

Why Fairfield County, Ohio?

1. As Fairfield County continues to grow and seek development that supports economic expansion and workforce development, the Eastern Cottontail Solar Project is a viable solution to compliment growth outlined in the Fairfield County Comprehensive Plan by providing a significant tax base, and an expanded workforce.¹ According to the County's Comprehensive Plan, it is expected that an additional 56,000 people will call Fairfield County "home" by 2050. Eastern Cottontail Solar is well positioned to supply nearly 75% of the required power needed for these new residents!
2. Private landowners have expressed interest in diversifying their financial portfolios and preserving multi-generational real-estate assets by voluntarily signing lease agreements, exercising their property rights to do so.
3. There is availability of local workforce for construction and long-term maintenance of a utility-scale solar project.
4. Fairfield County, Ohio consists of flat, cleared land, with direct access to existing transmission infrastructure with available capacity.
5. Utility-scale solar meets the significantly increasing demand from regional Ohio utilities and commercial and industrial customers for locally generated, clean energy to reduce state energy imports, while meeting ever-growing electricity usage.

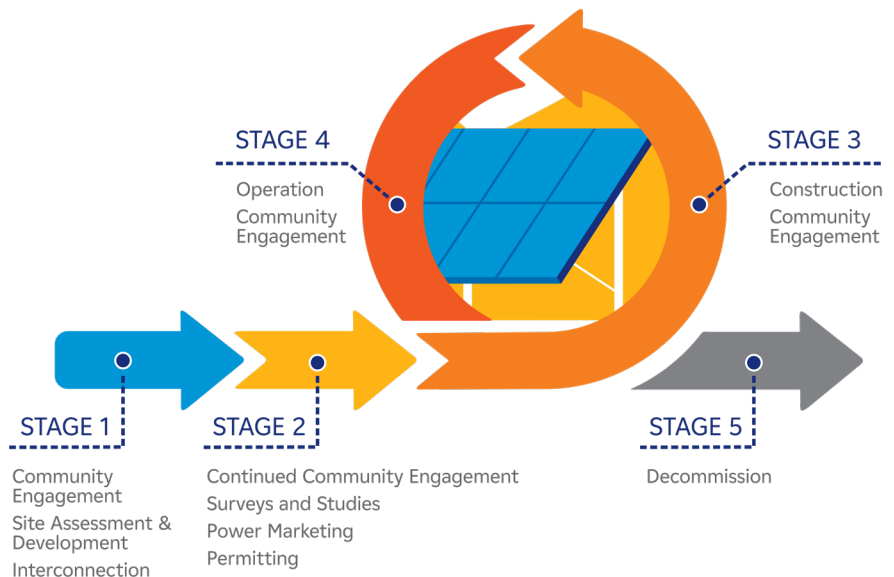


The Process of Developing a Utility-Scale Solar Facility

Whether you're building a home, developing a commercial building, or constructing a utility-scale solar facility, there are several processes and procedures we all must adhere to before completing a fully functional, finished project!

For a home, development may involve purchasing the ground in the right location, receiving building permits, designing a layout, acquiring materials, completing finishing touches, and finally moving in. Similarly, developing a utility-scale solar facility has numerous steps that any developer, including EDF Renewables² (EDF-R), must go through to create a power generation facility, like our Eastern Cottontail Solar Project³.

Below, you will find detailed information regarding the typical process of developing, constructing, and operating a utility-scale solar facility!



Site Selection:

Identifying the right site for developing a utility-scale solar facility is the launch pad for the entirety of a solar project! When considering the characteristics of a site, EDF-R primarily seeks open, flat land with access to a nearby transmission line, leasable acreage from interested private landowners, local demand for this type of infrastructure (i.e. utilities seeking to diversify their energy portfolios), market potential (the ability to sell the power), and finally, access to the sun! When development teams identify these characteristics in a site, they place an interconnection study request with the Regional Transmission Operator (RTO), such as PJM⁴, and further site analyses, such as environmental studies and surveys, commence.

Interconnection:

The interconnection study process is multi-year and multi-phase in nature. Following site selection, EDF-R submits an application with the appropriate RTO, who reviews the request to provide power to the grid at the requested location.

The RTO then evaluates its current infrastructure to identify the load on the impacted transmission line, while also considering outstanding applications from other energy developers, to determine if upgrades are needed to support the proposed energy on the grid. Upon completing the review process, EDF-R receives notice regarding whether its project can provide power to the grid with or without major infrastructure upgrades. This lengthy process is conducted concurrently with a majority of the other development processes.

Permitting:

In the state of Ohio, the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB)⁵ oversees the permitting process for wind, solar, and battery storage projects greater than 50 megawatts (MW) in size. OPSB requires developers of those power generation sources to submit a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (CECPN) application, which triggers a detailed, equitable siting process that welcomes feedback. The permit application includes a synopsis of the information gathered from various studies and surveys, maps of the project, and much more to guarantee 100% compliance with state-level regulations and conditions. Eastern Cottontail Solar is required to abide by this permitting process, which we will cover in greater detail in a future newsletter!

Power Offtake:

Power Offtake refers to the purchase of power from a power generation facility, such as Eastern Cottontail Solar, owned by a power generator, like EDF-R, with the power purchased by an outside entity. This agreement typically occurs before the project enters construction. While a purchase transaction can come in a variety of types and from various entities, it is common to enter into a long-term, fixed agreement with a local/regional utility or a commercial/industry partner, such as a large corporation in the technology or automotive space. Typically, these entities are seeking renewable energy to diversify their power generation mix, to provide additional local, affordable electricity, to assist in national decarbonization efforts, and to be better corporate stewards of the community and to the environment.

Construction:

The construction phase will take approximately 12-18 months from start to finish for projects like our Eastern Cottontail Solar Project. Construction consists of a variety of actions, such as site preparation, pre-planting in accordance with the vegetation management plan approved by OPSB, fencing installation, substation construction, and the installation of several components of a solar array, including underground cabling, pilings, racking systems, panels, and inverters. Upon completing the required final testing to ensure the facility is ready to produce power, the project will then officially commence operations.

Operation:

Once operational, the power generated from projects like our Eastern Cottontail Solar Project will be routed directly to the electric transmission grid for consumption! Typically, solar facilities are operational for up to 40 years and are maintained by an on-site Operations and Maintenance Team throughout to guarantee safety and continual operation. For more information on how power generation and transmission work, please check out our Power Generation and Transmission Newsletter on the Eastern Cottontail Solar Project website!

Community Engagement:

The last—but most important—part of the development process is engagement with the community! From the very early stages of development, all the way through decommissioning, EDF-R is committed to providing an open line of communication with stakeholders and community members. Being a good neighbor to the community where we develop, alongside operating with integrity, is vital to EDF-R's mission as a company. As such, we view our relationship with the community as a partnership. We are always seeking opportunities to deepen our ties and support the betterment of the community!

References

¹ <https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/rpc/pdf/Fairfield-Comp-Plan-D10-02.2024.pdf>

² www.edf-re.com/

³ www.edf-re.com/project/eastern-cottontail-solar-project/

⁴ www.pjm.com/

⁵ opsb.ohio.gov/



For more
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