



AGENDA MEMO - PLANNING

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: APRIL 9, 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, landscape plan, and building elevations, date stamped 03/12/13, 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.

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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.

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**** STAFF REPORT ****

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to construct fifteen 27-foot tall 1,200 square-foot Solar Panels 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.

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<i>Most Recent Change of Ownership</i>	
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The subject parcel is owned by the Federal government and operates under a long-term lease by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).	
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<i>Related Building Permits/Business Licenses</i>	
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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.
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<i>Pre-Application Meeting</i>	
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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.
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<i>Neighborhood Meeting</i>	
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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.
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<i>Field Check</i>	
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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.
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<i>Details of Application Request</i>	
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<i>Site Area</i>	
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Net Acres	20.69
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<i>Surrounding Property</i>	<i>Existing Land Use Per Title 19.12</i>	<i>Planned or Special Land Use Designation</i>	<i>Existing Zoning District</i>
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)

<i>Master Plan Areas</i>	<i>Compliance</i>
Cliff's Edge	Y
<i>Special Purpose and Overlay Districts</i>	<i>Compliance</i>
PD (Planned Development)	Y
<i>Other Plans or Special Requirements</i>	<i>Compliance</i>
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 fifteen 27-foot tall Solar Tower units that are placed at the western side of the subject property, setback approximately 81 feet south of the north property line, 170 feet north of the south property line, and 45 feet east of the west property line. Each 27-foot tall tower is topped with an approximately 1,200 square-foot photovoltaic array, and are partially screened by the existing eight to 12 foot high screen walls.

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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 Master Plan 2020 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:

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 Master Plan 2020 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.

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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

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NOTICES MAILED 596

APPROVALS 0

PROTESTS 1