

BUILDING SAFETY & ZONING DIVISION
PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Plan Commission
DATE: July 13th, 2026
SUBJECT: 1224 American Way - Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review requested by Ian McCarter, agent for SunVest Solar LLC, for a Photovoltaic Solar Array.
Parcel PIN(s): 291-0815-0713-001

SITE DETAILS:

Acres: 20.47 acres
Current Zoning: Heavy Industrial (HI)
Existing Land Use: Industrial Building and Vacant Land
Future Land Use Designation: Mixed Industrial

BACKGROUND & APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The applicant is proposing to construct a Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Array on approximately 10 acres of the Watertown Hops property. We-Energies will lease the property for 25 years with an additional five-year extension option and be responsible for all maintenance and repairs to the array, including vegetation management, and will own, operate, and maintain the solar PV array renewable energy output. The total system size will be 2.5 MW of AC capacity and all electrical cables will be buried throughout the project area. The array will be built upon the existing contours of the land and seeded in native grasses. A landscape screening of evergreens and shrubs will be located along Perry Way. Site access will be from a driveway on Perry Way.

STAFF EVALUATION:

Land Use and Zoning:

A Site Plan Review Committee recommendation and Plan Commission approval of the site plan is required pursuant to Sections 550-144 & 550-145 of the zoning code.

Within the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District 'Public Services and Utilities' is a principal land use permitted by right. 'Public Services and Utilities' land uses include utility and public-service-related distribution facilities, and similar land uses. *[per § 550-51E]*

Regulations for 'Public Services and Utilities' include:

- Outdoor storage areas shall be located a minimum of 50 feet from any residentially zoned property.
- All outdoor storage areas adjoining a residentially zoned property shall install and continually maintain a bufferyard with a minimum opacity of 0.60 (see § 550-99). Said bufferyard shall be located at the property line adjacent to said residentially zoned property.
- All structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from any residentially zoned property.
- The exterior of all buildings shall be compatible with the exteriors of surrounding buildings.

Site Layout and Design:

Within the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District the nonresidential rear lot line setback is 30 feet, the nonresidential side lot line setback is 20 feet, and the street side lot line setback is 25 feet. The proposed solar array meets all required setbacks in the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District *[per § 550-37G(2)(c)]*. No outdoor storage is being proposed. All proposed solar panel installations are located more than 20ft from residentially zoned property. No buildings are being proposed.

Vehicle Access and Circulation

The proposed PV Solar Array does not have any regular employees onsite and will be remotely monitored 24/7. No parking is required nor proposed. The proposed access from Perry Way is sufficient for occasional maintenance vehicles accessing the site.

Landscaping:

Within the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District the minimum landscape surface ratio (LSR) is 15%. With the addition of the PV Solar Array, the property will continue to have a landscape surface ratio exceeding the LSR for the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District. The property also meets or exceeds all required landscaping point total requirements for the Heavy Industrial (HI) Zoning District.

Lighting:

No lighting is required nor being proposed for this project.

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Deny the Site Plan.
2. Approve the Site Plan without conditions.
3. Approve the Site Plan with conditions as identified by the Plan Commission:

STAFF RECOMENDATION:

- Staff recommends approval of this Site Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application materials.