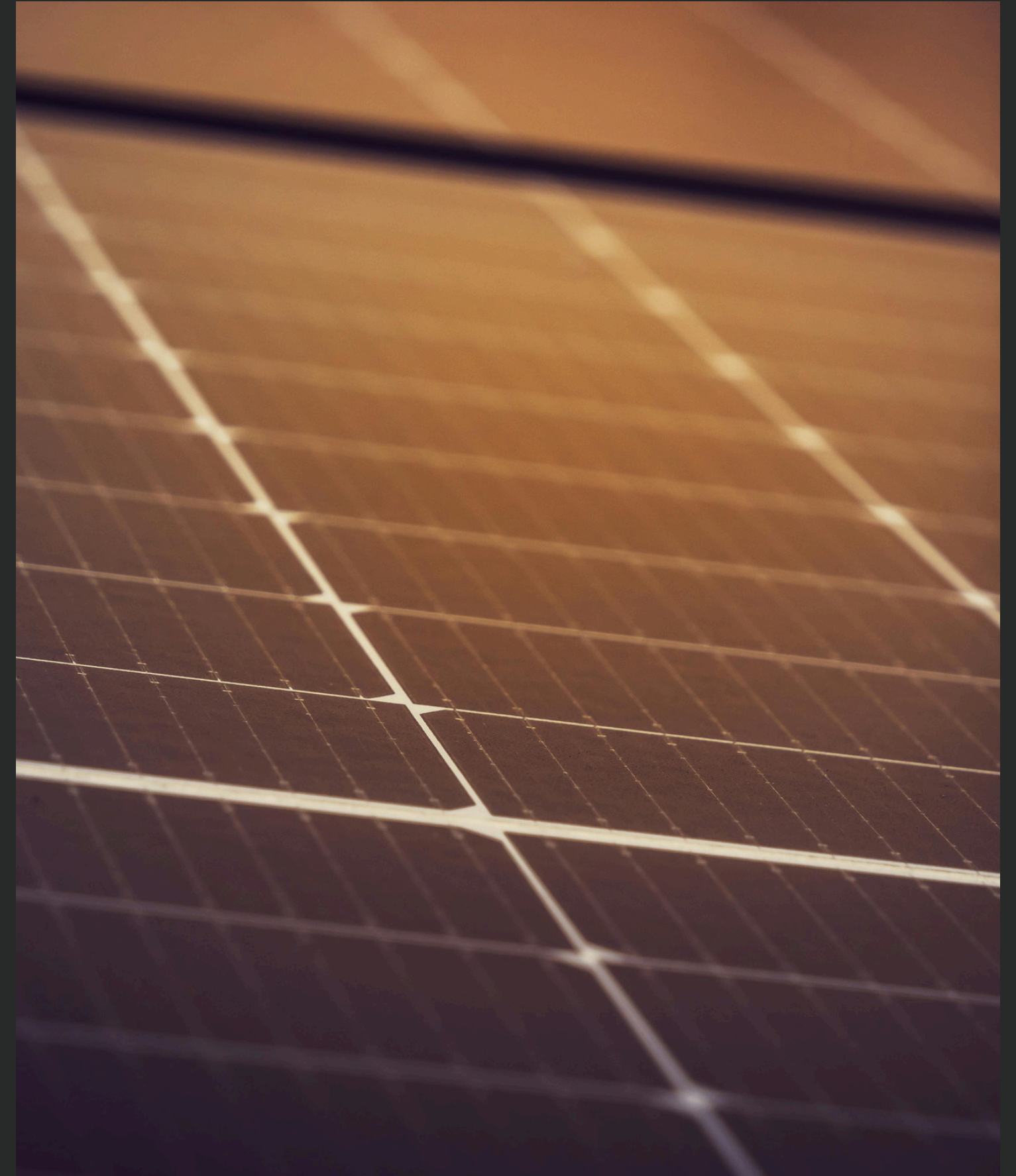


TOWN OF LOWELL

# Solar Project Informational Meeting

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Size, scope, and known impacts



# Points of Discussion

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01 The Facts

02 Visuals

03 Timeline

04 Public Comment

# 01 Key Facts

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**Key Facts:** Northland Solar Project

**Applicant:** Northland Solar LLC

**Location:** Off Route 100, Lowell, Vermont

**Capacity:** 4.999 MW AC (about 6–7 MW DC)

**Parcel:** about 43.9 acres

**Project area:** about 33 acres

**Current Land Use:** Open, actively managed  
hayfield, agricultural

# Project Infrastructure

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- **Estimated Number of Panels:** *Approximately 15,000 panels*
- **Fencing:** 7-foot-high perimeter fence with 6x6-inch “wildlife-friendly mesh.”
- **Access:** Existing driveway off Route 100 extended into the site; one intermittent stream crossing with culvert for internal access.
- **Connection:** Ties into the Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) grid via overhead line to a nearby substation.



# Environmental Facts

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## Wetlands:

- One Class II wetland nearby (avoided).
- One small Class III wetland within the project area — impact ( $\approx 21$  sq ft).

## Streams:

- A tributary of LeClair Brook crosses the northern field.
- Culvert designed to maintain aquatic organism passage; no additional tree clearing.

## Floodways / River Corridors:

- Not within a 100-year floodplain or river corridor.

## Shorelines:

- Not located on a shoreline; nearest is Missisquoi River ( $\sim 2,300$  feet away).

# Environmental Facts in the reports

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## Headwaters:

- Site meets the definition of a headwater area but will comply with stormwater permits and best management practices.
- No waste disposal or groundwater contamination expected.

## Wildlife:

**Deer Wintering Area (DWA):** Adjacent to east boundary; special restrictions in place:

- No construction Dec. 15–Apr. 15 without VT Fish & Wildlife approval.
- Limited winter maintenance access.

## Grassland Bird Habitat:

- 38.3 acres identified on-site; species observed include bobolink, savannah sparrow, and American kestrel.

# Environmental Impacts

## Peer-Reviewed Scientific Studies on Solar Fields

Topic	Finding	Source
Biodiversity loss	Solar arrays can fragment habitat and alter species composition.	Conservation Letters (2024)
Ecosystem change	PV sites modify vegetation and soil ecosystems; effects depend on management.	Environmental Evidence (2023)
Runoff & erosion	Conversion of cropland to PV can increase erosion 20–60% on slopes.	Water Resources Research (AGU, 2023)
Soil quality decline	Long-term PV cover reduces soil water-holding capacity and fertility.	Science of the Total Environment (Moscatelli et al., 2022)
Agrivoltaic reviews	Compaction, altered hydrology, and mixed crop performance reported under panels.	Agronomy / Sustainability (MDPI, 2023–24)

# Environmental Impacts

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## Government and Technical Reports & Reputable News and Extension Sources

Topic	Finding	Source
Soil compaction	Machinery and construction compact soils; restoration uncertain.	Welsh Gov't Technical Report (2023)
Farmland conversion	Loss of productive land for 25–40 yrs; uncertain recovery.	American Farmland Trust (2023)
Topic	Finding	Source
Real-world farmland impacts	Construction on fertile soils caused erosion, degraded topsoil.	Reuters (2024)
Soil health guidance	Compaction and infiltration loss common without careful design.	Penn State Extension & IERE (2022–24)



# 02

## The Visuals

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**Project Area (6/19/24)**



# The Visuals

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*Figure 2. Looking west from survey pt #3- electrical substation and Rte. 100 in mid-distance.*



# The Visuals

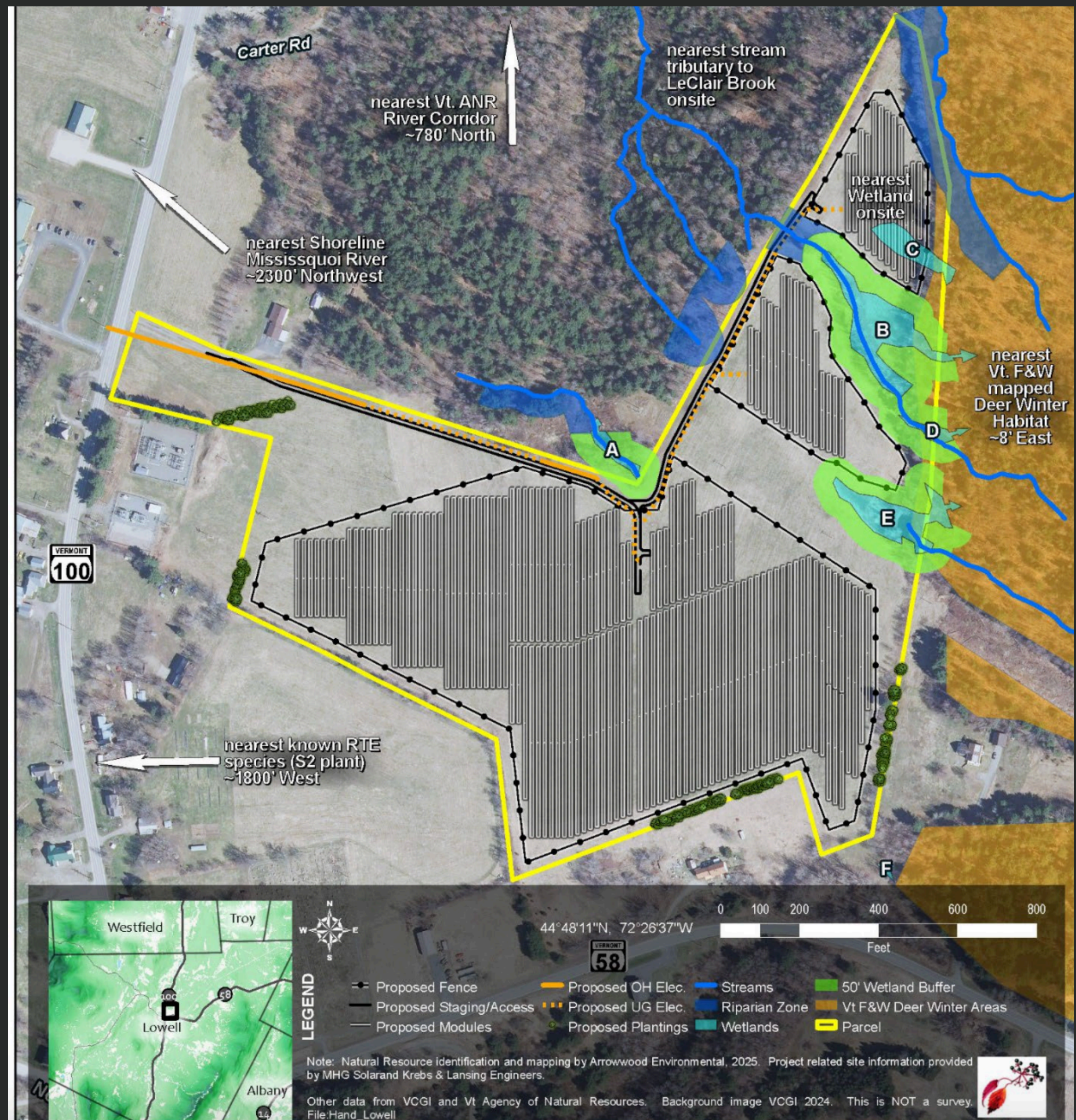
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*Figure 3. View across the unmowed valley area during the second survey.*



# The Visuals



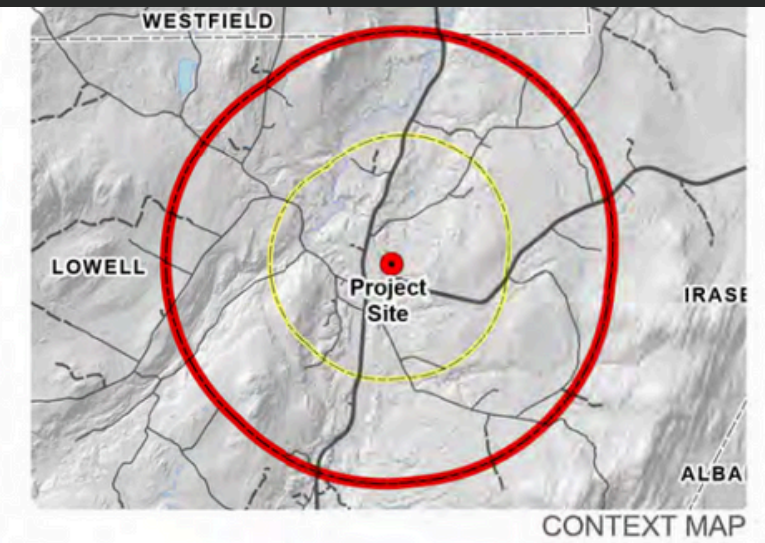


# The Visuals





# The Visuals



## Northland Solar Project

Appendix A

### MAP 1: AERIAL CONTEXT MAP

September 2025

#### LEGEND

- Viewpoint Location
- Landmarks
- Recreation Sites
- Utility Lines
- Inventory Route
- Vermont Trails
- Proposed Overhead Power
- Proposed Underground Power
- 1-Mile Radius
- Town Boundary
- Vermont Protected Lands
- Hydrology
- Proposed Solar Array Layout

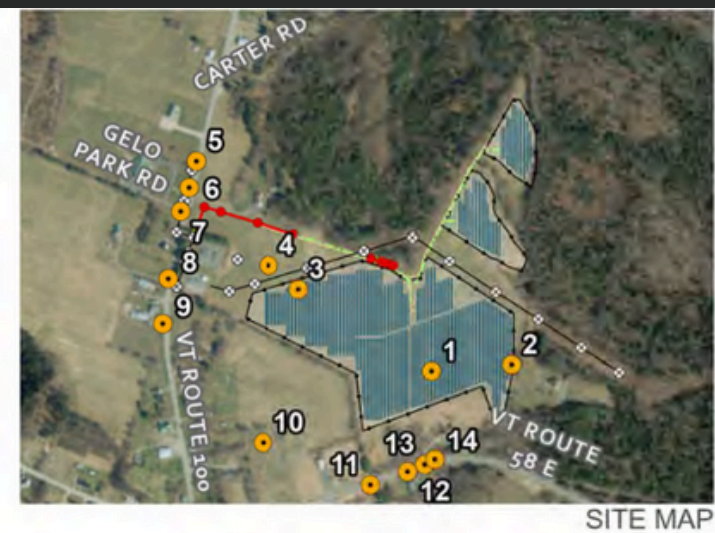
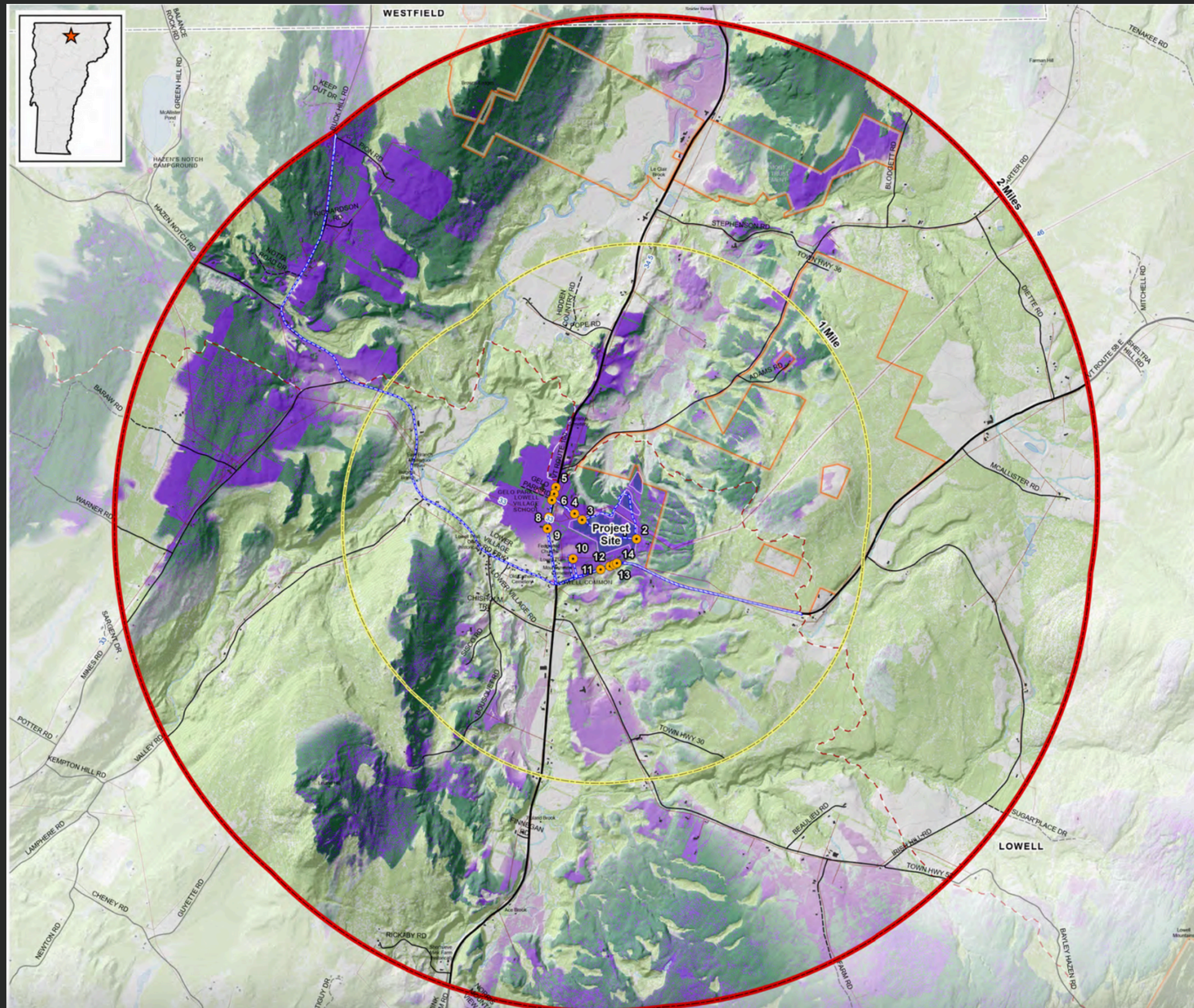
NS-JO-2 Appendix A



0 0.25 Miles



# The Visuals



## Northland Solar Project

Appendix A

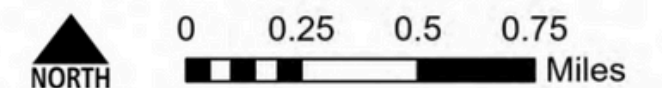
### MAP 2: TERRAIN VIEWSHED MAP

[ 2-Mile Study Area ]

September 2025

#### LEGEND

- Viewpoint Location
- Landmarks
- Recreation Sites
- Inventory Route
- 20' Contours
- Vermont Trails
- 2-Mile Study Area
- Town Boundary
- Hydrology
- Vermont Protected Lands
- Proposed Solar Array Layout
- Potential Visibility within Non-Forested Areas
  - Low
  - High
- Potential Visibility within Forested Areas
  - Low
  - High



GIS viewshed mapping is a preliminary means of visual analysis. While beneficial for preliminary orientation and investigation, because of data assumptions and omissions, viewshed maps are not a definitive indication of visibility. Potential visibility needs to be confirmed through field investigation and other visualization techniques.

Elevation data derived from LIDAR data and/or the National Elevation Dataset.



# 03 Our Timeline

Date	Event / Deadline
Nov 7, 2025	Deadline for motions to intervene and requests for site visit or public hearing
Nov 14, 2025	Responses due to motions to intervene and hearing/site visit requests
Nov 19–21, 2025	Responses due to specific motions:• Town of Lowell Select Board (11/19)• Lowell Cemetery Association (11/20)• Madonna Sullivan (11/20–21)• Doug Manning (11/20)• Lowell Graded School (11/21)
Nov 21, 2025	Deadline for discovery requests on Petitioner
Dec 12, 2025	Petitioner’s responses to discovery due
Jan 2, 2026	Second round of discovery on Petitioner
Jan 23, 2026	Deadline for comments, stipulations, testimony, and hearing requests
Jan 30, 2026	If uncontested: Petitioner files proposed order & Certificate of Public Good (CPG).If contested: Parties file proposed litigation schedule(s).

# Where This Stands



- As of now (Nov 2025), the intervention and discovery phase is underway.
- The Town of Lowell, Lowell Graded School, Lowell Cemetery Association, and several individuals have filed to intervene.
- If the case remains uncontested after January, it may move directly to a proposed order.
- If contested, a full evidentiary hearing schedule will be set after January 30, 2026.

04

# What's Next for us?

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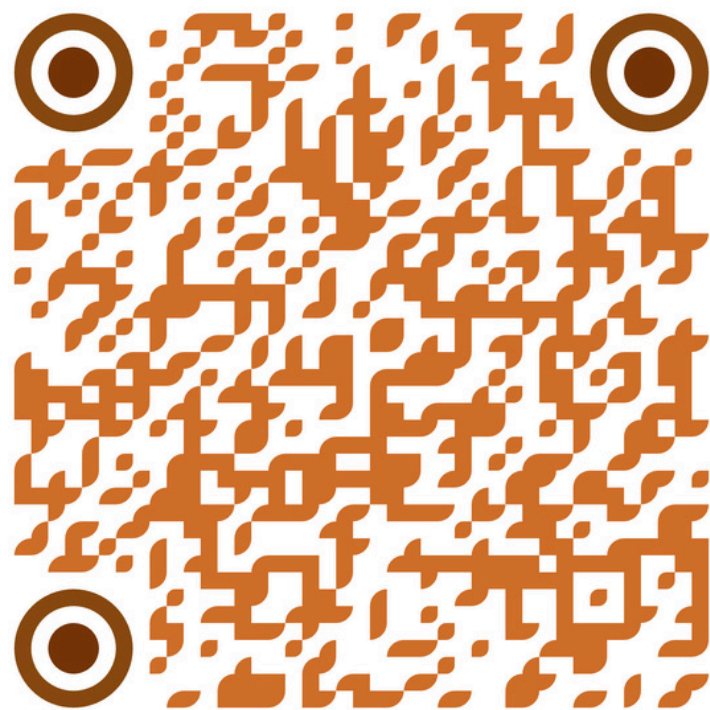
## Reach out the Public Utility Commision

Need a hand with public comment? Submit through the PUC website text box, or upload a PDF letter to the public comments page.

**Step 1:** Scan the QR codes on this slide or by the door to jump to the correct case number — phone friendly.

**Step 2:** At the top of the page, click “Select Action” and choose “Add Public Comment.”

**Step 3:** Type your comment directly into the text box or attach a PDF copy of your letter, then submit.



04

# What's Next for us?

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## Reach out the Vermont Electric Co-op

Voice your concerns directly to VEC about potentially buying power from this project.

**Step 1:** Click the link on the left side of this page.

**Step 2:** Select, your inquiry type.

**Step 3:** Type your personal information and comment directly into the text box and then submit.

