Exhibit Y Visual Resources Technical Report Stantec

March 1, 2021





Marion County Solar Project

Visual Resources Technical Report

March 1, 2021

Prepared for:

Marion County Solar Project, LLC

Prepared by:

Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.

Sign-off Sheet

This document entitled Visual Resources Technical Report was prepared by Stantec Consulting Services Inc. ("Stantec") for the account of Marion County Solar Project, LLC (the "Client"). The material in it reflects Stantec's professional judgment in light of the scope, schedule and other limitations stated in the document and in the contract between Stantec and the Client. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the document was published and do not take into account any subsequent changes.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marion County Solar Project, LLC (Applicant) has retained the services of Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) to prepare this technical report assessing potential changes to the visual landscape resulting from the development of the Marion County Solar Project (Project). The Project would occupy a 724-acre portion of a 970-acre Project area, located entirely on privately-owned agricultural lands within Marion County, Ohio (see Figure 1; all figures are attached here as Appendix A). In this technical report, "Project area" refers to all of the land within the 970-acre Project boundary. The "Project site" refers to the 724-acre portion of the Project area where Project infrastructure is currently proposed.

The Project would have a generating capacity of 100 megawatts and would include photovoltaic (PV) solar panels (modules) mounted on a single-axis tracker racking system (mount posts) to maximize solar energy capture and electric generation of the array. Electricity generated by the modules is sent to inverters located throughout the array that would convert the electricity from direct current to alternating current. A series of medium voltage underground and/or overhead electric collection lines would collect and transfer the electricity from the inverters to a single Project substation. A short (<1,000 foot) overhead generation tie-line (gen-tie) would deliver electricity from the new Project substation to a new point of interconnection (POI) switchyard that will connect to the regional transmission grid.

The Project would also include a battery energy storage system (BESS), an operation and maintenance (O&M) trailer, meteorological (MET) towers, access roads, and fencing. During construction, the Project would include temporary laydown yards, temporary construction management trailers, and stormwater management features.

This technical report supports the Applicant's application to the Ohio Power Siting Board for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) per Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 4906-4-08(D)(4), which states that project applicants shall evaluate the potential visual impacts of proposed facilities within at least a 10-mile radius from the Project area. Specifically, the Applicant shall:

- a) Describe the visibility of the project, including a viewshed analysis and corresponding map of the study area.
- b) Describe the existing landscape and evaluate its scenic quality.
- c) Describe the alterations to the landscape caused by the facility and evaluate the impact of those alterations to the scenic quality of the landscape.
- d) Evaluate the visual impacts to the resources identified in paragraph (D)(I) of this rule, and any such resources within 10 miles of the project area that are valued specifically for their scenic quality.
- e) Provide photographic simulations or artist's pictorial sketches of the proposed facility from public vantage points that cover the range of landscapes, viewer groups, and types of scenic resources

found within the study area. The applicant should explain its selection of vantage points, including any coordination with local public officials and historic preservation groups in selecting these vantage points.

f) Describe measures that will be taken to minimize any adverse visual impacts created by the facility, including, but not limited to, project area location, lighting, layout, visual screening, and facility coloration. In no event shall these measures conflict with relevant safety requirements.

Section 2.0, Existing Conditions, describes the existing landscape of the Project area and its visual character. Section 3.0, Methods, describes the approaches taken to satisfy the OAC requirements, including: the viewshed analysis (Figure 2) in Section 4.0; the visual resources inventory (Figures 3a through 3c) in Section 5.0; and the alterations to the landscape and their impacts to scenic quality discussed in Section 6.0, which are based on evaluation of photographic simulations. The conclusion is presented in Section 7.0.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed Project is in north-central Ohio, within an agricultural region, adjacent to the northern boundary of the City of Marion. It is a small, urban community that consists mostly of single-family residences, churches, historic buildings, and educational facilities. Other nearby communities include the Village of Morral (about 8 miles northwest), the Village of Caledonia (about 9 miles northeast), and the Village of New Bloomington (about 10 miles southwest). The Project's regional setting is shown in Figure 1.

Outside of these communities, this portion of Marion County is largely rural and agricultural with some industrial facilities, of which the POET Biorefining facility ("POET plant") is the most visually prominent. The area is characterized by the relatively level stretches of farmland that are interspersed with wooded areas, residences, and farm structures (Figure 4a, Character View A¹). Electrical transmission and distribution lines are also visible throughout the area, and traverse the southeastern portion of the Project area (Figure 4b, Character View B).

The properties surrounding the Project area are primarily used as cropland or rural residential; however, there are some churches and commercial warehouse buildings adjacent to the southeast portion of the Project area near the northern boundary of the City of Marion. The rural residential properties are mostly clustered along the roadways adjacent to the Project area, such as State Route (SR) 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road), Marion-Williamsport Road, and County Road 94 (Hillman-Ford Road). However, there is one residence with farm structures surrounded by the Project area.

The Project site consists mostly of fields used for row-crop agriculture. At the time of site photography in January 2021, crops within and adjacent to the Project site were already removed. Accordingly, views across the Project site appear similar in form, color, and texture, but such features change over the

¹ Character views are included to support descriptions of existing conditions. They are described in greater detail in Section 3.0.

course of the growing season along with the height of the crops. Views of the Project site are characterized by the relatively flat agricultural lands that are adjacent to the POET plant, which is visible to residents and to motorists driving along the local roadways surrounding the Project site. Its structures are recognizable to viewers and are discernable within foreground (within 0.25 mile) and middleground views (0.25 to 3-5 miles away) (Figure 4c, Character View C). Views in which the Project site may be seen are generally limited to those within 2 miles of the site. Background views (those beyond 3-5 miles away) of the Project site diminish from greater distances and are also limited by crops during the growing season, wooded areas, and development on the adjacent lands.

The Project site is entirely within Marion County, but the 10-mile radius surrounding the Project site includes portions of Wyandot, Crawford, Morrow, and Union counties (Figure 3). The Marion County 2011 Land Use Plan does not identify specific scenic resources or protected views within the County. Additionally, there are no scenic and recreational rivers designated by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, or scenic byways designated by the Ohio Department of Transportation within 10 miles of the Project site (Figure 3).

3.0 METHODS

The evaluation of potential visual impacts of proposed facilities relied on three main exercises: 1) preparation of a viewshed analysis, which shows the areas of potential Project visibility within a 10-mile radius based on topography and the height of Project elements; 2) a visual resources inventory, which identifies resources within 10 miles of the Project area that are valued specifically for their scenic quality; and 3) production of visual simulations based on selected photographs of the Project site and which, as a set, provide a basis by which existing visual conditions can be compared to the conditions with the Project in place. The approach taken for each is described below.

Project components evaluated here are limited to the solar modules, racking system, and inverters that are distributed within the fenced Project site. The Project substation, BESS, O&M building, and POI switchyard are currently proposed in the eastern portion of the Project area along SR 423 (Figure 4b, Character View B). These facilities, including the overhead gen-tie, have not yet been designed. As such, potential visual effects identified here focus on the modules and their visibility from throughout the surrounding landscape.

The Applicant is considering a variety of module types; this technical report evaluates the effects of the largest panels under consideration, mounted to result in maximum potential profile and with the assumption that the Project would include a single-axis tracking system. Solar modules modeled are 7.5 feet in length and 3.5 feet in width. They are shown mounted on a rack with an axis point of 8.5 feet. The single-axis tracking system has a maximum angle of 120 degrees. The maximum height of the top of the solar modules under such conditions would be 15 feet. Similarly, the largest inverters were assumed in the models used in this analysis; their assumed height is 7.5 feet. The model assumed the height of the perimeter chain-link fence would be 7 feet.

The viewshed analysis described in Section 4.0 reflects the above assumptions. A viewshed analysis is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) raster model output that shows a project's theoretical visibility in its surrounding vicinity based on topography and the dimension of project components. Viewshed analyses do not account for the obstructing effects of vegetation, structures, or other objects in the landscape aside from topography. Because a solar project is a polygon and not a single feature, Stantec GIS specialists digitized the Project layout and created a model of points, spaced 500 feet apart, with heights of 15 feet. They ran the model relative to an imported digital elevation model (DEM) based on available data for topography within 10 miles of the Project site. Data in Figure 2 indicate by shade of color along a single spectrum the approximate, theoretical degree of visibility, from areas within 10 miles of the Project site (ranging from "more visible" to "less visible").

The visual resources inventory described in Section 5.0 indicates the location of resources valued for scenic quality within a 10-mile radius of the Project site. Additional potentially sensitive receptors or places where people are presumed to gather—including Ohio Department of Natural Resources lands, churches, schools, locations on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and recreation areas—were inventoried and are included in Figures 3a through 3c.

Stantec visual resources specialists reviewed aerial imagery, data, and applicable plans to identify potential viewpoints for the simulations. Potential photo points were discussed with the Applicant prior to simulation. Field surveys were conducted by Stantec on January 12, 2021 to photo-document existing visual conditions and views toward the Project site. During the field survey, weather conditions were overcast which is typical during the winter season in Ohio. The view from each Key Observation Point (KOP) was photographed using a 35-millimeter (mm), 18-megapixel, single lens reflex camera with a crop factor of 1.6x, equipped with an 18- to 55-mm focal length lens set to 31-mm. This configuration allows for a 50-mm focal length, the industry-accepted standard for approximating the field of vision in a static view of the human eye. The camera positioning was determined with a sub-meter, differentially-corrected global positioning system (GPS). The camera was positioned at eye-level for each photograph. The time at which each viewpoint was photographed was documented to allow for accurate matching between the sun's position in the sky and the orientation of the tracking modules in the simulations.

Stantec selected a representative subset of photographed viewpoints for use as KOPs, which collectively served as the basis for this assessment. This selection reflected results of the viewshed analysis and was done in coordination with the Applicant. Assessments of existing visual conditions were made based on professional judgment that took into consideration sensitive receptors and sensitive viewing areas in the vicinity of the Project area. The locations of the four KOPs in relation to the Project site are presented on Figure 1. In addition, three "character views" were selected to further support discussions of existing visual conditions surrounding the Project area. Character views are views used to support descriptions of existing visual character or discuss a project's potential visibility. They are not used in visual simulations or as the basis for evaluation of potential effects.

The photographs from the KOPs were used to generate a photo-realistic simulation of the Project as proposed. Visual simulations provide clear before-and-after images of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the features affected by and associated with the Project. The simulations were developed through an objective analytical and computer-modeling process and are accurate within the constraints of

the available site and alternative data (3-dimensional computer model was created using a combination of AutoCAD files and GIS layers and exported to Autodesk's 3-dimensional Studio Max for production). Design data—consisting of site engineering data, assumed elevations based on module and inverter specifications, site and topographical contour plans, concept diagrams, and reference pictures—were used as a platform from which digital models were created. In cases where detailed design data were unavailable, more general descriptions about alternative facilities and their locations were used to prepare the digital models.

4.0 VIEWSHED ANALYSIS

The Project viewshed shown in Figure 2 reflects the assumptions described in Section 3.0 and provides a theoretical understanding of both the Project's visibility throughout the surrounding landscape and the intensity of its visibility, based on whether more or less of the entire Project site would be visible. Because the viewshed model does not account for intervening vegetation or structures, and because of the flat terrain upon which the model was based, potential visibility of the Project appears to be high, and there are few areas within a 10-mile radius of the Project site that would not theoretically have visibility of the Project. Because of vegetation, structures, atmospheric conditions, and distance decay associated with the declining visibility of 15-foot-tall structures over long distances, the subsequent evaluation in this report focuses on views within a 2-mile radius of the Project site.

5.0 VISUAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

The visual resources inventory shown in Figure 3 reflects the assumptions described in Section 3.0 and shows the spatial relationship between resources valued for scenic quality and other potentially sensitive receptors and the Project area. Sites within 10 miles of the Project site are indicated by general type in Figure 3a. Figures 3b and 3c provide a list of the 40 sites within a 2-mile radius of the Project site consisting of 3 cemeteries, 26 places of worship, 5 schools, 4 structures listed on the NRHP, the Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad, and the CSX Transportation Railroad. The nearest sites to the Project site are the Chapel Heights Memorial Garden (about 0.3 mile to the northeast), the Linn School (about 1 mile to the east), and the Marion Enterprise Baptist Church (about 0.2 mile to the east). The Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad and the CSX Transportation Railroad are about 0.5 mile to the east and west of the Project site, respectively.

6.0 DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

This section describes views from each KOP, first under existing conditions, and then with the proposed Project simulated. The visual simulations of views illustrate the location, scale, and conceptual appearance of the Project, as seen from each KOP; they allow for comparison of pre-Project and post-Project conditions as discussed qualitatively below. Existing and simulated images are included in Figures 5 through 8, attached as Appendix A.

6.1 KOP 1 – STATE ROUTE 423 (MARION-UPPER SANDUSKY ROAD)

6.1.1 Existing View

KOP 1 is located along the southbound lane of SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road), about 2.25 miles north of the City of Marion (see Figure 1). This KOP represents the views of motorists who would be encountering the Project for the first time while traveling south to the City of Marion (Figure 5a). The view consists of the gently sloped farmland in the northeast portion of the Project site set back from SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road). The northeastern most portion of the Project site is visible beyond the patch of tall grass adjacent to the roadway and in front of the farmhouse estate visible in the center of the view. The farmhouse estate and surrounding vegetation form the backdrop to the view's foreground area and limit middleground views. As such, these structures somewhat enclose the view and convey a more rural residential character compared to the southern portion of the Project site where the POET plant is located. Electrical distribution lines and a communication tower are also prominently visible in the view and typical of similar features found within the broader visual landscape. Other residential properties are also detectable in the left side of the view; however, are mostly obscured by the stands of trees and distribution lines that parallel the highway.

6.1.2 View with Project

Figure 5b shows the view from KOP 1 with the Project simulated. From this location, the northeast corner of the Project would be about 0.1 mile away. The Project would be set back approximately 130 feet from the highway and would be individually identifiable from this distance. The addition of the solar modules would not obstruct views of the farmhouse estate or the other structures in the view. However, it would alter the existing rural character as the solar modules would be present as recognizable structures, representing a use not currently visible in the view. The mount posts would add multiple, repeating rows of vertical features to the view, which would replicate the form of the row crops that typically occupy the farmland during the growing season. As shown in Figure 5b, the solar panels are oriented toward the east to capture early afternoon light. In the morning or evening, solar modules would appear taller in profile as the arrays would be at their maximum height and oriented toward lower sunlight.

6.2 KOP 2 – MARION-WILLIAMSPORT ROAD

6.2.1 Existing View

KOP 2 is located along the eastbound lane of Marion-Williamsport Road, near the southwest corner of Kellogg Parkway (see Figure 1). This KOP represents viewers travelling along Marion-Williamsport Road that would have a direct view of the south portion of the Project, which is about 0.3 mile away (Figure 6a). The view is to the northwest and consists of an open view of the farmlands that are bordered by the POET plant. The farmlands appear relatively flat, but a portion is crossed by a drainage ditch which adds some variation to the darker color of the farmland. Overhead electrical transmission towers also cross a portion of the farmlands, and frame the structures associated with the POET plant in the center of the view. The electrical transmission towers along with the distribution line that parallels Marion-Williamsport

Road occupy most of the skyline. They relate visually to the industrial character of the POET plant and together contribute to a landscape characterized by mechanized agriculture.

6.2.2 View with Project

Figure 6b shows the view from KOP 2 with the Project simulated. In this view, the solar modules would be visible beyond the perimeter security fencing about 0.3 mile away. The Project would extend across the center of the view and would increase the presence of mechanized structures. The addition of the solar modules would alter the agricultural character of the view in that they would appear where crops would otherwise be visible; however, the modules would visually relate to the industrial structures that are prominent within the existing view and thus reinforce components of the view's overall visual character. The solar modules and perimeter fencing would add vertical structures across the view but would appear similar to the form of the row-crops that typically occupy the farmland during the growing season. In this view, the solar modules are shown mostly flat, as they would appear in the midday conditions. In the morning or evening, the solar modules would appear taller in profile as the arrays would be at their maximum height and oriented toward lower sunlight. Even at their maximum height, views of the POET plant and electrical infrastructure would remain prominently visible and retain the existing visual character.

6.3 KOP 3 – COUNTY ROAD 94 (HILLMAN-FORD ROAD)

6.3.1 Existing View

KOP 3 is located along County Road94, about 0.4 mile southwest of the Project site (see Figure 1). This KOP represents the views of drivers traveling east on County Road 94 (Hillman-Ford Road), who would have views of the western edge of the Project (Figure 7a). The view is directed to the northeast and looks across the stretch of farmland that is located beyond the grasses and shrubs adjacent to the highway. The vegetation provides some variation in color and texture to the mostly flat farmland; however, it partially limits middleground views as it extends into the skyline. In the right side of the view, residences and farm structures located along SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road) are detectable against the dark rows of trees that define the background of the view. Additionally, the existing communication tower located along SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road) is visible within the left side of the view against the skyline. It is about 1.3 miles away from this KOP and is the tallest feature in the view.

6.3.2 View with Project

Figure 7b shows the view from KOP 3 with the Project simulated. The Project would be about 0.4 mile away from this viewpoint and appear as a thin, dark band across the center of the view. At this distance, the Project would appear mostly absorbed into the existing landscape and would not alter the view's existing visual character. The solar modules would partially obscure views of the structures and rows of trees that form the view's horizon. However, the solar modules would not appear more prominent than these features as they would remain visible above the solar modules and retain the existing visual character. The solar panels are shown mostly flat in this view, as they would appear for midday

conditions. In the morning or evening, the solar modules would appear taller in profile as the arrays would be at their maximum height to capture lower sunlight.

6.4 KOP 4 – LINN SCHOOL

6.4.1 Existing View

KOP 4 is located along the southbound lane of SR 4 (Marion-Bucyrus Road) near the Linn School, identified by Marion County as an "educational attraction" (see Figure 1). This KOP was selected to demonstrate the view visitors at the Linn School would have of the Project site from about 1 mile away (Figure 8a). The view of the Project site from this KOP is relatively narrow. It mostly consists of the long stretch of farmland that extends beyond the Linn School and structures associated with the adjacent residential property in the left side of the view. The farmland is framed by the clusters of the trees in the left and right sides of the view, which somewhat draws the viewer's attention toward the center-right of the view and toward the row of structures along SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road) that are detectable across part of the view in the background. The Project site would extend between these structures, appear in front of the rows of trees that line the view's background.

6.4.2 View with Project

Figure 8b shows the view from KOP 4 with the Project simulated. The Project would be about 1 mile away from this viewpoint and would be barely detectable from this distance. It would appear as a thin light gray line between the structures located along SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road). The solar modules would not be individually distinguishable from this distance and would appear wholly absorbed into the existing landscape. The Project would not alter the qualities of the existing view, nor would it affect the existing visual character. The flat farmland and clusters of trees surrounding the Linn School would remain the dominant visual features in the view.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Marion County Solar Project would place solar modules on 724 acres of land currently used for rowcrop agriculture. The presence of the Project would be visually unique within the Project area, but would be viewed within a rural agricultural area that already contains mechanized structures throughout the broader landscape.

In general, the Project would be visible and identifiable to viewers. As shown in the simulated views from KOP 1 through KOP 4, the Project would be evident to varying degrees by those travelling along the surrounding roadway network. Views of mechanical structures associated with the POET plant are already prevalent throughout the Project area, particularly in the southern and eastern portions of the Project area along SR 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road) and Marion-Williamsport Road. As shown in the view from KOP 2, located about 0.3 mile away, the addition of the Project would increase the presence of mechanized structures but would visually relate to the industrial character of the POET plant.

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However, in areas where the POET plant is not prominently visible, the Project would somewhat contrast with the existing visual character as it is predominantly rural residential.

Visibility of the Project would decrease over relatively short distances. As shown in the simulated views from KOP 3 and KOP 4, the Project would become less noticeable in views from 0.4 mile away and difficult to identify in views from 1 mile away. From such distances, individual modules would not be distinguishable and would be mostly absorbed into the existing agricultural setting. This decrease in visibility defines the outer extent of the Project's actual viewshed. As such, its effects to sensitive receptors greater than 1 mile away but still within the 2-mile radius shown in Figure 3b would likely be minimal. Views of the Project from these locations would be further limited by the flat topography of the Project area, surrounding vegetation, and crops on adjacent lands during the growing season. Therefore, the Project would not be prominently visible in broader, more long-distance views and affirms the decision to focus this evaluation on views no further than 2 miles from the Project area.

8.0 **REFERENCES**

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Appendix A FIGURES





Title Project Location, Key Observation Points, and Character Views Map

2028113241

Client/Project Marion County Solar, LLC Marion County Solar Project





Notes 1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Ohio North FIPS 3401 Feet 2. Data Sources: Stantec, Savion, USGS, NADS 3. Orthophotography: 2019 NAIP







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4a) View to the southwest from Character View A. This viewpoint is located along the southbound lane of State Route 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road). The Project would be about 0.1 mile away, appearing across the entire view and beyond the cluster of trees and residence in the right side of the view.



4b) View to the northwest from Character View B. The viewpoint is located along the northbound lane of State Route 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road) and directed toward the existing electrical transmission line that crosses the southeastern portion of the Project area. This view also shows the proposed locations for the BESS, Project substation, O&M building, and switching station. These facilities would be less than 0.1 mile away and appear in front of the solar modules located about 0.2 mile away.





4c) View to the west from Character View C. The viewpoint is located along the southbound lane of State Route 4 (Marion-Bucyrus Road), about 0.6 mile away. The Project would appear in the center of the view between the POET Biorefining facility and the communication tower.



Project Location

Marion County, Ohio

Client/Project

Marion County Solar, LLC Marion County Solar Project

Figure No

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Title

Character Views



a) View to the south from KOP 1. The view is from the southbound lane of State Route 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road), about 2.5 miles north of the City of Marion. The Project would be about 0.1 mile away and occupy a small portion of the farmland in the right side of the view.



b) View from KOP 1 with the Project simulated.



Project Location

Marion County, Ohio

Client/Project

Marion County Solar, LLC Marion County Solar Project

Figure No.

5 Title



a) View to the northwest from KOP 2. The view is near the intersection of Marion-Williamsport Road and Kellogg Parkway, about 0.3 mile from the Project. The Project would extend across the agricultural field and appear in front of the POET Biorefining facility.



b) View from KOP 2 with the Project simulated.



Project Location

Marion County, Ohio

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Marion County Solar, LLC Marion County Solar Project

Figure No.

6 Title



a) View to the northeast from KOP 3. This viewpoint is located along County Road 94 (Hillman-Ford Road), about 0.4 mile from the western edge of the Project site. The Project would extend across the center of the view and partially obscure portions of the structures and rows of trees that define the view's horizon.



b) View from KOP 3 with the Project simulated.



Project Location

Marion County, Ohio

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Marion County Solar, LLC Marion County Solar Project

Figure No.

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a) View to the southwest from KOP 4. This KOP is located along State Route 4 (Marion-Bucyrus Road) near the Linn School, identified by Marion County as an "educational attraction." The Project site would be 1 mile away and extend between the structures that are visible in the center of the view along State Route 423 (Marion-Upper Sandusky Road).



b) View from KOP 4 with the Project simulated.



Project Location

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Figure No.

8

Title

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Case No(s). 21-0036-EL-BGN

Summary: Application - 28 of 30 (Exhibit Y – Visual Resources Technical Report) electronically filed by Christine M.T. Pirik on behalf of Marion County Solar Project, LLC