# **Visual Impact Mitigation Plan**

## Clear Mountain Energy Center

December 2023

#### **Prepared for**

#### **Clear Mouintain Energy Center, LLC**

422 Admiral Boulevard Kansas City, MO 64106

#### **Prepared by**



4101 Cox Rd Ste. 120 Glen Allen, VA 23060

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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Clear Mountain Energy Center, LLC ("Clear Mountain") is proposing to construct the Clear Mountain Energy Center (Project), a 100-megawatt ("MW") photovoltaic ("PV") solar generation facility ("Project") with a 52-MW battery energy storage system ("BESS"). The Project is situated on approximately 1,226 acres of privately-owned land located in Clermont County, Ohio, which Clear Mountain will control via leases or purchase options with the individual owners ("Project Area").

The Project is located in Clermont County, Ohio approximately 2 miles northwest of the Village of Williamsburg and approximately 23 miles east of the City of Cincinnati. The Project is bounded roughly by Sharps Cutoff Road to the east, Hawley Road to the west, Jackson Pike Road to the north, and State Route 276 which bisects the southern portion of the Project. The Project will have a nameplate capacity of approximately 100 MW alternating current ("AC"), consisting of solar arrays and associated infrastructure, comprising the following components:

- A solar field of PV panels producing direct current ("DC") electricity mounted on fixed-tilt tracking structures or single-axis tracking structures that will follow the sun throughout the day;
- Inverters within boxes will be situated amongst the solar arrays to convert DC electricity to AC electricity;
- A medium-voltage cable collection system that will extend underground to aggregate the AC output from the inverters;
- A Project substation which will step up the voltage to 138 kV. A short overhead 138 kV generation tie-in line will be constructed to deliver electricity from the Project substation to a switchyard that will be the Point of Interconnection to the regional electric grid; and
- Internal infrastructure including permanent gravel access roads and security fencing.

The Project will also have a 52-MW BESS component that will be placed in the vicinity of a proposed substation/switchyard and will include a graveled area surrounded by a chain-link fence. The BESS system will likely be placed on concrete slabs and will be connected to the substation/switchyard by buried electrical cables. PV panels will be ground-mounted on a low-profile tracking system that will be supported by small I-beam posts driven into the ground. The result is an extremely small ground disturbance footprint associated with the panels.

Each proposed solar array area will have an access driveway off the public roads, and there will be internal gravel access roads within the solar panel array areas. The Project will include four main components that include the panel array areas, interconnection corridors, battery storage area, and switchyard/substation area.

#### 2.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The plan is designed to provide an outline of visual impact minimization and mitigation strategies that will be part of the Project design and construction process. Visual impact minimization and mitigation

is intended to soften and or screen highly visible areas of the Project but will not completely obscure Project infrastructure from view.

#### 3.0 VISUAL IMPACT MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION METHODS

The Project is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity of the Project where existing vegetation does not screen the views; however, the Applicant has sited the perimeter fencing at least 150 feet from the edge of adjacent roads in order to minimize the visibility of the Project with the solar modules being set back an additional distance. Additionally, the Applicant has established 300-foot setbacks from non-participating residences from all Project infrastructure, thereby further reducing the visual impacts of the Project to residents.

As a visual impact minimization measure, the Applicant has committed to the use of agricultural, wildlife-friendly fencing rather than using chain-link fencing along the perimeter of the Project Facility. The agricultural fencing style is more consistent with the agricultural landscape surrounding the Project Area and is less industrial looking than chain-link fencing with barbed wire on top which is commonly used for facilities like this.

The Applicant has also committed to retaining existing trees within the Project Area, to the extent practicable, to help screen the Project and reduce visual impacts. Supplemental mitigation measures, in the form of vegetative screening, have been discussed with adjacent residents in order to obstruct or soften views of the Project, where appropriate. The Applicant has engaged with local residents to seek feedback on the visual impact of the Project and is committed to working with those residents to develop and implement a vegetative screening plan for the Project.

The location of currently planned planted vegetative screening can be seen in Appendix A – Proposed Landscape Screening Locations. These locations were selected as they are areas that lack natural screening between the Project and adjacent residences. The Applicant has also provided a Planting Schedule (Appendix B) which includes the species to be planted and density of plantings. The Applicant prioritized the use of native vegetation and vegetation that mimics local natural areas.

The Applicant believes that these visual mitigation methods will minimize the visual impacts given the existing viewshed and results of the Visual Impact Assessment Report (Exhibit V).

### APPENDIX A: PROPOSED LANDSCAPE SCREENING LOCATIONS



- Operations and Maintenance Building

## APPENDIX B: CLEAR MOUNTAIN ENERGY CENTER PLANTING SCHEDULE









DISTANCES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE.
PROPOSED VEGETATION TO FILL GAPS BETWEEN EXISTING VEGETATION.

NOTE:

			ANTING SCH	EDULE			
KEY	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME SIZE S		SPACING	CONDITION	NOTES	DETAIL
LARGE	TREES						
AR	ACER RUBRUM	RED MAPLE 2" CAL		SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
BN	BETULA NIGRA	RIVER BIRCH	2" CAL	SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
PV	PRUNUS VIRGINIANA	COMMON CHOKEBERRY	2" CAL	SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
EVERG	REEN TREES						
JV	JUNIPERUS VIRGINIANA	EASTERN RED CEDAR	6'-8' HEIGHT	SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
ТО	THUJA OCCIDENTALIS	AMERICAN ARBORVITAE	6'-8' HEIGHT	SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
PS	PINUS STROBUS	WHITE PINE	6'-8' HEIGHT	SEE DETAIL	B&B	FULL; STRONG, CENTRAL LEADER	A1
SMALL	TREES / LARGE SHRUBS						
jc	JUNIPERUS COMMUNIS	COMMON JUNIPER	15 GALLON	SEE DETAIL	CONTAINER	FULL	A2
vd	VIBURNUM DENTATUM	ARROWWOOD VIBURNUM	15 GALLON	SEE DETAIL	CONTAINER	FULL	A2
vb	VIBURNUM X BURKWOODII "MOHAWK"	MOHAWK VIRBURNUM	15 GALLON	SEE DETAIL	CONTAINER	FULL	A2
vr	VIBURNUM X RHYTIDOPHYLLOIDES "ALLEGHANY"	ALLEGHANY VIBURNUM	15 GALLON	SEE DETAIL	CONTAINER	FULL	A2

NOTE: PRELIMINARY PLANT SCHEDULE. PLANTS MAY BE SUBSTITUTED BASED ON AVAILABILITY OR OTHER APPROVED SUBSTITUTES.





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				Clear Mountain Energy Center	Drawn By:	TAB
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Summary: Application Exhibit W – Visual Impact Mitigation Plan electronically filed by Teresa Orahood on behalf of Herrnstein, Kara.