

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
TRANSMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

<p>AGENDA TITLE: SP202100001 Midway Solar</p> <p>SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Solar-energy electrical generation facility including an approximately 8 megawatt photovoltaic system and 4 megawatt battery energy storage system occupying approximately 80 acres.</p> <p>SCHOOL DISTRICT: Brownsville, Henley, Western Albemarle</p>	<p>AGENDA DATE: June 16, 2021</p> <p>STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Rapp, Herrick, Fritz</p> <p>PRESENTER (S): Bill Fritz</p>
---	---

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting on April 20, 2021, the Planning Commission voted 6:0 to recommend approval of SP202100001 Midway Solar. The Planning Commission included in the recommendation for approval that the applicant make every effort to avoid removal or disturbance of prime agricultural soils. The Planning Commission stated concerns about significant grading on prime agricultural soils.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant has provided additional information (which staff has adapted as Attachment E) showing the extent of grading and the approximate elevation change due to cut or fill. Approximately 33% of the site is prime soils. Solar panels are proposed on approximately 40% of the prime soils. Of the prime soils to be disturbed by the solar panels, approximately 10% would require significant grading (a change in elevation of greater than 7 feet) and 20% would require minimal grading (a change in elevation of less than 1 foot). The grading would provide a gentle slope to allow for tracking devices on the panels and to prevent shading. No retaining walls or other abrupt grade changes are shown.

Staff opinion is that the grading proposed does minimize the disturbance of prime soils to the extent possible. Further, the disturbance that does occur is not the type of terra-forming that is discouraged by the County.

Following the Planning Commission's public hearing, the County Attorney's Office suggested non-substantive revisions to the proposed conditions of approval. Those revised conditions are incorporated in the attached Resolution (Attachment F).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment F) to approve SP202100001 Midway Solar, with conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A – Planning Commission staff report
- B – Planning Commission action letter
- C – Planning Commission minutes
- D – Public comment presented at the Planning Commission meeting
- E – Grading Information
- F – Proposed Resolution for approval