Note:
This summary was last updated on
October 7, 2024
For current information, follow this link:
PSC Docket Case #9726

Chaberton Sugarloaf
20507 Darnestown Road
Dickerson, Maryland 20842
(Montgomery County)
PSC Case #9726

PPRP Case Manager: Supida Piwkhow

Note:
This summary is based on information provided in the CPCN Application filed with the PSC on **March 4, 2024,** and the supplemental filing on April 4, 2024, all of which are subject to change and have not yet been fully reviewed by PPRP.

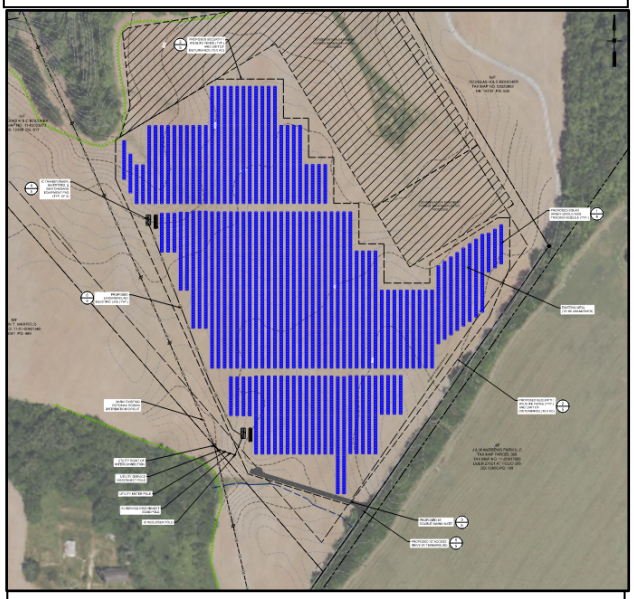
CPCN Timeline

CPCN Application filed on March 4, 2023
Applicant's Filed Direct Testimony Due: June 19, 2024
1st Public Hearing (Virtual): June 25, 2024
Intervenors' Direct Testimony Due: January 24, 2025
2nd Public Hearing: February 4, 2025
Settlement Status Update: February 7, 2025
PSC Evidentiary Hearing (if settlement is reached): February 11, 2025

Project Location:

The Sugarloaf 4.0 MW AC Solar Project (Project) will be located on a 52.7-acre parcel in Dickerson, Maryland (Figure 1) in Montgomery County. Google Map Link. Per the Applicant, the approximate limit of disturbance (LOD) for the Project will be 16 acres.

Figure 1. Project Location



Source: Sugarloaf CPCN Application

Project Overview:

Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf I LLC (Applicant) has applied for a CPCN to construct a 4.0 MW AC solar array in Montgomery County.

Project components include:

- 10,800 photovoltaic (PV) modules ground-mounted on a single-axis tracking rack system;
- Interconnection equipment: connection via an extension of the 34.5 kV Feeder line to Potomac Edison's Aqueduct-Beallsville Substation;
- String inverters; and
- Two power centers, each containing a medium voltage transformer and a central inverter station, where the string inverters will be aggregated.

Site Description

The parcel that comprises the Project site was historically used for farming practices and consists of open agricultural fields. Approximately 77.1 percent of the Limits of Construction (LOC) is considered prime farmland. The Property is primarily undeveloped agricultural land and bordered by undeveloped forest land. The landowners have voluntarily put a portion of the parcel into a forest conservation easement. There are some residences nearby, but mostly beyond view due to topography and/or natural vegetation. The Project parcel is located within an Agricultural Reserve Zoning. A commercial solar facility is not a permitted use in the Agricultural Reserve with Class I/II soils. However, the Applicant is discussing the use of agrivoltaics for the project with the County in order to maintain the agricultural use of the land.

The Project is a Community Solar Energy Generating System and will deliver all of its output to subscribers via the Potomac Edison electric distribution grid. At the time of its CPCN Application submittal, the Applicant was approved as a subscriber organization by the PSC for 4MW AC and the Potomac Edison interconnection agreement had been executed.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- According to the Applicant's Environmental Review Document (ERD), there are no existing forested areas within the proposed Project area.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- The Applicant consulted with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service (DNR-WHS), and DNR-WHS indicated that they have no official records for State or Federal listed, candidate, proposed, or rare plant or animal species within the project area.
- The Applicant coordinated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) which has determined there will be "no effect" to the Northern Long-eared Bat and that there are no critical habitats within the Project area.
- The Applicant intends to apply for the Pollinator-Friendly Solar Designation.
- The Project drains to a tributary, Little Monocacy River, of the Potomac River, which is listed as one of Maryland's Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Applicant included a letter from DNR's Land Acquisition and Planning Unit stating that the Project will have no adverse effect on the scenic quality of the Potomac.
- The Property contains several unnamed streams which are unnamed tributaries to the Little Monocacy River. These streams are located outside of the Project area and streams were buffered from project development by a minimum of one hundred (100) feet. Wetlands adjacent to the site are buffered by a 25-foot nontidal wetland buffer.
- The Project is not located in a Critical Area and is not upstream of Tier II stream segments.
- The Applicant states that the site is entirely located within DNR Focal Areas. A forest conservation easement is on the parcel adjacent to the Project area.
- The ERD states that the Project impervious areas will be limited to those associated with equipment pads for mechanical and electrical equipment.

Noise Impacts

- The Applicant will apply for a Temporary Noise Waiver with Montgomery County in conjunction with building permits for the use of pile driving equipment.
- The Applicant's ERD states that the proposed DC to AC inverters have the most potential for noise production during solar facility operation. The Applicant's ERD states that the closest residential dwelling is more than 500 feet away from a proposed equipment pad.

Visual Impacts

- The Applicant proposes to enclose the Project with a 7-foot-tall security fence.
- The Applicant states the existing trees and vegetation onsite provides adequate screening of the project.
- The Applicant states that the Project is not located near any major airports. Additionally, The Applicant utilized the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) 2013 Policy Adherence component (FAA Notice Criteria Tool) and the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) Project Locator to determine that the Project location does not exceed notice criteria, is not within an Airport Zoning District, and no further action is required.

Cultural Resource Impacts

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

Public Safety and Transportation

- The Applicant states that to the extent possible, construction traffic will minimize land disturbance within the LOC and existing roadway disturbance and damage will be avoided.
- The Applicant's ERD states during construction, large materials and equipment will be transported to staging areas by tractor-trailers and offloaded by construction vehicles. During operation, traffic will mostly be limited to 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 48 design, management, and construction jobs during the construction period and 0.7 operation and maintenance jobs post-construction.
- The Applicant indicates that the Project includes a capital cost of approximately up to 13 million, has a tax revenue yield of approximately 2.5 million, and a tangible financial benefit of approximately 8.3 million overall.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided

- The Applicant indicates that the Project will displace approximately 7,807 tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the course of its useful life.