

Staff Report for the McHenry County Zoning Board of Appeals

Application: #Z25-0074

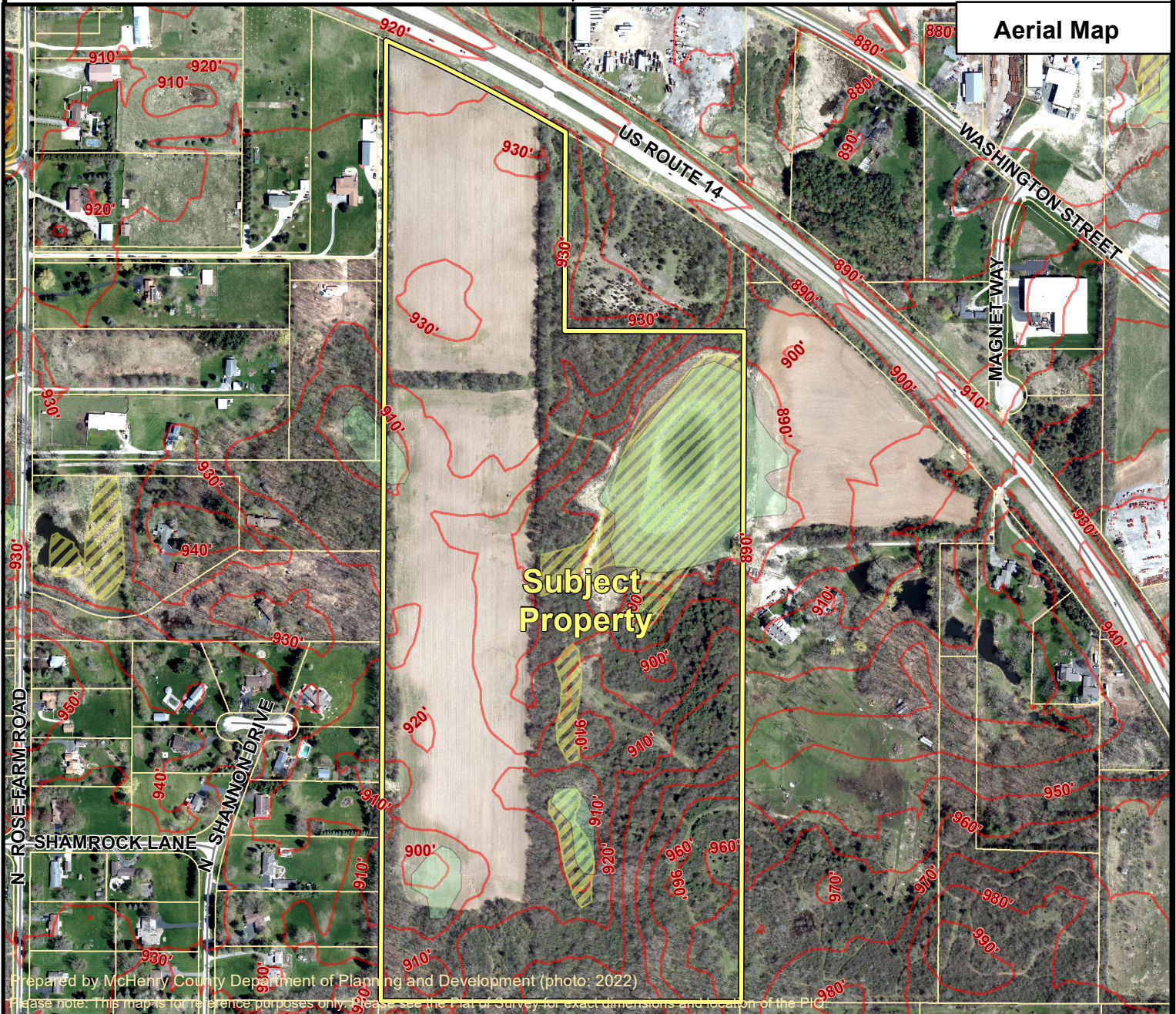
PIN: #07-36-326-003

Location: The property consists of approximately 88.075 acres and is located on the south side of U.S. Highway 14, approximately three hundred fifty (350) feet east of the intersection of U.S. Highway 14 and Washington Street, in Hartland Township, Illinois.

Hearing: September 17, 2025

Applicant: Woodstock Community Energy Initiative LLC

Request: Conditional Use Permit to allow for a Commercial Solar Energy Facility






Prepared by McHenry County Department of Planning and Development (photo: 2022)
 Please note: This map is for reference purposes only. Please see the Plat of Survey for exact dimensions and location of the PIC.

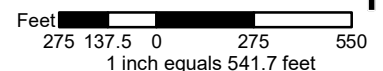
ADID Wetland Map 2005

Elevation
 (feet above sea level)

— Contours

-  High Functional Value Wetland (hfw)
-  High Quality Wetland (hqw)
-  Wetland (w)
-  Farmed Wetland (fw)

Historic Flood Zone



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STAFF COMMENTS

The following comments and conclusions are based upon staff analysis and review prior to this hearing and are to be considered viable unless evidence is established to the contrary. Staff may have additional comments based upon the testimony presented during the public hearing.

BACKGROUND & REQUEST SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a Commercial Solar Energy Facility. The subject property consists of approximately eighty-eight (88) acres and is zoned A-1 Agriculture District. According to the aerial photography, the subject property is currently in crop production and contains significant tree cover.

According to the narrative, the applicant is proposing up to a 5-megawatt commercial solar energy facility, enclosed by a eight (8)-foot tall security fence, per the regulations of the National Electric Code. The nearest adjacent residence on a nonparticipating parcel is over one-hundred fifty (150) feet from the proposed location of the solar array.

Note: On January 27, 2023, the State of Illinois passed Public Act 102-1123 (further modified under trailer bill P.A. 103-0580 on December 8, 2023), which modifies regulations for proposed commercial solar energy facilities. The County of McHenry has amended the Unified Development Ordinance, as of April 18, 2023, in order to comply with the State's regulations.

MCHENRY COUNTY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

- The applicant must meet the Principal Use Standards for a Solar Farm, listed in County Code Section 16.56.030.PP of the UDO (with the exception of any changes provided by Public Act 102-1123, as outlined above).

STAFF ANALYSIS

Current Land Use & Zoning

The property is adjacent to Agricultural uses to the east, Single-Family Residential to the south, Agricultural and Single-Family Residential to the west, and Vacant and Industrial to the north. The surrounding zoning consists of A-1 Agriculture to the east and south, A-1 Agriculture and E-1 Estate to the west, and B-3 Business and I-1V Industrial to the north.

2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map

The proposed conditional use permit is not consistent with the County's future land use designation of Residential.

2030 Comprehensive Plan & 2030 and Beyond Analysis

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan and 2030 and Beyond Update support the construction of commercial solar energy facilities within existing agricultural areas. (See analysis below)

McHenry County 2030 and Beyond, Adopted October 18, 2016

Big Idea #1 Let's make our communities healthy, active, and green

"We can make it happen by preserving our groundwater aquifers, lakes, rivers, streams, and their natural functions." (p.11)

- The McHenry County Water Resources Division has determined that the panels will not be calculated as an impervious surface for the development permit. This is because the panels are proposed to be elevated above the ground several feet and supported by driven piles. The petitioner will be required to obtain a Stormwater Management Permit which will include calculations for all impervious areas, including but not limited to the piles, access drives, and equipment pads.

Big Idea #2 Let's build on our strengths

"We can make it happen by recognizing the economic and social importance of our agricultural industry." (p. 15)

- The McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District's Natural Resources Inventory report (#25-063-4724) indicates that the LE score is 71.54 out of a possible 100 regarding soils for crop production. This is due, in part, to approximately 55.7% of the site containing prime farmland soils. The concerns that the development of solar facilities in the county will result in the loss of farmland, particularly prime farmland can be remediated because, unlike other forms of development, the land is preserved for future farming. Also, the proposed native vegetation may slow the velocity of runoff, capturing sediments or other pollutants and allowing water to infiltrate into the soil, thereby reducing potential for erosion and sedimentation and improving soil conditions.

Big Idea #3 Let's grow smarter

"The county should also be open to commercial enterprises in the unincorporated areas that are major generators of jobs or tax revenues for which no suitable municipal sites exist elsewhere in the county, or that are dependent upon a direct proximity to agriculture or open space and designed in harmony with these areas." (p. 17 & 21)

- Due to the size and scale of the project, undeveloped acreage is important to the siting and development of a commercial solar energy facility. The applicant should be prepared to address how the proposed use relates to the statement above regarding generation of jobs, tax revenues, and siting of the facility.

Big Idea #4 Let's expand our economy

"We can make it happen by improving infrastructure, including freight and commuter rail, access to major regional and interstate roadways, and access to high-speed internet services." (p.22)

- The proposed commercial solar energy facility will provide a renewable energy source to the electrical grid as an alternative to energy created from sources with a larger carbon footprint.

McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted April 20, 2010

Community Character & Housing

No applicable text.

Agricultural Resources

"Encourage owners of parcels with the greatest potential for productive agricultural use, such as parcels with an LE score of 80 or above that are in agricultural use and contiguous with other such parcels, to preserve their parcels for agricultural uses." (p. 38, #7)

- Commercial solar energy facilities typically have a life of approximately thirty (30) to forty (40) years and after that time the property may return to agriculture.

"Continue joint participation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District in educational programs regarding best soil conservation practices and improving rural water quality." (p. 38, #20)

- The McHenry-Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District recommends that areas between panels be planted to a native prairie mix to help increase water infiltration and reduce runoff from the site. It is recommended that a planting and maintenance plan be developed with the landowner to ensure that noxious weeds are controlled, and native plantings are properly installed and managed. The petitioner is encouraged to add pollinator species to this planting plan. The Soil and Water Conservation District also recommends, upon decommissioning, that if any underground lines are to remain, they should have at least five (5) feet of cover to adequately allow farming operations to commence after the facility's removal.

Greenways, Open Space & Natural Resources

"Protect environmentally sensitive areas from negative impacts of adjacent land uses." (p.57, #9)

- The IDNR found record of potential protected resources in the vicinity of the project location (West Woodstock Prairie INAI Site, Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve Class 3 Groundwater, Blanding's Turtle, and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee) but concluded that adverse effects were unlikely, as long as the applicants adopted their recommendations as outlined in their February 20, 2025 letter. The endangered species consultation was terminated.

"Encourage the design of developments to achieve the broader sustainability of human and natural communities, including the social and economic dimensions of sustainability." (p. 57, #15)

- The proposed commercial solar energy facility will contribute to a broader sustainability objective in that it will produce clean energy as a replacement for energy produced by unsustainable means.

Water Resources

"Preserve and enhance the chemical, physical, biological, hydrologic integrity of streams, lakes and wetlands." (p.63)

"...land use and development should be carefully examined and regulated within sensitive groundwater recharge areas to ensure that the water quality, quantity, and natural recharge functions of the area are safely maintained." (p.67)

- The applicant will be required to obtain a Stormwater Management Permit prior to construction.

Economic Development

"Decrease the degree to which the residential sector in the County must pay for services." (p.87)

- The state legislature has approved standards that would regulate how commercial solar energy facilities are assessed for tax purposes. The standards would result in an increase from the current assessed value of agricultural land.

Infrastructure

"It is estimated that every 120 MW of solar power would eliminate 1.7 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions which is the equivalent of removing 310,000 vehicles from the nation's roadways annually. A 1,000 MW coal plant produces approximately 6 million tons of carbon dioxide per year." (p.116)

"Encourage all governmental units in the County to adopt and support ordinances that will enhance all segments of the areas electric grid." (p. 120, #5)

The proposed commercial solar energy facility is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* support of more sustainable energy sources.

STAFF ASSESSMENT

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan and the 2030 and Beyond Update both support the development of commercial solar energy facilities. Once the facility is constructed, there is very little to no traffic generated by the use. There is very minimal risk of noise, lighting, or other nuisances generated by this use. The proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses. As noted within Public Act 102-1123, a request for a Conditional Use Permit for a commercial solar energy facility shall be approved if the request is in compliance with the standards and conditions imposed within the Act, the zoning ordinance adopted consistent with this Code, and the conditions imposed under State and Federal statutes and regulations. A County may not adopt zoning regulations that disallow commercial solar energy facilities from being developed or operated in any district zoned to allow agricultural or industrial uses. All construction will be required to meet applicable codes and ordinances for: fire protection, commercial building and electrical construction, and stormwater management.

Staff offers the following conditions for consideration:

1. The Conditional Use shall have no time limit, unless the use is abandoned as specified in 16.56.030.PP.4 of the McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance.
2. Site development shall be in substantial conformance with the site plan prepared by Kimley-Horn, dated July 25, 2025, and received by the Department of Planning and Development on August 8, 2025. (attached).
3. The *Decommissioning Plan* shall be applicable in part as well as in whole. If any portion of the commercial solar energy facility ceases to perform its intended function for more than twelve (12) consecutive months, that portion of the facility shall be decommissioned in compliance with all the terms of the *Decommissioning Plan*.
4. A McHenry County Stormwater Management Permit shall be secured prior to construction. Any damaged drainage tiles shall be repaired at the expense of the Petitioner and in a manner satisfactory to the Water Resources Division Manager.
5. A detailed Landscape Plan illustrating compliance with required landscape screening standards and Illinois Department of Natural Resources Pollinator Scorecard Standards and land management practices shall be approved by the Zoning Enforcement Officer prior to issuance of construction/building permit.
6. Recommendations made by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in their February 20, 2025 letter to the applicants, with regard to protected resources in the vicinity of the project location, shall be followed.
7. Fencing shall be provided in compliance with the National Electrical Code, as applicable, and shall be of a woven wire agricultural style, containing a 6-inch gap along the bottom to prevent the restriction of wildlife movement. The use of barbed wire is prohibited. Setting fence posts in concrete is prohibited except for gate posts and where otherwise required for stability.
8. All requirements of McHenry County Unified Development Ordinance §16.56.030.PP (as amended, subject to State of Illinois Public Act 102-1123 and Public Act 103-0580) shall be met or exceeded unless specifically amended by this Conditional Use Permit.
9. All other federal, state, and local laws shall be met.

16.56.030 Principal Use Standards

PP. **COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY.** Conditional use permits for a COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY shall have no time limit, unless the use is abandoned as specified in subsection PP.4. below (COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY: Abandonment), or the permit is revoked in accordance with § 16.20.040I. (Revocation of Conditional Use Permits).

1. Application.

- a. A threatened and endangered species consultation (EcoCAT) from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is required at the time of conditional use permit application for any site that is five (5) acres or greater in size and currently in agricultural use or undeveloped.
- b. A site plan shall be provided showing all improvements, including structures, fencing, power lines (above and below ground), lighting, and landscaping, at a detail sufficient to understand the location, height, appearance, and area.
- c. All other application submittal requirements outlined in the *Planning and Development Department Zoning Application Packet* as published on the McHenry County Website.

2. Site design.

- a. Solar panels, structures, and electrical equipment, excluding fences and power lines for interconnection, shall be erected no less than fifty (50) feet from any lot line and no less than one hundred fifty (150) feet from any residence, other than a residence on the same ownership parcel.
- b. No structures, excluding power lines for interconnection, may exceed twenty (20) feet in height. Power lines shall be placed underground to the maximum extent possible.
- c. Lighting must comply with § 16.60.020 (Exterior Lighting).
- d. Solar panels shall have a surface that minimizes glare and shall comply with § 16.60.040D. (Lighting and Glare).
- e. The facility shall be situated as to minimize impacts to woodlands, savannas, wetlands, drainage tiles, and encroachment into flood plains. All site development shall comply with the Stormwater Management Ordinance. Any damaged drainage tiles shall be repaired.
- f. In order prevent erosion, manage run-off, and provide ecological benefit, the facility shall be planted with "low-profile" native prairie species, using a mix appropriate for the region and soil conditions per Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) standards, as amended from time to time.
- g. Fencing shall be provided in compliance with the National Electrical Code, as applicable. The use of barbed wire must comply with § 16.56.050H.1.c. of this Ordinance.
- h. Any part of the facility that is within five hundred (500) feet of a NONPARTICIPATING RESIDENCE, or road right-of-way, shall be landscaped with an arrangement of native shrubs, subject to approval by the County Board, unless the facility is screened from view by existing vegetation.
- i. Prior to building permit issuance, the operator shall prepare a landscape monitoring and maintenance plan to ensure the establishment and continued maintenance of the native prairie species, all installed landscape screening, and all existing vegetation that provides required landscape screening.
- j. Prior to scheduled public hearing, the operator shall enter into an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), as required by that department.
- k. Prior to building permit issuance, the operator shall provide an executed road use agreement between the Applicant and the appropriate governing road and highway jurisdictions or the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), showing approved entrances.

3. Safety.

- a. Prior to construction, the operator shall prepare an emergency management plan acceptable to the County and the local fire district and shall be responsible for training of emergency personnel, as needed.
- b. A sign shall be posted providing the name of the operator and a phone number to be used in case of an on-site emergency.
- c. Access shall be granted, provided appropriate advance notice, for periodic inspection of the site by the County or the local fire district.
- d. Damaged solar panels shall be removed, repaired, or replaced within sixty (60) days of the damage. The ground shall remain free of debris from damaged solar panels at all times.

4. Abandonment.

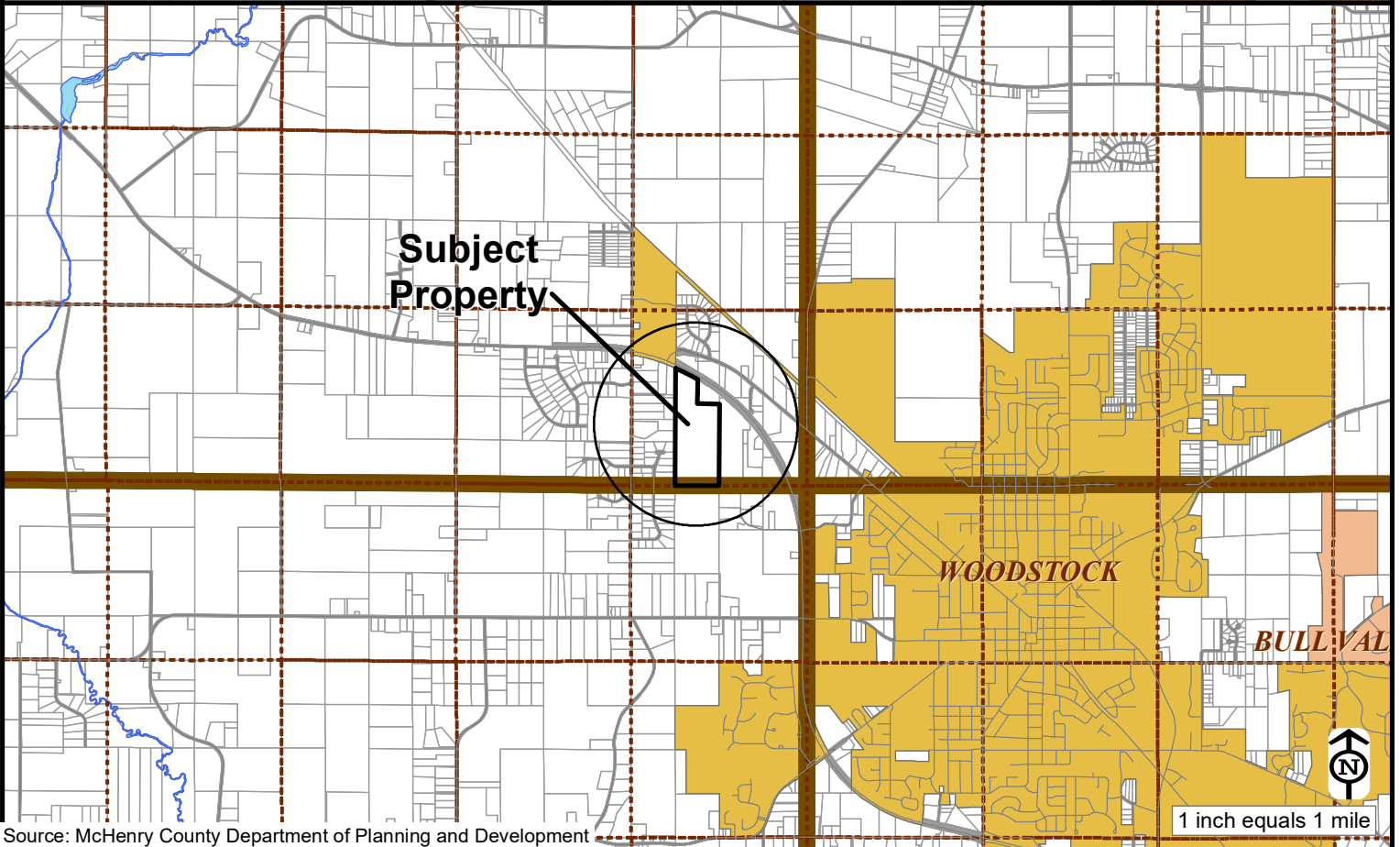
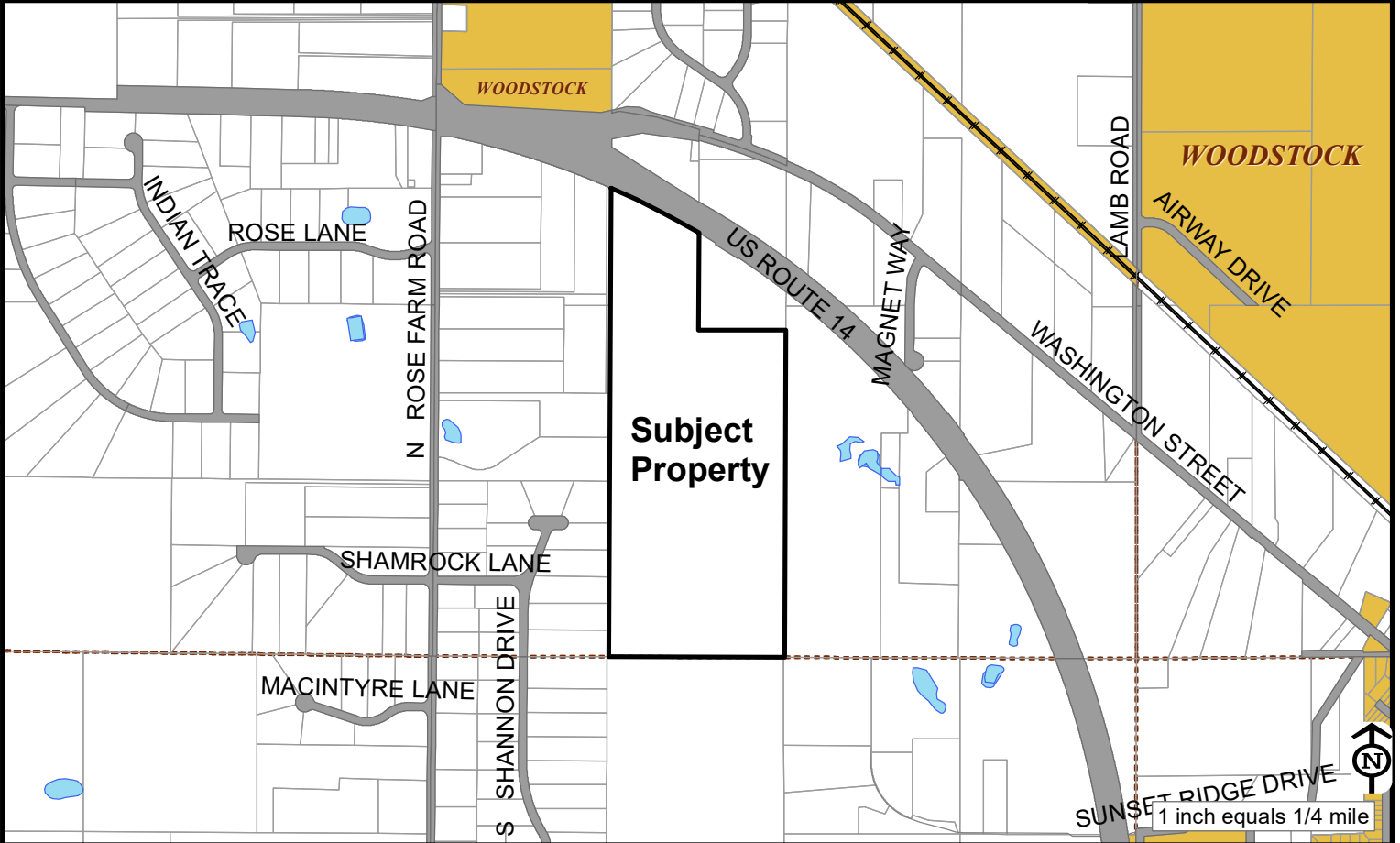
- a. The COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY shall be considered abandoned if the operator fails to pay rent as specified in the Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement, or it ceases to generate electricity for a period of twelve (12) consecutive months. Reports of electrical power production shall be provided to the County upon request. An abandoned COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY must be decommissioned and removed within twelve (12) months from the time it is deemed abandoned. The operator may appeal in writing to the Zoning Enforcement Officer for an extension of time in order to remove the facility or to bring the solar farm back into operation.

5. Decommissioning. Decommissioning and removal of the COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY shall be the responsibility of the operator upon abandonment or revocation of the conditional use permit. All operators shall comply with the following:

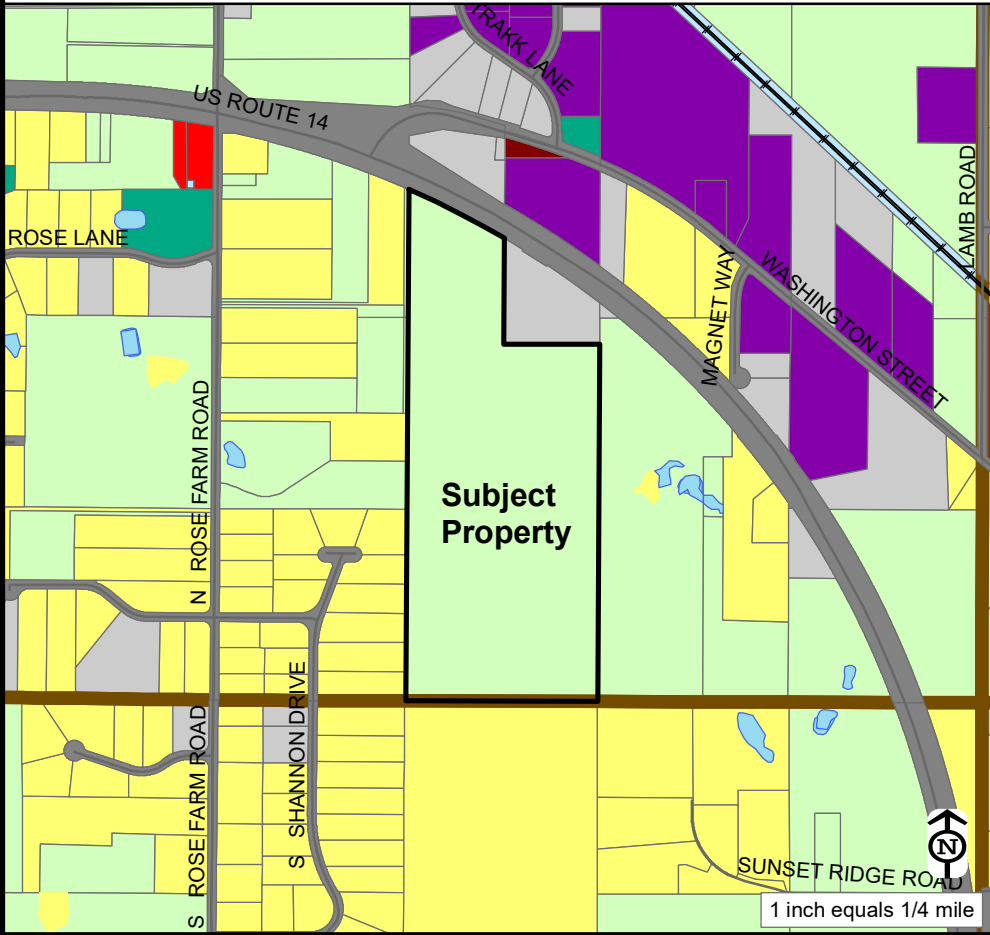
- a. Prior to building permit issuance, the operator shall prepare a decommissioning plan which shows the final site conditions after the COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY has been removed from the property. Decommissioning plans shall require removal of all solar panels, electrical equipment, poles, piles, foundations, and conduits (above and below ground). Access roads, fencing, groundcover, and landscaping may remain only by agreement of property owner.

b. Prior to building permit issuance, the operator shall submit an engineer's estimate of cost for decommissioning the facility and restoring the site in accordance with the approved decommissioning plan. Upon review and approval by the Zoning Enforcement Officer of the estimate, the operator shall obtain a bond, letter of credit, or other form of surety acceptable to the County to be held by the Department of Planning and Development in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the estimate. Provision of this financial assurance shall be phased in over the first eleven (11) years of the project's operation or as otherwise provided in accordance with the executed Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement.

c. During the operation of the facility, a new engineer's estimate of cost for decommissioning shall be submitted every ten (10) years to the Department of Planning and Development. Upon approval of the estimated costs by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, a revised surety shall be provided to the Department of Planning and Development in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the new estimate.



Current Land Use Map



Current Land Use

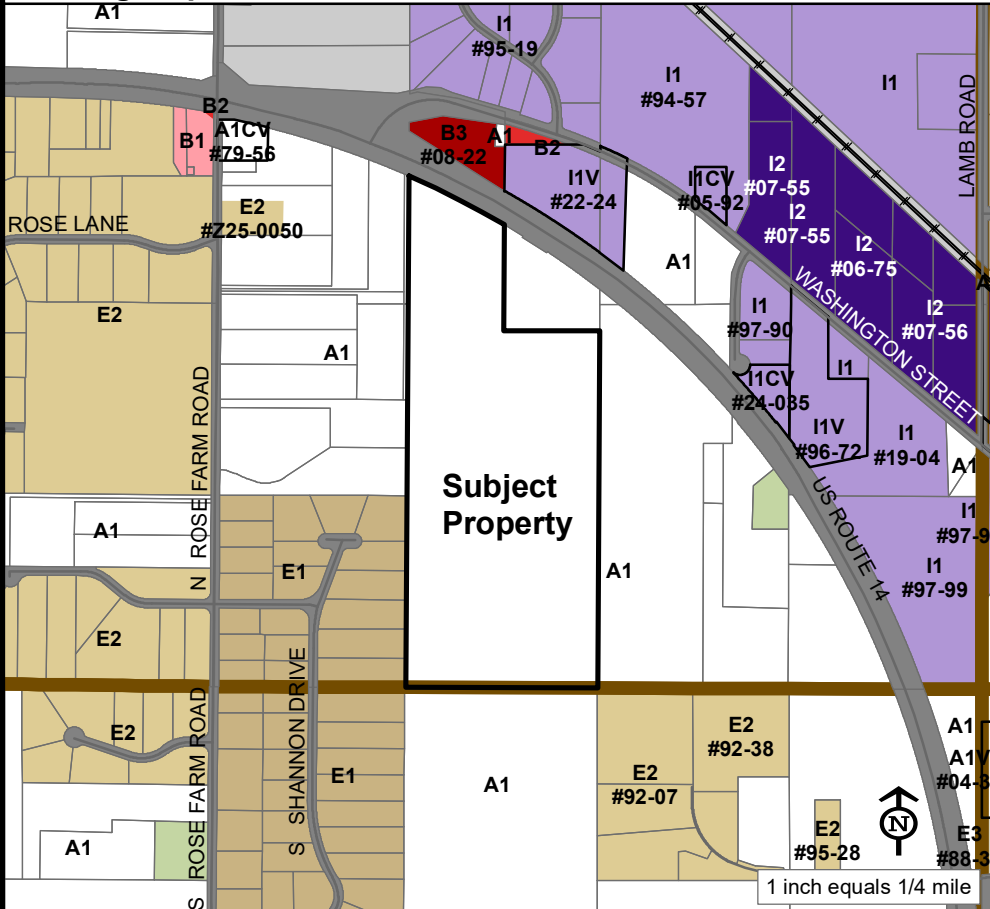
Agriculture

Adjacent Land Use(s)

- North: *Vacant/Industrial*
- South: *Single-Family Residential*
- East: *Agriculture*
- West: *Agriculture/Single-Family Residential*

- Agriculture
- MCCD Agriculture
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Open Space
- Golf Course
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Earth Extraction
- Vacant
- Government / Institutional
- Transportation, Communication, Utilities
- Under Review

Zoning Map



Current Zoning

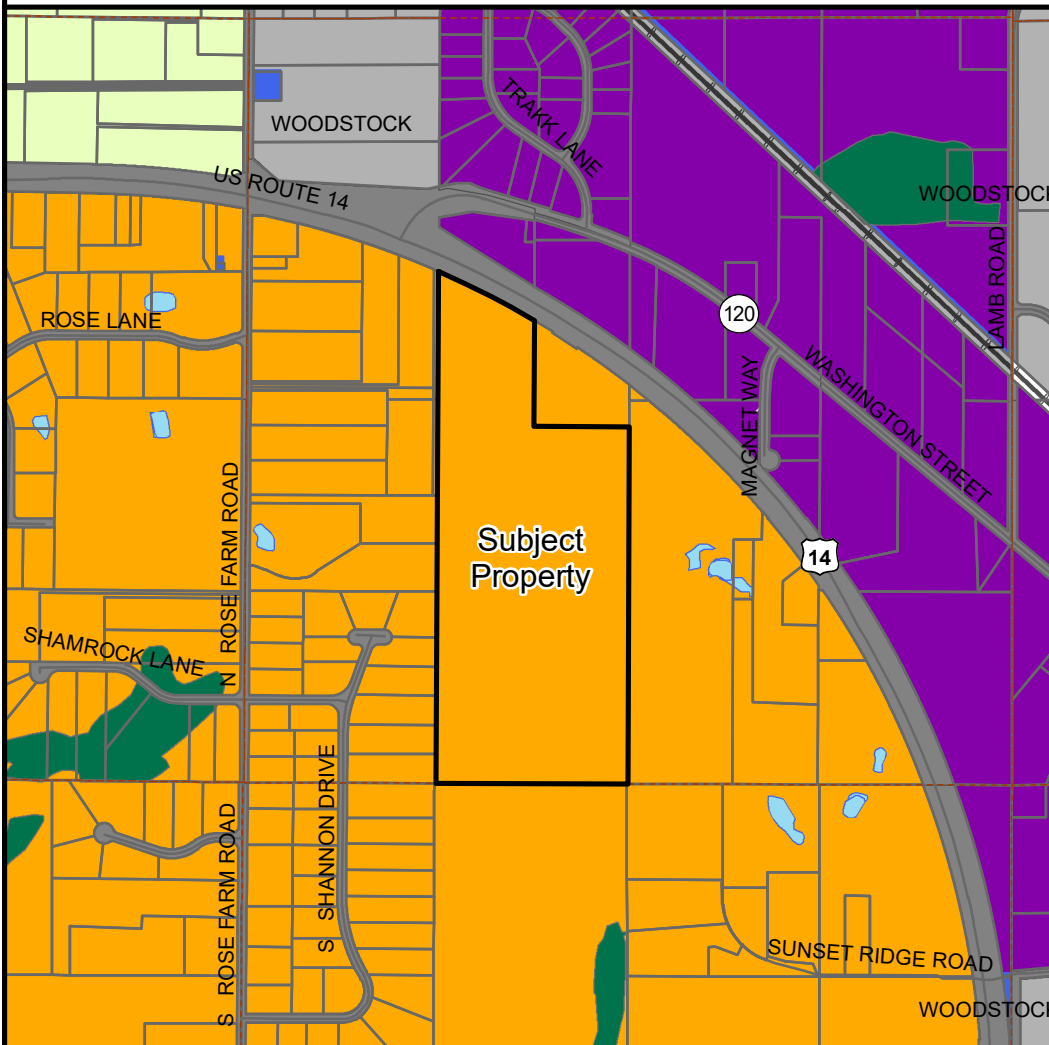
A-1 Agriculture

Adjacent Zoning

- North: *B-3 Business/I-1V Industrial*
- South: *A-1 Agriculture*
- East: *A-1 Agriculture*
- West: *A-1 Agriculture/E-1 Estate*

- A-1 Agriculture
- A-2 Agriculture
- E-5 Estate
- E-3 Estate
- E-2 Estate
- E-1 Estate
- R-1 Single-Family Residential
- R-2 Two-Family Residential
- R-3 Multiple-Family Residential
- B-1 Neighborhood Business
- B-2 Neighborhood Business
- B-3 General Business
- O Office / Research
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial
- PD Planned Development
- C Conditional Use
- V Variation
- Incorporated

McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Map Designation

Residential

- Agricultural
 - Open Space
 - Environmentally Sensitive Area
 - Estate
 - Isolated Estate
 - Residential
 - Isolated Residential
 - Retail
 - Mixed Use
 - Office, Research, Industrial
 - Gov't, Institutional, Utilities
 - TOD Existing Rail Station
 - TOD Future Rail Station
 - Active Earth Extraction Site
 - Municipality
- Scale: 1 inch = 1/4 mile



Municipal / Township Plan Designations

Hartland Township: Agriculture

Woodstock: Neighborhood Development

McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan — Text Analysis

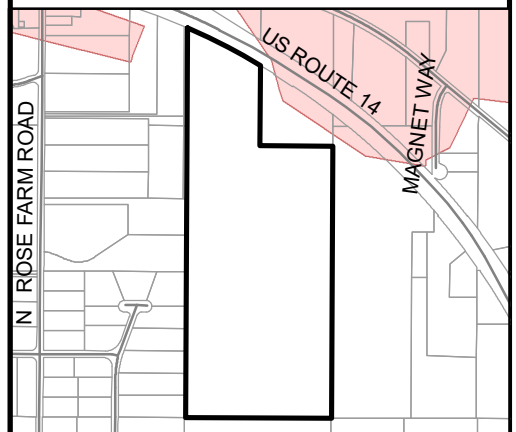
Land Use

Residential includes existing and proposed areas for single-family and multifamily residential uses at gross densities of less than one acre per dwelling unit. Within the Residential district, development densities should consider nearby land uses and zoning, and the availability of transportation, infrastructure, water supply, and other public services, environmental limitations, and other factors required by County ordinances, state statutes, and case law.

Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas

The site is not located in a zone with elevated contamination potential.

Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARA)



- Sensitive Recharge Area

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE

WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE LLC
 202 GARDEN STREET #106
 WOODSTOCK, VA 22693
 (540) 460-2088

Kimley-Horn
 2022 KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
 DECEMBER 16, 2023 (947) 240-7804
 570 LAKE CROFT ROAD, SUITE 300
 WILMINGTON, DE 19806
 194.000217-2-0006 062.045338

PROJECT	KHA PROJECT
DATE	7/25/2025
SCALE	AS SHOWN
DESIGNED BY	AMC
DRAWN BY	AMC
CHECKED BY	AMC

WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE LLC
 WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE LLC
 5 OF US HIGHWAY 14, E. OF NORTH ROSE LAMM ROAD
 MOCHERY COUNTY, VA, 22688

SITE LAYOUT

WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE LLC
 SHEET NUMBER
C-200

LEGEND

- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- PROPERTY LINE
- PROPERTY SETBACK
- ROAD CENTERLINE
- EX OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
- EX RIGHT-OF-WAY
- EXISTING RESIDENCE/STRUCTURE
- EX WETLAND AREA
- EX WETLAND BUFFER
- EX TREELINE
- EX EXISTING TREELINE
- EX FENCE
- EX UTILITY EASEMENT
- EX HISTORICAL FLOOD ZONE
- EX WOODED AREA TO BE UTILIZED FOR SCREENING
- PR SECURITY FENCE
- PR TREELINE
- PR UTILITY POLE
- PR ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AREA
- PR SOLAR ARRAY
- PR OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
- PR UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC (AC)
- PR SITE ACCESS
- PR SITE ACCESS SHOULDER
- PR ACCESS ROAD
- PR GRADING LIMITS
- PR CULTIVAT OUTLET
- PR CULTIVAT
- PR VEGETATIVE SCREENING

NOTES

- SETBACKS PER MOCHERY COUNTY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE. PRINCIPAL USE STANDARDS OUTLINES IN 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.0, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 6.0, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 7.0, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8.0, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.0, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 10.0, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 11.0, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 12.0, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 13.0, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, 13.7, 13.8, 13.9, 14.0, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.8, 14.9, 15.0, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 16.0, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.9, 17.0, 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.9, 18.0, 18.1, 18.2, 18.3, 18.4, 18.5, 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51.8, 51.9, 52.0, 52.1, 52.2, 52.3, 52.4, 52.5, 52.6, 52.7, 52.8, 52.9, 53.0, 53.1, 53.2, 53.3, 53.4, 53.5, 53.6, 53.7, 53.8, 53.9, 54.0, 54.1, 54.2, 54.3, 54.4, 54.5, 54.6, 54.7, 54.8, 54.9, 55.0, 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, 55.4, 55.5, 55.6, 55.7, 55.8, 55.9, 56.0, 56.1, 56.2, 56.3, 56.4, 56.5, 56.6, 56.7, 56.8, 56.9, 57.0, 57.1, 57.2, 57.3, 57.4, 57.5, 57.6, 57.7, 57.8, 57.9, 58.0, 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4, 58.5, 58.6, 58.7, 58.8, 58.9, 59.0, 59.1, 59.2, 59.3, 59.4, 59.5, 59.6, 59.7, 59.8, 59.9, 60.0, 60.1, 60.2, 60.3, 60.4, 60.5, 60.6, 60.7, 60.8, 60.9, 61.0, 61.1, 61.2, 61.3, 61.4, 61.5, 61.6, 61.7, 61.8, 61.9, 62.0, 62.1, 62.2, 62.3, 62.4, 62.5, 62.6, 62.7, 62.8, 62.9, 63.0, 63.1, 63.2, 63.3, 63.4, 63.5, 63.6, 63.7, 63.8, 63.9, 64.0, 64.1, 64.2, 64.3, 64.4, 64.5, 64.6, 64.7, 64.8, 64.9, 65.0, 65.1, 65.2, 65.3, 65.4, 65.5, 65.6, 65.7, 65.8, 65.9, 66.0, 66.1, 66.2, 66.3, 66.4, 66.5, 66.6, 66.7, 66.8, 66.9, 67.0, 67.1, 67.2, 67.3, 67.4, 67.5, 67.6, 67.7, 67.8, 67.9, 68.0, 68.1, 68.2, 68.3, 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172.9, 173.0, 173.1, 173.2, 173.3, 173.4, 173.5, 173.6, 173.7, 173.8, 173.9, 174.0, 174.1, 174.2, 174.3, 174.4, 174.5, 174.6, 174.7, 174.8, 174.9, 175.0, 175.1, 175.2,

McHENRY~LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION REPORT

25-063-4724

August 5, 2025



This report has been prepared for:
Woodstock Community Energy Initiative LLC

Contact Person:
Hobie Anderson

PREPARED BY:
McHENRY-LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

1648 S. EASTWOOD DR.

WOODSTOCK, IL 60098

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The McHenry-Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District
is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF NRI REPORT #25-063-4724

It is the opinion of the McHenry-Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors that this report as summarized on these pages are pertinent to the requested zoning change.

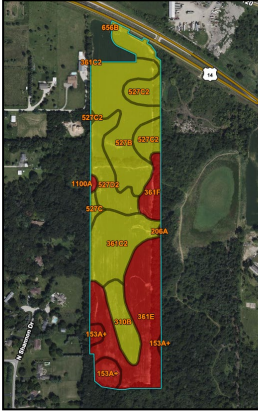




Picture 1: Looking southeast from the northwest property corner.



Picture 2: Looking southwest from eastern boundary (just south of the wooded field border located within the northern 1/3 of the parcel).



Ground-Based Solar Arrays

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey indicates 14.1 acres or 34.6% of the parcel has very limited soils for ground-based solar arrays (identified in red).



Hydric Soils

The NRCS Soil Survey indicates 1.9 acres or 4.6% of the parcel contains hydric soils (identified in red and orange).

Floodplain Information:

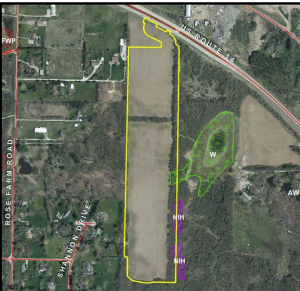
The Flood Insurance Rate Map

Indicates the parcel is outside of the 100-year floodplain.

Flood of Record Map (Hydrologic Atlas)

The Flood of Record Map for this area indicates the site has not previously flooded.

Wetland Information:



USDA-NRCS Wetland Inventory

The NRCS Wetlands Inventory identifies 0.25 acres of wetland and 0.12 acres of Non-Inventoried Hydric Soil on the parcel.



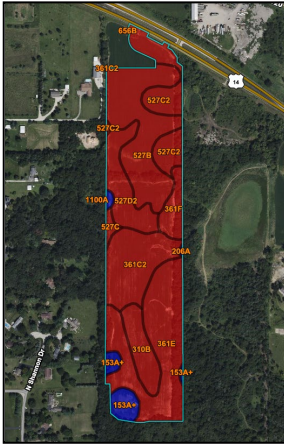
ADID Wetland Inventory

The ADID Wetland Study identifies 0.25 acres of wetland N911, 0.08 acres of wetland N923, and 0.11 acres of N925 on the parcel.

*The Prospecting Site Plan, prepared by Kimley Horn, dated 7/9/2025, indicates the wetland areas will be avoided.

Flooding Frequency

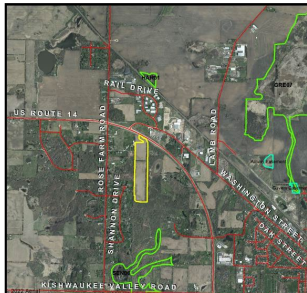
The NRCS Soil Survey indicates that flooding is not probable on the parcel. The chance of flooding is nearly 0% in any year. Flooding occurs less than once in 500 years.



Ponding Frequency

The NRCS Soil Survey indicates that frequent ponding occurs on 1.9 acres or 4.6% of the parcel. Frequent means that ponding occurs, on average, more than once in 2 years. The chance of ponding is more than 50 % in any year (identified in blue).

Cultural Resources: Office maps indicate there are no known cultural/historical features within the parcel in question.



Preserved or Recognized Ecological Sites: Office maps indicate 3 McHenry County Natural Area Inventory Sites and 2 Land Conservancy of McHenry County Easements - Airway Easement and Gavers Easement, in the vicinity of the parcel.

McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory Site - Silver Creek Marsh (GRE07) contains a sedge meadow and streamside marsh threatened by siltation, an upstream impoundment, water table alteration, cattail expansion, Reed Canary Grass, and Development.

McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory Site - Rose Farm Prairie (HAR01) is comprised of mesic silt loam prairies, wet silt loam prairies, and sedge meadows that is threatened by siltation, water table alteration, and brush encroachment.

McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory Site - West Woodstock Prairie (SEN06) contains a mesic silt loam prairie, wet silt loam prairie, basin marsh, and sedge meadows threatened by water table alteration, brush encroachment and Reed Canary Grass.

Woodlands: There are existing mature trees along the eastern boundary of the parcel.

Agricultural Areas: Office Maps indicate there are no State designated agricultural areas on the parcel in question.

Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA)

The Land Evaluation Score for the parcel is 71.54. A Site Assessment was not completed due to the Agricultural zoning on the parcel.

Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement: We have received notice from the Illinois Department of Agriculture that an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement has been filed.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

The Board recommends that areas between panels and within the buffers be planted to a native prairie mix to help increase water infiltration and reduce runoff from the site. It is recommended that a planting and maintenance plan be developed with the landowner to ensure that noxious weeds are controlled, and native plantings are properly installed and managed. The petitioner should refer to the planting requirements of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and McHenry County Department of Planning & Development.



NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION REPORT (NRI)

NRI Report Number	25-063-4724	
Applicant's Name	Woodstock Community Energy Initiative LLC	
Size of Parcel	40.72 acres	
Zoning Change	Solar Facility	
Parcel Index Number(s)	07-36-326-003	
Common Location	Undefined	
Contact Person	Hobie Anderson	
<i>Copies of this report or notification of the proposed land-use change were provided to:</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
The Applicant	x	
The Applicant's Legal Representation/Consultant		x
The Village/City/County Planning and Zoning Department or Appropriate Agency	x	

Report Prepared By: *Spring M. Duffey*

Position: *Executive Director*



February 20, 2025

Michael Holm
650 Pierce Blvd
O'Fallon, IL 62269

**RE: Woodstock Community Energy Initiative LLC Solar Project
Consultation Program
EcoCAT Review #2509418
McHenry County**

Dear Mr. Holm:

The Department has received your submission for this project for the purposes of consultation pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code* Part 1075.

The proposed action consists of the construction of a solar project in McHenry County.

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database shows the following protected resources may be in the vicinity of the project location:

Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI)
West Woodstock Prairie INAI Site

Class 3 Groundwater
Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve Class 3 Groundwater

State Threatened or Endangered Species
Blanding's Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*)
Rusty-patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*)

Due to the project scope and proximity to protected resources the Department recommends the following actions be taken to avoid adversely impacting listed species in the vicinity of the project:

West Woodstock Prairie INAI Site

The Department has determined adverse impacts to this site are unlikely.

Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve Class 3 Groundwater

This project falls within the Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve Class 3 Groundwater recharge area, which protects the integrity of the Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve. The modification of groundwater quality and quantity which may affect conditions within a Nature Preserve is prohibited. The Department recommends the following to avoid and minimize impact to the Class 3 Groundwater:

- Use the lightest weight equipment possible to complete the job.
- Balloon or large tires should be used whenever possible to reduce compaction.
- Disc site upon completion to de-compact the surface after final soil is placed to ensure good infiltration.

Blanding's Turtles

EcoCAT has indicated records for the state-listed Blanding's Turtle in vicinity of the project area. The Department recommends:

- Educate personnel working on site about the Blanding's Turtle. Post photos of juvenile and adult Blanding's Turtles at a central location. State-listed species may not be handled without the appropriate permits pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act*.
- If Blanding's turtles are encountered, crews should stop work immediately, allow the turtle to move out of the way and contact IDNR at (217) 785-5500.

Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee

The Department has determined adverse impacts to this species are unlikely.

Given the above recommendations are adopted the Department has determined that impacts to these protected resources are unlikely. The Department has determined impacts to other protected resources in the vicinity of the project location are also unlikely.

In accordance with 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1075.40(h), please notify the Department of your decision regarding these recommendations.

Consultation on the part of the Department is closed, unless the applicant desires additional information or advice related to this proposal. Consultation for Part 1075 is valid for two years unless new information becomes available which was not previously considered; the proposed action is modified; or additional species, essential habitat, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the action has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resource review reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of the project submittal and should not be regarded as a final statement on the project being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected resources are unexpectedly encountered during the project's implementation, the applicant must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations.

This letter does not serve as permission to take any listed or endangered species. As a reminder, no take of an endangered species is permitted without an Incidental Take Authorization or the required permits. Anyone who takes a listed or endangered species without an Incidental Take Authorization or required permit may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties pursuant to the *Illinois Endangered Species Act*, the *Fish and Aquatic Life Act*, the *Wildlife Code* and other applicable authority.

The Department also offers the following conservation measures be considered to help protect native wildlife and enhance natural areas in the project vicinity:

- The Department strongly recommends that the project proponent establish pollinator-friendly habitat as groundcover wherever feasible. Solar Site Pollinator Establishment Guidelines can be found here:
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/pollinatorscorecard.html>
- The site should be de-compacted before planting.
- Long term management of the site should be planned for prior to development to ensure successful native pollinator habitat establishment and prevent the spread of invasive species throughout the lifetime of this project. An experienced ecological management consultant should be hired to assist with long-term management.
- Required fencing, excluding areas near or adjacent to public access areas, should have a 6-inch gap along the bottom to prevent the restriction of wildlife movement. Woven wire or a suitable habitat wildlife friendly fence should be used. Barbed wire should be avoided.
- If tree clearing is necessary, the Department recommends removing trees between November 1st and March 31st to avoid impacts to the state-listed bats and birds.
- Any required night lighting should follow International Dark-Sky Association's (IDA) Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting to minimize the effect of light pollution on wildlife: Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting | DarkSky International

Please contact Isabella Newingham (Isabella.newingham@illinois.gov) with any questions about this review.

Sincerely,



Bradley Hayes
Manager, Impact Assessment Section
Division of Real Estate Services and Consultation
Office of Realty & Capital Planning
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
Bradley.Hayes@Illinois.gov
Phone: (217) 782-0031

Applicant: SCI ENGINEERING, INC.
Contact: Michael Holm
Address: 650 Pierce Blvd
O'Fallon, IL 62269

IDNR Project Number: 2509418
Date: 02/11/2025

Project: Woodstock Community Energy Initiative LLC Solar Project
Address: South of Highway 14 and north of Kishwaukee Valley Road, Woodstock

Description: Proposed construction of a new solar development with associated access roads and infrastructure.

Natural Resource Review Results

Consultation for Endangered Species Protection and Natural Areas Preservation (Part 1075)

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database shows the following protected resources may be in the vicinity of the project location:

- West Woodstock Prairie INAI Site
- Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)
- Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*)

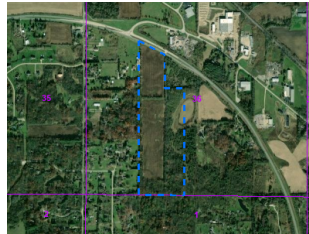
An IDNR staff member will evaluate this information and contact you to request additional information or to terminate consultation if adverse effects are unlikely.

Location

The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the location submitted for the project.

County: McHenry

Township, Range, Section:
45N, 6E, 36



IL Department of Natural Resources
Contact
Isabella Newingham
217-785-5500
Division of Ecosystems & Environment

Government Jurisdiction
IL Environmental Protection Agency
Division of Water Pollution Control
PO Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794 -9276

Disclaimer

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database cannot provide a conclusive statement on the presence, absence, or condition of natural resources in Illinois. This review reflects the information existing in the Database at the time of this inquiry, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected resources are encountered during the project's implementation, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations is required.

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