Valley County Planning and Zoning

PO Box 1350 • 700 South Main Street Cascade, ID 83611-1350



Phone: 208-382-7115 Email: cherrick@valleycountyid.gov

STAFF REPORT:

C.U.P. 25-030 Olsen Solar Panels

MEETING DATE:

December 11, 2025

TO:

Planning and Zoning Commission

STAFF:

Cynda Herrick, AICP, CFM Planning and Zoning Director

APPLICANT /

Shayne Olsen

PROPERTY OWNER

2139 N Meridian RD, Eagle ID 83616

LOCATION:

16 East Mountain Road

Within parcel RP12N04E039225, located in the SE ¼ Section 3 and NE ¼ Section 10, T.12N, R.4E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho

SIZE:

110.5-acre parcel

REQUEST:

Ground-Mounted Solar Panel Array

EXISTING LAND USE:

Agricultural (Timber)

Valley County Code 9-5G-1 states that conditional use permits are required for solar panels greater than eight (8) square-feet that are detached from the primary structure. This requirement was adopted in Ordinance 10-06 on August 23, 2010.

Shayne Olsen is requesting a conditional use permit for 8 panel ground-mounted solar array to operate and maintain equipment for timber management.

Panels would be within a 20-ft by 20-ft site with a maximum height of 14-ft. The site is approximately 40-ft from an existing building and approximately 653 feet from the nearest property line.

Access would be from East Mountain Road, a public road. The property is addressed at 16 East Mountain Road.

FINDINGS:

- 1. The application was submitted on October 14, 2025.
- Legal notice was posted in the Star News on November 20, 2025, and November 26, 2025.
 The applicant was notified by letter on November 10, 2025. Potentially affected agencies were notified on November 10, 2025. Property owners within 300 feet of the property line were notified by fact sheet sent November 10, 2025. The notice was posted online at www.co.valley.id.us on November 10, 2025. The site was posted on November 18, 2025.

3. Agency comment received:

Brent Copes, Central District Health, has no objections. Any building generating wastewater will need a permit prior to use. (November 26, 2025)

4. Public comment received:

Bill Freeman, property owner of 315 Clear Creek Road, supports the proposal. The panels will not be readily visible, and most neighbors and visitors will not know they are there. Idaho Power does not have infrastructure in the immediate vicinity; thus, solar power is the practical and economic alternative.

- 5. Physical characteristics of the site: The area is sloped and tree-covered. The site for the solar panels is more open and flatter than much of the remaining parcel.
- 7. The surrounding land use and zoning includes:

North: Agricultural (Timber)

South: Agricultural (Timber) with Homesites

East: U.S. Forest Service – Boise National Forest

West: Agricultural (Timber) with Homesites

- 8. Valley County Code (Title 9): In Table 9-3-1, this proposal is categorized under:
 - 7. Alternative Energy Uses (b) Solar panels detached from primary structure and > 8-feet in area

Review of Title 9 - Chapter 5 Conditional Uses should be done.

TITLE 9 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

9-5G-1: SITE OR DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Alternative energy uses requiring a conditional use permit shall meet the following site or development standards:

- A. Solar Panels Greater Than Eight Square Feet In Accumulated Area and Detached From Primary Structure:
 - 1. Must be a minimum of fifteen feet (15') from property lines.
 - 2. Glare shall not create a hazard to vehicular traffic.
 - 3. Cannot be over thirty feet (30') in height.
 - 4. Impact to neighbors will be a determining factor.

SUMMARY:

Staff's compatibility rating is a +36.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should do their own compatibility rating prior to the meeting (form with directions attached). Be prepared to submit your compatibility rating or state which lines on staff's compatibility rating needs to be changed.

STAFF COMMENTS / QUESTIONS:

- 1. This site is within the Cascade Fire District and Water District 65. It is not within an irrigation district nor a herd district.
- 2. All requirements of 9-5G-1.A appear to have been met. Idaho Power does not currently provide electrical power to this site. Full-time generator use would result in more noise.
- 3. Will site grading occur at the solar panel site? Has the area already been cleared of vegetation and graded?

Standards of Approval:

- 1. Will the application result in an increase in value of private property? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
- 2. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on the environment? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
- 3. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on adjoining properties? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
- 4. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on governmental services? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
- 5. Is the application consistent with the Valley County Comprehensive Plan? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
- 6. Conditional uses may be approved only after a C.U.P. has been evaluated to determine that the impacts can be mitigated through conformance with conditions of approval. VCC 9-5-2(A).

These six standards should be a significant focus of attention during the public hearing and deliberations because they need to be resolved in order to justify approval. VCC 9-5-1(C) directs the decision-making body to encourage conditional uses where noncompatible aspects of the application can be satisfactorily mitigated through development agreements for the costs to service providers and impacts to surrounding land uses. Because mitigation measures are a requirement of approval the applicant needs to understand that he/she will be required to perform some off-site improvements. They are not mandatory but without them the application cannot satisfy the mitigation of impacts requirement and would be denied under the ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposed Conditions of Approval
- Blank Compatibility Evaluation and Instructions
- Compatibility Evaluation by Staff
- Location Map
- Aerial Map
- Topographical Map
- Assessor Plat T.12N R.4E Section 10
- Record of Survey 13-207
- Site Plan from Application
- Responses

Proposed Conditions of Approval

- 1. The application, the staff report, and the provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance are all made a part of this permit as if written in full herein. Any violation of any portion of the permit will be subject to enforcement and penalties in accordance with Title 9-2-5; and, may include revocation or suspension of the conditional use permit.
- 2. Any change in the nature or scope of land use activities shall require an additional Conditional Use Permit.
- 3. The issuance of this permit and these conditions will not relieve the applicant from complying with applicable County, State, or Federal laws or regulations or be construed as permission to operate in violation of any statute or regulations. Violation of these laws, regulations or rules may be grounds for revocation of the Conditional Use Permit or grounds for suspension of the Conditional Use Permit.
- 4. Shall obtain a building permit for the solar panel structure by December 31, 2026.
- 5. Shall meet requirements of Cascade Fire Department.
- 6. All noxious weeds on the property must be controlled.
- 7. All lighting on-site must be dark sky compliant.
- 8. When the solar array becomes damaged, replaced, or obsolete, all materials must be properly disposed of as required by federal and state laws and regulations.
- 9. A new conditional use permit will be required to enlarge or move the solar array location.
- 10. If there is any new site grading required, a site grading/stormwater management plan will have to be approved by the Valley County Engineer.

END OF STAFF REPORT

Compatibility Questions and Evaluation

Matrix Line # / Use:	Prepared by:
Response YES/NO X Value	<u>Use Matrix Values:</u>
(+2/-2) X 4	1. Is the proposed use compatible with the dominant adjacent land use?
(+2/-2) X 2	2. Is the proposed use compatible with the other adjacent land uses (total and average)?
(+2/-2) X 1	3. Is the proposed use generally compatible with the overall land use in the local vicinity?
(+2/-2) X 3	Site Specific Evaluation (Impacts and Proposed Mitigation) 4. Is the property large enough, does the existence of wooded area, or does the lay of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses?
(+2/-2) X 1	5. Is the size or scale of proposed <u>lots and/or</u> structures similar to adjacent ones?
(+2/-2) X 2	6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use similar to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, on- site roads, or access roads?
(+2/-2) X 2	7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses?
(+2/-2) X 2	8. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas?
(+2/-2) X 2	9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property?
Sub-Total (+)	
Sub-Total ()	
Total Score	•

The resulting values for each questions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal receives a single final score.

9-11-1: APPENDIX A, COMPATIBILITY EVALUATION:

A. General: One of the primary functions of traditional zoning is to classify land uses so that those which are not fully compatible or congruous can be geographically separated from each other. The county has opted to substitute traditional zoning with a multiple use concept in which there is no separation of land uses. Proposed incompatible uses may adversely affect existing uses, people, or lands in numerous ways: noise, odors, creation of hazards, view, water contamination, loss of needed or desired resources, property values, or infringe on a desired lifestyle. To ensure that the county can continue to grow and develop without causing such land use problems and conflicts, a mechanism designed to identify and discourage land use proposals which will be incompatible at particular locations has been devised. The compatibility evaluation of all conditional uses also provides for evaluations in a manner which is both systematic and consistent.

B. Purpose; Use:

- 1. The compatibility rating is to be used as a tool to assist in the determination of compatibility. The compatibility rating is not the sole deciding factor in the approval or denial of any application.
- 2. Staff prepares a preliminary compatibility rating for conditional use permits, except for conditional use permits for PUDs. The commission reviews the compatibility rating and may change any value.
- C. General Evaluation: Completing the compatibility questions and evaluation (form):
 - All evaluations shall be made as objectively as possible by assignment of points for each of a series of questions.
 Points shall be assigned as follows:
 - Plus 2 assigned for full compatibility (adjacency encouraged).
 - Plus 1 assigned for partial compatibility (adjacency not necessarily encouraged).
 - 0 assigned if not applicable or neutral.
 - Minus 1 assigned for minimal compatibility (adjacency not discouraged).
 - Minus 2 assigned for no compatibility (adjacency not acceptable).
 - 2. Each response value shall be multiplied by some number, which indicates how important that particular response is relative to all the others. Multipliers shall be any of the following:
 - x4 indicates major relative importance.
 - x3 indicates above average relative importance.
 - x2 indicates below average relative importance.
 - x1 indicates minor relative importance.
- D. Matrix Questions 1 Through 3: The following matrix shall be utilized, wherever practical, to determine response values for questions one through three (3). Uses classified and listed in the left hand column and across the top of the matrix represent possible proposed, adjacent, or vicinity land uses. Each box indicates the extent of compatibility between any two (2) intersecting uses. These numbers should not be changed from proposal to proposal, except where distinctive uses arise which may present unique compatibility considerations. The commission shall determine whether or not there is a unique consideration.

E. Terms:

DOMINANT ADJACENT LAND USE: Any use which is within three hundred feet (300') of the use boundary being proposed; and

- 1. Comprises at least one-half (1/2) of the adjacent uses and one-fourth (1/4) of the total adjacent area; or
- 2. Where two (2) or more uses compete equally in number and are more frequent than all the other uses, the one with the greatest amount of acreage is the dominant land use; or
- 3. In all other situations, no dominant land use exists. When this occurs, the response value shall be zero.
 - LOCAL VICINITY: Land uses within a one to three (3) mile radius. The various uses therein should be identified and averaged to determine the overall use of the land.

F. Questions 4 Through 9:

- In determining the response values for questions 4 through 9, the evaluators shall consider the information contained in the application, the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan, the provisions of this title and related ordinances, information gained from an actual inspection of the site, and information gathered by the staff.
- 2. The evaluator or commission shall also consider proposed mitigation of the determined impacts. Adequacy of the mitigation will be a factor.

APPENDIX A

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No Specific Matrix Lim Compatibility Questions and Evaluation

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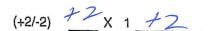
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YES/NO	X	Value

Use Matrix Values:

1. Is the proposed use compatible with the dominant adjacent land use?

Forest

2. Is the proposed use compatible with the other adjacent land uses (total and average)?



3. Is the proposed use generally compatible with the overall land use in the local vicinity?

Mostly Foxes

Site Specific Evaluation (Impacts and Proposed Mitigation)

(+2/-2) +2 x 3 +6

4. Is the property large enough, does the existence of wooded area, or does the lay of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses?

(+2/-2) 12 X 1 +2

Is the size or scale of proposed <u>lots and/or</u> structures <u>similar</u> to adjacent ones?

(+2/-2) <u>+/</u> x 2 +2

6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use similar to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, onsite roads, or access roads?

(+2/-2) +2 x 2 +4

7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses?

(+21-2) + 7 x 2 + 4

8. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas?

No Many

(+2/-2) + X 2 + 4

9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property?

Sub-Total (+) 36

No Change

Sub-Total (--

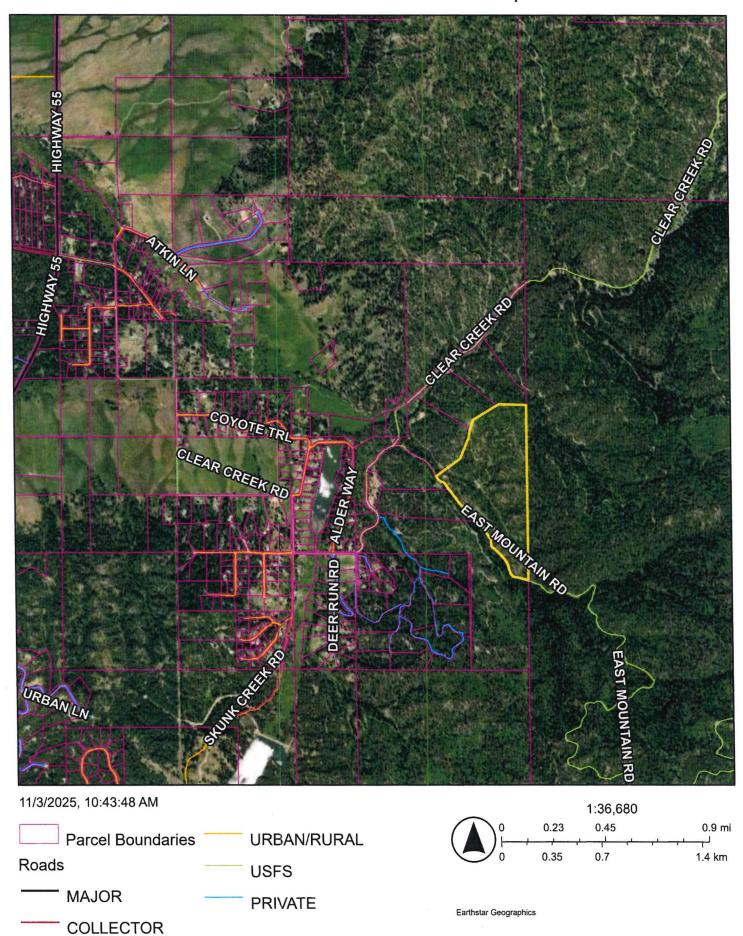
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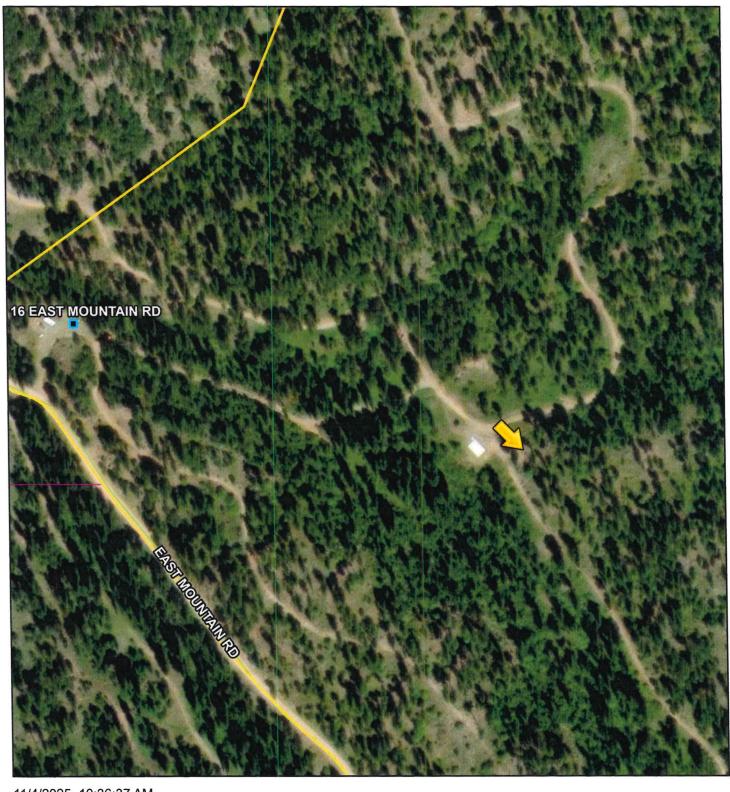
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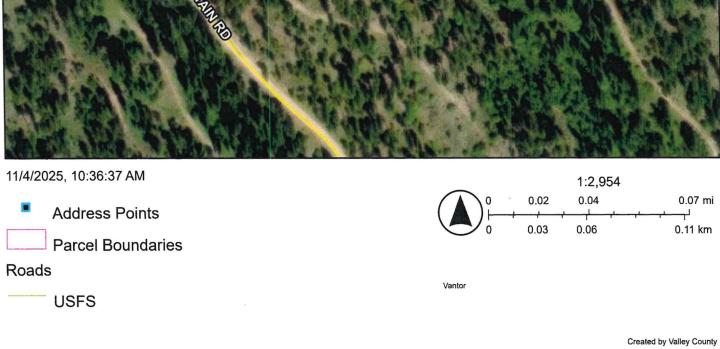
The resulting values for each questions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal receives a single final score.

C.U.P. 25-030 - Location map

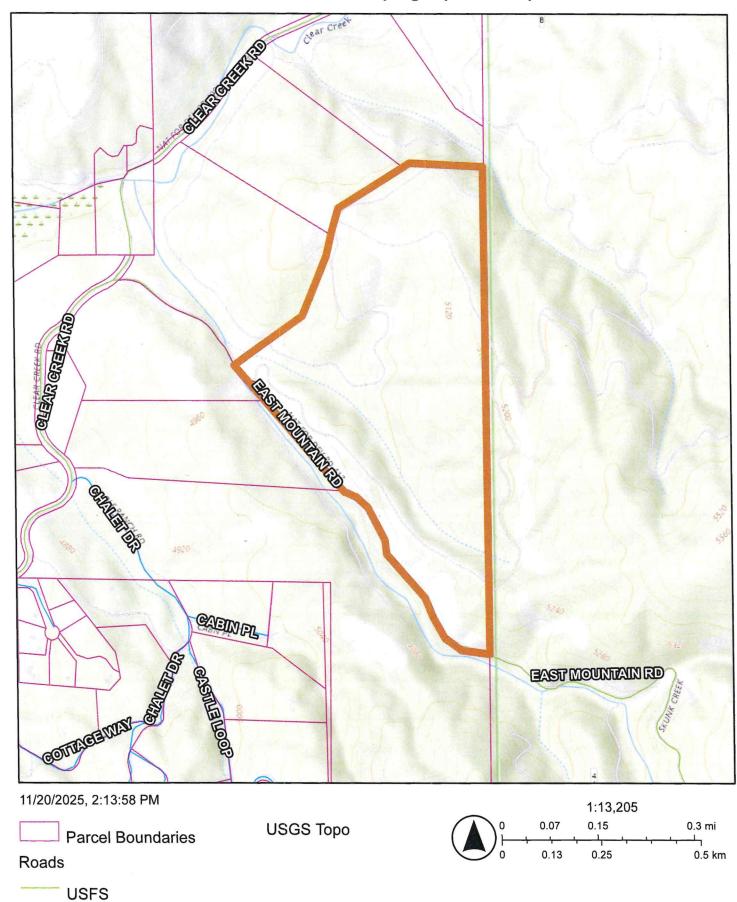


C.U.P. 25-030 Approximate Site



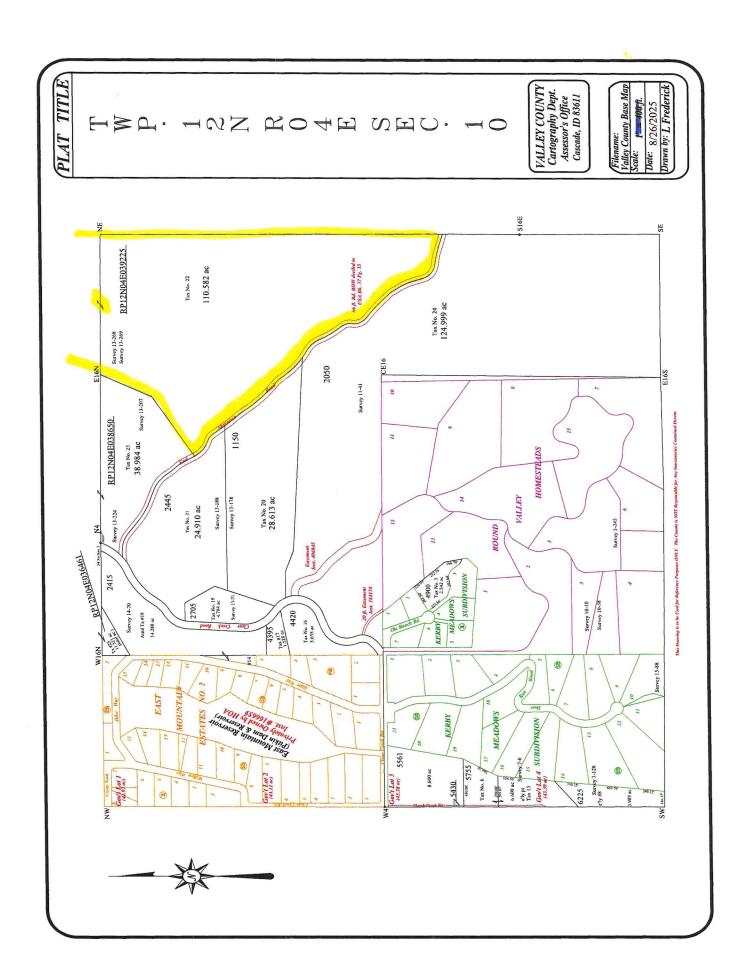


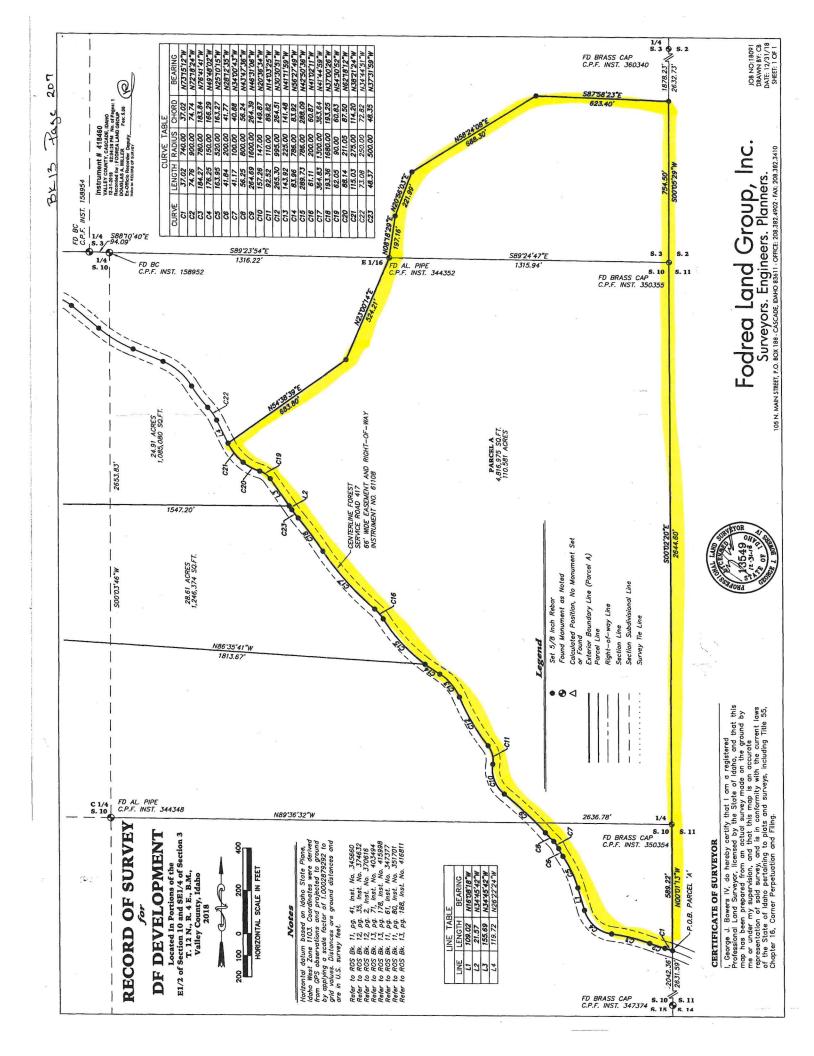
C.U.P. 25-030 Topographic Map



PRIVATE

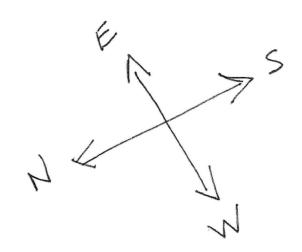
USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road data; Natural Earth Data; U.S.







Location of panels near storage building Site.



		CENTRAL Valley County Transmittal DISTRICT Division of Community and Environmental Health	Return to: Cascade Donnelly
1		one #	☐ McCall ☐ McCall Impact
		ditional Use # 25-030 Olsen Solar Pavels	Valley County
	'reli	iminary / Final / Short Plat	
L			
	1.	We have No Objections to this Proposal.	
	2.	We recommend Denial of this Proposal.	
	3.	Specific knowledge as to the exact type of use must be provided before we can comment on this Pr	oposal.
	4.	We will require more data concerning soil conditions on this Proposal before we can comment.	
	5.	Before we can comment concerning individual sewage disposal, we will require more data concerning of: high seasonal ground water waste flow characteristics other other	
	6.	This office may require a study to assess the impact of nutrients and pathogens to receiving ground waters.	
	7.	This project shall be reviewed by the Idaho Department of Water Resources concerning well construavailability.	uction and water
	8.	After written approvals from appropriate entities are submitted, we can approve this proposal for:	
		central sewage community sewage system community interim sewage individual sewage individual water	water well
	9.	The following plan(s) must be submitted to and approved by the Idaho Department of Environment central sewage community sewage system community central water central water	-
	10.	Run-off is not to create a mosquito breeding problem	
	11.	This Department would recommend deferral until high seasonal ground water can be determined if considerations indicate approval.	other
	12.	If restroom facilities are to be installed, then a sewage system MUST be installed to meet Idaho Stat Regulations.	te Sewage
	13.	We will require plans be submitted for a plan review for any: food establishment swimming pools or spas child care of the control of t	center

Date: 1

Reviewed By:

<u>U</u> 14.

From: William Freeman

Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 10:53 AM

To: Cynda Herrick <cherrick@valleycountyid.gov>

Subject: C.U.P. 25-030, Solar Panels, Applicant Shayne Olsen

Dear Cynda Herrick:

I own the parcel at 315 Clear Creek Road, west of Shayne Olsen's property, and I have frontage on both Clear Creek and East Mountain Roads. I support the application for a Conditional Use Permit to install a solar panel array. The panels will not be readily visible, and most neighbors and visitors will not even know they are there. I foresee no negative effects on neighbors or the environment.

As far as I know, Idaho Power has no infrastructure in the immediate vicinity, and solar power is the only practical and economic alternative at the proposed location.

Sincerely,

Bill Freeman, 315 Clear Creek Road and

1009 South Owyhee Street Boise, ID 83705