
TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
FROM: Beth Richmond, Planner
SUBJECT: Gravel Driveway Interim Use Permit (IUP)
DATE: 6-11-2025 for 6-18-2025 meeting
APPLICANT: Cedar Creek Energy Corporation (TJ Wilson and Jason Breiland)
LOCATION: 7040 Nacre St NW (PINs 28-34-25-11-0001 and 28-34-25-12-0001)
COMP PLAN: Low Intensity Industrial
ZONING: I-2 Isolated Industrial

OVERVIEW:

The City has received an application for an interim use permit (IUP) to allow a gravel drive and parking area serving the future solar farm at 7040 Nacre St NW. The subject site is located outside of the City's urban service area on the northern boundary between the City and Stanford Township. The site is surrounded by agricultural land to the east, large lot residential to the north, and industrial land to the west and south. The site has access off of Nacre St NW.



REVIEW PROCEDURE:

60-Day Land Use Application Review Process

Pursuant to Minnesota State Statutes Section 15.99, local government agencies are required to approve or deny land use requests within 60 days. Within the 60-day period, an automatic extension of no more than 60 days can be obtained by providing the applicant written notice containing the reason

for the extension and specifying how much additional time is needed. The original deadline for action on the IUP request is July 6, 2025. Due to the scheduling of Planning Commission and City Council meetings, Staff has extended this deadline for 60 days to September 4, 2025.

Public Hearing

City Code requires that a public hearing for review of the land use request be held by the Planning Commission. The public hearing notice was published in the Anoka County Union Herald on June __, 2025 and posted on the City Hall bulletin board on June __, 2025. The public hearing notice was mailed to all affected property owners located within 1,000 feet of the subject property on June __, 2025.

ANALYSIS:

The site is guided and zoned for industrial use. The applicant is proposing a solar farm on the site. An existing gravel drive provides access to the property from the west side of Nacre St NW. A driveway and small parking area are proposed to provide access to the site. This access would be used for construction of the site (about 4 months) and then on an infrequent basis for service visits over the course of the life of the solar array.

City Code Section 10-72-08 Design and Maintenance of Off-Street Parking requires all industrial parking spaces and driveways to be “surfaced with concrete, bituminous, or pavers” and to have a perimeter concrete curb barrier around the entire parking area. Parking lots located outside of the Urban Service Area which serve non-residential uses may allow for different surfacing and design requirements than those found in this Section with approval of an Interim use Permit. Considerations for the IUP may include but are not limited to: dust management, stormwater runoff, proximity of site to sensitive environmental areas and residential districts, size of parking lot, and anticipated traffic.

The applicants have requested that the existing gravel drive be extended into the property to be used as a construction and service drive. The drive and small associated parking area would continue to be surfaced with gravel and would not include curbing. Rip-rap would also be used with the gravel to reduce the amount of gravel that would be tracked out onto Nacre St NW.

The County has been notified of the IUP request as the proposed drive would access onto Nacre St NW, a County road. No comments have been provided from the County at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

Action to be Considered:

The Planning Commission is requested to hold the public hearing for the IUP request. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission is requested to take action on the request and provide a recommendation to Council. Interim use permits must meet the applicable criteria for approval as specified in Sections 10-33-03 and 10-34-04 of the City Code.

Potential Motions:

1. Move to recommend approval of the IUP for a gravel access drive for an industrial use in the rural service area with findings of fact and conditions as presented by Staff (see below for suggested findings and conditions).
2. Move to deny the IUP request with Commissioners’ findings of fact.
3. Move to table the application and request additional information from Staff and/or the applicant.

Findings of Fact – Interim Use Permit

1. The proposed improvement has been considered in relation to the specific policies and provisions of and has been found to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The proposed improvement will not adversely affect the character of neighboring industrial and agricultural properties. Existing gravel drives and access points are located along Nacre St NW today.
3. The proposed improvement will not impose additional unreasonable costs on the public.
4. The proposed improvement will be used infrequently over the course of the life of the solar array for service and maintenance visits.
5. Rip-rap is proposed to be used in conjunction with recycled aggregate or Class V to reduce the amount of material that would be tracked onto Nacre St NW.
6. The proposed use is adjacent to agricultural land and therefore negative impacts to sensitive environmental areas and residential districts are minimized.
7. The date or event that will terminate the proposed improvement can be identified with certainty.
8. The user agrees, in writing, to any conditions that the City Council deems appropriate for permission of the improvement, including the specified termination date or event.

Conditions – Interim Use Permit

1. The IUP shall expire when the solar array comes to the end of its life or when the property is redeveloped; whichever occurs first.
2. The gravel drive and parking area shall be used as a construction and service access to the site, with limited use following the development of the site as a solar farm.
3. The applicants shall be responsible for all fees associated with this land use application.
4. All fees and financial obligations shall be received by the City prior to the releasing of the approval document for recording.
5. Other conditions identified during the review process by Staff, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

Attachments:

1. Applicant Submittals