

SU 22-12 (Silicon Ranch Solar)

**Special Use Authorization to construct, operate,
maintain, and decommission a proposed Solar
Energy Power Plant and Battery Energy Storage
System in a Rural Zoning District**

**Planning & Zoning Commission
June 8, 2022**



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- This is a request to allow a 20 MW PV solar facility with battery storage
- Parcel 404-11-070 and 405-05-502, 158.7 acres
- The Applicant is Silicon Ranch Solar, represented by Adrian Markocic
- Vacant land in McNeal



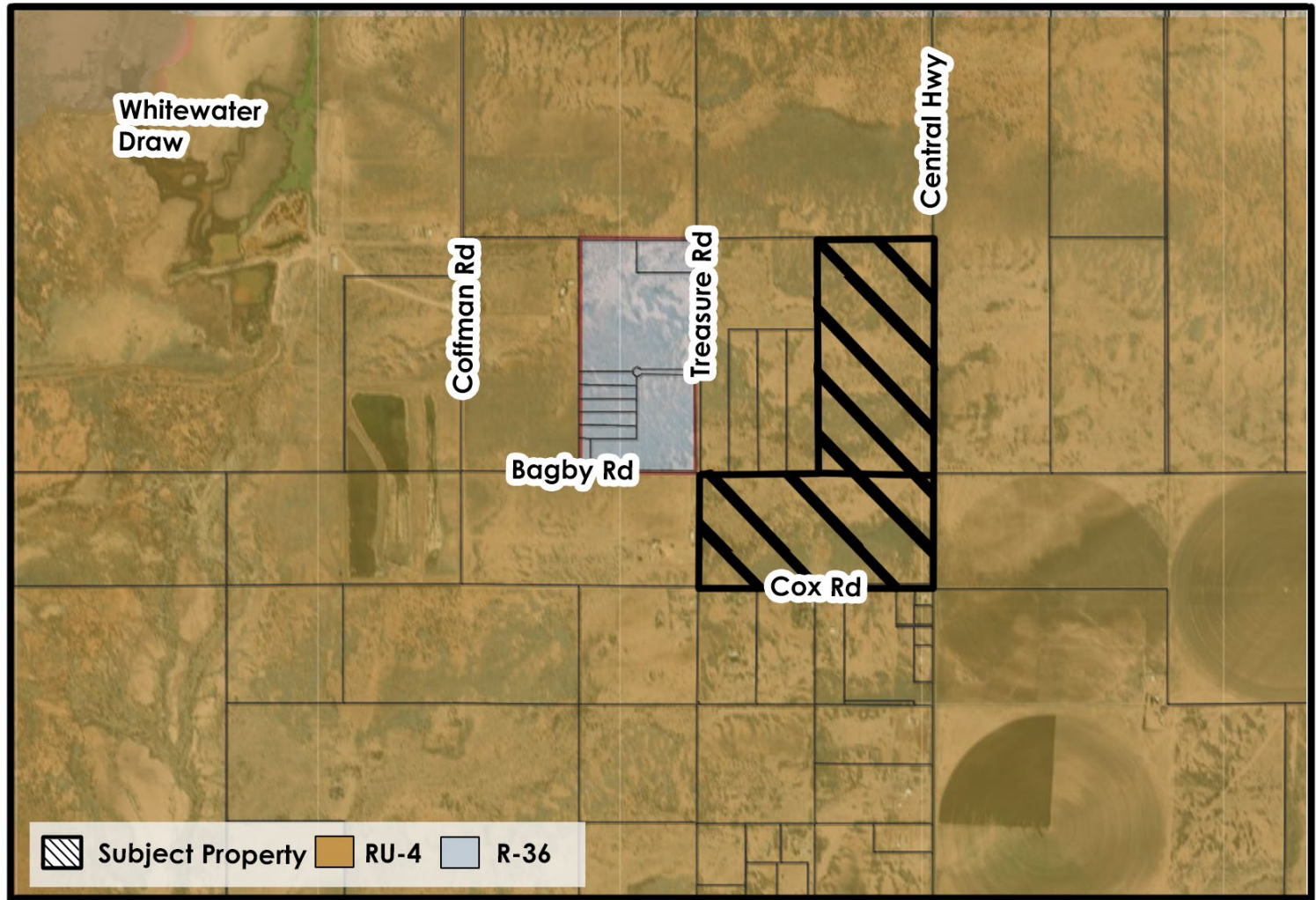
Site Photos



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



Zoning



Zoning
SU 22-12 Silicon Ranch Solar

Site Development Standards for Solar Energy Plants (Zoning Regulations, 1824)

- Height Limit: Exempt
- Setbacks: 2x the required setback of the Zoning District (20') or equal to the height of the tallest structure, whichever is greater



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

There are 10 factors used to evaluate all special use proposals. As submitted, the application:

Complies: 8 factors

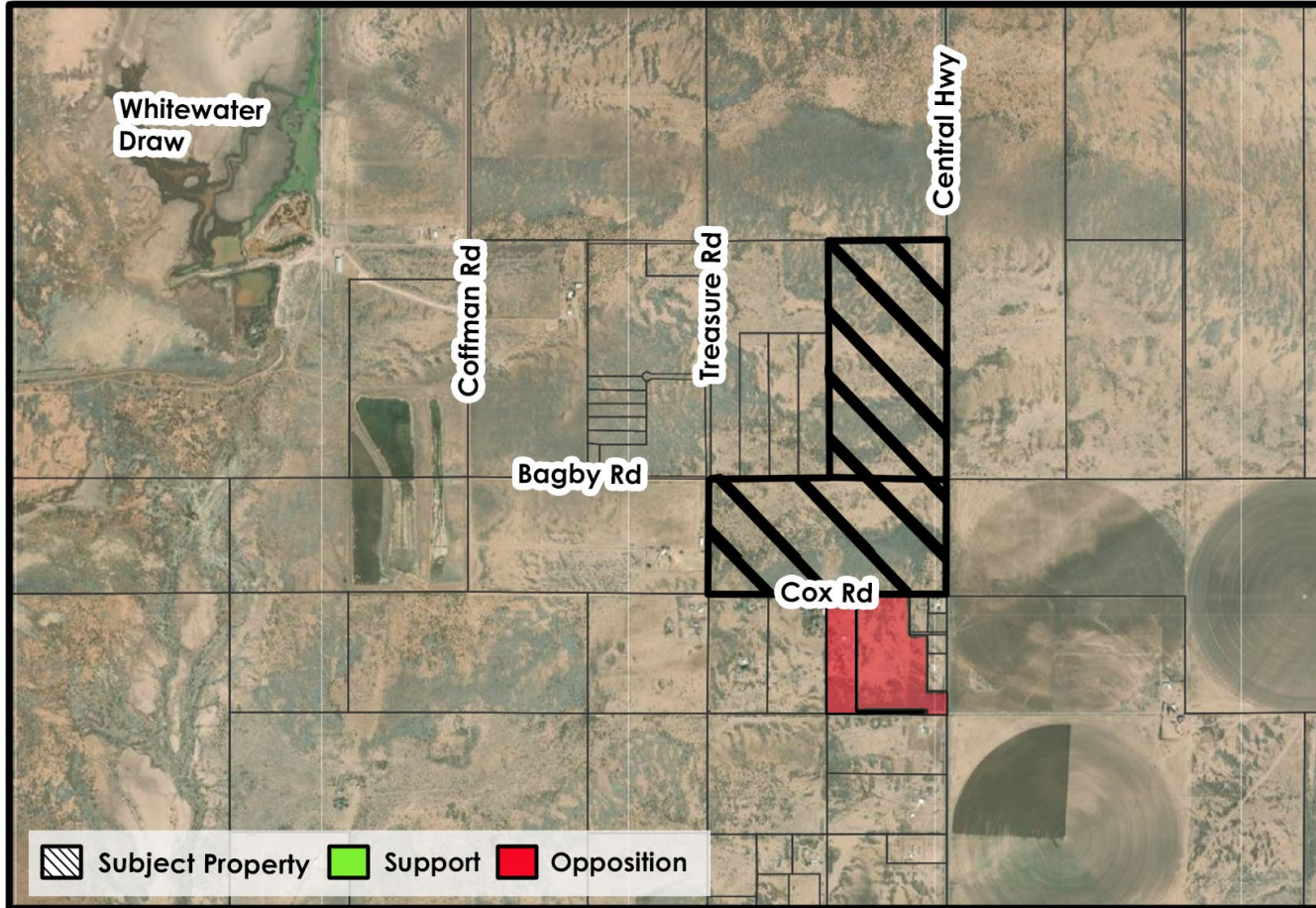
- Compliance with duly Adopted Plans
- Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose
- Development along Major Streets
- Traffic Circulation
- Adequate Services and Infrastructure
- Significant Site Development Standards
- Public Input

Complies with Conditions

- Off site impacts



Public Comment



Public Input
SU 22-12 Silicon Ranch Solar

N.T.S.



Factors in Favor of Request

1. The project is consistent with the applicable Policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the Purpose of the Rural Zoning Districts;
2. The project complies with most of the criteria used to evaluate special use requests;
3. The site plan submitted complies with most applicable site development standards and conditions;
4. Once completed the project would generate negligible levels of traffic;
5. At build-out the project would use minimal water, services and infrastructure; and
6. The project would serve as a source of clean energy, offsetting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the need to generate electricity from fossil fuels.

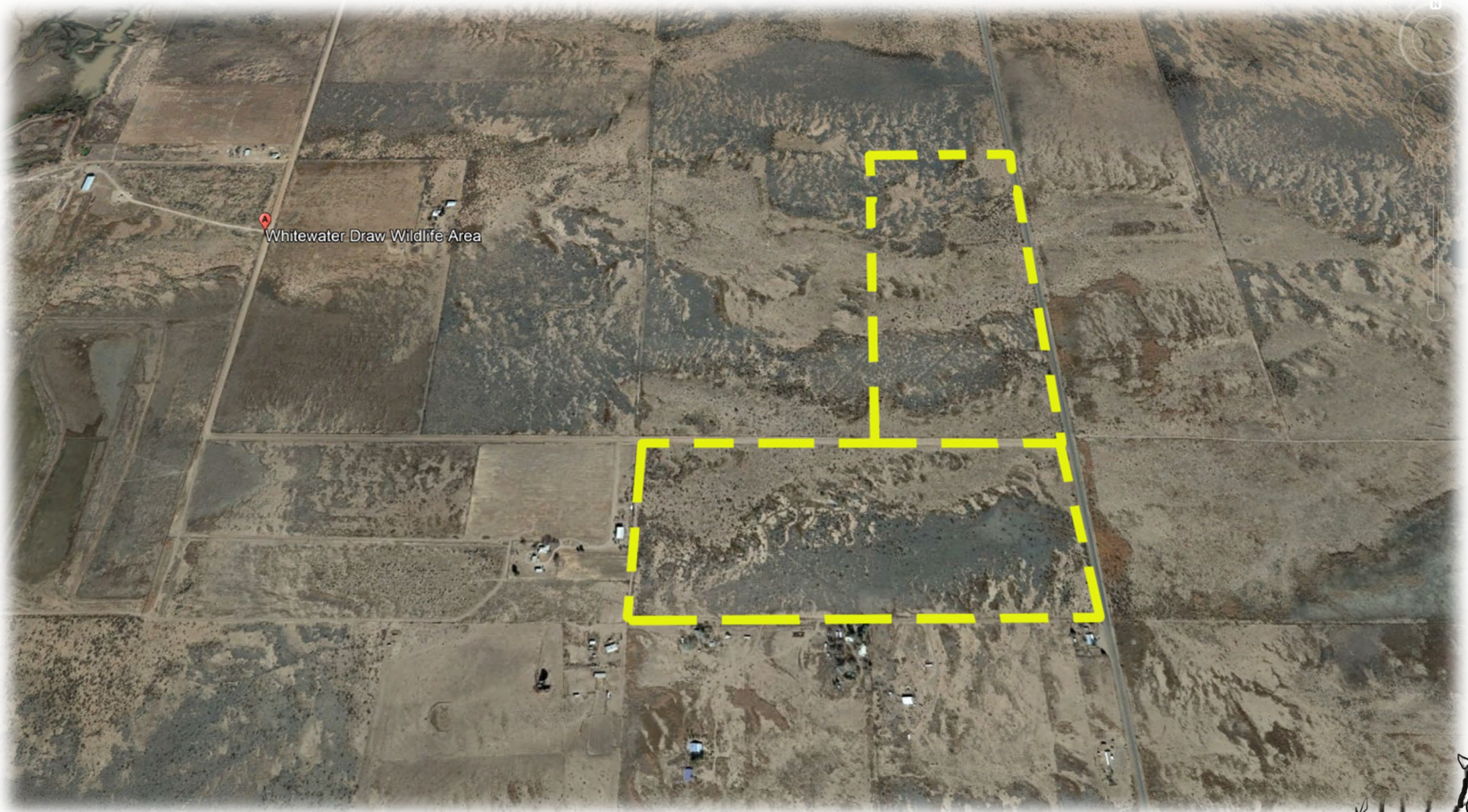


Factors Against Approving the Request

1. Project construction would likely generate fugitive dust. While the placement of a solar facility will not necessarily increase dust transmission in the long-term, without soils stabilization, dust transmission will also not improve;
2. General compatibility and aesthetics concerns – the surrounding terrain is flat, and the area is undeveloped except for low-density residential and agricultural use. The visibility and massing of the project is of concern;
3. Wildlife and biological concerns – there is potential for bird fatalities or injuries to occur if avian species mistake the solar panels for open water. Water-dependent bird species are theorized to be vulnerable to fatality at some solar facilities due to the potential for them to confuse arrays for bodies of water; and
4. Two Letters of opposition have been received.



Applicant Presentation/Discussion



Recommended Conditions

1. Within 30-days of approval of the Special Use, the applicant shall provide the County a signed Acceptance of Conditions form and a Waiver of Claims form arising from ARS Section 12-1134. Prior to operation of the Special Use, the applicant shall apply for a building/use permit for the project within 12-months of approval. The building/use permit shall include a site plan in conformance with all applicable site development standards (except as modified) and with Section 1705 of the Zoning Regulations, the completed Special Use permit questionnaire and application, and appropriate fees. A permit must be issued within 18-months of the Special Use approval. Non-compliance can result in the Special Use being revoked upon a 30-day notification to the applicant.
2. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain any additional permits or meet any additional conditions that may apply to the proposed use pursuant to other federal, state, or local laws or regulations;
3. Any changes to the approved Special Use shall be subject to review by the Planning Division and may require additional modification and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission;



Recommended Conditions

4. Warning signage shall be placed on solar equipment to the extent appropriate. Solar equipment shall not be used for displaying any advertising except for reasonable identification of the manufacturer or operator of the solar energy project;
5. The applicant shall provide the type of perimeter fencing where indicated on the concept plan. Fencing shall reserve a 6-8-inch gap between the ground surface and bottom of the fence to allow for smaller wildlife species to make use of any habitat within the project boundaries;
6. The applicant shall provide no less than a 40-foot-wide buffer along all property boundaries or from edge of roadways. Native vegetation, where present shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Also, the applicant must establish perennial native vegetation over the entire disturbed soil area at a minimum density of seventy (70) percent of the native vegetative coverage;



Recommended Conditions

7. The applicant shall incorporate best management design practices of the AGFD within construction plans, to the greatest extent possible, to minimize potential project impacts to wildlife, this includes leaving the vegetation and soil underneath the panels intact, instead of grading the entire site;
8. Prior to the issuance of a building permit the applicant shall provide a revised decommissioning plan, which shall include the anticipated life of the project, the decommissioning sequence, as well as the projected cost for its removal and site restoration. The owner or operator shall be responsible for the complete physical removal of the project by the date of abandonment included within the decommissioning plan or within 12-months of the project being rendered offline (whichever is sooner). The applicant shall also submit a bond, irrevocable Letter of Credit, or other appropriate surety acceptable to the County to secure the cost of removing the system and restoring the site to its original condition to the extent reasonably possible;



Sample Motion

Mr. Chairman, I move to approve Docket SU 22-12 (Silicon Ranch Solar), with the Conditions of Approval recommended by staff; the Factors of Approval constituting Findings of Fact.

