

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ JUSTICE SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ VETERANS SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES

December 1, 2021

Kari Parsons
Project Manager
El Paso County Development Services Department
2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Subject: Pike Solar Project WSE-O Application Review #2 (WSEO-21-001)

Hello Kari,

The Park Operations Division of the Community Services Department has reviewed the WSE-O application (Review #2) for the Pike Solar Project and has the following additional administrative comments of behalf of El Paso County Parks:

On November 11, 2021, the applicant's representative, Sophie Kiepe, and El Paso County Parks staff worked together to officially verify the location of the proposed Kane Ranch Primary Regional Trail corridor through the project site. After initial discussion regarding the placement of the trail outside of the solar array areas, staff sent the applicant the following verification email:

"Hi Sophie: Yes, El Paso County Parks is good with the proposed alignment as long as the applicant and CSU understand that this is a higher-level general route that would have to undergo site visits, field fit/flagging, and surveying before an accurate final alignment was determined. We wouldn't want to be shoehorned into a location that places us on the edge of a 50' cliff or forces us to cross a ravine with a 300' pedestrian bridge, where a location a few hundred feet away would give us a better alignment. We would need to see other facilities built (e.g., solar facilities, roads, powerlines, reservoir, etc) and conduct the aforementioned planning efforts before we would have an idea where exactly the trail could be placed. For the meantime, this alignment gets us in the ballpark. Thanks! Ross A. Williams" (Park Planner, El Paso County Community Services / Parks)

The following comments were submitted administratively on September 16, 2021:

"In November and December 2020, the applicant's representative contacted El Paso County Parks staff regarding the proposed construction of extensive solar array energy generation facilities in a location southwest of Kane Ranch Open Space in property owned by the City of Colorado Springs, in and around an area designated for the proposed Upper Williams Creek Reservoir. The representative wanted to discuss the alignment of the proposed Kane Ranch Primary Regional Trail through the project area, and during those discussions and



subsequent research, the original signed site approval letters, dated April 2010 and January 2013, for the Upper Williams Creek Reservoir were found to include the following condition:

“Recreation facilities, including, but not limited to parks trails, trailheads and grounds shall require separate approval of location and site development plan approvals.”

The applicant’s representative provided EPC Parks with detailed plans for not only the solar array energy generation facilities, but also a conceptualized location of the Upper Williams Creek Reservoir. Staff utilized these plans to modify the alignment of the proposed Kane Ranch Primary Regional Trail. The applicant then included a map of the new alignment, as well as communications between the applicant and EPC Parks, as Appendix AF-Parks and Trails Proposal of the 1041 application.

Staff is pleased with the consideration and inclusion of the proposed Kane Ranch Primary Regional Trail alignment as a part of the Pike Solar 1041 application. While still listed as a long-term goal in the 2013 El Paso County Parks Master Plan, this 10-mile trail would provide a valuable connection between the Fountain Creek Regional Trail / Colorado Front Range Trail, Clear Spring Ranch (an open space owned by Colorado Springs Utilities and managed by El Paso County Parks), and Kane Ranch Open Space, which is due to open to the public in late 2021. The addition of a reservoir to the route will only serve to increase the value of the overall recreational amenity.

Furthermore, El Paso County Parks understands the basis for federal regulations restricting public access into power generation facilities, and respects the applicant’s need for strict security measures. As such, EPC Parks will not require trail easements within the fenced solar array facilities themselves, but requests that Pike Solar work with Colorado Springs Utilities, the City of Colorado Springs, and El Paso County Parks to safely route the proposed Kane Ranch Regional Trail when in the vicinity of the solar arrays and accompanying reservoir in a manner that provides easy access to not only the trail itself, but other possible recreational facilities around the proposed reservoir.”

These comments are being provided administratively, as this application does not require Park Advisory Board consideration.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ross A. Williams
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