

GENERAL INFORMATION

Subject

Request	-	Special Use Permit for standalone solar field
Location	-	627 Lotus Avenue
Applicant	-	Historic South Initiative P.O. Box 1008 Toledo, OH 43697
Developer	-	Elevated Energy Solutions 27100 Oakmead Dr., #157 Perrysburg, OH 43551
Property Owner	-	City of Toledo One Government Center, Suite 2250 Toledo, OH 43604
Engineer	-	Verdantas 219 S. Erie Street Toledo, OH 43604

Site Description

Zoning	-	IG / General Industrial
Overlay District	-	Maumee Riverfront Overlay District
Area	-	± 15.4 acres
Frontage	-	No street frontage
Existing Use	-	Pump station
Proposed Use	-	Pump station and solar energy facility

Area Description

North	-	Norfolk Southern Railroad, Lotus Avenue, single-family homes and duplexes with multi-family scattered throughout / IG, RD6
South	-	Maumee River, manufacturing, casino / IG, CM & CR
East	-	Undeveloped land, warehouse, Edwin Drive, marina / IG
West	-	Maumee River, wooded/undeveloped land / IG

GENERAL INFORMATION (cont'd)Parcel History

Z.1(J) 41-77	-	Establishment of the Maumee Riverfront Overlay District (PC rec approval 1/12/1978; CC approved 2/14/1978 via Ord. 99-78).
MRO-4-94	-	Maumee Riverfront Overlay District review for filling/grading (Administratively approved 12/20/1994).
M-1-17	-	Review and adoption of Old South End Master Plan (PC rec approval 4/13/2017; CC approved 5/30/2017 via Ord. 226-17).
MRO-1-26	-	Maumee Riverfront Overlay review for standalone solar field at 627 Lotus Ave. (<i>companion case</i>).

Applicable Plans and Regulations

- Toledo Municipal Code (TMC), Part Eleven: Planning and Zoning
- Forward Toledo Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Old South End Master Plan
- Maumee Riverfront Plan

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for a standalone solar energy facility at 627 Lotus Street. The subject site, consisting of five (5) parcels totaling 15.6 acres, is situated south of Lotus Street between the Norfolk Southern Railroad and the Maumee River. The property is owned by the City of Toledo and the applicant will be entering into a lease agreement with the city to utilize a portion of the site for a standalone solar field. Currently there is a City pump station on the site. Surrounding land uses include undeveloped land, a warehouse and a marina to the east; the Maumee River to the south; the Maumee River and wooded/undeveloped land to the west; and railroad tracks, Lotus Street and a mix of single-family homes and duplexes with multi-family units scattered throughout to the north.

The Historic South Initiative (HSI) is the applicant for the project. The mission of HSI is to develop bold, long-term, measurable strategies and facilitate partnerships to promote the ongoing development of a vibrant, thriving Old South End neighborhood. HSI has received grant funding to construct the solar field. The solar field is projected to generate 1.5 megawatts (MW) of power. It is the intent of HSI to partner with other nonprofits and service providers in the neighborhood to sell them the generated power at a reduced rate. HSI will then utilize the collected funds to complete improvement projects in the Old South End neighborhood.

STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)

The subject property is zoned IG – General Industrial and is located within the Maumee Riverfront Overlay District. A Special Use Permit is required per the Use Table in TMC§1104.0100 for a primary solar energy system in the IG zoning district. In addition, a Maumee Riverfront Overlay District Review is required as the subject parcel is located within the Maumee Riverfront Overlay District. This review is being completed in companion case MRO-1-26.

Proposed Use and Site Development

The proposed solar field is projected to generate 1.5 MW of power. For perspective, the Solar Energy Industries Association has calculated that the average number of homes powered by 1 MW of power created by photovoltaic panels in Ohio is just over 140 homes. The solar energy system for the site is not fully designed, thus specifics such as type, number, height, etc. for the solar array have not been determined at this time. The system will consist of a driven steel pile mounting system that holds the solar panels at a fixed angle, and the solar array layout will be similar to that illustrated on the attached site plan. The height is noted as low-profile and is approximated to be three feet (3') in height at the low end and six to nine feet (6'-9') in height at the high end. Additional equipment to facilitate solar power collection and distribution will also be installed as required, as well as a chain link fence as required by the applicant's lease agreement. Limited site improvements such as minimal grading and stormwater management is noted for the solar array installation. Based on the site plan, the location of the proposed solar array is situated on a portion of the site that was previously cleared for use. The surrounding portions of the property are wooded with the exception of the area where the existing pump station is located.

Based on the information provided to date, the proposed solar field is an appropriate use for the subject property. To ensure that the development will have minimal impact on surrounding properties, a revised site plan depicting the final designed solar array with required equipment, site fencing and any proposed lighting shall be submitted for review and approval by the Plan Director and listed as a condition of approval. This will allow for inclusion of any buffer or landscaping necessary to minimize the impact of the development on surrounding properties.

Circulation/Access

The subject site is essentially landlocked. The site plan does not show how access to the site is proposed. The City has an access easement in place for their use that extends to the east to Edwin Drive. As part of the lease agreement with the City, the applicant is required to secure an access easement for their use associated with the solar field. Access to the proposed development will therefore be from Edwin Drive to the east through an access easement agreement with adjacent property owners. The applicant is currently working to secure this access easement agreement and submittal of the agreement is listed as a condition of approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)Circulation/Access (cont'd)

The City is requiring fencing to be installed as part of the lease agreement with the applicant to limit access to the pump station. The required fencing is not noted on the site plan, so it is unclear how service vehicles will maneuver once at the solar field. While off-street parking is not technically required, an area should be provided that enables vehicles servicing the solar field the ability to adequately maneuver in and out of the site and park when there since there are no immediate adjacent roadways. A revised site plan shall be submitted that illustrates the parking and maneuvering area and listed as a condition of approval.

The existing access drive to and through the site is not paved. Per TMC§1107.1906 - Surfacing and Drainage, maneuvering areas, aisles and driveways must be surfaced with concrete, bituminous asphalt, or other dust-free material other than gravel or loose fill, and be graded to drain all surface water towards the interior of the parking lot. In addition, the Fire Prevention Bureau has conditioned that the access road shall be designed and maintained to support loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all-weather driving capabilities. The access road and site drives will either need to be paved, or the applicant will need to secure a waiver from the requirement to surface the drives with a dust-free material in TMC§1107.1906. Staff is supportive of this request provided the surface provided meets the condition of the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Floodplain

As noted on the site plan, there are floodway and floodplain areas associated with the site as identified on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). As a condition of approval, the applicant shall submit documentation to the Floodplain Administrator within the City of Toledo's Division of Building Inspection for all necessary permits as applicable.

Old South End Master Plan

The Old South End Master Plan adopted in 2017 is intended to be a long term, and flexible guiding document that is intended to help direct development/reinvestment in a coordinated fashion while focusing on strengthening the community, increasing overall environmental awareness and guiding the proper use and allocation of resources. One (1) of the plan recommendations is increased/expanded open space and parks throughout the Old South End. The plan recommends a new waterfront park on the subject property and notes that this would require a pedestrian railroad crossing. While the proposed project is not intended to be accessible to the public and does not meet the specific recommendation of creating a waterfront park at the subject site, it is supportive of the plan by providing a revenue source to achieve the identified goals and recommendations in the plan. In addition, the proposed solar field will be ground mounted and removeable so that the site could be otherwise developed in the future.

STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)

Forward Toledo Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Forward Toledo Comprehensive Land Use Plan designates the site for Utilities. The Utilities (UT) Land Use designation is intended to preserve key thoroughfares for connectivity of infrastructure such as rail lines, electrical lines, transformers, water treatment, and distribution. Solar fields is an identified land use for the UT designation. The proposed solar field is therefore consistent with the Forward Toledo land use designation. In addition, the proposal supports the Sustain theme of the plan. This theme identifies strategies for maintaining our natural environment, accessing healthy food and promoting efficient energy. The proposed solar energy facility is consistent with this theme in that it reduces impacts on the environment by providing an alternative green energy source.

Staff is supportive of the proposed solar energy facility as it meets the stated purpose of the Zoning Code, is consistent with the Forward Toledo Plan and the Old South End Master Plan, and will not have any adverse land or environmental impacts.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Toledo City Plan Commission recommend approval of SUP26-0003, a request for a Special Use Permit for standalone solar field at 627 Lotus Street, to Toledo City Council for the following **three (3) reasons**:

1. The proposed use meets the stated purpose of the Zoning Code (TMC§1111.0706(A));
2. The proposed use is consistent with the Forward Toledo Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Old South End Master Plan; and
3. The proposed use will not have any adverse land or environmental impacts (TMC§1111.0706(F)).

The staff recommends that the Toledo City Plan Commission make the following recommendation to the Toledo City Council on the waiver requested for SUP26-0003, a Special Use Permit for standalone solar field at 627 Lotus Street:

Chapter 1107 Parking, Loading, and Access

Section 1107.1906 Surfacing and Drainage

Approve a waiver so that the proposed access road and interior site drives for the solar energy facility do not have to be surfaced with concrete, asphalt or other dust-free material. Staff is in support of the waiver since the access road and interior site drives will have minimal use once the facility is constructed. Staff is supportive of this waiver provided the access road and interior site drives are designed, maintained, and supports all-weather driving capabilities as required by the Fire Prevention Bureau.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION (cont'd)

The staff further recommends that the Toledo City Plan Commission recommend approval of SUP26-0003, a request for a Special Use Permit for standalone solar field at 627 Lotus Street, to Toledo City Council subject to the approval of the following **twenty-five (25) conditions**:

The following conditions are listed by agency of origin. Applicants are encouraged to contact each of the agencies to address compliance with their conditions.

Division of Engineering Services

1. Stormwater planning is sufficient for the site plan, but construction pollution prevention planning will require some revision and final approval for construction. A SWP3 submittal and approval is required for projects over 2,500 square feet of construction activity. A submittal coversheet has been provided to the designer. The total disturbance of the project would not just be the footprint of the mounting structure and would also include the remainder of the area that will be disturbed by construction activities, including construction traffic. If any of the site is to experience heavy construction traffic from equipment and will disturb the earth, that would need to be accounted for in the calculation of the total disturbed area. The entire project including the electrical transmission work will need tallied, and if greater than an acre, an NOI will also be need to be submitted and authorized by OEPA

Fire Prevention Bureau

2. The proposed new solar field will require compliance with all applicable Building, Fire, Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing code requirements. (OBC 105.1 & 101.4)
3. A Fire Hydrant may be required to be placed on site. (OFC 507.1 and 507.5.1, TMC 1511.03, Rule 5, #1).
4. Security gates are not shown around the solar field. Does this need to be secured? Security gate at the drive entrance on Edwin Dr. shall have an approved means of emergency operations. A Knox padlock is acceptable. (OFC 506.1)
5. The access road for the fire department shall be designed and maintained to support loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all-weather driving capabilities. (OFC 503.2.3)
6. Signage will need to be added on the entrance gate at Edwin Dr. showing the solar field address.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION (cont'd)

Division of Environmental Services

7. Applicant shall maintain compliance with the City of Toledo's Storm Water regulations as specified in the Toledo Municipal Code. Special attention must be paid to all potential storm water impacts from the modification of the site, including but not limited to long-term operation and maintenance of existing structural and non-structural Best Management Practices.
8. Applicant shall maintain compliance with Ohio EPA's General Storm Water NPDES permit programs.
9. Applicant is strongly encouraged to include multiple green infra-structure measures to minimize runoff and increase infiltration, and to minimize the amount of new and/or additional impervious surface on the site.
10. Applicant is strongly encouraged to plant native, low maintenance and non-invasive trees, shrubs and perennials. Information is at <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/plants-trees/invasive-plants>; a list of invasive plants and alternative species can be downloaded from https://www.oipc.info/uploads/5/8/6/5/58652481/alternatives_to_ohio_invasive_plant_species.pdf.
11. Applicant shall maintain compliance with the City of Toledo and the State of Ohio's Air Quality Regulations applicable in the Toledo Municipal Code and the Ohio Administrative Code including, but not limited to the Asbestos and the Anti-Noise Laws.

Division of Sewer and Drainage Services

12. S&DS requires that all existing private sewer lines that are not being removed or properly abandoned (both storm & sanitary) be cleaned and inspected.
13. S&DS requires that the existing private sanitary lines (after they have been cleaned) that are not being removed or properly abandoned be televised from the building (or private cleanout) to where they connect with the public sewer system if this has not been done in the past (2) two years. An electronic copy (DVD/memory stick) shall be provided to S&DS demonstrating the lines cleaning and integrity.

Division of Traffic Management

14. Add a paved area for parking.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION (cont'd)

Plan Commission

15. The applicant shall maintain the solar energy facility and all appurtenances in good and working condition for the life of the facility.
16. The applicant shall adequately decommission the solar energy facility when it is abandoned or no longer in service. This includes but is not limited to closing the facility, removing the equipment and restoring the property to its predevelopment condition.
17. An executed lease agreement with the City of Toledo shall be submitted to the Plan Director.
18. An easement of access, for access to the proposed site from an improved public street shall be submitted to the Plan Director.
19. Off-street parking and loading spaces, parking lots, maneuvering areas, aisles and driveways must be surfaced with concrete, bituminous asphalt, or other dust-free material other than gravel or loose fill, and be graded to drain all surface water towards the interior of the parking lot. **Not acceptable as submitted. Applicant shall obtain a waiver to TMC§1107.1906, so that the access road and internal access drives do not have to be surfaced with concrete, asphalt or other dust-free material.**
20. Applicant shall submit any necessary permits to allow development within the floodway or any special flood hazard areas to the Floodplain Administrator within the City of Toledo's Division of Building Inspection as applicable.
21. A revised site plan including a detailed site lighting and fencing plan shall be submitted to the Plan Director for review and approval. Such plan shall include:
 - a. The final layout of the solar field including all required equipment and infrastructure.
 - b. On-site parking and maneuvering areas required for the solar field.
 - c. The location, height and materials for any fencing to be installed and maintained. Any proposed fencing shall meet TMC§1105.0300 and a fence permit application shall be submitted and approved prior to installation.
 - d. The location, lighting, and size of any signs. Any proposed signage for the site shall be meet the requirements of TMC§1113.0000. A sign permit application shall be submitted and approved for all signage.
 - e. The location, height and type of any lights and light fixtures. Lights and light fixtures must be selected and arranged to direct and reflect the light away from any adjacent property and public ways, and away from the sky above per TMC§1107.1908.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION (cont'd)

Plan Commission (cont'd)

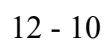
22. No permits shall be issued until arrangements satisfactory to the Director of the City of Toledo Plan Commission have been made for compliance with the conditions as set forth above.
23. The Special Use Permit may be reviewed for compliance with the conditions of approval, negative secondary effects, and adherence to all requirements of the Toledo Municipal Code. If outstanding issues are found and not addressed the Special Use Permit may be considered for revocation.
24. Minor adjustments to the Site Plan that do not violate the above conditions, or the Toledo Municipal Code, may be reviewed and approved by the Director of the Toledo City Plan Commission.
25. Approval of the Special Use Permit will lapse after one (1) year if the criteria listed in TMC§1111.0707(A) have not been met.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT
TOLEDO CITY PLAN COMMISSION
REF: SUP26-0003
DATE: March 12, 2026
TIME: 2:00 P.M.

TOLEDO CITY COUNCIL
ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE: April 15, 2026
TIME: 4:00 P.M.

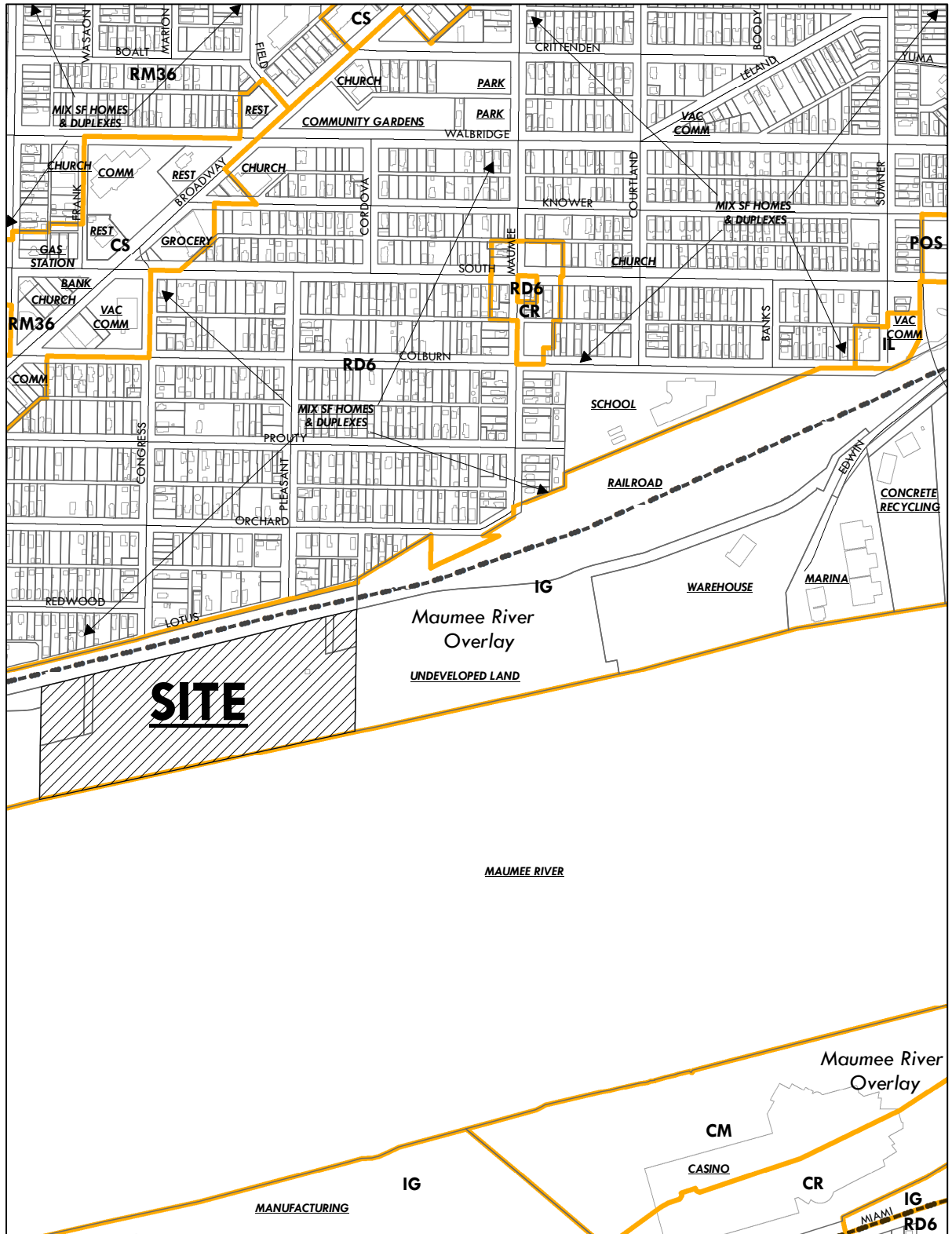
LK
Three (3) sketches follow

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ZONING & LAND USE

SUP26-0003



SITE PLAN

SUP26-0003



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