SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEDURES

STEP 1. Request application and discuss circumstances with staff (see the following page for more specific information).

Application Deadline: _____

Public Hearing Date: _____

County Board Date: _____

STEP 2. File application by the above noted deadline. An application includes the following:

a. A completed application form with the required filing fee
b. A complete site sketch listing all applicable distances, setbacks or other necessary measurements
c. For shoreland requests, septic system certification is required. (Note: Noncompliant septic systems are required to be upgraded regardless of the outcome of the planning commission proceedings).

STEP 3. Processing (completed by the Environmental Services staff, with the exception of plats):

a. Public hearing notice sent to the local paper and to the official County paper, the Cold Spring Record
b. Notification of affected property owners:
   -Plats - property owners within ½ mile
   -Rezoning - property owners within ½ mile
   -Conditional Use/Interim Use Permits - property owners within ¼ mile
c. Staff reviews application and generates a staff report
d. Mailing of information packets to the members of the Commission, and
e. Mailing of agenda and staff report to applicants

STEP 4. Staff and Planning Commission members will enter the property to perform needed inspections and review the application. All have county-issued badges. Entry may be without prior notice

STEP 5. Planning Commission conducts hearings on plats, rezonings and conditional and interim use permits on the third Thursday of the month unless otherwise stated.

It is recommended that the applicant(s) or their representative attend the hearing to answer any questions the Commission may have. The Commission will base its decision on the information presented and public testimony. Failure to have representation may result in the continuation of the item to the next meeting.

Actions of the Planning Commission are as follows:

- ✓ **Plats** are recommendations to the County Board, and will follow final plat requirements.
- ✓ **Rezonings, Conditional and Interim Use Permits** are also recommendations and will be submitted to the County Board of Commissioners generally at their next meeting. Any item may be continued or tabled by the Planning Commission. If the item is continued, the Planning Commission will state when the item is continued to (either the next meeting or a specified date). There will be no additional notification on continued items.

Step 6. The Stearns County Board of Commissioners will consider this request at their next Board meeting. Interim Use Permits and Conditional Use Permits will be placed on the consent agenda which is heard at the beginning of the agenda. To inquire how to request an item be placed under the regular agenda for discussion, please contact the Department. If the Board of Commissioners do not concur with the Planning Commission, they will hold another public hearing and new notice will be sent.

STEP 7. All conditional and interim use permits are recorded with the property deed in the County Recorder's Office. If the conditional use permit is denied, notice will be sent to the applicant(s) via mail.

STEP 8. Once the proceedings for conditional and interim use permits are recorded, a copy will be sent to the applicant(s) via mail.

Applicant _____ Parcel # _____

_____

CONDITIONAL/INTERIM USE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Completed Application with the signature of the property owner and applicant.
- ☐ Fee $ (_____)
- ☐ Septic Certification (1) If the project is located in Shoreland Overlay District; or 2) If there is an expansion of use of the building being served by the SSTS or a change in use of the property being served by the SSTS either of which may impact the performance of the system).
- ☐ Jurisdictional Determination Letter from Department of Labor and Industry is required for Places of Public Accommodation.

  Contact: _____
- ☐ Building plans, to include existing and proposed additions and structures, including views of the front, rear, and sides of the project. Structures and facilities may be required to meet the Handicap Accessibility Code portion of the State Building Code, Minnesota Rules, chapter 1341. Accessibly review fee required. Cost to be determined based on project value. Project value $ _____.
- ☐ Impervious lot coverage calculation worksheet or a certificate of survey showing the impervious lot coverage calculation.
- ☐ Proposed stormwater management and erosion control plan and fee, when required by Sections 7.10 and 7.25 of Zoning Ordinance #439. Fee $ (_____)
- ☐ Site plan with the following information. All information checked must be provided. The proposed project shall be staked out prior to submitting the application to Environmental Services.
  - ☐ Location of all existing and proposed structures, their dimensions and setbacks from lot lines, road, the ordinary high water level, septic system and other structures.
  - ☐ Existing and proposed driveway, access road (s), off-street parking & sidewalks.
  - ☐ Location of septic system with setbacks related to the request, any wells and, when relevant, the location of neighboring wells.
  - ☐ Parking areas including number of spaces.
  - ☐ Sign location and dimensions-existing and proposed.
  - ☐ Outdoor Display Areas- existing and proposed.
  - ☐ Outdoor Storage Areas-existing and proposed.
  - ☐ Traffic circulation arrows.
  - ☐ Fencing and screening-existing and proposed.

  Other:
  - ☐ _____
  - ☐ _____

APPLICATION FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT
Wind Energy Conversion Systems
Meteorological Towers

Stearns County Environmental Services Department
http://co.stearns.mn.us/Environment/LandUseandSubdivision
Stearns County Service Center - 3301 County Rd 138 - Waite Park, MN 56387
320-656-3613 or 1-800-450-0852

Application Fee: $ _____ File No. _____ Receipt No. _____

Property Owner _____ Phone _____

Property Owner Email _____

Address of Property _____

Mailing Address _____

Applicant (if different from above) _____ Phone _____

Applicant Email _____

Applicant Mailing Address _____

Parcel I.D. Number(s) _____ Township _____ Section _____

Legal Description _____

The following must be submitted with the completed application:

A) Site plan showing lot lines, locations of buildings on the site and adjacent properties, applicable setbacks, location of the proposed WECS or MT and guy wires, poles, or anchors, access roads, and the location of wetlands, scenic and natural areas and shoreland within 1320 feet of the proposed WECS
B) Analysis of the impact of the proposed WECS on the ability of adjoining property owners to site a WECS on their property
C) For WECS 40kw or more, documentation that the applicant notified all communication tower operators within 5 miles of the proposed WECS location and that the proposed WECS will minimize or mitigate interference with electromagnetic communications
D) Power purchase contracts (for WECS over 40kw)
E) Manufacturer's description of all equipment
F) An acoustical analysis
G) Decommissioning plan
H) Description of potential impacts on nearby WECS and communication equipment
I) Engineering certification

Zoning District _____ Section of Ordinance _____

Staff to Complete
Overlay Districts
☐ Floodplain ☐ Airport ☐ Conservation Overlay
☐ Shoreland: Water Body Name/Number _____ Classification _____

1. Detailed Description of Request (including the kilowatt of the proposed tower) _____

_____

2. Engineer's Name/License Number _____ Telephone # _____

Building and Setbacks (As shown on site plan)

3. Lot Size	_____	7. Blade Length	_____
4. Road ROW Setback	_____	8. Front (OHWL) Setback	_____
5. Road Centerline Setback	_____	9. Rear Setback	_____
6. Height of Tower	_____	10. Side Setbacks	

Applicant's Signature_____ Date_____

Property Owner's Signature _____ Date_____

Signature of this application authorizes Environmental Services Staff, Board of Adjustment and/or Planning Commission members, and County Board of Commissioners to enter upon the property to perform needed inspections and review. All have county-issued badges. Entry may be without prior notice.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? Staff will review your application and determine if the application is complete. If the application is complete, the application will be scheduled for a Public Hearing with the County Planning Commission who will recommend action to the County Board of Commissioners. It typically takes 2 months from the time a complete application is submitted until the County Board issues final approval or denial of the CUP.

Site Plan

Include the following on the site plan:

- ☐ Setbacks- Side Yard, Rear Yard, Road, Ordinary High Water Level, Wetlands
- ☐ Existing Structures
- ☐ Proposed Structures / Additions / Modifications
- ☐ Roads & Existing or Proposed Approaches
- ☐ Parking Areas & Driving Surfaces
- ☐ Existing & Proposed Fences or Screening
- ☐ Existing & Proposed Lighting
- ☐ Existing & Proposed Signage (on & off the building)
- ☐ Outdoor Sales, Display, or Storage Areas

LAND USE DECISION FACTORS

1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ALIGNMENT

This factor builds on an existing process used by decision makers to determine if a proposed project aligns with the County's Comprehensive Plan. This factor places a stronger ownership on the Townships, property owner or applicant to determine how the proposed project fits within the overall context of the Comprehensive Plan.

Directions: Select the Goal statements and Focus Areas that align with the proposed project.

AGRICULTURAL PILLAR

Stearns County's agricultural heritage is the root of our prosperity and identity. Through product diversity, innovation, and sustainable practices, we will enhance and promote the advancement of our agricultural economy.

GOALS

- ☐ Support agriculture as a desirable land use for the long term and facilitate diversification of the County's agricultural economy.
- ☐ Utilize sustainable practices to protect prime farmland and water quality for future generations.
- ☐ Retain areas with highly valued agricultural land or economically viable animal agriculture operations.
- ☐ Strive for and support higher farm profitability and family farm stability.
- ☐ Strengthen and retain areas with highly valued agricultural land or economically viable animal agriculture operations.
- ☐ Encourage cities to collaborate with the County on the review of animal agriculture issues in close proximity to boundaries or within orderly annexation areas.

FOCUS AREAS

- ☐ Agricultural Uses
- ☐ Crop/Product Diversification
- ☐ Animal Agriculture
- ☐ Clean Energy

LIVING PILLAR

Stearns County shares a broad set of values about ourselves and the place where we live. We will continue to embrace these diverse values by supporting a full range of housing choices that meets resident's needs at every stage of their lives, and ensure a healthy balance of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population with diverse needs.

GOALS

- ☐ Collaborate with cities and townships to maintain sustainable growth patterns that align with the Comprehensive Plan.
- ☐ Manage the impacts of growth and development on the County's rural character and natural resources.
- ☐ Support housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.
- ☐ Encourage new homes to be constructed in a sustainable manner, while including energy efficient technology and in accordance with state building code.
- ☐ Respect and preserve architectural, archaeological, and cultural history, while building on all residents' cultural assets to strengthen County cohesion.

FOCUS AREAS

- ☐ Transitional Areas
- ☐ Agricultural Residential Uses
- ☐ Rural Residential Uses
- ☐ Accessory Dwelling Units
- ☐ Workforce Housing
- ☐ Lakeshore Living

BUSINESS PILLAR

Stearns County will invest in economic development strategies that are rooted in our shared values, skills, and identity. This will require a balanced economy that supports our existing businesses, while attracting new business that encourages entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity.

GOALS

- [ ] Increase the County's regional prosperity by being globally competitive and a business-friendly region.
- [ ] Increase the value of County economic production by ensuring that operations sustain natural resources.
- [ ] Acknowledge tourism's economic value and the prospective contribution of this industry to both the diversity of the County economic base and the potential for growth.
- [ ] Enhance the ability of local retail and commercial business to sustain small cities and rural townsites.
- [ ] Continue to promote and encourage multi- jurisdictional partnerships and public-private partnerships that advance economic development opportunities.
- [ ] Support opportunities for rural businesses that are compatible with agricultural environments and residential neighborhoods.

FOCUS AREAS

- [ ] Rural Business
- [ ] Agritourism
- [ ] Artisan Agriculture
- [ ] Townsite Mixed Use
- [ ] Major Transportation Corridors
- [ ] Changing Economies
- [ ] Partnerships & Local Coordination

CONNECTIVITY PILLAR

Stearns County's infrastructure, facilities, and services play an important role in connecting the places where we live, work and play. We recognize the inherent responsibility in maintaining these systems in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner. Enhancing these systems will require public and private partnerships that strive to maintain our quality of life.

GOALS

- [ ] Develop and maintain a transportation system that promotes the safety, mobility, and access of all users.
- [ ] Coordinate infrastructure and service needs with development, and encourage development where the infrastructure and services are adequate to serve that growth.
- [ ] Strengthen our regional role in connecting rural and agricultural economies with metropolitan areas through reliable transportation networks.
- [ ] Deploy fast and reliable internet technologies that are equitable, affordable, and take advantage of existing infrastructure assets.
- [ ] Provide County infrastructure, services, and facilities that benefit the residents of the County in a cost-effective manner.
- [ ] Maintain a state of readiness to meet natural, man-made, and technological disasters on a local or countywide basis.

FOCUS AREAS

- [ ] Transportation Networks
- [ ] County Resources
- [ ] Internet Connectivity
- [ ] Sustainability & Resiliency

NATURE PILLAR

Stearns County recognizes the inherent values of the natural environment and connecting people to nature. We are committed to providing recreational opportunities, while recognizing the value of natural resource protection, restoration, and preservation. This will require sustainable practices that balance growth between urban and rural communities.

GOALS

- [ ] Preserve, restore, and protect important natural systems and natural resources.
- [ ] Ensure the reasonable and responsible use of the County's natural resources, including land, surface and ground water, minerals, open space, wetlands, wildlife, and woodlands.
- [ ] Recognize the significance of water resources in the County and ensure the creation and implementation of policies to manage stormwater in collaboration with land use and development.
- [ ] Protect the County's aggregate resources and provide for reasonable economic use of aggregate.
- [ ] Partner with cities, townships, adjoining counties and state agencies to broaden the potential pool for park acquisition and improvement.
- [ ] Provide park and open space areas throughout the County to meet the active and passive recreational needs of current and future residents.
- [ ] Provide a regional trail system in order to support a variety of recreational activities, offer alternative transportation modes, and support tourism and economic development initiatives

FOCUS AREAS

- [ ] Water Resources
- [ ] Natural System Corridors
- [ ] Aggregate Resources
- [ ] Future Parkland Planning
- [ ] Operations and Management
- [ ] Funding

4 FACTOR FOUR
FUTURE LAND USE CRITERIA

This factor applies development standards and criteria to the Future Land Use categories (see Factor 2). This approach helps convey preferred land use patterns and expectations to minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses and natural resources.

Depending on the location of the proposed project, it may be required to address more than one land use criteria. For example, a proposed project may be located in an Agricultural/Rural Area and along a Major Transportation Corridor.

Directions: Select (check the boxes) of the design standards the proposed project is using under its future land use criteria (see Factor 2). More than one future land use category may apply.

AGRICULTURAL/ RURAL AREAS: RESIDENTIAL USE

- ☐ The project has taken the LESA score into consideration and has taken the appropriate steps to preserving prime farmland soils for future agricultural activities.
- ☐ Through good conservation oriented site design practices and principles, the site is able to protect and preserve significant natural resources and agricultural areas.
- ☐ The project can be designed to minimize potential conflicts with agricultural uses (agricultural uses take precedent).
- ☐ Proposed projects creating multiple residential lots should employ standards to minimize impacts on agricultural land.

AGRICULTURAL/ RURAL AREAS: BUSINESS USE

- ☐ The project enhances the agricultural community.
- ☐ The project can be designed to minimize impacts to adjacent land uses.
- ☐ Through good conservation oriented site design practices and principles, the site is able to protect and preserve significant natural resources and agricultural areas.
- ☐ The project utilizes existing buildings and/or structures.
- ☐ The project's owner or operator lives on-site.
- ☐ The project has demonstrated that it will not alter the rural character.

TRANSITIONAL AREAS

- ☐ The project minimizes potential conflicts between urban and rural land uses.
- ☐ The project is logically connected to existing development; zoning districts shall be identified to prevent leapfrog or isolated development within contiguous land use districts.
- ☐ The delivery of other government services (i.e. fire, police, public works, and public education) have been consulted and the County is satisfied that the development can be serviced under existing or planned programming levels.
- ☐ Through good conservation oriented site design practices and principles, the project is able to protect and preserve natural resources.
- ☐ The project has been coordinated and aligned with the City and/or Township plans for future growth.

TOWNSITE MIXED USE

- [ ] The project fits the surrounding areas character and takes into consideration its historical context.
- [ ] The project promotes a positive image of the community through design principles (e.g., building materials and landscaping) that convey the area as an attractive place for visitors and prospective businesses.
- [ ] The project provides housing options or job opportunities that support local and regional economic development goals for future growth.

CONCENTRATED RESIDENTIAL

- [ ] The project can be designed to minimize impacts to adjacent land uses.
- [ ] If the project is located near a water body, it can be designed to restore or preserve shoreland.
- [ ] The project is logically connected to existing development.
- [ ] Through good conservation oriented site design practices and principles, the site is able to protect and preserve significant natural resources and agricultural areas.
- [ ] The project can be designed to easily address sewer system requirements.

MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

- [ ] The project demonstrates a transition between commercial uses and residential or agriculture uses including retaining existing features of the landscape as defining elements of site design (fence rows, ditches, wetlands, woods).
- [ ] The project promotes a positive image of the community through design principles (e.g., building materials and landscaping) that convey the corridor as an attractive place for visitors and prospective businesses.
- [ ] The project has met the roadway's access management guidelines.
- [ ] The project has taken the appropriate steps to mitigate traffic impacts.

Planning Commission Public Hearing Procedures

1) Prior to the first public hearing, the Planning Commission Chair will briefly explain the public hearing process and the steps the Commission will take in making their decisions on applications. Commission members, any member of the public, the applicant and staff should endeavor at all times to be respectful and understanding of one another during this entire public hearing.

2) For each application, the Chair will first declare the public hearing to be open and then request the applicant to come forward and state their name.

3) Next, the Chair will call on the Environmental Services Department staff to give a summary of the application and provide pertinent information regarding the property and the applicant's request. Following the summary, the Chair will allow the applicant an opportunity to add any additional information in regards to the request.

4) The next step will be for the Chair to allow members of the public to state their position in regard to the application. Speakers should first state their name for the record. Comments should be limited to issues directly related to the request and be presented in a manner that is respectful to the Commission, the applicant, staff and others present at the hearing. If an item is particularly controversial and entails considerable discussion, the Chair may ask that positions not be repeated and that only new information be presented. If the public has questions of the applicant or staff, those questions must be directed through the Chair in order to maintain order and provide proper protocol for the meeting. At anytime the Commission may ask questions of the applicant, staff, or the public.

5) Following the conclusion of all public testimony, the Chair will call for a motion to close the public hearing. Once the public hearing is closed, only the Commission members may ask clarifying questions of the applicant or staff. During this time, the applicant and/or the public may not make any further comments or testimony unless directed to do so by the Chair. This is an opportunity for the Commission to discuss the request and testimony among themselves and begin to frame their individual positions on the merits of the application.

6) Once it appears that all issues have been discussed and questions have been asked by the Commission members, the Chair will direct the Commission members to proceed with making their Findings of Fact. This is a formal process in which the Chair will read through a series of questions aimed at determining whether or not the request and testimony presented meet the intent of the comprehensive plan and all applicable ordinance requirements. Following the completion of the Findings of Fact, the Chair will call for a motion in support of or in denial of the request. The motion passed must be supported by the evidence in the Commission's Findings of Fact. For conditional use permits, interim use permits, plats and rezoning applications, the motion made by the Commission will be a recommendation of approval or denial to the County Board of Commissioners. At a later date, the County Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on these requests.

7) Applicants for a conditional use permit, interim use permit, rezoning, or plat will receive written notice of the Commission's decision within one week of the public hearing.