Note:
This summary was last updated on
May 29, 2024
For current information, follow this link:
PSC Docket Case #9725

Chaberton Pine Rock
1151 Sullivan Road, Westminster, MD 21157
(Carroll County)
PSC Case #9725

PPRP Case Manager: Shawn Seaman

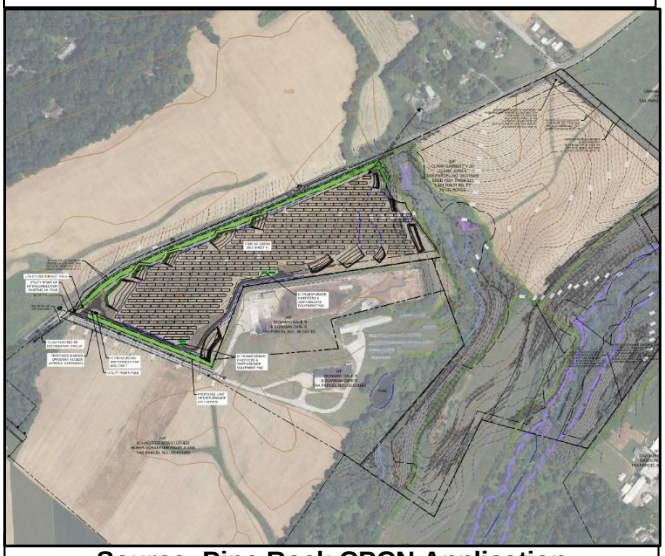
Note:
This summary is based on information provided in the CPCN Application filed with the PSC on **Feb. 23, 2024,** and the supplemental filing on April 2, 2024, which are subject to change and have not yet been fully reviewed by PPRP.

CPCN Timeline
CPCN Application filed on February 23, 2024
Applicant's Filed Direct Testimony Due: June 21, 2024
1st Public Hearing (Virtual): Week of June 24, 2024
Intervenors' Direct Testimony Due: October 3, 2024
2nd Public Hearing: October 8, 9, or 10, 2024
Settlement Status Update: October 18, 2024
PSC Evidentiary Hearing (if settlement is reached): October 23, 2024

Project Location:

The Pine Rock 3.0 MW AC Solar Project (Project) will be located on a portion of a larger property totaling 74 acres in Westminster, Maryland (Figure 1) in Carroll County. Google Map Link. Per the Applicant, the approximate limit of disturbance (LOD) for the Project will be 18 acres.

Figure 1. Project Location



Source: Pine Rock CPCN Application

Project Overview:

Chaberton Solar Pine Rock, LLC (Applicant) has applied for a CPCN to construct a 3.0 MW AC solar array in Carroll County.

Project components include:

- Approximately 8,784 photovoltaic (PV) modules mounted on a fixed tilt post-supported rack system;
- Interconnection equipment to an existing 13.2kV feeder line which connects to BGE's existing Westminster substation;
- String inverters;
- Two power centers, each containing a medium voltage transformer, where the string inverters will be aggregated.

Site Description

The parcel that includes the Project site consists of agricultural fields, forests, and the landowner's primary residence. Surrounding land uses include forest, agricultural, and other residential and commercial structures. Directly to the south of the site is a commercial mulch and landscaping facility. The Applicant's Environmental Review Document (ERD) notes that the Project site is zoned as agricultural and Carroll County currently does not permit community solar projects on agriculturally zoned land.

The Project is a Community Solar Energy Generating System and will deliver all of its output to subscribers via the Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE) electric distribution grid. At the time of its CPCN Application submittal, the Applicant was approved as a subscriber organization by the PSC for 3MW AC and BGE conditionally approved the Applicant's interconnection application.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- The Applicant's ERD states that there is 0.20 acres of wetland on the parcel and five streams including Cranberry Branch. However, all wetlands and streams will be avoided. The Project design will incorporate a 25-foot buffer from all wetlands and a 50-foot buffer that extends from the stream limits and will comply with Carroll County Stormwater Management and MDE Environmental Site Design guidelines.
- No forested areas are within the Project site and no tree clearing is currently planned.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- There are no existing conservation easements or restrictive covenants on the site. The site is not in the Critical Area.
- The Project is located within a Tier II High Quality Water catchment area. MDE determined that the Project will have minimal effects on the Tier II stream segment and will not require additional Tier II Antidegradation Review. Natural drainage patterns will largely be maintained to mimic existing hydrology.
- Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife and Heritage Service did not identify any State or federal sensitive species of concern in the vicinity of the Project area.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) identified the Northern Long-eared Bat as a species that could be affected by the Project but since no tree clearing is proposed the applicant believes impacts to the Northern long-eared bat are unlikely. USFWS has determined there are no critical habitats within the Project area.
- The Applicant intends to apply for the Pollinator-Friendly Solar Designation.

Noise Impacts

- The Applicant's ERD states that the nearest residential property is 600 feet away from the inverter/transformer pads and the nearest commercial facility is directly south of the property approximately 200 feet away.

Visual Impacts

- The Applicant indicates the panel arrays will be enclosed and protected using a 7-foot-tall fence.
- The Applicant has proposed a 25-foot vegetative buffer along the northern, western and eastern borders of the site. The buffer will include evergreen trees, deciduous trees, and shrubs.

Cultural Resource Impacts

- The Applicant has corresponded with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) which has determined that the Project would have no effect on historic properties.

Public Safety and Transportation

- The Applicant states that the Federal Aviation Administration notice criteria tool indicated that the site does not exceed the notice criteria.
- The Applicant states the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) responded that the Project is located outside of the boundary limits that would require an airport zoning permit.
- The Applicant states that the entrance to the Project site will be from Sullivan Road.
- The Applicant does not anticipate that the Project will require any overweight or oversize load permits. If road damage occurs onsite, it will be resurfaced. Any damage to County roads will be restored in accordance with County requirements and standards.
- The Applicant's ERD states that during the construction period, large materials and equipment will be transported to staging areas on tractor-trailers and offloaded by construction vehicles. However, the Applicant anticipates that personnel vehicles will comprise most daily construction traffic. During operation, traffic will mostly be limited to maintenance crews for seasonal mowing and vegetation maintenance as well as maintenance for any operational issues.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Applicant estimates that the Project will create 36 direct jobs and 26 indirect jobs during construction and installation. For the next first five years the project will create less than one direct indirect jobs.
- The Applicant indicates that the Project represents a capital investment of approximately $13.1 million.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided

- The Applicant indicates that the Project would remove 4,464 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions by using renewable energy.