

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: City of Ellensburg Public Works and Utilities

STATE: WA

PROJECT TITLE: Solar and Smart Grid Modernization at the Solar Energy Park

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-EE0010717	GFO-0010717-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination	Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)
B1.7 Electronic equipment	Acquisition, installation, operation, modification, and removal of electricity transmission control and monitoring devices for grid demand and response, communication systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.
B5.16 Solar photovoltaic systems	The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, and mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences), or if located on land, generally comprising less than 10 acres within a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.
B5.23 Electric vehicle charging stations	The installation, modification, operation, and removal of electric vehicle charging stations, using commercially available technology, within a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions are limited to areas where access and parking are in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to administer Congressionally Directed Spending to the City of Ellensburg Public Works and Utilities (Ellensburg PWU) to install and replace advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), to replace and expand an existing photovoltaic (PV) solar array, and to install electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at a local park.

Design activities would be carried out by the Ellensburg PWU (Ellensburg, WA). Replacement and installation of PV panels would take place at the Ellensburg Solar Park (Ellensburg, WA). EV charging stations would be installed at Rotary Park (Ellensburg, WA). AMI software replacement would take place at homes throughout the area. Site identification for AMI to be installed on a local high point is still underway. The Water Tower at Craig's Hill would be the primary location, but a secondary location may be needed.

The proposed activities for this award are separated into seven tasks. This NEPA Determination (ND) applies to Tasks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 for all sites. Such activities must be completed to obtain sufficient information and finalize site selection which is necessary to conduct a meaningful review of the remaining activities, i.e., Task 4.

Activities in Tasks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 would include project design, bidding, AMI specifications and procurement, Solar Park and EV charging station designs, and the installation and commissioning of solar and EV upgrades. The aforementioned tasks have been reviewed for the sites listed below:

- 1) City of Ellensburg Solar Park, a fenced in area comprised of an existing solar array
- 2) City of Ellensburg Rotary Park parking lot, a previously disturbed area used for public parking

Activities in Task 4 have only been reviewed for some sites, with some restrictions being placed on other sites. Individual home installation of AMI meters has been reviewed, as well as installation on any existing high point or the

Water Tower at Craig's Hill. Task 4 has not been reviewed for any installation of a new tower or high point. If a new tower or similar structure would be required for AMI installation, a subsequent NEPA review would be required to review the location.

The Solar Park site would undergo a replacement of existing panels and installation of 200 kilowatts of new PV panels. Replacement and new installation would occur within a fenced in area measuring roughly three acres in size. The site is currently using $\frac{3}{4}$ of the three acres, and this award would develop the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre. A new framing structure would be installed to house the new PV panels, but no adverse effects are anticipated by the replacement and expansion of the Solar Park.

The Rotary Park site would consist of installing EV charging stations on the existing parking lot pavement. Ground disturbing activities would include the installation of foundations and tying the EVs into the existing electrical grid. A majority of the site has been previously disturbed, and the EV charging stations would be installed adjacent to existing hardscape and underground utilities. Approximately 50 square feet would be disturbed for foundation and trenching work. Due to the previously disturbed nature of the site and the fact that it is an actively managed site, no adverse effects are anticipated by the installation of EV charging stations at this site.

Individuals working on this project could be exposed to physical hazards. Existing corporate health and safety policies and procedures would be followed including employee training, proper protective equipment, engineering controls, and monitoring. Additional policies and procedures would be implemented as necessary if new health and safety risks are identified.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on sensitive resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature, and found no effects that would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Tasks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 for all sites.

Task 4 for homes, the Water Tower at Craig's Hill, or another preexisting high point.

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Task 4 for any new tower or similar structure that would be constructed to house the AMI system.

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)
Review completed by Alex Colling on 04/24/2024

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  **Electronically Signed By: Andrew Montano** _____ Date: 5/9/2024
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager