



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Legislation Text

File #: RES 21-131, **Version:** 2

Development Business - *Lori Johnson, City Planner*

Title

Granting a Conditional Use Permit for a Freestanding Solar Installation in an I-2A (Heavy Industrial) Zoning District at 2880 82nd Lane NE. Medtronic Inc. (TC Solar MV LLC) (Case File No. 21-0029/SLK)

Executive Summary

Medtronic is requesting a conditional use permit to construct a freestanding solar array on 7 acres of vacant land adjacent to their existing building on 82nd Lane NE. The ground mounted solar array will consist of 3,300 modules at a height of approximately 10 feet above grade.

Schedule of Actions

Planning Commission Public Hearing	05/11/21
City Council (Conditional Use Permit)	06/21/21
Action Deadline	08/03/21

Background

Staff report prepared by Shawn Kaye, Associate Planner

Medtronic is proposing to use approximately 7 acres of vacant land directly east of its main building for a ground mounted solar array consisting of 3,300 modules at a height of approximately 10 feet above grade. The modules will track the sun from east to west throughout the day.

The City is currently processing a code amendment concurrently with this item to allow for the ground mounted solar array as an accessory use by conditional use permit in all industrial zoning districts. The applicant has made a conditional use permit application within the I-2A (Heavy Industrial) zoning district.

Medtronic has a large piece of vacant land immediately east of its main building. This solar array is expected to operate on the property for 20 years, with the ability for Medtronic to extend the contract or buy out the project and have it removed at any time during the term. Once operating, this project will deliver over 2,000MWh of clean, local energy annually to the Medtronic campus with only the sun as feedstock, equaling over 20% of the campus' annual electric needs. Any excess energy that is not consumed by the building, will be sent back into the electric grid and used within the community.

This project utilizes silicon based solar panels which have an anti-glare coating. There are no hazardous materials in the system and no noise other than typical transformer humming would be present within the fence. The area will be enclosed with a 7-foot tall fence to restrict access to the system from unqualified personnel.

The site will be accessible at the northwest corner through a locked gate on a 14' wide gravel driveway for maintenance. The cover plantings inside the footprint of the system will be a combination of low growth native crops and a seed mix that promotes pollinator friendly habitats. There are no buildings included in this proposal.

TC Solar MV LLC will be the provider of the panels and has targeted October 2021 to begin construction on the project.

A maintenance team would consist of an electrician and a groundskeeper to ensure the system is operating safely and the landscaping is properly maintained. Each would independently visit 3-6 times a year depending on necessity. While on site, the technician checks equipment for proper operation and the groundskeeper mows, manages vegetation, and verifies stormwater management is properly working.

Site plan approval and a building permit will be required prior to any work being performed on site. A Site Improvement Performance Agreement (SIPA) and financial guarantee will also be required to cover the site improvements on site.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Not Applicable.

Board/Commission Review

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the conditional use permit. There were no comments at the public hearing.

Financial Impact

Not Applicable.

Public Outreach/Input

Notice of a public hearing were:

1. Mailed to property owners within 350 feet of the property boundaries.
2. Published in Blaine/Spring Lake Park/Columbia Heights/Fridley Life.
3. Posted on the City's website.
4. Posted (sign) on the property with contact information for the Planning Department.

Staff Recommendation

By motion, adopt the resolution.

Attachment List

Zoning and Location Map

Site Plan

Grading Plan

Equipment Detail

Narrative

Unapproved Planning Commission Minutes 5/11/21

WHEREAS, an application has been filed by Medtronic Inc as Conditional Use Permit Case File No. 21-0029; and

WHEREAS, said case involves the land described as follows:

The east 1000 feet of Lot 1, Block 1 MEDTRONIC SECOND ADDITION, Ramsey County, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, a public hearing has been held by the Blaine Planning Commission on May 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Blaine Planning Commission recommends said Conditional Use Permit be approved; and

WHEREAS, the Blaine City Council has reviewed said case on June 21, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Blaine that a Conditional Use Permit is hereby approved per Section 31.30 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a freestanding solar installation in an I-2A (Heavy Industrial) zoning district based on the following conditions:

1. Site Plan approval and appropriate permits will be required prior to any work being performed on site. A Site Improvement Performance Agreement (SIPA) and financial guarantee will also be required to cover the site improvements.
2. Site to be constructed and panels to be installed as shown on the plans submitted for the conditional use permit application.
3. The interior of the array must contain native grasses with a pollinator habitat.
4. Any deviation from the plans as presented will require a conditional use permit amendment.
5. The access road must be maintained at all times of the year to provide Fire Department access to the structures.
6. The project will require a permit from the Rice Creek Watershed District.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Blaine this 21st day of June, 2021.