



## **Mercer County Improvement Authority Solar Project at Mercer County Community College *Fact Sheet #3***

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In continuation of our on-going efforts to provide clear and up-to-date information concerning the solar project (the “Solar Project”) that will be constructed by SunLight General Mercer, LLC (“SunLight”) and located at the Mercer County Community College (the “MCCC”) campus in West Windsor, the Mercer County Improvement Authority would like to provide the following facts:

1. **Distance from Residences** – The map attached hereto depicts the final location of the Solar Project. As shown on the map, the Solar Project (panels) will be located 75 feet from the closest residence on Old Trenton Road, and 233 feet from the closest resident on South Post Road. The 233 feet is to the extreme southeast corner of the closest property. The final location of the Solar Project was impacted by a variety of issues including permitting and regulatory issues. In all cases, in consultation with the West Windsor's landscape architect, the project will be screened at the fence line by appropriate plantings as depicted in the site line drawings that were reviewed with the residents and posted on the MCIA website.
2. **Local Review** – As explained at a local outreach meeting on May 31, 2012, it was initially thought that the Solar Project might be presented to the local planning board in West Windsor for a non-binding courtesy review. However, this approach was altered when it was learned that the County Planning Board would be conducting a formal review of the Solar Project. In addition, in the last 25 years the MCCC has never submitted any of its projects to West Windsor for courtesy reviews. This information led the project team to conclude that a courtesy review by West Windsor would not be a proper forum for the discussion of the Solar Project. The project team has also shared project plans with West Windsor Township Engineering staff for their review and comments. In addition to allowing residents to ask questions and voice concerns at the County Planning Board meeting the project team also held three public outreach meetings where interested persons were given ample opportunity to speak to and ask questions of the project team.

3. **State of Property** – The property upon which the Solar Project will be located is part of the MCCC’s campus and its intended use was, and is always, to facilitate and foster the operations of the MCCC. The MCCC was previously leasing the land to a local farmer, but the lease expired in December of 2010, and the MCCC notified the tenant farmer that the lease would not be renewed because the land would be needed for the Solar Project. The tenant farmer still leases land from West Windsor Township which adjoins the MCCC’s property.
4. **Bond Payments** – At the public outreach meeting on May 31, 2012, SunLight stated that “1.97 million of principal payments are made each year until September 15, 2024”. This statement was made because at the time of the public outreach meeting, the anticipated size of the Solar Project would have resulted in the need for prepayment of the term bonds maturing September 15, 2027. This prepayment option was a protection that was specifically built into the financing to address the possible variation in sizing of the Solar Project that could result from regulatory permits and approvals. If the bonds maturing on September 15, 2027 were prepaid, this would have left the longest remaining bonds maturing in 2025. The reference made to 2024 was due to a typo in the presentation that should have referenced 2025.
5. **Accelerated Depreciation** – SunLight is actively pursuing a partner to assist them in monetizing the Accelerated Depreciation tax benefit associated with the Solar Project.
6. **SREC Values** – It is important to note that July 23, 2012, Governor Christie signed into law legislation that is designed to bolster the current SREC market. As discussed at the May 31, 2012, public meeting, SunLight requires an annual average SREC value of \$129 for the first five years and an average of \$165 for 15 years to ensure timely payment of the Lease Payments to the Authority. As of July 24, SREC values were approximately \$170 for a forward contract..
7. **Ground Mounted Construction Experience** – SunLight is a finance company, not a construction firm. SunLight’s partner, MasTec, Inc., is a \$3 billion construction company with over 80 years of experience building energy, utility, and infrastructure project, including wind and solar projects (both roof and ground-mounted). The combined experience of the SunLight/MasTec team was considered in the evaluation and selection process.

8. **Screening** – As the design of the system progressed, berms were ruled out as a possible screening measure for several reasons to include:

*Environmental Restrictions* - Berms cannot be constructed within the floodplain or within a Riparian Buffer. The project location contains a 300 foot Riparian buffer which surrounds certain drainage features located within the project site. These features would significantly limit the area within which berms could have been constructed. The project team has repeatedly indicated that the NJDEP would not allow berms to be constructed. These statements were referencing the fact that berms could not be constructed in environmentally sensitive areas subject to NJDEP jurisdiction.

*Physical Impacts and sizing* - As for the remainder of the project location, the construction of berms would not be feasible given the footprint such berms would require in order to screen the Solar Project from the residents immediately adjacent to the project location. In fact, West Windsor's own landscape architect, who has overseen the construction of many berms throughout West Windsor, also concluded that the construction of berms without impacting adjoining resident properties would be impossible and has supported the use of an 8 foot hedge rather than berms.

Based upon the considerations listed above and after consultation with the MCIA's professional team, Sunlight General, Mercer County Community College and West Windsor's landscape architect, it was determined that berms would not be feasible and that a less intrusive 8-10 foot high hedge would be a more effective and appropriate means of screening the project from those properties immediately adjacent to the project location. It is important to note that the basis for selecting the 8-10 foot high hedge screening and the reasons why berms would not be a feasible screening alternative were discussed in detail with those residents located immediately adjacent to the project location at a landscaping meeting held on June 19, 2012.

July 25, 2012



