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CS Energy

Somers Solar Community Engagement Plan

Town of Fort Edward, Washington County, New York

Prepared By:

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Abbreviations

AC	Alternating Current
CEP	Community Engagement Plan
CES	Clean Energy Standard
CLCPA	Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
DC	Direct Current
EPC	Engineering Procurement and Construction
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
GW	Gigawatt
kV	Kilovolt
MW	Megawatt
NYCRR	New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations
NYSDAM	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
NYISO	New York State Independent System Operator
NYP&A	New York Power Authority
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
NYSOPRHP	New York State Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation
NYSHPO	New York State Historic Preservation Office
PILOT	Payment In Lieu Of Taxes
PV	Photovoltaic
REC	Renewable Energy Credits
RFP	Request For Proposals
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Introduction

Somers Solar, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of CS Energy, LLC (“CS Energy”) is proposing to construct and operate a 20 MW-ac photovoltaic single-axis tracking solar energy generation facility (the project) in the Town of Fort Edward, Washington County, New York. CS Energy has extensive experience developing, designing, and constructing solar energy generation facilities in New York and neighboring states.

This Community Engagement Plan (Plan) is intended to provide general guidelines that the project will follow in the development process for engagement with project stakeholders. It demonstrates the types of public outreach efforts CS Energy has undertaken and expects to undertake to both properly inform community stakeholders about the project and seek feedback that may be relevant to the projects continued development process. CS Energy has and will continue to be committed to engaging with host communities and meeting or going beyond minimum requirements for community engagement. CS Energy understands the importance of establishing relationships with host communities and addressing their concerns, and this is a core principle of our development strategy.

Company Background

Company Profile

CS Energy is a fully integrated solar and energy storage company, with over 2.0 GW of installed operating solar across 13 states. In addition to a robust solar resume, CS Energy is a highly bankable company, with over \$200 million in annual revenues and over \$200 million of bonding capacity. CS Energy provides end-to-end solutions for our projects, with in-house development, permitting, financing, engineering, construction, and operations expertise. CS Energy prides itself in its ability to perform all aspects of a solar project in-house. From the earliest phases of a project, including real estate negotiations and permitting, all the way through to financing, construction, and operations, CS Energy provides industry leading expertise to ensure projects are built safely, efficiently, and with minimal impacts.

American Securities, LLC, the majority owner of CS Energy, is a leading private equity firm with approximately \$45 billion in committed capital. Headquartered in New York, American Securities is a privately held firm with over 30 years of experience in private equity. Currently, American Securities has 26 investments and operates in over 55 countries, with a total revenue of \$45 billion. American Securities



prioritizes environmental, social and governance matters, seeking to minimize adverse environmental or societal impacts on individuals' communities or the planet.

Development Experience

CS Energy has established expertise in all aspects of the development, construction, and operation of greenfield solar projects. CS Energy understands the nuances associated with these projects and the complexities of zoning and regulatory processes. Additionally, the company has a detailed understanding of all other aspects of solar project development in New York, including policy expertise, in depth knowledge of permitting requirements, the NYISO interconnection process, and deep engineering and construction expertise. CS Energy has significant experience in New York State with over 500 MW of solar installed, and a further 200 MW of solar under construction. To support its growth in New York, CS Energy opened a regional office in Albany in 2020, a testament to the company's commitment to the New York solar and energy storage markets. CS Energy employs over 30 full time salaried employees in New York State and is growing its in-state team on a monthly basis. Additionally, CS Energy employs a robust construction labor force both on a permanent and temporary basis to support the construction of its projects in the field.

The company's aim is to provide a truly turnkey development solution, which distinguishes CS Energy from others in the marketplace. CS Energy controls the entire process from early-stage development through construction and commercial operations. This means that project stakeholders have one point of contact through development of the project, ensuring continuity and follow through on relationships with and obligations to the community.

Project Siting and Location

Siting a solar project is a complex endeavor which involves evaluating a myriad of factors to ensure a specific location will support responsibly developed, low impact and cost-effective projects. Major factors in selecting a suitable site include adequate interconnection capacity on the local electrical transmission grid, low impacts to environmental and cultural resource constraints, availability of suitable land for the construction of solar panels, and reasonable compatibility with the local community.

Project Description

Project Summary

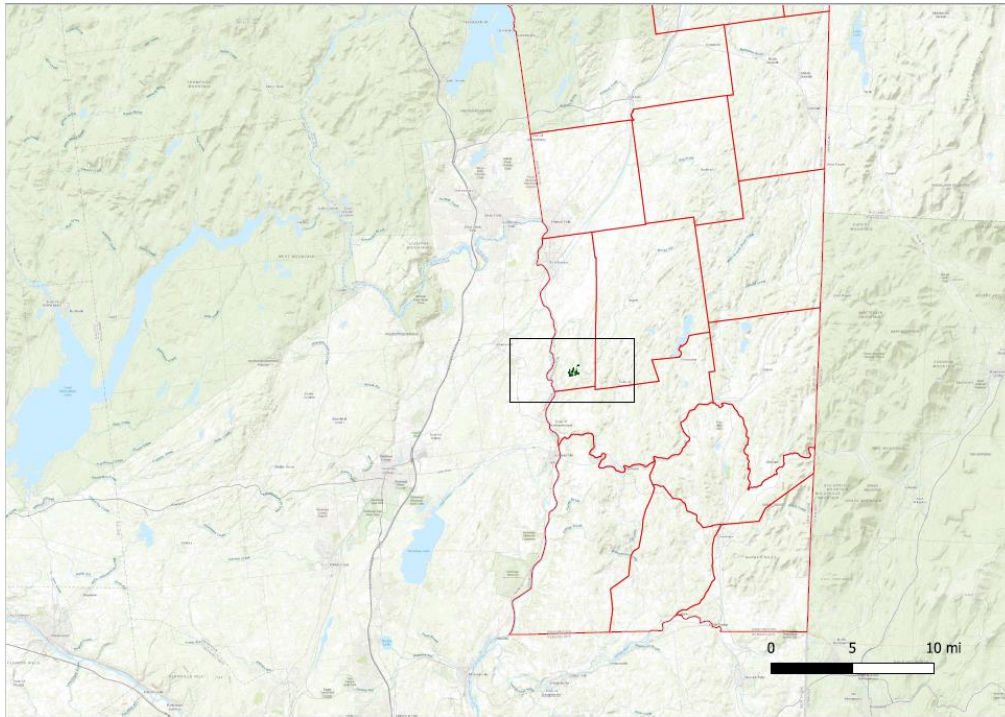
The Somers Solar Project is a proposed 20 MW-ac photovoltaic single-axis tracker solar power generation project. It is currently in late-stage development and is expected to enter construction in late 2024. It will produce power for up to 40 years and is expected to generate enough electricity each year to meet the typical electrical consumption of approximately 4,000 New York homes. Current plans call for the project to lease or purchase approximately 150 acres across portions of 5 properties in the area.

The Somers Solar Project is in the Town of Fort Edward, in Washington County, NY. The project will be sited on a mix of agricultural, forested, and shrubland to recognize and balance the competing concerns and interests specific to each cover type. Low density rural residential development and farms are interspersed throughout the project area. The project is located entirely within the Agricultural/Residential (R-AG) zoning district in the Town of Fort Edward. The project is proposed to be built in between Duer Rd and Hunter Rd, just west of O'Brien Rd and east of State Route 46. The site will be accessed with two roads to be constructed off of Hunter Rd. The following pages includes an overview of the projects general location with respect to the state and county (**Figure 1**).

The project's interconnection application was submitted in April 2020, and has been assigned the NYISO queue position of Q# 1015. The project has completed all of the applicable interconnection studies with NYISO, including the System Impact Study, which was received in October 2021, and the Final Facilities Study, which was received on January 20, 2024. . Somers Solar is proposing to connect to the Mohican-Battenkill 115 kV line that runs through the project site between the Mohican and Battenkill Substations. The project interconnection will include a collector substation at the point of interconnection, on the western most edge of the project site.

The Project obtained a Site Plan Approval and a SEQR negative declaration from the Town of Fort Edward Planning Board on November 8th, 2023. CS Energy, as an established EPC company, will carry out construction of the facility which is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2024. The facility will consist of PV modules on single axis tracking structures that follow the sun throughout the day, inverters which convert direct current to alternating current, electrical collection systems between the panel arrays, and a new substation to deliver power to the transmission line. Complementary facility areas will include access roads, fencing, stormwater management systems, and temporary construction areas for equipment.

Figure 1: County location of the Somers Solar Project



Project Schedule

The Somers Solar project has been under development since 2020 and is expected to go under construction in late 2024 and be operating by 2026. A high-level representation of the expected project schedule is included below.

Project Task/Milestone	Start Date	Completion Date
Landowner outreach and negotiations	Q2 2020	Q3 2022
Town outreach and communication	Q2 2020	Ongoing
NYISO/National Grid Interconnection Studies	Q4 2020	Q1 2024
On site environmental studies and surveys	Q2 2022	Completed
Neighbor and community outreach and communication	Q2 2020	Ongoing and will continue through project life

Site Planning Review Process with the Town of Fort Edward Planning Board	Q2 2023	Completed
Ministerial Permits (building permit, SPDES)	Q1 2024	Q3 2024
Project Construction	Q3 2024	Q4 2025

Permitting

The Somers Solar project pursued permitting locally in the Town of Fort Edward, with the Town of Fort Edward Planning Board being the lead agency in the Site Plan Review Process. The Project submitted a full Site Plan Review Application, Area Variance Application, Full SEQR Environmental Assessment Form, and all supporting materials on April 20, 2023. Throughout the review process, project representatives attended five Planning Board meetings and two Zoning Board meetings to address comments and feedback on the Site Plan and Area Variance Applications. The SEQR process allows the town to identify and evaluate all potential impacts the project may have on the environment and the community. The Part II Environmental Assessment Form was completed by the TOFE Planning Board on November 8, 2023, and the project received a Negative Declaration at this meeting.

The project has been designed by a third-party engineering firm with input and support from CS Energy’s internal engineering team. It has been designed to avoid impacts to water bodies, including streams and wetlands, thereby eliminating the need for wetland permits from the NYSDEC or the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). The project will limit the scope and timing of tree clearing operations and other construction activities in order to minimize impacts to rare, threatened or endangered species. The project will obtain access permits, building and electrical permits, a final Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), and any additional ministerial permits that may be required.

The project consulted with NYSDEC to assess the potential presence of endangered or threatened species on site. Through that consultation, NYSDEC determined that a Grassland Breeding Bird Survey would be necessary to assess the presence of the species on site. On site filed surveys were carried out over 2021 and 2022. Through this survey, no sighting of the target threatened or endangered species occurred. The Somers Solar Project has completed an on-site wetland delineation to provide detailed feedback as to the specific locations of wetlands on the project area, and a Phase 1A/1B archeological survey to locate potential sites of archeological sensitivity.



The Somers Solar Project has been designed specifically to encourage the long-term strength and viability of the underlying agricultural resource and to ensure there is no significant impact to agricultural and rural character of the area. The site will be planted with low-growth native plant species wherever the existing vegetation has been disturbed. These deep-rooted plants improve soil with organic matter which allows for microorganisms and soil fauna to recover, and provide habitat for various birds, mammals, and other species. The project site will be able to be restored to its current agricultural use at the end of the project life, effectively preserving the site's agricultural heritage for the long-term in ways that other more permanent development would not. This restoration commitment will be secured by long-term decommissioning and restoration bonds that will be posted for the benefit of the host municipalities.

CLCPA Goals

CS Energy recognizes the long-term impacts of environmental inequities on low-income and minority communities and consistently seeks to support these communities. In an effort to more effectively carry out these efforts, CS Energy has identified Potential Disadvantaged Communities near the project location and potential barriers to information access to ensure that, if necessary, information is provided in a language and format that is accessible to all. The direct potential economic benefits to disadvantaged communities has been provided in this application within the Bid Data Form.

The nearest disadvantaged community to the Somers Solar Project, according to the NYSERDA disadvantaged community mapper is 7.7 miles away in Hudson Falls. The Project's largest potential impact on disadvantaged communities will be the use of construction labor that could potentially include members of this community. CS Energy has always and will continue to use union labor for the construction of their projects and has good relationships with Liuna and IBEW. While the Project hopes that disadvantaged community members will be members of the construction team, the fluidity of local labor forces makes it difficult to commit to a concrete contribution to these communities.

Project Benefits

Project Construction Benefits

Development of the Somers Solar project will include a significant investment in regionally based, full-time and contract employees. Surveying and Engineering firms have supported the field studies necessary to prepare the project's initial design and permit applications. Additionally, staff from TOVIP Energy, a

landowner relations company, has supported landowner engagement throughout the development period.

The most significant employment and economic impacts associated with a solar project occur during the construction phase. CS Energy anticipates creating over 100 construction jobs to build the facility. CS Energy will hire local laborers and electricians to the greatest extent practicable for construction and installation of the solar arrays. Work on a solar array includes tree clearing and site preparation, fencing and access road installation, foundation, racking and module installation, electrical wiring and commissioning. Additionally, highly skilled electricians and technicians are hired to construct the utility interconnection facilities and performance test the facility. As New York's solar market has grown, the number of in-state firms and personnel that can support this type of construction has also expanded. As such, many of these workers are expected to be hired in-state. These workers will also provide indirect benefits to the local community through food and lodging purchases throughout the construction period. Additionally, during the construction phase, the project will purchase or rent tools and equipment, construction trailers, fuel, gravel, and associated items from local and regional businesses.

Project Operational Benefits

Over the operational life of the project, Somers Solar will contribute significantly to the local economy and the local taxing jurisdictions. Local landowners will receive economic benefit through lease payments which will also yield both direct and indirect contributions to the community. Finally, the project will contribute significantly to the revenues of the local taxing jurisdictions through a PILOT agreement negotiated with the town.

Somers Solar will directly support up to 2 full-time equivalent, high-quality jobs over the life of the project. Care for the project's landscaping improvements, habitat features, and grasses planted beneath the solar panels will be performed by local ground maintenance contractors. The project will also employ solar technicians to perform routine inspections, maintenance, and repairs of the solar energy generating equipment and to respond to unexpected interruptions in service. The project will be managed by a project or asset manager who will be responsible for long-term compliance with permits, lease agreements, and interconnection agreements, and will manage ongoing relationships in the local community.

Solar power is a safe and renewable form of energy generation. Unlike fossil fuel generated electricity, solar power does not emit pollutants while in operation. By replacing energy sources that produce air



pollution, solar provides public health and climate benefits. The Somers Solar Project is participating in the 2023 NYSEDA Solicitation for LSR which will support New York State's clean energy goals, and ultimately contribute to the fight against climate change, a significant existential threat to local and global agricultural production.

Solar provides public health benefits by replacing energy sources that produce air pollution and other climate change impacts. Solar facilities are, largely, quiet and produce no vibration. The panels that will be used do not contain hazardous materials and pose no risk of leaching throughout the project life. Setbacks and tree screening buffers have been implemented to minimize the visual impacts on the community and setting in the area and to aid in the integration of the project with the natural landscape.

Property Taxes and Host Community Agreements

One of the most tangible and lasting economic benefits to local jurisdictions from a solar power generation facility development are property tax payments. The Somers Solar Project intends to enter into a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement which will provide payments to the Town of Fort Edward and will anticipate paying taxes on the rolls to all other taxing jurisdictions.

Taxing Jurisdiction	RPTL Status
Washington County	Opted In
Town of Fort Edward	Opted Out
Schuylerville Central School District	Opted In

Authorities and Stakeholders

CS Energy has worked and will continue to work directly with both participating landowners, and project neighbors, those located adjacent to the project location, to ensure concerns are heard and addressed through project design and mitigation efforts.



Agencies and organizations with direct permitting and oversight responsibilities will be engaged throughout the course of the project permitting process. CS Energy typically engages directly with authorities having jurisdiction for permits while seeking support from engineering and land development consultants on a case-by-case basis. A list of the Authority Having Jurisdictions for the project and the relevant contacts are listed below:

Authority Having Jurisdiction	Contact Title	Contact Name	Contact Information	Tenure (if applicable)
Washington County	County Administrator	Melissa Fitch	(518)-746-2102	N/A
Washington-Warren County IDA	Director of Economic Development	Laura Oswald	518-746-2291 loswald@washingtoncountyny.gov	N/A
Town of Fort Edward	Town Supervisor	Tim Fisher	(518)-760-3066 supervisor@fortedward.net	Term expires 12/31/2027
Town of Fort Edward Planning Board	Acting Chair	Valerie Ingersoll	(518) 955-2533 vsetay@gmail.com	
Schuylerville School District	Superintendent	Gregg Barthelmas	(518) 695-3255 Bartgreg@schuylerville.org	N/A

Above and beyond the public process afforded by the project’s requisite permits, CS Energy intends to build on the success of its public engagement to date, utilizing multiple avenues to encourage stakeholder participation. CS Energy finds that community meetings outside of the regulated public hearing process can be a better forum for open dialogue. See below in this document for a more detailed explanation of the public engagement process. A list of relevant agencies, representatives, and stakeholders that CS Energy anticipates being involved in the project throughout the rest of the development period are identified below:

State and Federal Agencies	Project Role
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NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	Consultation Agency
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)	Direct Permitting Oversight
NYSDEC, Region 5	Direct Permitting Oversight
NYS Energy Research and Development Authority	Direct Oversight
NYS Department of Economic Development	Consultation Agency
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation	Consultation Agency
NYS Department of Public Services	Consultation Agency
NYS Department of State Office Planning and Development	Consultation Agency
NYS Department of Transportation	Direct Permitting Oversight
NYS Independent Service Operator	Direct Oversight
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Direct Oversight
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Rural Developments	Consultation Agency
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	Consultation Agency
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Direct Oversight
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Direct Permitting Oversight
National Telecommunication and Information Administration	Consultation Agency
United States Senator Chuck Schumer	Area Legislator
United States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand	Area Legislator
United States House of Representatives, Tom Reed, 23 rd District	Area Legislator
NY State Senate, Betty Little	Area Legislator
NY State Assembly, Carrie Woerner, or Successor, 113th, District	Area Legislator
Local Agencies and Governments	
Town of Fort Edward Town Clerk, Aimee Mahoney	Oversight
Town of Fort Edward Planning Board	Building Permitting and Oversight

Town of Fort Edward Town Board	Oversight
Town of Fort Edward Town Supervisor, Timothy Fisher	Oversight
Washington-Warren County IDA	Oversight
Host Municipalities and School Districts	
Washington County	Oversight
Town of Fort Edward	Possible PILOT, Oversight
Schuylerville Central School District	Possible PILOT, Oversight
Utility and Highway Departments	
Washington County Highway Association	Direct Permitting Oversight
National Grid	Transmission Owner
New York Power Authority	Interconnection
Additional Stakeholders	
Southern Adirondack Audubon Society	Community Stakeholder
Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club	Community Stakeholder
Audubon Society of the Capitol Region	Community Stakeholder
Agricultural Stewardship Association	Community Stakeholder
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County	Community Stakeholder
Washington County Economic Development	Community Stakeholder
Town of Fort Edward Fire Department	First Responders
Town of Fort Edward Police Department	First Responders

Community Engagement Timeline

CS Energy intends to follow our community engagement timeline, provided below, to ensure full engagement and transparency with the community and its stakeholders throughout the development lifecycle of the project. The following table of ongoing outreach actions identifies both the specific

activities that are required under ORES and the additional commitments CS Energy will make to foster strong relationships with host communities.

Outreach Activity	Start Date	Duration	Frequency
Comments and Inquiries	Summer 2021	4 years	Continuous
Town Supervisor Meetings	Fall 2020	4 years	Continuous
Initial Town Board Meetings	Fall 2020	2 years	Continuous
Project Neighbor Outreach	Summer 2022	3 years	Continuous
Direct Neighbor Outreach	Summer 2022	3 years	Continuous, on as need basis

Proposed Public Engagement

Community Engagement Activities to Date

CS Energy began exploring the Washington County area as a possible location for a solar project in 2019. The first landowner that is included in the current design of Somers Solar was signed up in the Spring of 2022, and the 5 total participating parcels in the current Project design are all under option agreements and provide sufficient acreage for a 160 MW system. CS Energy worked with based TOVIP Energy on initial landowner identification and outreach in the area.

CS Energy’s development approach involves early and frequent communication with community representatives. In the pre-development phase, CS Energy contacted local officials to introduce a project concept, provide basic facts regarding solar technology, project construction and project operation, and to discuss the local permitting context. A key goal of this initial consultation is to identify potential fatal flaws for the project or particular sensitivities or concerns that should help to guide the development of the project. As hands-on developers, the CS Energy team serve as reliable project representatives with direct agency over project decision-making and whom stakeholders can contact with specific questions or comments about the project as they arise.

Central to its belief that strong relationships are vital to project success, CS Energy has made dozens of trips to the area and has had multiple substantive conversations with key stakeholders in the community, specifically with project neighbors. Employees of CS Energy are on a first name basis with town and county leaders and the company's presence in town has been noted and applauded by residents and stakeholders alike.

CS attended several town board meetings to inform the town board and residents of the project as it developed. Additionally, representatives of the Project engaged in door knocking at homes adjacent to the Project Site in the Summer of 2022.

Previously, CS Energy staff participated in a panel discussion lead by the Cornell Cooperative Extension on July 25, 2019 in Easton, Washington County, NY. The purpose of the meeting was to provide general information for the public on solar projects and their interaction with agricultural communities. Landowners leasing property, local and county officials, and agricultural business owners participated in this event and provided a wide variety of information and views on solar and its role in that community.

Outreach with Town and County Officials

In conjunction with initial landowner outreach, CS Energy began contacting local officials regarding the potential for a large-scale solar project including the following meetings and correspondence:

- The Somers Solar Project was first presented to the Planning Board on August, 24th, 2022. General project details were provided, including the site's footprint, and ongoing environmental surveys.
- Representatives for the Project attended the Planning Board meeting on October 28th, 2022 and received a referral to the Town of Fort Edward Zoning Board of Appeals for the required area variances.
- Representatives for the Project attended the Planning Board meeting on May 24th, 2023 where the Planning Board declared itself lead agency, declared the action a Type 1 Action under SEQ, and referred the application to the Washington County Planning Agency and began initiating a coordinated review.
- Representatives for the Project attended the Planning Board meeting on July 12th, 2023 where the Planning Board reviewed the decommissioning estimate as well as the Viewshed analysis performed by the Project.

- The Public Hearing for the Somers Solar Project was held on August 9th, 2023. There were no public comments.
- The Public Hearing for the Somers Solar Project was closed on October 25, 2023, and the project presented a revised Draft SWPPP, as well as further information on the Project.
- On November 8th, 2023, the Town of Fort Edward Planning Board made a negative declaration on the Somers Solar Project and issued a Conditional Site Plan Approval.
- Representatives from CS Energy had been engaged with the Washington County IDA, on PILOT discussions for the Somers Solar Project. Given their feedback, the Project is currently pursuing a PILOT with the Town and the Schuylerville School District.

Construction

CS Energy acts as both developer and EPC contractor, and therefore the transition from development to construction phases for community engagement will be seamless. As the project nears construction, new members of CS Energy's construction team will be introduced to the community and project stakeholders. However, the development team will continue to be regularly involved in the project to ensure continuity of relationships and project obligations. Construction is expected to start in late 2024 and last between 18 and 24 months. Overall, the project is expected to generate approximately over 100 construction jobs. CS Energy will make all reasonable efforts to hire as many construction jobs from local labor pools as possible. These efforts include outreach with local workforce development organizations and leaders to provide training, internships, and skills development for local leaders. It is the hope that through these efforts, CS Energy will be able to increase the labor pool in the local disadvantaged communities prior to the start of construction.

Operation

Once the project enters commercial operation, the regularity of activity on the project or any project updates will reduce significantly. That said, it is still important for information about the project to remain accessible, and for lines of communication between local stakeholders and the project's operations and maintenance team to remain open. To that end, CS Energy will still function as a point of contact for the first few years of project operation to ensure mitigation measures have been successfully implemented and concerns regarding the project from local community members and town officials can be effectively address. Appropriate contact information, including emergency contact information, to be posted at the project site.

Public Permitting Engagement

Common Public Concerns

Because projects like Somers Solar have large footprints, the surrounding communities have justifiable concerns. Specific concerns that the community adjacent to the project has brought to our attention include viewshed concerns, loss of agricultural land, decommissioning of the project, the safety of the panels and potential property value impacts. CS Energy has taken an active role in community engagement and will continue to meet landowners, neighbors, and concerned residents to find mutually beneficial solutions to the concerning aspects of solar projects. To specifically address a few of the concerns that have been brought up through community meetings or direct meetings with community members, CS has been working to identify the means to host sheep on the site to allow for an agricultural use to continue throughout the project area. Additionally, CS has met directly with property owners adjacent to the project regarding options for viewshed mitigation or other potential options available to mitigate the potential impacts. CS has held meetings with the Fort Edward Fire Department and will be carrying out safety trainings prior to construction and throughout operations. The project site was reviewed by the fire department to determine locations where pass by and turnarounds would aid in effective access to the project site.

CS Energy prides itself on its strong partnerships with local municipalities and key stakeholders within the community. It is because of these partnerships that CS Energy has been able to build so many successful projects in New York State. The company has been in ongoing contact with the Towns of Kiantone and Busti in order to stay informed of concerns that are being brought by residents. CS Energy has participated in two Town Board Meetings and held meetings for the relevant agencies, local fire departments, and community members to inform the public of the project's progress and hear and address project concerns. Moving forward, the company intends to complete further outreach to project neighbors and build a question and comment structure to ensure that anyone who has concerns can raise them.

Mitigation Efforts

A list of some common concerns and general solutions that CS Energy has implemented for previous projects and intends to implement for the Somers Solar Project include the following:

Viewshed and Buffer zones

- **Concern**

- Viewshed concerns have been raised by neighbors to the project, by various Town Officials, and by host landowners that are concerned with their or their neighbors' view of the project. Community members want to be sure that adequate buffers are put in place to mitigate viewshed concerns.

- **Solution**

- CS Energy has conducted a visual analysis, to determine viewsheds of concern. The company has also meet with affected parties to determine the best course of action to mitigate concerns. Feedback from the public and project neighbors has been incorporated into the viewshed mitigation plan that is currently in place. CS Energy has latitude on where landscaping buffers can be planted and what type of buffer should be used, and the company has used and will continue to use this flexibility to find mutually agreeable solutions.

Decommissioning

- **Concern**

- Host communities and project neighbors have expressed concern over decommissioning and concerns over the potential that a defunct project may not be removed following the end of the project's life have been brought to our attention.

- **Solution**

- The Fort Edward Local Law requires a robust plan for decommissioning. Throughout the application process, the Planning Board requested several revisions to ensure that the Town was fully protected, in the unlikely scenario that decommissioning could not be carried out by the project owner. The project area will be remediated in accordance with the decommissioning plan and any applicable regulations. To ensure the project is decommissioned regardless of potential long-term changes, the project will establish a bond or letter of credit with the local municipalities in an amount sufficient to decommission the project. The amount of the decommissioning bond will be established by the Fort Edward Town Board, and will be adjusted periodically during the operational life of the project. This bond will be used by the municipality in the unlikely event that the company cannot complete its own decommissioning as written in its decommissioning plan.

Taxes

- **Concern**
 - Many residents are concerned with how this project will be taxed and have concerns that the project won't be paying its "fair share".
- **Solution**
 - Taxation of renewable energy projects is a complicated issue and requires significant engagement with local stakeholders to ensure all parties are on the same page. This project will enter into a PILOT agreement which will represent a portion of the property tax payments the project will make. The project will pay the remainder of the property taxes to the relevant jurisdictions which are not included in this PILOT. This agreement is meant to establish long term certainty and confidence for budgeting purposes for both the project and the local municipalities. The project will also be paying special district taxes directly based on the real property assessment of the project.

Agriculture Loss

- **Concern**
 - Many residents of rural New York are concerned that solar projects are sited on agricultural land. They are worried that these projects will cause irreparable damage to local farmland.
- **Solution**
 - Open land is necessary for any large-scale solar project. However, Hawthorn Solar will be intentionally sited on a mix of agricultural, forest, and scrubland to balance the impacts of the project across land cover types. Further, solar projects are not permanent structures and have little long-term effect on the underlying land or soil. When the project has reached the end of its life, the land can easily be converted back into agricultural land.

Fires and Safety

- **Concern**
 - Some residents are worried about the potential fire hazard of solar projects and the ability of the local fire department to handle this hazard.
- **Solution**

- Large-scale solar projects present little fire and safety risk. Small electrical fires may occur in some of the equipment, but these are generally self-contained and burn themselves out. However, CS Energy will conduct a safety training to educate local first responders on safety procedures, energy cut-off locations, and electrical risk.

Public Input

CS Energy has found that the best way to assuage community concerns is to address them transparently and early in the process. It is for this reason that the company has opened many pathways to communication. CS Energy has solicited feedback from the public using several modalities. The first is direct outreach to key stakeholders. Through mailers to neighbors and conversations with local leaders, CS Energy has been in contact with those who are most affected by the project.

Due to the lengthy interconnection study process for large-scale solar projects, CS Energy has found that regular updates at Town Board and Planning Board meetings are helpful in providing up to date information on projects. In addition, community meetings outside of the regulated public hearing process ensure there are multiple means of communicating with and soliciting feedback from interested parties. Additionally, CS Energy staff will continue to engage with the Town of Fort Edward to provide more details on the project and discuss a PILOT.

Project Contact

Project contact's will be available via email and phone Monday - Friday during normal business hours:

Mitch Quine

CS Energy

100 Grove St. #102

Worcester, MA 01605

Development Manager

Phone: 732.266.4255

Email: mitch.quine@csenergy.com