

PROJECT SUMMARY

SunVest Solar, LLC, doing business as SV CSG Northfield, LLC, is proposing to develop a 1-megawatt Community Solar Garden on a parcel currently owned by the Devney Trust. The proposed Community Solar Garden will be developed as part of the Xcel Energy Community Rewards program that provides Xcel customers the ability to secure part or all of their energy needs from solar energy. Access to the site will be on the far west side of the property off of MN Hwy 19. Off-street parking will be provided for vehicles inside of the project area.

IMPACT TO ADJACENT EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USES

The proposed use of the property will not have a negative impact on the existing and future land uses of the area. The property is currently zoned A-S and the proposed location and use of the property will allow for the continued use and enjoyment of the adjacent properties.

IMPACT TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Generally, solar gardens do not have a negative effect on surrounding properties health and safety and do not impede the welfare of the surrounding area.

PROJECT FEATURES

Site improvements will consist of photovoltaic solar panels installed on a single axis tracking system. The tracking system will be supported by galvanized steel beams, pile driven 8 – 10' into the ground. No concrete is anticipated to be used for the support system. The panels will be facing east-west, thus the rows of panels will be oriented in a north-south direction. The overall height of the system will be approximately 8' tall. A 12' wide access drive will provide year-round access to all major equipment throughout the array. The solar garden will be setback a minimum of 100' from the centerline of Mn Hwy 19 and 50 feet from the west property line. The entire project site will be covered with diverse, pollinator friendly, native vegetation specifically designed for this project. The vegetation will be native, requiring minimal maintenance once established, and create habitat beneficial to bees, other insects, birds and other animal species. All electrical cables will be buried throughout the project area. However, wooden electric support poles will be needed to transfer the power generated from the project to the local distribution lines located along MN Hwy 19. These poles will be approximately 30' tall.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

It is anticipated that 15 to 20 full time employees will be on site in the early stages of construction. This will reduce to a team of approximately 10 members toward the end of the construction activities. Typically, there will be a vehicle for each worker, approximately three (3) small vehicles for transferring equipment around the site, and temporary equipment needed to perform different construction tasks. Hours of operation will be within 7am – 9 pm. The total construction will take approximately 12-16 weeks. The first two (2) weeks will consist of pile driving with the balance of the construction timeline used for erecting the racking, panels and electrical equipment. Dust will be mitigated through the use of a water truck as needed.

FACILITY SAFETY

The facility will be surrounded by a 7' tall chain link fence with a locked gate to prevent access from unauthorized persons. All major electrical equipment will be individually locked and warning signage is provided to identify specific dangers.

NO LIGHTING

No lighting is planned at this facility.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The site will be monitored off-site via a scada system and wireless phone connection. The site will be visited annually once or twice for the maintenance of the electrical system. This will be limited to a crew of 1-2 electrical personnel in a passenger vehicle performing annual maintenance checks and replacing equipment as needed.

VEGETATION MAINTENANCE

Once the native meadow / prairie vegetation is established, maintenance of the plantings will occur bi-annually and will consist of mowing and spot treating noxious weeds. Additional seeding will be done on an "as needed" basis to help maintain optimal vegetative cover.

NORTHFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Northfield Comprehensive Plan allows Community Solar Gardens as a Conditional Use in the A-S district. The Comprehensive Plan also shows the subject parcel in an area that potentially might not have a level of sanitary sewer needed for development. The solar project, which will not require any public utilities, is a perfect use for this land designation.

HARMONY WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The current land use for the subject site is agriculture, with agriculture or large farm homesteads as surrounding uses. This solar project will have a maximum height of approximately 8 feet, a very low-profile for uses in an agriculture district. The adjacent property to the east has existing dense vegetation to act as a natural buffer from the project.

NO PUBLIC UTILITIES NEEDED

The proposed solar project will not require any municipal utilities for construction or operation. The only public services that may be needed would be in the event there is vandalism or a fire, in which the probability of either event is extremely low.