March 11, 2025

Responses to Public Engagement Questions

PLANAPP-2024-01794: LUB Text Amendment to allow for a Solar Farm at PID40769598 (West Petpeswick)

1. **How many employees will be on site on a day-to-day basis during construction and while the solar farm is operational?**
   During construction, local teams will be hired for onsite work, creating 30-40 jobs, including construction workers and support staff. The most workers on site at one time will be approximately 15.

2. **How many vehicles will be present on a day-to-day basis during construction and while the solar farm is operational?**
   An estimated 5-10 trucks per day will be used for transporting materials and equipment at the start of construction. The delivery period will only last 2 weeks. **Construction will take approximately 3 months**. The maximum number of vehicles on-site at any given time will be around 15 passenger vehicles belonging to contractors.
   During operation:
   - Preventive maintenance: done twice a year; one vehicle on site
   - Corrective maintenance: Occasionally, dispatched only for major issues. Typically, this will involve one vehicle.

3. **What will the proposed layout of the site look like should the application be approved by council? Can you provide an amended site plan showing the intended layout should there be any changes?**
   Please attach the current site plan.
   Should application be approved, there would be no major change to the project in relation to location of the array, from what has already been shared with HRM and the public during our community engagement meetings in 2024. Site plan will be finalized after engineering in-depth studies, such as Detail System Impact Assessment with Nova Scotia Power and topographic studies, which will be conducted after Community Solar Contract is officially granted. The site plan may be adjusted based on the findings from the studies. The final site plan will be posted on website, link: https://www.airenewable.ca/community-solar/west-petpeswick-

solar-project/. Final site plan will also be provided to planning departments before construction.

4. **Why was this site chosen?**
   The site was chosen based on several factors:
   - Physical condition suitable for hosting a solar project (large, somewhat flat area).
   - Proper zoning (Mixed Use, allowing for solar development). Non-agricultural land.
   - Availability of the parcel for lease.
   - Passed preliminary assessment by NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) regarding impact to wildlife, archaeological, as well as preliminary topographic and geotechnical studies by third party engineering firm
   - Proximity to a 3-phase distribution line. 2.2 MW capacity is available from the existing distribution system to connect this solar project, so the solar system can generate clean energy to the NSPI grid.
   - Natural visual screening. The site is well hidden within the surrounding forest.

5. **What provisions are made to keep wildlife out/permit wildlife to continue to use the site?**
   The project size is 2.2MW, only using around 10 acres of land. The site will be fenced around the panels only, maintaining travel corridors around the project east and west. The natural vegetation and trees outside the solar area will remain unchanged, preserving the existing habitat and minimizing the impact on wildlife.

6. **Will there be any additional environmental reparations after the site is developed? (e.g., wildflower planting, tree planting elsewhere to offset the trees cut down for the solar farm)**
   The design choices and construction methods are aimed at disturbing the ground as little as possible after clearing. The goal is that the ground can re-vegetate as much as possible naturally once construction is complete. The grounds are then maintained to keep growth at a level below the lowest panels to prevent shading. Our experience following these practices has been positive. Wildflower and seeding of low growing native species is something that can be done to help the revegetation process along. We will hire local forestry companies to clear the trees, ensuring the wood is repurposed as needed.

7. **To what extent is tree cutting taking place?**
   The extent of tree clearing is to be limited to only that which is necessary within the array footprint, and access driveway. The development aims to disturb the existing environment as little as possible, and maintain natural visual barriers of undisturbed land.

8. **Have any other sites been investigated that might already be clear of trees and natural habitat?**
   Low impact site selection is always a main consideration in the site selection process. This site was chosen on several balanced suitability criteria, including topography, size, zoning, availability, proximity to necessary infrastructure, history of forestry and harvesting, and having cleared environmental screening. This site has passed preliminary screening of archaeological and wildlife studies conducted by CCTH. The project is not expected to have an impact on any species at risk including plants and animals, and no specific archeological risk factors were identified related to this site. This site was also clear cut about 20 years ago so we will not be impacting any old growth forest.

   We also investigated more than 10 sites and selected another 3, in addition to this one. 4 Projects are proposed to the Community solar program. Two are in CBRM and another one in Annapolis Valley.

9. **Have you been in contact with Transportation Canada regarding the Porters Lake Waterdrome and the proximity to the solar farm?**
   Porters Lake is a private water aerodrome managed by NAV Canada. In Nova Scotia and at the federal level, neither Transport Canada nor local regulations specify distance requirements for solar developments near aerodromes to guide project planning and engagement. Therefore, we have taken reference from Alberta Utility Commission (AUC) Rule 007. If the aerodrome is within 4kM of the Solar Project, it will require to complete a glare study and notification to the Aerodrome, however the Porters Lake Waterdrome is more than 12 kM away from the solar project.

   Additionally, our solar site in CBRM, which is similar in size, is located just 6.5 km from Sydney Airport. We reached out to NAV Canada notifying them of the subject project and they have no concerns onthe solar site. Given these factor, we did not contact Transport Canada or NAV Canada for this site (West Petpeswick), as we are confident that this development will not negatively affect operations at the Porters Lake Waterdrome.

10. **Is there any other information you might be able to share with the community to offer some more insight into the proposed project?**
    The project aims to support Nova Scotia's renewable energy goals, offering benefits like enhanced grid reliability, cost savings, as a low impact renewable energy development. If met with the approval of the Province, the project will be implemented in full compliance rules and regulations of the province of Nova Scotia and the municipality of HRM. For more information, we have attached our slide presentation, and the project website is https://www.airenewable.ca/community-solar/west-petpeswick-solar-project/.