



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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November 13, 2015

Philip M. Small, Esq.  
Brown Rudnick LLP  
185 Asylum Street, 38<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: **PETITION NO. 1192** - SolarCity Corporation petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed construction and operation of a 2.74 Megawatt Community Shared Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating facility located on two City of Norwich-owned parcels on Rogers Road, Norwich, Connecticut.

Dear Attorney Small:

At a public meeting of the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) held on November 12, 2015, the Council considered and approved the Development and Management (D&M) Plan submitted for this project on November 4, 2015.

This approval applies only to the D&M Plan submitted on November 4, 2015. Requests for any changes to the D&M Plan shall be approved by Council staff in accordance with Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section (RCSA) §16-50j-62(b). Furthermore, the project developer is responsible for reporting requirements pursuant to RCSA 16-50j-62.

This decision is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and is not applicable to any other modification or construction. All work is to be implemented as specified in the petition dated September 18, 2015 and in the D&M Plan dated November 4, 2015.

Enclosed is a copy of the staff report on this D&M Plan, dated November 12, 2015.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Robert Stein  
Chairman

RS/CH/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated November 12, 2015

c: The Honorable Deb Hinchey, Mayor, City of Norwich  
John Bilda, Acting City Manager, City of Norwich  
Peter Davis, City Planner, City of Norwich  
Elie Schecter, SolarCity Corporation





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**Petition No. 1192**  
**SolarCity Corporation**  
**Rogers Road, Norwich**  
**Development and Management Plan**  
**Staff Report**  
**November 12, 2015**

On September 18, 2015, SolarCity Corporation (SolarCity or Petitioner), in development partnership with Brightfields Development, LLC (Brightfields), Norwich Public Utilities (NPU), the City of Norwich and the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC), submitted a petition to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) is required for the construction and operation of an approximately 2.74 Megawatt Solar Electric Generating Facility on two municipally-owned parcels on Rogers Road, Norwich. Pending the Council's decision of this petition, SolarCity submitted a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for the project on November 4, 2015.

Consistent with the Council staff's recommendations in the November 12, 2015 Petition Staff Report for the project, the D&M Plan contains the following items:

- a) **A final plan of site development to include specifications for the solar panels, supporting infrastructure, electrical equipment, equipment compound, access and maintenance roads, utility connections, and landscaping;**

The proposed solar array would consist of approximately 8,854 310-Watt Canadian solar panels, each measuring approximately 64.95 inches by 39.05 inches by 1.37 inches. The two solar arrays on the former crop fields would have an RBI Solar post-driven mounting system and individual panels would be placed at a fixed 25 degree tilt to the south, to maximize output. The mounting assemblies holding the modules are built on I-beam foundations that would be driven into the ground, with the rack then constructed on the posts. When the rack is complete, the modules are bolted on to the rack.

The solar arrays on the two former landfills will utilize a ballasted, surface-mounted racking system to ensure that the landfill cap/cover systems are not adversely affected in any way. The ballasted system will be placed directly on the vegetative cover, mitigating any impact on the cap construction. The arrays will be installed using landfill-specific low ground pressure equipment to make sure that the 7 PSI cap/cover loading limit is adhered to at all times. Licensed engineers will inspect the field work regularly to ensure that the construction methodology does not impact the cover/cap system. Additionally, due to the fact that the solar arrays and the associated wiring will be installed on top of the landfill cover/cap, all of the conduit runs will be installed on ballast blocks located above the vegetative surface. This will require that all of the electrical wiring is installed within rigid conduit or cable trays and placed on concrete or rubber ballasts. Once clear of the landfill cover/cap, this conduit will transition to an underground configuration to connect both arrays.

The site would include four Solectria SGI utility scale inverters, of which two would be 500KW and two would be 750 KW. The inverters convert the DC power supplied by the panels into AC power that can be connected to the electric grid. The inverters would be mounted on three, small concrete pads with transformers that are connected to the grid via switch gear - two pads would have one inverter and one transformer, and one pad would have two inverters and one transformer.



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The solar arrays on the two former crop fields would be surrounded by a six-foot tall chain link fence. For the solar fields on the two former landfills, no fencing is required due to the steep slopes and the heavily wooded surroundings. For these, SolarCity would install a gate across each access road with 30-foot side panels to restrict access which will, for all practical purposes, restrict access to the landfills and solar arrays. SolarCity does not plan to remove snow from the solar panels. The panels' lower edges are expected to be two feet above ground level, and are expected to generate enough heat to cause the snow to slide off the panel.

**b) Construction details for site clearing, site phasing, grading, water drainage, and erosion and sedimentation controls consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, as amended;**

Prior to and throughout the duration of construction, sedimentation and erosion controls will be installed and maintained in accordance with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. Consistent with the wetland protection plan, sediment fencing will be installed adjacent to the construction area to provide additional protection to adjacent environmental resources.

**c) A final Drainage Report and associated site plans stamped by a Professional Engineer;**

The stormwater will be handled in accordance with the 2004 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual. The proposed facility been designed to limit the impacts to existing stormwater runoff flow rates and patterns. The existing runoff flow paths have been maintained and while there are minor increases in peak runoff rates from the existing landfill sites they should not have a negative impact on down gradient areas.

**d) The Wetland Protection Program as provided in Petition Exhibit 2, Appendix G;**

The wetland protection program consists of several components:

- Use of appropriate erosion control measures to control and contain erosion and sediment;
- Avoiding/minimizing wildlife entanglement;
- Periodic inspection and maintenance of isolation structures and erosion control measures;
- Education of all contractors and sub-contractors prior to initiation of work on the site;
- Protective measures, including petroleum materials storage and spill prevention;
- Herbicide and pesticide restrictions; and
- Reporting any incidents of sediment release into the nearby wetland to the Siting Council.

**e) Construction work hours and days of work;**

Construction is intended to be completed eighteen weeks after commencement. Work hours would be seven days a week, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

**f) The Wildlife Impact Mitigation Measures, dated August 2015;**

Once constructed, a narrow strip of land - generally 25 feet in most areas, with an expansion to 50 feet or greater for developed areas bordering vegetated community types - between the solar arrays and the existing forest edge will need to remain clear (non-forested) to prevent shading of the solar arrays. This area can be managed for wildlife by restricting mowing to a rotation basis of every four to seven years outside of the principal growing season, mowing should occur between October 1 and March 1. This will allow the area to revert to late old field and create a "soft" ecotone that will provide cover and habitat for a number of "edge" nesting birds and some vernal pool species.

**g) Identification of an assigned environmental monitor for the project;**

All Points Technology has been assigned as the environmental monitor for the project.

**h) A facility decommissioning plan;**

In accordance with the Site License Agreement, decommissioning will involve removal and disposal or recycling of all Project components. All recyclable materials will be transported to the appropriate nearby recycling facilities. Any non-recyclable materials will be properly disposed of at a nearby landfill. 95% or greater of the Facility's components will be recyclable.

Council staff recommends approval with the condition that approval of requested significant changes to the approved D&M Plan be delegated to Council staff in accordance with Section 16-50j-62(b) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. In accordance with that section, if advance written notice is impractical, SolarCity shall provide verbal notice of the changes and shall submit written specifications to the Council within 48 hours after the verbal notice.