in the Conservation Element. The existing perimeter walls meet the current development standards, and effectively screen the ancillary equipment related to the pumping reservoir.

3.Site access and circulation do not negatively impact adjacent roadways or neighborhood traffic;

There are no anticipated changes to the existing site access and circulation based on the requested proposal.

4.Building and landscape materials are appropriate for the area and for the City;

The building materials that are exposed to public view are painted in muted earth-tones so as to create as little visual intrusion as possible. The photovoltaic arrays are located within the enclosed pumping reservoir and are screened from view.

5.Building elevations, design characteristics and other architectural and aesthetic features are not unsightly, undesirable, or obnoxious in appearance; create an orderly and aesthetically pleasing environment; and are harmonious and compatible with development in the area;

The proposed solar power installation has been presented in a manner that seeks to reduce the visual and audible impacts to the neighboring properties. The towers are architecturally and aesthetically harmonious and compatible with the area and adjacent development by means of a perimeter screen wall, which will reduce sounds and screen the view of the photovoltaic arrays onsite.

6.Appropriate measures are taken to secure and protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

All development will require permits and inspections that will maintain the public health, safety and welfare. The proposed use will actively contribute to the reduction of green house gas emissions and the avoidance of constructing high-voltage transmission lines to the site.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS NOTIFIED 23

NOTICES MAILED 596

APPROVALS 4

PROTESTS 15