

PPRP's Fact Sheet – Perennial Solar, Washington County

PSC Case Number 9408

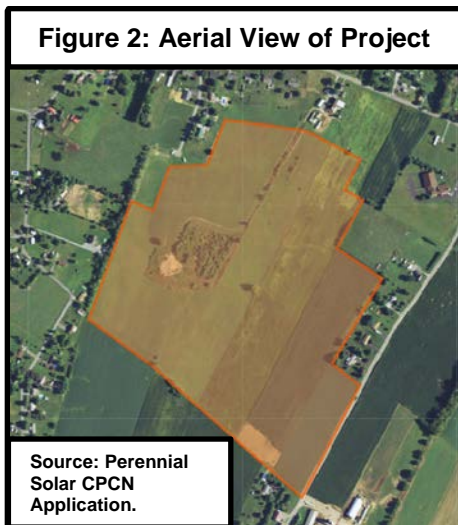
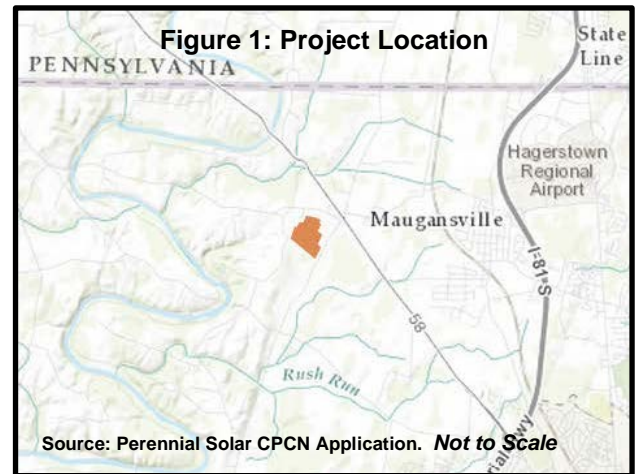
Manager: Shawn Seaman

Last updated 28 August 2017

Project Overview:

Perennial Solar, LLC (a subsidiary of Community Energy, LLC) has filed for a CPCN to construct and operate an 8 MW solar array in Washington County (Figure 1). The Project will occupy a 70 acre portion of 2 parcels totaling 86 acres and will be located approximately one quarter mile from the unincorporated community of Cearfoss. Project components include:

- 34,000 photovoltaic (PV) modules mounted on a fixed tilt racking system;
- 8 power centers with DC to AC power inverters, medium voltage transformers; and
- Associated interconnection equipment.



Site Description

The Project will occupy two land parcels: a 67.55-acre parcel containing an occupied residence 180 feet from the Project boundary and an 18.55-acre parcel of undeveloped agricultural land. The entire Project outline is shown in Figure 2. The Applicant has entered into separate long-term leases with each property owner to construct and operate the Project. Both properties are zoned Agricultural (Rural) District and 32% of the Project area is classified as Prime Farmland. The Applicant applied for and was granted a special exception for the Project by the Washington County Board of Zoning in November 2015.

The Project will connect to the local grid through a direct line tap on the 34.5 kV Halfway-Milnor circuit located on Greencastle Pike, east of the Project site. Surrounding land uses include a mixture of agricultural, residential, industrial, and commercial uses.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- The Project area does not include forests, but does include individual trees. Initial project plans indicate that these will be removed.
- There are no records of rare, threatened or endangered species at the Property. PPRP has made the following recommendations with regard to providing for wildlife habitat as part of the Project:
 - Restrict mowing during the nesting season for ground-nesting birds (May-August);
 - Establish and maintain potential wildlife habitat following construction by planting areas around and between solar panels with warm-season grasses; and
 - Follow Washington County Soil Conservation District guidance to establish and maintain vegetation.
- A drainage swale in the southern portion of the Project area was identified as a sensitive area. PPRP has recommended a license condition that the Applicant continue to consult with the County with regard to construction in this area.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Project is expected to create 30-50 temporary design, management, and construction jobs.
- Economic benefits to the State and county will be primarily in the form of corporate income taxes, income taxes from lease payments to landowners, and personal property

tax revenues. PPRP estimates that business personal property taxes from the Project could be \$100,000 in the first year, declining to \$40,000 in Year 20.

- The Project will displace approximately 70 acres of agricultural land use, but will not affect land use on surrounding properties.

Transportation

- Construction worker traffic and truck traffic for delivery of equipment will not affect the level of service on roads near the Project.
- Some vehicles for equipment delivery may be oversize and/or overweight.
- The closest airport to the project is the Hagerstown Regional Airport, about 2.5 miles away. PPRP conducted an independent assessment of glare upon glide paths into the airport's two primary runways. The results predicted glare on the outer part of one of the two glide paths. This glare would be of relatively short duration and would only be expected in the early evening of spring and summer months. PPRP has recommended a license condition requiring the Applicant to provide confirmation to the PSC and PPRP that the Project is in compliance with state and federal standards and notifications with regard to aviation prior to beginning construction.

Visual impacts

- The Applicant has indicated that landscape buffers will surround the Project.
- PPRP has concluded that landscape buffers that satisfy Washington County design standards, including those negotiated during Site Plan review, will mitigate most views of the Project from adjoining public roads and properties.
- The Project will not create substantial light if its lighting plan satisfies Washington County's exterior lighting requirements.
- Modeling of glare trespass onto surrounding properties indicates the potential for glare trespass onto properties east and west of the Project in the early evening or morning, respectively during the spring and summer months. The model does not take into account landscape buffering, which is expected to mitigate glare trespass. PPRP recommends a license condition requiring the Applicant to document and address complaints related to potential solar reflections.

Cultural & Aesthetic

- There are no properties on the National Register of Historic Places <1 mile from the Site. There are several properties on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties <1 mile from the Project. The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has concluded that the Project will not adversely impact historical properties.
- The archeological potential of the Project area is low due to past agricultural activity.
- The Project is not within any Maryland Certified Heritage Area and no Maryland Scenic Byways bypass the Project.
- Several bike routes use the same roads that will be used by construction traffic. PPRP has recommended a license condition to protect the safety of cyclists.

Other

- PPRP has recommended license conditions requiring the Project to be designed, installed, and maintained in conformance with relevant National Fire Protection Association guidance; and requiring the Applicant to contact local emergency responders to: establish points of contact, facilitate emergency vehicle access, create a protocol to identify system components requiring special attention during emergencies, and develop standard operating procedures for emergencies.

CPCN Status

- CPCN Application filed on 12/1/15.
- A Notice of Procedural Schedule was filed on 12/23/15. This schedule was suspended on 3/16/16.
- Applicant Direct testimony was filed on 1/26/16
- For more current information, see: <http://www.psc.state.md.us/>

