

Note:
This summary was last updated on
July 28, 2021
For current information, follow this link:
[PSC Docket Case #9635](#)

New Market Solar
Near: 5806 Thompsonstown Road,
East New Market, MD 21631
(Dorchester County)
[PSC Case Number 9635](#)
PPRP Manager: Ginny Rogers

Note:
This summary is based on
information provided in the CPCN
Application dated **February 14, 2020**
which is subject to change and has
not yet been fully reviewed by PPRP

*This summary does **not** reflect
Project Plan changes that are
expected to be presented in
Applicant Supplemental Testimony,
due on **August 13, 2021**.*

CPCN Timeline

CPCN Application filed on February 14, 2020
Applicant's Filed Direct Testimony: June 19, 2020
1st Public Hearing: Date, Time, and Location June 3, 2020
Procedural Schedule Suspended: June 26, 2020; Adopted New Schedule: July 23, 2021
Applicant's Supplemental Direct Testimony Due August 13, 2021
Intervener's Direct Testimony Due: Date November 17, 2021
2nd Public Hearing: Date, Time, and Location November 30, 2021)
PSC's Evidentiary Hearing: Date 9 December, 2021

Project Location:

The Project will occupy approximately 286 acres across 4 parcels that total 619 acres located near 5806 Thompsonstown Road southeast of East New Market (Figure 1). [Google Map Link](#)

Project Overview:

New Market Solar, LLC has filed for a [CPCN](#) to construct a 50 MW solar array.

Project components include:

- Approximately 176,848 photovoltaic (PV) modules mounted on a single-axis tracking racking system (height and spacing of panels will be determined in the final design);
- 15 inverter pads;
- Underground connection to East New Market 69 kV Substation and other interconnection equipment; and
- Expansion of the existing 69 kV bus and substation property to a ring bus configuration with 5 terminals.

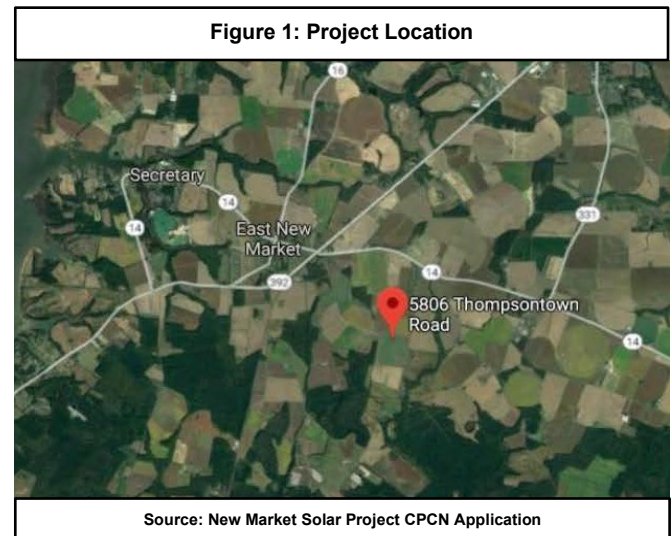


Figure 2: Design Concept and Solar Array Layout



Source: CPCN Application (Not to scale)

Site Description

The Project site currently consists of agricultural fields surrounded by wooded areas and has been farmed for conventional agricultural crops for several decades. A well pump house, transformer, and irrigation system are located in the approximate center of the Project site.

All four parcels are zoned Agricultural Conservation District (AC). Utility-scale solar is a permitted use within AC sites, provided that the Board of Zoning Appeals grants a Conditional Use Approval for the Project.

Impact Assessment Highlights

Biological

- The Project is not located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.
- The Project is located within the headwaters drainage area of the Transquaking River watershed and runoff from the facility will flow into the River and then to the Chesapeake Bay.

Biology (cont.)

- The Application states that MDE has determined that there are no jurisdictional waters within the Project boundary.
- Wetland areas are present within the Project parcels. The Application states that the Project will avoid these areas with a 35-foot setback.
- The Project will include 6 waterway crossings, 5 of these already exist and will need only non-waterway modifications; 1 of the crossings will require installation of a culvert within the waterway.
- The Project lies upstream of the Linkwood Wildlife Management Area.
- The Forest Stand Delineation Report attached to the Application, indicates that there are 4 forest stands, totaling approximately 62 acres within the four parcels that make up the Project site. The Application states that these areas will be avoided during Project construction.
- The Wildlife Heritage Service (WHS) indicates that one species In Need of Conservation (Delmarva fox squirrel) is known to occur in the vicinity of the Project site. The letter from WHS included in the Application also indicates that the forested portions of the Project site may contain Forest Interior Dwelling Bird Habitat.

Economic and Fiscal

- The Project is expected to create approximately 200-400 temporary design, management, and construction jobs.
- The Project represents a capital investment of approximately \$50 million.
- The Application states that project construction is expected to last 6 – 8 months.

Land Use

- Surrounding land uses are agricultural, single family homes and a church and cemetery.
- Part of one project parcel is within East New Market's municipal growth area.
- Perimeter areas of one parcel are protected by a DNR conservation easement.

Transportation

- Construction traffic will include deliveries of materials and heavy equipment via tractor-trailer, as well as daily traffic consisting of cars, trucks, and other personnel vehicles.
- Interconnection will require installation of utility lines under Richardson Road via directional drilling.
- During operation, traffic will be limited to quarterly to yearly maintenance and inspection crews.

Visual Impacts

- The Project will be secured with a 6-ft high chain link fence.
- The proposed array layout will maintain a 150' setback from road frontages and property lines not internal to the project.
- In addition to the tree cover that will be left in place at the Project site, the Application states that a landscape/buffer plan will be prepared for the Project and reviewed by Dorchester County Planning & Zoning.
- Adjacent residential properties will be screened from the project by a 50' landscaped strip.
- The project will not emit glare on nearby properties or public roads.

Cultural & Aesthetic

- The MHT determined that a Phase I Archaeological survey was not required for the Project.
- The Applicant has contacted the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT). MHT requested Determination of Eligibility Forms for 4225 East New Market-Rhodesdale Rd. and 5896 Thompsonstown Rd. The Applicant provided the DOE Forms on 28 May 2019. MHT's response indicates no adverse effect on historic properties.

Public Service Impacts

- Water and sewer utilities will not be used for the Project.

County Permitting, Public Involvement, Legal Challenges

- The Applicant applied for a Special Exception from the County's Board of Appeals (BOA) on June 5, 2020.
- The BOA held a public hearing on the Project on December 3, 2020. During the hearing, the BOA convened a closed session, after which it announced it would table the application until the County Council provided new policy on solar projects via a new comprehensive plan.
- Since the BOA hearing, the Applicant is coordinating with representatives of the County government and local elected officials to refine the site plans in efforts to secure local approval. These refinements have included increases to buffers, setbacks, screening, etc. to address comments presented by the public during the BOA hearing.