



# Benton Solar Project

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Senior Project Manager,  
Development



**Local Investment. Jobs. Clean Energy.**

# Investing in Minnesota since 2000

**\$700,000**  
**annual land**  
**payments**



**~\$884**  
**million**  
**total capital**  
**investment**

**~\$66.4**  
**million**  
**in annual**  
**payroll**



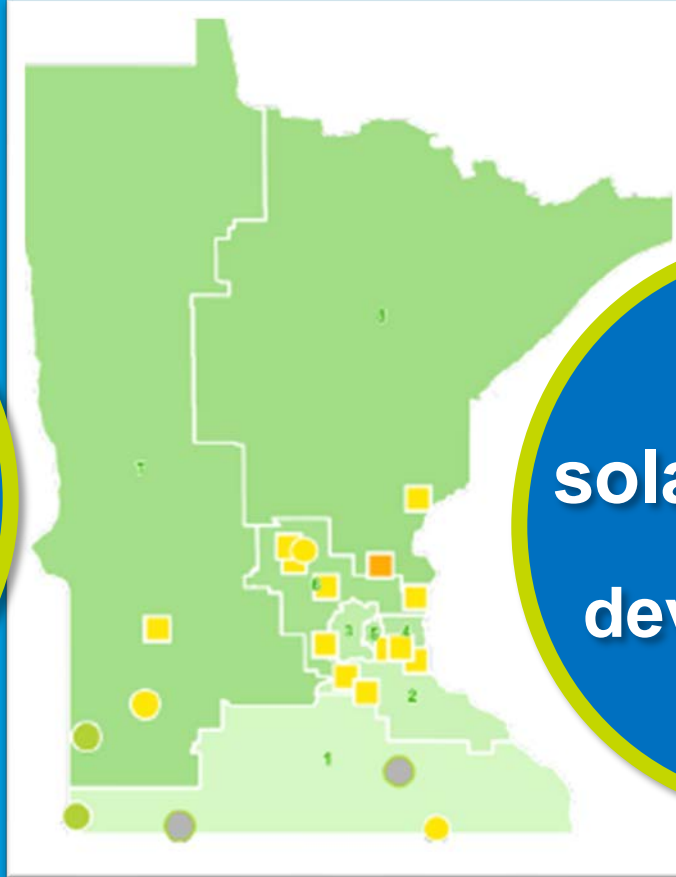
**\$580,000**  
**in property**  
**taxes, 2022\***

# Operational sites and development projects

2  
operational  
wind energy  
centers

29  
operational  
distributed  
generation  
solar  
facilities

1  
operational  
universal  
solar  
facility



2  
wind  
projects in  
development

2  
solar projects  
in  
development

1  
operational  
battery  
energy  
storage  
system

Legend: ● Wind ● Utility-Scale Solar ■ Distributed Energy Resources ■ Battery Energy Storage ● Development/Construction

# Benefits of Solar Energy

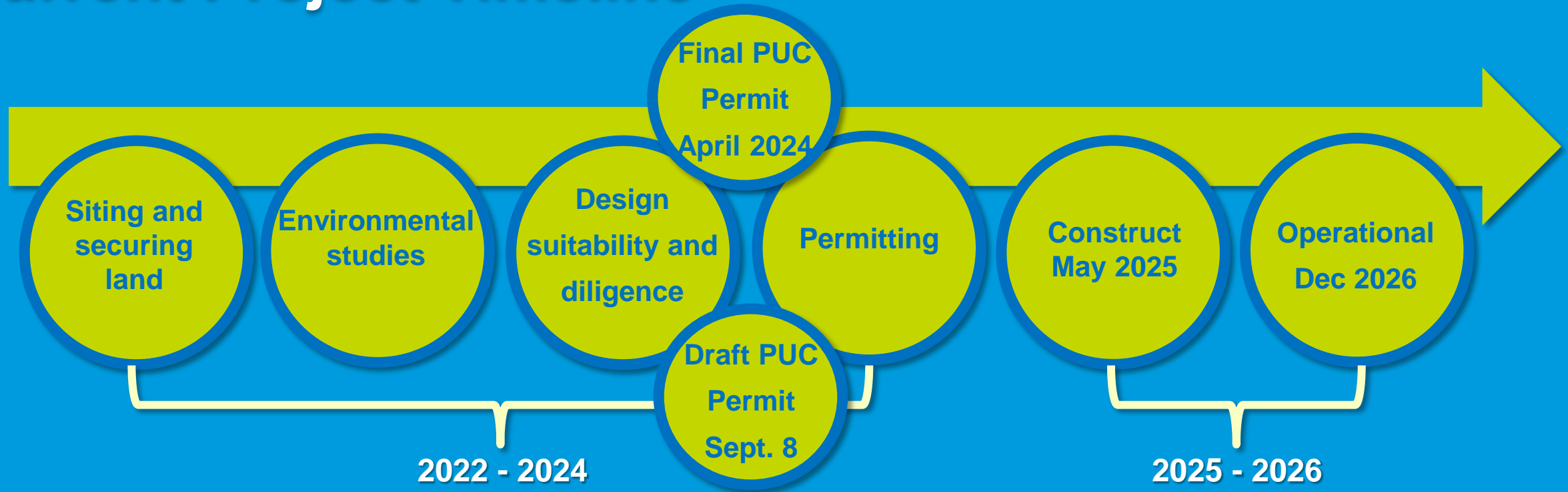
- ▶ **Clean, reliable, and renewable source of energy**
  - » No air, water or soil pollution
- ▶ **Creates hundreds of temporary jobs**
- ▶ **Land payments diversify landowner revenue sources**
- ▶ **Additional tax revenue to local communities**
- ▶ **Increases local purchasing of goods and services**
- ▶ **The project does not present any likelihood of toxic materials, and it will not contaminate soil or groundwater**
  - » Project must submit Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
- ▶ **Photovoltaic (PV) panels are comprised of aluminum, tempered glass, copper, silicon, and are secured in a plastic encapsulant**
  - » Materials can be recovered and recycled
- ▶ **Efficient, reliable and safe**



# Benton Solar Project Overview

- ▶ **Capacity of up to 100 MW of clean, renewable energy**
  - » Commercial operations targeting December 2026; construction to start May 2025
- ▶ **Located in Minden Township**
  - » No county road right of way will be needed for buried collection cables
- ▶ **Interconnect into Great River Energy's Benton County 115 kV Substation**
  - » Finalized the transmission line route with GRE; agreement to be executed end of month
- ▶ **Draft MN PUC application submitted Sept. 8, 2023**
  - » Final application will be submitted April, 2024
    - › Application will be on the public docket

# Current Project Timeline



# Application Details

## ▶ Project footprint:

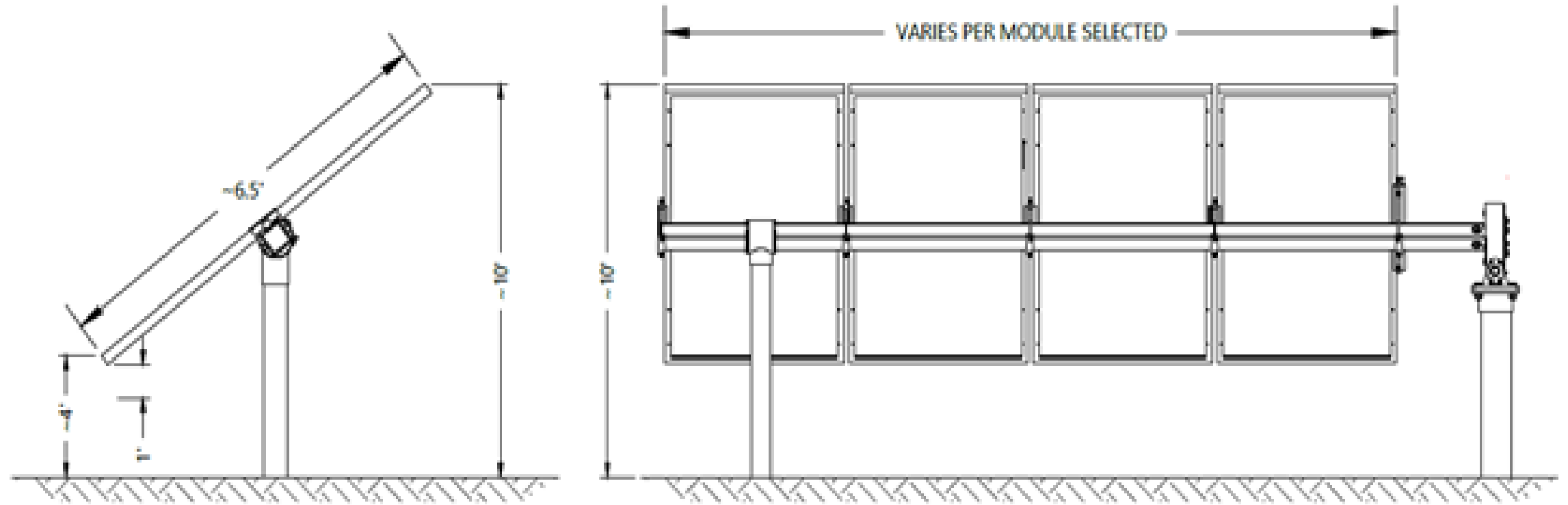
- » ~500 acres with panels
- » ~600 total acreage
  - › Includes fencing (10 ft), substation, stormwater basins and temporary laydown yards

## ▶ Solar panel description:

- » Up to 20 ft at their highest point (varies due to tracking technology and topography)
  - › Anticipated height of 10-12 ft.
- » Light absorbing, dark-colored materials will limit glare and reflection
- » ~254,000 panels
- » ~3,300 racks

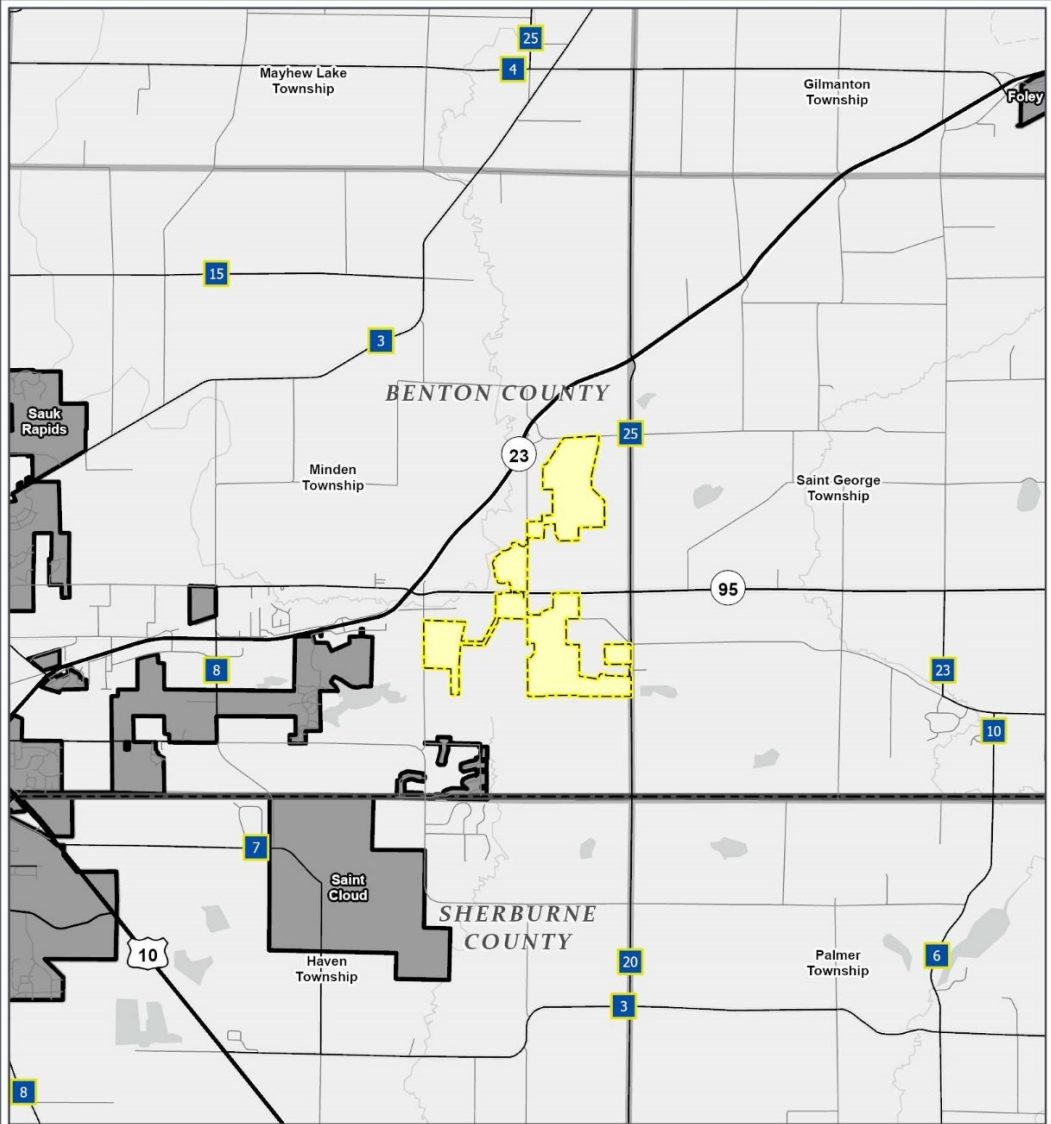
**NOTE:**

1. DIMENSIONS MAY VARY BASED ON MODULE SELECTED.
2. SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



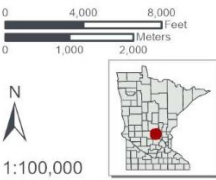


# Project site location



- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Local Road
- Site
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Township / Range Boundary

Benton County, MN  
 USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:  
 Cable, MN, 45094-E1  
 T36N R30W Section  
 13,23,24,25,26,35  
 NAD 1983 UTM Zone 15N  
 45.592°N 94.0284°W



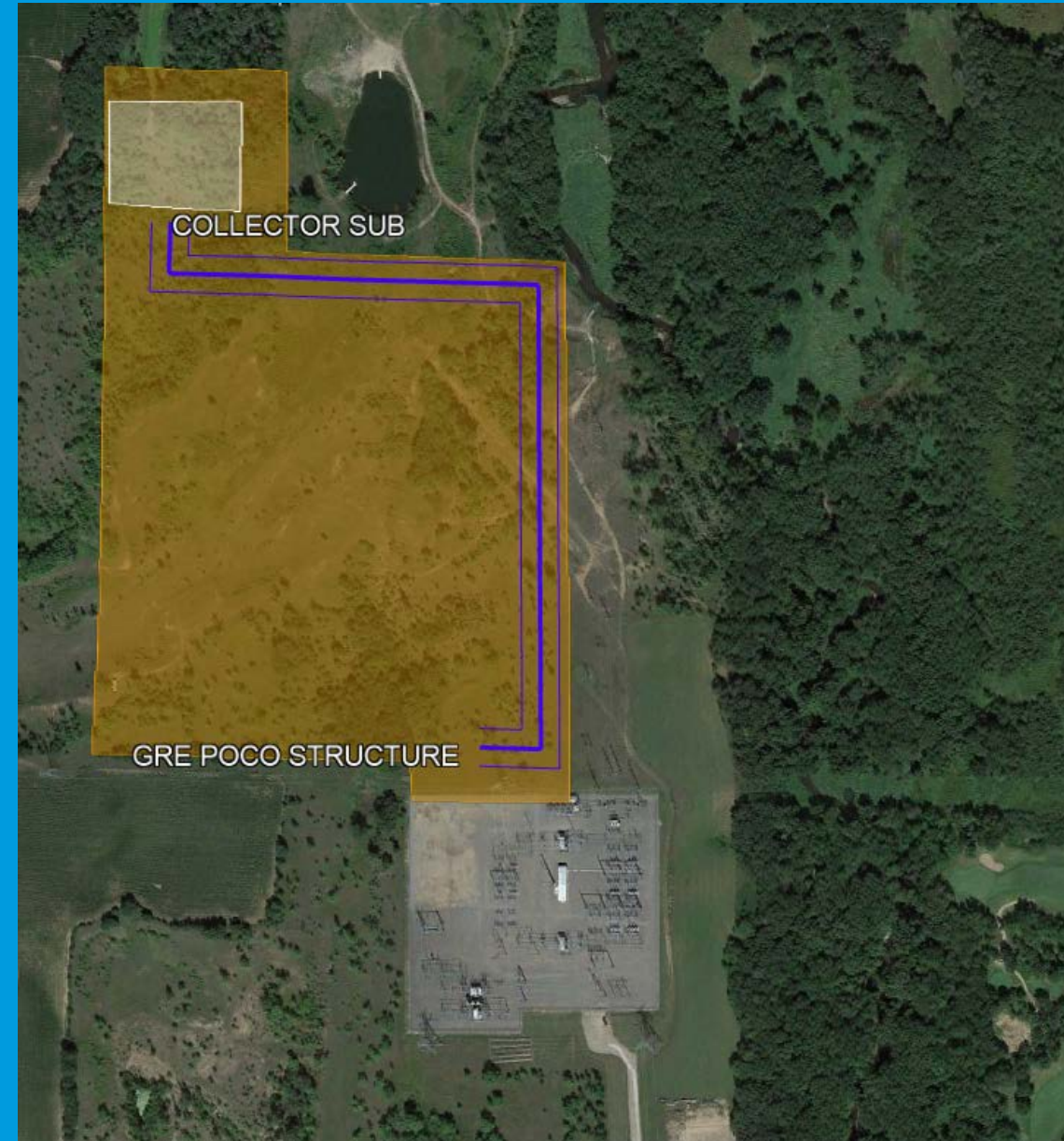
Base Map: Esri ArcGIS Online,  
 accessed August 2023  
 Updated: 8/10/2023  
 Project No. 76767  
 Layout: BEN\_Fig1\_ProjectLoc\_Report  
 Aprx:  
 76767\_bentonSolar\_PUC\_Figures

1:100,000

**Benton Solar, LLC**

# Transmission route

- ▶ Overhead transmission line is .85 miles long
- ▶ Great River Energy is the sole landowner
- ▶ Final pole heights will be determined during detailed design to maintain all required clearances
  - » The proposed pole height is not expected to exceed 70-115 ft above ground



# County Permitting and Road Use

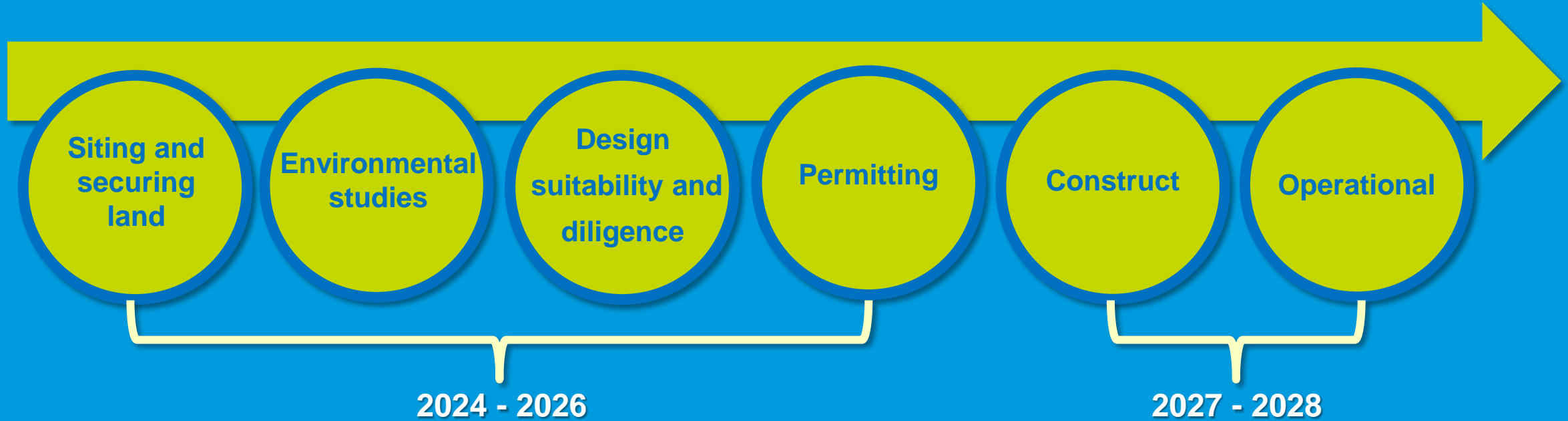
## ▶ Work with County on:

- » Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for substation and laydown yard.
- » Development Agreement / Road Use Agreement with Benton County.

## ▶ Benton Solar will coordinate and pay for required upgrades to meet the required public standards.

- » Such upgrades may include, but are not limited to:
  - › Additional aggregate.
  - › Road improvements.
  - › Driveway/approach changes.

# Benton Solar II (St. George Township)



Preliminary and subject to change

# Surveys and Studies Completed

## ▶ Environmental Studies:

- » Habitat assessments and species reviews
- » Desktop surveys and evaluation
- » Cultural resource evaluations
  - » State Historic Preservation Office desktop evaluation kicked off November 2023
  - » Field surveys to begin Spring 2024

## ▶ Design Suitability:

- » Topographic survey
- » Subsurface geotechnical investigation
- » Hydrology and floodwater studies

# Stakeholder Outreach

- ▶ **Extensive coordination will occur with stakeholders, including:**
  - » County Commissioners
  - » Township Board meetings
  - » School District Superintendents
  - » Native American Tribal Outreach
  - » Benton Economic Development Organization
  - » Soil and Water Conservation Districts
  - » Agency outreach letters



# Community Support Efforts

## ► Sponsorships/Donations

- » Chambers of Commerce
  - › Foley Chamber Members City of St Cloud Chamber Members
- » Benton Economic Partnership
- » Future Farmers of America
- » Boys and Girls Club of Central MN
- » Local Food Pantries
- » Landowner Dinners
  - › Coyote Moon Grille
- » Foley Party in the Park
- » Big Brother Big Sister of Central Minnesota
- » Looking for more!

Supporting  
our local  
communities



NEXtera  
ENERGY  
RESOURCES



# Connect with us

- ▶ Learn more about the project at:

**Website:** [www.bentonsolarproject.com](http://www.bentonsolarproject.com)

**Facebook:** Benton Solar

**Email:** [bentonsolar@nexteraenergy.com](mailto:bentonsolar@nexteraenergy.com)

- ▶ Reach out:

**Adam Gracia**

**Cell: (561) 797-5048**

**[Adam.Gracia@nexteraenergy.com](mailto:Adam.Gracia@nexteraenergy.com)**



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ENERGY



RESOURCES

# Decommissioning

- ▶ **Decommissioning** is the process of removing the panels and equipment of a solar project and returning the land to its original condition.
  - » Modern solar projects are designed to operate for 20 – 40 years, during which time they are carefully managed and maintained.
  - » In some instances, we can replace aging solar panels with newer, more efficient technology to extend their useful lives.
  - » Our company makes financial commitments to pay the full costs of decommissioning, ensuring taxpayers do not pay for removing any part of a solar project.
  - » When we decommission a solar project, the process includes removing and disposing or, where feasible, recycling above-ground infrastructure including solar arrays, inverters, pads and fences.
    - › Photovoltaic solar panel recycling technologies can recover more than 95% of semiconductor material and more than 90% of the glass in the panel.