

# Public Information Meeting Questions and Answers

## Powell Creek Solar Project

Liberty and Palmer Townships,  
Putnam County, Ohio

Prepared for:



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## Virtual Meeting

### **Q1) Is there anything that could enhance the view as seen from the school and athletic fields?**

A1) Visual simulations are underway which will evaluate any impacts to the view from the school and fields. If there are any impacts, Powell Creek Solar may be able to address the impacts with mitigation.

### **Q2) What is the plan for maintenance and upkeep in the solar fields? Will there be mowing, trash pickup, etc.?**

A2) Weed control and vegetation management are priorities to Powell Creek Solar because of the impacts to our neighbors and to facility performance. Plants that could shade the modules need to be cut short, so shading does not interrupt the performance of modules. To achieve this, we have in place a robust post-construction re-vegetation and vegetation management plans that would use locally sourced grasses and plants for soil stabilization, we will also have technicians on-site for vegetation maintenance. Trash pick-up will also be our responsibility, in order to keep the area clean.

### **Q3) What is the estimated useful life of a solar field?**

A3) The estimated useful life of the facility is 30 to 35 years. With technology upgrades there is a possibility for project extension. Any extension after the initial operational period will have to be considered with respect to the property owners and other stakeholders.

### **Q4) Would you be willing to share the property value studies that you are referencing?**

A4) Property value studies can be found on various siting board websites, and other areas that had solar projects before. For example, the McLean County, Illinois website provides a property value impact study at <https://www.mcleancountyil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13192/Patricia-L-McGarr--Property-Value-Impact-Study?bidId=>. There have been some studies on property values from other solar developments in the Midwest. We are unaware of evidence that solar projects will have a negative impact on property values. Further, when considering effects on property values, positive effects such as improved services due to the increased revenue from the project to local taxing districts may positively affect property values.

### **Q5) Will the grass mowing and ground maintenance be a contracted job?**

A5) It depends on our staffing levels and their workload. Typically, we would hire local contractors to conduct mowing, but that decision has not been made yet for Powell Creek Solar.

**Q6) How tall are the bottoms of the solar panels? (How high can native plants grow without restricting the function of the panels)?**

A6) The modules are approximately 6ft tall and vegetation will be maintained to avoid shading the panels.

**Q7) This may have been answered already but what do homeowners that will be adjacent from the solar panels need to do?**

A7) Powell Creek is currently evaluating the layout and reviewing homeowner eligibility for the Good Neighbor Program. We are beginning to reach out to eligible homeowners. If you have questions about the program or your eligibility, please contact us at the email address shown on the title page of this document.

**Q8) Did you say you have an off taker or are you looking for one or more?**

A8) This project has been very active in the request for proposal process, we have very interested customers at this point. It is our plan to remain competitive with other projects we have been working within the area. It is our full expectation that will have an off taker for this project.

**Q9) It was mentioned that the MC-NC school district and the landowners will benefit. How about the village and community of Miller City?**

A9) In Miller City, Powell Creek is working with the city to assist with funding in order for the City to have the ability to upgrade their water treatment facility, which will assist with future growth of the city.

**Q10) Regarding "useful life", when the project ceases to function efficiently, will the entire project be removed, and land restored to current conditions by the same initial project developer?**

A10) Yes. All aboveground equipment, fences, access roads, and other improvements, as well as underground improvements less than 3 feet below grade will be removed from leased land (unless the landowner requests an improvement or improvements to remain). The site (including drain tiles) will be restored to its preconstruction condition.

**Q11) What are the approximate financial benefits for the village of Miller City and the school?**

A11) Project payment-in-lieu-of-taxes ("PILOT") are going to be paid to the county annually, and then distributed to the taxing districts on a millage basis. In this case the base PILOT would pay over \$1 MM annually to be distributed as discussed above, and it is anticipated that over half of the annual payment would be received by area schools in the taxing district...

**Q12) Does the county receive the bulk of the tax revenue? Where does the village and school revenue come from?**

A12) As discussed in A11, the Project base PILOT payments are sent to the County (much like someone's property taxes are paid to the County), and the County distributes these funds to the taxing districts in the same manner that your property taxes are distributed, on a millage basis. Please refer back to A11 for anticipated annual payments.

**Q13) But if the county takes the bulk of the revenue, how does the village get the funding for the sewage system? Isn't the county getting six-digit revenue and the village only 5 digits?**

A13) As discussed in A11, the distribution of the base PILOT from County to taxing districts is the same as the distribution of your property taxes to the taxing districts. Regarding the funding for Miller City improvements, funding will come from PILOT revenue, as well as commitments from the project and other community stakeholders.

**Q14) The village and surrounding landowners will live this daily while most of the county will never see it. More revenue needs to stay with the Miller City area.**

A14) As discussed previously, revenue from the base PILOT is distributed to the taxing districts in the same manner as your property tax payments are distributed.

**Q15) How do you avoid hitting existing tile in fields during pile installation?**

A15) Powell Creek Solar will employ the best technology and survey methods available to avoid disturbing drain tile. In the event that drain tile does get damaged during project construction, such damage will be repaired to a condition suitable to allow draining in neighboring fields not hosting the solar project to function as they did prior to the construction of the project , and support the operation of the solar project in the fields hosting the solar project. When the project is decommissioned, drainage system in fields hosting the solar project will be restored to a condition found prior to construction.

**Q16) What planning should be done for the farming year 2021?**

A16) At this point, people can plant their fields as if nothing were going on. If it becomes necessary to disturb the fields prior to harvest, you will get paid for crop damage, which is part of the lease agreement.

**Q17) What materials make up the solar panels?**

A17) Solar modules to be used at this solar project will be monocrystalline bifacial, primarily made of glass, with an aluminum frame surrounding the module. At Powell Creek, we will **not** be using thin film solar modules that contain heavy metals. We will be using a bifacial, crystal-silicon PV module.

**Q18) If the solar panels go from East to West, what glare could neighbors expect from the solar panels?**

A18) For clarity, the trackers run North and South, and panels track East to West. Solar panels are constructed to maximize absorption of sunlight, which helps to reduce the potential for glare. Additionally, we are responsible to study the potential for glare and we will take this into account in the design and layout of the project. Powell Creek Solar considers the module backtracking, angle of the modules, and the direction the modules are pointing to mitigate glare concerns at local residences, infrastructure, and other areas of concern surrounding the project. Glare can be avoided at receptors with simple layout and software changes. We are in the process of adjusting layouts such that glare from panels is eliminated at all receptors.

**Q19) How does Avangrid (Powell Creek Solar) handle property value loss due to this project to all neighboring properties (homes, other farm ground, etc.)?**

A19) Powell Creek Solar respectfully disagrees with the premise of this question. A4 provides response concerning property values.

**Q20) Can the aesthetics from road camouflage the panels such as vines on fence?**

A20) We are working on the visual simulations, which will then guide the landscaping plan, both of which will be submitted with the application. Powell Creek Solar will mitigate substantial adverse impacts as practical. Note that the panels will be only 6 feet tall and will be set at least 100 feet from the roadway, so generally, they will not be visually intrusive.

**Q21) Will you use all 2,000 acres if you only need 1,000 acres for panels?**

A21) No. We will not be using all 2,000 acres for panels.

**Q22) At what wind speed will panels blow off post?**

A22) There are stated requirements (appropriate building codes, and design will be sealed by an Ohio Licensed Structural Engineer) for wind resistance, and we will be in strict compliance with those requirements. Generally, a wind speed of 100 mile/hour or greater would be necessary to cause a separation of the module, and this is not likely to occur.

**Q23) Where are you going to start constructing the panels? Are you starting by Miller City or by the power station?**

A23) Closer to construction, we will work with the construction contractor on sequencing the construction process.

**Q24) If we do this again can you put the questions up for us to see so people are not asking the same or similar questions over and over?**

A24) Thank you for the feedback. The platform being used for this webinar has various limitations on how it works for the questions and answers exercise. We appreciate people's specific questions, and it is our pleasure to make sure we answer all questions.

**Q25) Are the solar panels made in the USA?**

A25) Not mentioned in the recording Solar energy is rapidly becoming more competitive over time due to both increased performance and decreased cost associated with the solar equipment. As with all competitive industries, the most cost effective (from both cost and performance) technology will be selected. Currently these more cost-effective technologies are manufactured in Southeast Asia.

**Q26) How will the mirror glare affect our internet and cable satellite signals? There is an internet tower at ST Route 108 & St Route 15. The solar panels will be in the direct path from the tower to my home.**

A26) Generally speaking, solar panels are designed to absorb light, not reflect it as glare. As part of our design work, we have hired consultants to find out where glare can affect surrounding properties. Regardless, glare resulting from panels can be engineered away with proper resting angles and other design and tracker software modifications. Please also see the response to Question 18.

**Q27) My house is situated facing West on Road 13. Will we have issues with direct glare at the front of my home from the panels if they are located across the street from me?**

A27) The panels are built to absorb light; you will not have a reflective effect. Possible glare can occur in the morning or evenings, but Powell Creek Solar is mitigating these effects by design. Please also see the responses to Questions 18 and 26.

**Q28) Will field and outlet tile be reconnected and or repaired?**

A28) Yes. During construction, the timing of the repair would depend on whether they are lateral or main. We understand the value and concern about tile. In a solar facility, in advance our design layout we had a tile vendor identify the tile mains within the project footprint, and we have included them in our drawings. We are working to avoid tile mains and damage will be repaired. Main tiles would be repaired as soon as damage is discovered. For laterals that are only in the field that we are working, we will repair that at a time sufficient that will support operation of the solar facility. When decommissioning the facility, we will repair tiles to the condition they were in prior to the beginning of the construction.

**Q29) Is it fair to say you will do this in phases and if so when will it be known as to phase 1,2, etc.?**

A29) This project will not be built in phases, but it may be built in more than one construction season. We might start in 2021 and finish in 2022, but it will be built as one project.

**Q30) What is the anticipated sound level near the panels?**

A30) The panels themselves do not emit sound. The sound primarily comes from small inverters that are located towards the middle of the solar panel arrays. The sound levels at night are minimal as the sun is required for the facility to reach rated capacity. Sounds from solar equipment are low when compared to other forms of power generation. The Ohio Power Siting Board requires detailed sound studies to be performed, and limits the increase over existing sound levels. These studies are in progress and we are expecting to comply with Ohio Power Siting Board requirements.

**Q31) Is there a plan to plant trees etc. for neighbors near the panels to block view from front home windows etc.?**

A31) Visual simulation photos, and the complete visual modeling process, are still in process. Once we complete those simulations the project will evaluate and prepare a landscape planting plan to mitigate potential impacts to sensitive resources such as homes and resources in the area. Included in that plan will be vegetation screening. The first step is to finalize the simulation process, and from that we can finalize the screening plan which will be available to the public through the Ohio Power Siting Board process.

**Q32) Property values especially near the panels is a concern. What has been the experience from previous installations?**

A32) There have been some studies on property values from other solar development in other agricultural solar development in the mid-west. What has been found is that there is no evidence that solar projects will have a negative impact on property values. From a facility like this, the community will benefit as a whole, because of the increases in revenue to the local taxing districts. Please also see the responses to Questions 4 and 19.

**Q33) Is an agreement to purchase the power produced by the solar project in place?**

A33) We are in discussion with potential customers on this project. We do not have a power purchase agreement yet. Until we secure the Power Siting Board Certificate potential customers consider the lack of a Certificate a risk to the project. Please also see the response to Question 8.

**Q34) Are there any plans to allow more setbacks at the intersection of SR 613 and SR 108 as to not obstruct the view for traffic at that intersection? What is the setback for intersections? What is standard setback for all roads?**

A34) The layout takes public safety of the project into consideration. Setbacks from public roads are at least 100 ft, and the panels are only 6 feet tall. At this distance and height, we would not expect visual obstruction at crossings.

**Q35) If we are local and are interested in working for this company, are they hiring and how do we apply?**

A35) There will be quite a few construction jobs as part of this project. We will be starting construction as early as 2021. In addition, any job related to operation and maintenance for this project will be posted in our Powell Creek Solar website. There is a career portal available in our webpage, and as of now there are some technical jobs for other projects available.

## Teleconference Meeting

**Q1) Where is the information to prove or disprove the changes in property values, and what happened when we want to sell our houses and we cannot sell our houses?**

A1) People who try to sell their houses around solar projects typically do not encounter problems. Please also see answers to 4, 19, and 31.

**Q2) Are there more property value studies where the town is similar to ours?**

A2) The study covers several projects in agricultural areas in Illinois and Indiana with the same types of demographics. Also see answer to 4.

**Q3) Did this company make the studies? Referencing people that you know; can we get data from those cases? Will the company go back to prove this? Does the company have data to prove or disprove that?**

A3) Studies like this use various locations and developers, to make sure you have access to more general data. Our company has not experienced issues with people selling their house. Also see answer to 4.



**Q4) Has the company done satisfaction surveys?**

A4) We have company hotlines and people are free to come by to our site as well to share thoughts and/or concerns with us.

**Q5) How much EMF will be produced per panels, per field, and what is the standard level? Will this information be made public? Can you send that?**

A5) Panels do not create electromagnetic fields (EMFs). EMF is possible from the project invertors. However, the inverters are located more centrally in the project and thus their distance reduces or eliminates measurable EMF exposure at the project boundary. EMF data is typically available from inverter manufacturers. These EMF emissions are regulated by authorities, and before inverters can become UL listed, they must be tested to confirm compliance with applicable EMF standards. EMF from solar facilities have not been shown to be an issue at thousands of solar projects across the country, including the numerous rooftop solar applications where the exposure level is much higher than that of utility scale projects.

**Q6) Are you accessing from road 13 or road 12, or building your own roads? Are there plans to take care of the roads and use them properly?**

A6) We are working with the transportation analysis right now. We are working with the county engineers to establish which roads we will be using and/or improving.

**Q7) Do you have any data along with the company who is doing the house and property data on health concerns studies? How does it affect health in the long term?**

A7) We are not aware of any health concerns with solar PV facilities and there is over 80 GW of solar installed in the US currently.

**Q8) Will this make our school taxes to go down? Property taxes? Elaborate?**

A8) The project will contribute a significant amount of revenues to the local taxing authorities.

**Q9) Are there any residency requirements for the construction of this site? Will you be using local contractors?**

A9) As part of our PILOT agreement within the Qualified Energy Project (QEP) framework under R.C. 5727.75, we are required to use at least 80% Ohio domiciled workers.

**Q10) Will the churches, the fire department, and other entities be affected as well? Between the two districts?**

A10) The amount that was agreed in the PILOT agreement will likely be allocated similarly as other residents' taxes are allocated in the county. We would expect the allocation will be very similar to what the residents tax bill states.

**Q11) Can you elaborate on the fence characteristics?**

A11) We are finalizing our design, but it will likely be a chain link fence.

**Q12) How far are you going to feel the heat? Will the temperatures change? Before and after construction?**

A12) Solar panels are designed to absorb the light and heat, not to reflect it. They do not generate heat. People from the public and nearby residents are encouraged to visit other solar project sites and experience the environment.

**Q13) Can you refer other solar facilities around?**

A13) Vantage Career Center has a small facility that can be visited. There is a facility in Bowling Green, that has a single access tracking system, similar to what we are proposing for this project.

**Q14) We have local contractors that are familiar and proficient with this type of work. We have a list of them if the company is interested, we would love to talk about this.**

A14) Please send contact information and we can later engage in a conversation as we get closer to the construction phase.

**Q15) What is the land currently zoned for?**

A15) The land is currently zoned agricultural by the county.

**Q16) Will local people be maintaining it? Will helicopters be checking on these places? Do we get notifications if you use these drones?**

A16) For solar arrays we would not use helicopters. A drone survey may be a rare occurrence, though we have not had a need to do that yet at any of our existing solar plants. Solar drone survey equipment is small, lightweight, and inconspicuous to the point that it would not be noticed on any rare occasion that it might be used.

**Q17) You are testing water, how frequent are they being made and where we can access that data? Testing water and soil?**

A17) Studies are being made as part of the OPSB process to look for wetlands, waterbodies, and other environmental resources. Water quality testing is not necessary as the panels have no emissions or releases; There is nothing harmful inside the modules that could affect the environment. Powell Creek Solar is not using thin film modules that contain heavy metals.

**Q18) Will more areas, or roads be annexed? Will land across the streets will be annexed?**

A18) There are plans to annex the project into Miller City. Properties that are not leased and not participating in the project will not be annexed. We are working through the surveys right now. Small sections of roads will be annexed as needed to ensure a contiguous project footprint

**Q19) Will the projected (annexation) plan be presented to us, to be able to vote on?**

A19) The annexation process is a public process (with notice and public meetings) that is ultimately voted on by the commissioners.

**Q20) How many years is the project going to be there? Is that related to the life of the panels?**

A20) The project is going to be in place for 30 to 35 years and this is related to the life expectancy of the panels. We could consider options to extend their life expectancy, but as for now, 30 to 35 years is the projected time.

**Q21) If there is compensation to the neighbors who might not be there for all that period, do the contracts transfer to the following owner?**

A21) If a homeowner has a good neighbor agreement, when they sell or transfer the ownership, the agreement stays with the house.

**Q22) Who is buying the energy?**

A22) We are close to finalizing the power purchase agreements. However, we cannot share information until those agreements are finalized due to confidentiality of the agreements.

**Q23) Is the contract [to purchase energy] going to be for the lifetime of these panels?**

A23) Not necessary. The length of the contract goes into our analysis whether the project will be economic with the purchase agreement that ultimately gets negotiated.

**Q24) Does it conflict with internet, cellphones, or any other things?**

A24) There is no evidence and it has not been our experience that solar projects affect telecommunications. If there are issues, we would work with you to resolve issues.

**Q25) If we have issues afterwards? Are you committing to helping and/or mitigate problems? Will it be done in a timely manner?**

A25) We operate more than 60 renewable energy projects in multiple states and enjoy a very positive relationship with our local communities. In our experience, our company will respond promptly and address issues.

**Q26) If they do get damage by a tornado, and your property runs into my property?**

A26) We are there to be good neighbors. If in an unlikely event, a module blows off and litters someone's backyard we will clean and compensate if damage occurs.

**Q27) How do you decide who gets compensations? Can you clarify adjacent?**

A27) Our good neighbor program includes people who have property adjacent to the project. The project includes properties that will be leased to have panels on them. Adjacent refers to those parcels located adjacent to the property line.

**Q28) How do we get a written copy from the webinar, and from today?**

A28) They will be recorded and uploaded on our website.

**Q29) For how long are they going to be up in the webpage?**

A29) The webinar will be up for the duration of the project's website.

**Q30) Is there a way to print out the questions and answers?**

A30) Yes. There should be options available for printing out the questions and answers. We also have a comment box available for future questions and comments.

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

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Summary: Application Exhibit M - Public Comment electronically filed by Teresa Orahod on behalf of Dylan F. Borchers