



**STAFF REPORT**  
**2/16/2022**

**To:** Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

**FROM:** Nikki Gomez, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** Woodspur Farms Photovoltaic Project - A request to consider an appeal of conditions of approval contained in the Architecture Review (AR) 21-10 (Admin) for a solar farm project located 52200 Industrial Way. Applicant, William Hsien

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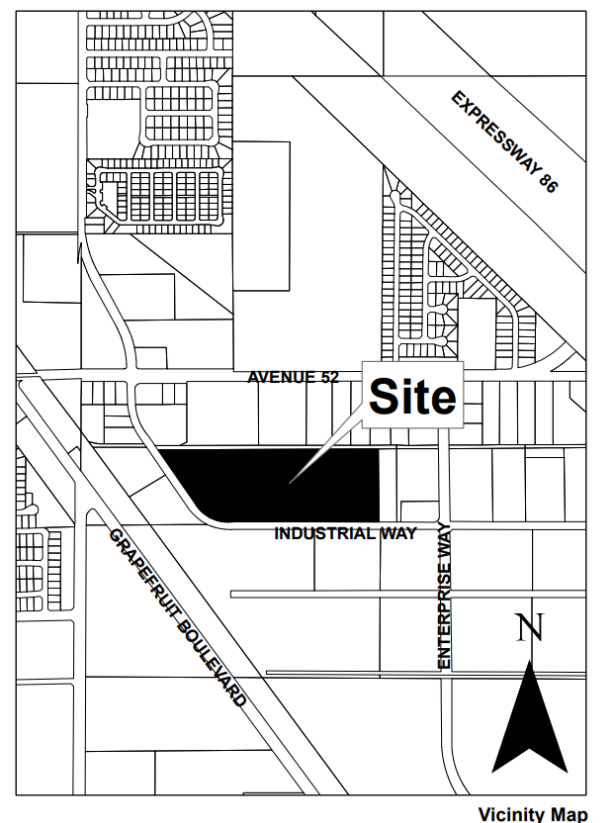
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the information contained in the staff report regarding the applicant's appeal request and uphold the Director's decision for AR 21-10.

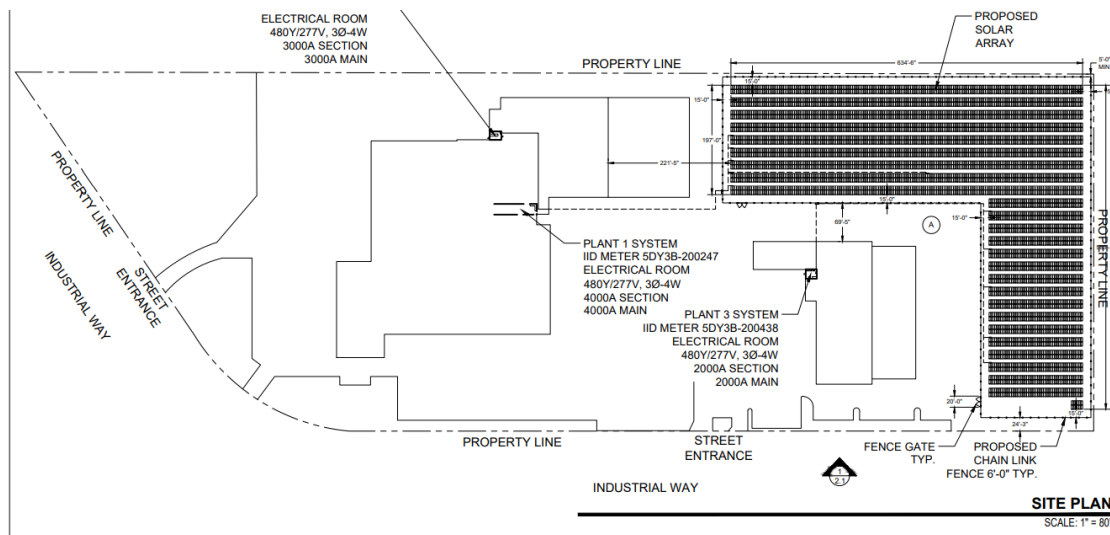
**BACKGROUND:**

On September 1, 2021, the applicant, William Hsien, submitted an Administrative Architecture Review (AR 21-10) application to the Planning Division for a ground mounted solar farm located at 52200 Industrial Way. The project for the installation of a total of 4.7-acre (4,996 panels) ground mounted solar farm at the northeast corner of an existing agricultural packaging and processing facility Woodspur Farms facility within the M-H (Heavy Industrial) zoning district. The proposed ground mounted solar farm is proposed at 4'-7" in height is entirely confined within the subject site with a setback of 38 feet from the Industrial Way street frontage. The ground mounted solar will interconnect to the three (3) IID electrical meters to offset onsite power usage.

Since providing the applicant the preliminary conditions of approval for the project, staff has been actively in communication with the applicant about the conditions of approval associated with the project. On January 10, 2022, a Decision Letter to the AR 21-10 (Admin) project was sent to the applicant.



Vicinity Map



**REQUEST FOR APPEAL REGARDING CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

City staff and the applicant have been working diligently over the course of several months to come to an agreement with the project conditions of approval. Pursuant to Section 17.70.080 of the Coachella Municipal Code any person aggrieved by the Director’s decision may file an appeal to the Planning Commission within 15 days of the effective decision date. On January 21, 2022, the applicant responded to the Decision Letter and agreed to all conditions, except the following conditions related to on-site and off-site improvement. The conditions of approval the applicant is requesting to appeal are Engineering Street Improvement conditions, which requires the installation of sidewalk along the project frontage, replacement of any old driveways to conform with commercial standard and ADA, curb and gutter transition, and any other appurtenances as required to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. The applicant has requested an appeal of the conditions of approval to remove the Engineering Street Improvement conditions before the Planning Commission. The applicant expressed hardship associated with the construction costs related to the requested improvements in the conditions of approval.

The Engineering Street Improvement requirements within the Decision Letter are smaller in scope than is typically required by the City for a development project. The proposed solar farm project is a benefit to the applicant offsetting energy usage, it is also harnessing clean energy benefitting the community as whole, therefore, requirements such as lighting, curb/gutter and landscaping was not included as part of the conditions of approval as it would have in any other project.

Below are the conditions of approval as presented on the Decision Letter that are the subject of the applicant’s appeal:

**Engineering Department:**

- 8. Site access improvements shall be in conformance with the requirements of Title 24 of the California Administrative Code. This shall include access ramps for off-site and on-site streets as required.

## Street Improvements:

19. Street improvement plans prepared by a California Registered Civil Engineer shall be submitted for review and approval by the City Engineer. All street improvements including street lights shall be designed and constructed in conformance with City Municipal Code, General Plan, and Standards and Specifications. Street flow line grade shall have a minimum slope of 0.35 %.

20. Applicant shall construct all off-site and on-site improvements including ~~street pavement, curb, gutter, sidewalk, street trees, perimeter walls, perimeter landscaping and irrigation, storm drain, street lights,~~ and any other incidental works necessary to complete the improvements. Driveways shall conform to City of Coachella standards for commercial driveways with a minimum width of 24.00 feet and curbed radius entrances.

21. Applicant shall construct and dedicate the following Street and street improvements to conform to the General Plan and/or requirements of Traffic Study.

A. Industrial Way- Public Roadway as shown on the RAC and per these comments shall include the following:

- i. Dedication of land along northbound lane within project limits is required. This street is classified as Industrial Collector with 80 feet of right-of-way as per City of Coachella General Plan.
- ii. Street measured at Center line to easterly curb shall have a width of 24-foot
- iii. Applicant shall install all sidewalk, curb and gutter transitions to uniformly connect to existing adjacent improvements and coordinate installation and/or relocation of fire hydrants, water meters, storm drain, wells, streetlights and all other appurtenances as required to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- ~~iv. Applicant shall construct all appurtenant roadway components within project limits such as, but not limited to: curb and gutter, sidewalk, ADA ramps, Traffic control striping, legends, Traffic control signs and street name signs to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.~~
- v. Applicant shall remain and protect in place existing curb and gutter that is on good shape condition and/or remove and replace curb and gutter that is not such as, but not limited to: crack, deteriorated or any kind of concrete fractures to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- vi. Applicant shall remove old driveways and construct new Driveways by new Standards instead to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- ~~vii. Applicant shall underground all existing dry utilities if existing at southbound lane within project limits such as, but not limited to: power poles, telecommunication poles and all other existing dry utilities to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.~~

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-01 upholding Director's decision for AR 21-10 (Admin) with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Deny the Appeal for AR 21-10 (Admin)
- 3) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:**

Staff concludes that the conditions of approval within the Decision Letter is reasonable for this type of project. Staff recommends alternative #1.

Attachments: 1. PC Resolution No. 2022-01  
2. AR 21-10 (Admin) Decision Letter  
3. Vicinity Map