

## KITTITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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"Building Partnerships – Building Communities"

### **Findings of Fact and Decision Teanaway Solar Reserve - Conditional Use Permit CU-09-00005**

**Applicant:** Teanaway Solar Reserve, LLC

**Project:** Teanaway Solar Reserve

**Location:** The project site is located approximately 4 miles northeast of Cle Elum, Washington, in Township 20N, Range 16E, within Sections 22, 23, and 27. The site is located on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains on Cle Elum Ridge, which runs generally from east to west at elevations ranging from approximately 2,200 to 2,600 feet. The Teanaway River is approximately 1 mile to the northeast of Cle Elum Ridge. The site is accessed from Highway 970 by way of County roads such as Red Bridge Road, and private roads such as Loping Lane. The site is also accessed via Wiehl Road, which is a dedicated public road but is not maintained by the County; it is maintained privately. The property is located in all of Section 22; the North Half of the Northeast Quarter, the Northwest Quarter and the North Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 23; and Parcel 2 of that certain Survey as recorded May 6, 2003 in Book 28 of Surveys, pages 234, 235 and 236, under Auditor's File No. 200305060025, records of Kittitas County, Washington, being a portion of the Northeast Quarter of Section 27; All in Township 20 North, Range 16 East, W.M., in the County of Kittitas, State of Washington.

**This matter having come before the Kittitas County Board of Adjustment upon the above referenced Conditional Use Application from Teanaway Solar Reserve, LLC, land lessee, the Board of Adjustment makes the following Findings of Facts, Conclusions at Law and Decision related to the above referenced matter:**

#### **I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

##### **General Description of Proposal**

1. Teanaway Solar Reserve LLC ("the applicant" or "TSR"), has submitted a Conditional Use Permit application to construct and operate the Teanaway Solar Reserve ("the project"). The project includes the following key components: solar modules; field inverters; field transformers; electrical conductors; electrical substation and switchyard; operations and maintenance (O&M) building and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system; overhead interconnection transmission line; and access and maintenance roads.
2. The Teanaway Solar Reserve will be constructed on an approximately 982 acre site, though only up to 477 acres will be involved in land disturbance and development. The remaining acres are currently undeveloped open space. Approximately 193 acres onsite will be preserved with a conservation easement as part of the Applicant's wildlife mitigation plan, and an open corridor will be maintained to allow for wildlife migration through the site.

3. The project will be completed over a period of 2 to 3 years, with 7-to 9-month construction periods each year, weather dependent.
4. The project is proposed to generate up to 75MWdc of PV solar energy for distribution to utilities and communities in the region.
5. The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element designates the subject parcel as Rural.
6. The subject property is zoned Forest and Range. The surrounding properties are zoned Commercial Forest, Forest and Range, and Rural-3.
7. The purpose and intent of the Forest and Range zone is to provide for areas of Kittitas County wherein natural resource management is the highest priority and where the subdivision and development of lands for uses and activities incompatible with resource management are discouraged.
8. The solar farm is considered a "Major Alternative Energy Facility" (KCC 17.61.010.9) and certain components of the solar farm (overhead transmission line and substation) are considered "Special Utilities" (KCC 17.61.010.2). According to the Kittitas County Code a "Major Alternative Energy Facility" and "Special Utilities" are allowed with a Conditional Use Permit in the Forest and Range zoning district, subject to the conditions set forth in Chapter KCC 17.60A Conditional Uses and KCC 17.61 Utilities. KCC 17.61.020.4; 17.61.020.6.
9. An administrative site analysis was completed by the staff planner in compliance with Kittitas County Code Title 17A, Critical Areas. Wetlands, wildlife habitat areas, and geologically hazardous areas were identified onsite.

### **Procedural Background for the Subject Application**

10. On August 18, 2009 Teanaway Solar Reserve, LLC ("TSR" or "the applicant") submitted to Kittitas County Community Services Department ("CDS") an application for a Conditional Use Permit ("CUP"), a draft Development Agreement ("DA") for the project, and an expanded SEPA Environmental Checklist dated August 14, 2009. The expanded SEPA Checklist included a *Sensitive Species Report*; a *Wetland Delineation Report*, a *Cultural Resources Report*, and a *Zone of Visual Influence Memorandum*.
11. On August 22, 2009 the County deemed the application complete and sent a letter to the applicant stating this conclusion.
12. On September 3, 2009 a Notice of Application was issued. This notice was mailed to government agencies, adjacent property owners, and the applicant. The public notice period lasted from September 3, 2009 to September 18, 2009. A notice of application was published in the official county paper of record and was mailed to jurisdictional government agencies, adjacent property owners, and other interested parties. Written comments were received and included in the record for consideration.
13. On September 2, 2009, the applicant's authorized agent signed an Affidavit of Posting, confirming that in accordance with Kittitas County Code 15A.03.110, this project was accurately posted with the "Land Use Action" sign as provided by Community Development Services. The Affidavit of Posting was returned to the planner and is included as part of the record.
14. The County reviewed comments with the Applicant and requested that additional studies addressing issues raised by the comments be submitted by February 22, 2010.

15. In February 2010, TSR supplemented its CUP application and Expanded SEPA checklist with additional reports and information per the County's request including, but not limited to, a Geology and Soils Hazard Evaluation, a Fugitive Dust Control Plan, a Vegetation Management Plan, a Hydrologic Analysis, a Wildlife Mitigation Plan, and a Transportation and Road Plan.
16. The Applicant submitted additional hydrology and stormwater modeling as well as executed agreements between the Applicant and WDFW and the Kittitas County Fire Protection District 7 in June of 2010.
17. Based upon a review of these materials, on July 15, 2010 the County issued a SEPA Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS). The Board finds that the notice of said determination was provided to all required parties of record pursuant to 43.21C RCW and that said notice was published in the official county paper of record and was mailed to jurisdictional government agencies, adjacent property owners, and other interested parties. The last day to appeal this decision was July 29, 2010 at 5:00 PM.

### **Conduct of Hearing**

18. On August 11, 2010 a consolidated open record hearing was held to consider the SEPA Appeal and the underlying Conditional Use Permit. Testimony was taken from those persons present who wished to be heard. On July 15, 2010, due notice of the CUP public hearing was given as required by law, and the necessary inquiry was made into the public interest to be served by this proposed project.
19. The public hearing was conducted in the standard manner for a Board of Adjustment consolidated hearing to consider an application for conditional use permit. County staff presented an overview of the project and summarized its Staff Reports on the CUP, including the recommended conditions of approval. The applicant made their presentation requesting approval of the CUP. Public testimony was taken from 18 citizens.

### **Conditional Use Permit**

20. The Board of Adjustment finds that the proposed development has met the requirements of KCC 17.60A.010 Review criteria—Conditional uses, which include the following:
  1. The Board of Adjustment shall determine that the proposed use is essential or desirable to the public convenience and not detrimental or injurious to the public health, peace, or safety or to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
  2. The Board of Adjustment shall determine that the proposed use at the proposed location will not be unreasonably detrimental to the economic welfare of the county and that it will not create excessive public cost for facilities and services by finding that (1) it will be adequately serviced by existing facilities such as highways, roads, police and fire protection, irrigation and drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewers, and schools; or (2) that the applicant shall provide such facilities or (3) demonstrate that the proposed use will be of sufficient economic benefit to offset additional public cost or economic detriment. (Ord. 2007-22, 2007; Ord. 88-4 § 11 (part), 1988; Res. 83-10, 1983)
21. The Board of Adjustment finds that the proposed development has met the requirements of KCC 17.61.030 Review Criteria—Special utilities and associated facilities, which include the following:
  1. The board of adjustment shall determine that adequate measures have been undertaken by the proponent of the special utility and/or associated facility to reduce the risk of accidents caused by hazardous materials.

2. The board of adjustment, as required by existing statutes, shall determine that the proposed special utility and/or associated facilities are essential or desirable to the public convenience and/or not detrimental or injurious to the public health or safety, or to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

3. The board of adjustment shall determine that the proposed special utility and/or associated facilities will not be unreasonably detrimental to the economic welfare of the county and/or that it will not create excessive public cost for public services by finding that: (a) It will be adequately serviced by existing services such as highways, roads, police and fire protection, emergency response, and drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewers, and schools; or (b) The applicant shall provide such services or facilities.

4. Special utilities and/or associated facilities as defined by this chapter shall use public rights-of-way or established utility corridors when reasonable. Although Kittitas County may map utility corridors, it is recognized and reaffirmed that the use of such corridors is subject to conditional use approval and just compensation to the landowner for the use of such corridor. While a utility corridor may be used for more than one utility or purpose, each utility or use should be negotiated with the landowner as a separate easement, right-of-way, or other agreement, or other arrangement between the landowner and all owners of interests in the property. Any county map which shows utility corridors shall designate such corridors as "private land closed to trespass and public use" where such corridors are on private land. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to conflict with the right of eminent domain.

5. The board of adjustment shall consider industry standards, available technology, and proposed design technology for special utilities and associated facilities in promulgating conditions of approval.

6. The construction and installation of utilities and special utilities may necessitate the importation of fill material which may result in the displacement of native material. The incidental generation of earthen spoils resulting from the construction and/or installment of a utility or special utility, and the removal of said material from the development site shall not require a separate zoning conditional use permit.

7. The operation of some utilities and special utilities identified within this chapter may necessitate unusual parcel configurations and/or parcel sizes. Such parcels: (a) Need not conform with applicable zoning requirements; provided, they comply with the procedures provided in KCC Title 16, Subdivisions, and so long as used for a utility or special utility; (b) Are not eligible for any other use or any rights allowed to nonconforming lots in the event the utility or special utility use ceases; (c) Shall continue to be aggregated to the area of the parent parcel for all other zoning and subdivision requirements applicable to the parent parcel. (Ord. 2001-12)

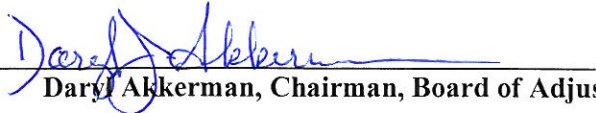
22. According to KCC 17.60A.020, in permitting conditional uses the Board of Adjustment may impose such conditions as it deems necessary to protect the best interests of the surrounding property or neighborhood or the county as a whole. The Board of Adjustment grants this Conditional Use Permit subject to the following conditions are required for approval of the Conditional Use Permit.

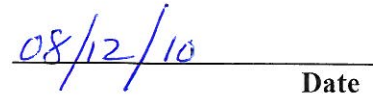
1. All development, design and construction shall comply with Kittitas County Code, Kittitas County Zoning and the 2006 International Fire and Building Codes, including those mitigation measures listed as "Code Mitigation" in the SEPA Staff Report, dated July 14, 2010.
2. All development, design and construction shall comply with those mitigation measures listed as "Voluntary Mitigation" in the SEPA Staff Report, dated July 14, 2010.

3. All development, design and construction shall comply with the SEPA mitigation measures listed in the MDNS, dated July 15, 2010.
4. The applicant shall enter into a Development Agreement with the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners.

**II. DECISION**

The Conditional Use Permit is approved.

  
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Daryl Akkerman, Chairman, Board of Adjustment

  
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Date