



Sapling Solar Project
Special Land Use Permit Application Narrative

Prepared for:
Gustin Township

Prepared by:
Sapling Solar, LLC

Submittal Date:
August 5, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of Sapling Solar, LLC (Sapling Solar, or the Applicant), Atwell, LLC (Atwell) has prepared this application for a Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan approval (“Application”) for the Sapling Solar Project (the Project) within Gustin Township, Alcona County, Michigan. The Project is proposed for development by Ranger Power, LLC (Ranger Power, or Ranger). The Project will include up to 215 MW (megawatts) of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels located entirely within Gustin Township. Prior to the commencement of construction, Sapling Solar will enter into a power purchase agreement (PPA) or similar type of contract for the purchase of the power generated by the Project. Evidence of such agreement will be provided to the Gustin Township Planning Commission prior to installation. The Project is located within approximately 1,427 acres of participating land known as the Project Area. Within the overall Project Area, solar panels have been sited within a fenced-in area of approximately 820 acres. The following checklist summarizes the requirements of the Gustin Township Ordinance (Solar Ordinance) and cites the relevant application materials submitted by Sapling Solar in the attached appendices.

Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist

	Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance	Explanation of Project Compliance with Standards for Approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Section 7.31: Commercial Solar Energy Systems</p> <p>General Requirements: Commercial Solar Energy Systems shall only be allowed in the Agricultural-Residential District or the Industrial District as a special use approved by the Planning Commission and shall meet the following general requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Solar Energy Systems must conform to the provisions of this Ordinance and all County, State, and Federal regulations, and safety requirements as well as applicable industry standards. 2. Solar Energy Systems shall be located or placed so that concentrated solar glare shall not be directed toward or onto nearby properties or roadways at any time of the day. 	<p>Pursuant to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance, the Project is defined as a Commercial Solar Energy System. The Project is sited entirely within the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district of Gustin Township. Refer to the Zoning Map in Appendix B: Site Plan (Sheet 02).</p> <p>The Project has been designed to comply with the National Electric Safety Code and the constructions code standards adopted by the State of Michigan, as well as all provisions outlined in this ordinance.</p> <p>The Project will not result in glare that would impact neighboring properties or vehicles on the road. The solar panels that will be used for the Project have been designed with an anti-glare coating. A glare hazard analysis did not predict glare to be reflected to any residences, businesses, or roadways. Refer to the Project Glare Study in Appendix F for additional detail.</p>

	Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance	Explanation of Project Compliance with Standards for Approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1. The property owner or applicant for a Commercial Solar Energy System shall provide the Planning Commission with proof of ownership of the subject property, a copy of any lease agreement for a commercial solar energy system, together with an operations agreement, which shall set forth the operations parameters, the name and contact information of the certified operator, inspection protocol, emergency procedures and general safety documentation.</p>	<p>As part of the application package, the Applicant will provide the Planning Commission with all required documentation, including proof of ownership, a copy of memorandums of any lease agreement for a Commercial Solar Energy System, an operations agreement, inspection protocol, emergency procedures, and general safety documentation. Please refer to Appendix A for copies of memoranda of all signed lease agreements.</p> <p>Proof of ownership, an operations agreement, an emergency response plan, and inspection protocols and general safety information will be provided to the township prior to construction. Additionally, all access roads have been designed to provide safe and efficient ingress and egress points for maintenance crews and emergency service vehicles and will not interfere with any existing drainage patterns.</p> <p>The Project is not expected to require any additional local police or fire department resources. The Project will have safety and operation protocols in place to address fire and emergencies if they are to arise.</p> <p>Sapling Solar will notify relevant emergency response agencies and fire departments having jurisdiction of the project area prior to construction so that the Fire Department can visit the Project during construction to obtain an on-the-ground understanding of the Project layout, access points, and protocols in place. Furthermore, Sapling Solar will supply additional equipment to support the local departments if necessary.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2. Commercial Solar Energy Systems shall be located on parcels of land no less than twenty (20) acres in size.</p>	<p>It is Applicant's understanding that this requirement was struck from the Gustin Township Solar Ordinance.</p> <p>Refer to the Site Plan in Appendix B.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3. The Commercial Solar Energy System shall be set back two hundred (200) feet from all property lines of non-participating lots. Setbacks should be measured when the panel is at minimum tilt.</p>	<p>Sapling Solar intends to apply for a variance for said provision to align with the Michigan Statewide Siting Regulations related to renewable energy projects. In accordance with these provisions, the Project will be setback at least 300 feet from dwellings on non-participating properties and fifty (50) feet from all public right-of-way and property lines of non-participating lots.</p> <p>Refer to Setback Tables in Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05 – 20.</p>

	Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance	Explanation of Project Compliance with Standards for Approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. The height of the Commercial Solar Energy System and any mounts shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet when oriented at maximum tilt.	The maximum height of the solar arrays, and other collection devices, components, or buildings of the Commercial Solar Energy System, excluding substation and electrical transmission equipment, have been designed not to exceed 15 feet in height when oriented at maximum tilt (as measured from the natural grade at the base of improvements) at any time or location on the property. Refer to Proposed Conditions in Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20 and the Solar Details in Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 25.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Solar devices shall be screened year-round from view from any existing residential use and the public right-of-way by use of a screening wall, evergreen vegetation, or other screening of similar effectiveness and quality, as determined by the Planning Commission. Screening shall be installed which screen the facility fully from view from the time of planting or installation. Screening shall be maintained throughout the life of the facility including replacing dead vegetation within six (6) months or at the earliest feasible time of the year dependent on the weather.	The Project will be adequately screened from existing residential uses and public rights-of-way. All proposed screening will be maintained throughout the life of the Project. Refer to the Landscaping Plan in Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 21.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. The sound pressure level of a solar energy facility and all ancillary solar equipment shall not exceed forty-five (45) dBA (Leq (1 hour)) at the property line of an adjacent non-participating lot. The site plan shall include modeled sound isolines extending from the sound source to the property lines to demonstrate compliance with this standard.	Sapling Solar intends to apply for a variance for said provision to align with the Michigan Statewide Siting Regulations. In accordance with these provisions, the Project will not exceed fifty-five (55) dBA average hourly decibels modeled at the nearest outer wall of the nearest dwelling located on an adjacent non-participating property. Refer to Appendix D: Sound Modeling Study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Prior to installation, the applicant shall submit a descriptive site plan to the Planning Commission which includes where and how the Commercial Solar Energy System will connect to the power grid.	In compliance with the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance, Sapling Solar is submitting a descriptive site plan within this Application containing information pertaining to where and how the Project will connect to the power grid. The location of the proposed Project substation, transmission line, and point of interconnection are included on the Site Plan. Refer to Appendix B: Site Plan (Sheet 05-20).
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. No Commercial Solar Energy System shall be installed until evidence has been given to the Planning Commission that the electric utility company has agreed to an interconnection with the electrical grid or a power purchase	Prior to the commencement of construction, Sapling Solar will enter into PPA or similar type of contract for the purchase of the power generated by the Project. Evidence of such agreement will be provided to the Gustin Township Planning

	Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance	Explanation of Project Compliance with Standards for Approval
	agreement. Any such agreement shall be furnished to the Planning Commission.	Commission prior to installation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>9. A condition of every approval of a Commercial Solar Energy System shall be adequate provision for the removal of the system whenever it ceases to be used for one (1) year or more. In the event that a system has been abandoned (meaning not having been in operation for a period of one (1) year), the property owner and developer/applicant shall notify the Township and shall remove the system within one (1) year from the date of abandonment. Removal includes the proper receipt of a demolition permit from the Building Official and proper restoration of the site to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator. The site shall then be filled and covered with topsoil and restored to a state compatible with the surrounding vegetation.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that the Project is left abandoned for one (1) year, the Project will be decommissioned and removed in accordance with the Project Decommissioning Plan and the land may be restored to a state compatible with the surrounding vegetation.</p> <p>The Decommissioning Plan will include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the anticipated life of the project; 2) the anticipated manner in which the project will be decommissioned, including a description of which above- grade and below-grade improvements will be removed, retained (e.g., access drive, fencing), or restored for viable reuse of the property consistent with the zoning district; 3) the estimated decommissioning costs in current dollars. Such costs shall not include credit for salvageable value of any materials. The Township may require one (1) or more third-party entities to develop decommissioning cost estimates. If this is required, the Township will select the most appropriate cost estimate; 4) the method of ensuring that funds will be available for site decommissioning and stabilization (in the form of surety bond, irrevocable letter of credit, or cash deposit); and 5) a performance guarantee in the form of a cash deposit, certified check, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or surety bond acceptable to the Township. <p>The above requirements, as well as additional details are provided in Appendix E: Decommissioning Plan.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>10. To ensure proper removal of a Commercial Solar Energy System upon discontinued use or abandonment, applications shall include a description of the financial security guaranteeing removal of the system which must be posted with the Township within fifteen (15) days after approval or before a construction permit is issued for the facility. The financial security shall be: 1) a cash bond; or 2) an irrevocable bank letter of</p>	<p>A financial guarantee will be provided for the expected cost for removal of the system and can be re-evaluated every 10 years to account for inflation. This guarantee will be posted before a construction permit for the facility is received and shall be subject to approval by the Township.</p> <p>Sapling Solar understands that the surety bond is to remain in place for the length of the</p>

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	<p>credit or a performance bond, in a form approved by the Township. The amount of such guarantee shall be no less than the estimated cost of removal and may include a provision for inflationary cost adjustments. The estimate shall be prepared by the engineer for the developer and shall be approved by the Township. The applicant shall be responsible for the payment of any costs or attorney fees incurred by the Township in securing removal.</p>	<p>lease/contracts and until decommissioning is completed to pursuant to the Decommissioning Plan.</p> <p>Additional details are provided in Appendix E: Decommissioning Plan.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>11. If the owner of the facility or the property owner fails to remove or repair the defective or abandoned Commercial Solar Energy System, the Township, in addition to any other remedy under this Ordinance, may pursue legal action to abate the violation by seeking to remove the Solar Energy System and recover any and all costs, including attorney fees.</p>	<p>Sapling Solar understands that if the Commercial Solar Energy System is not removed or repaired if defective or abandoned, the Township may pursue legal action to abate the violation by seeking to remove the Solar Energy System and recover any and all costs, including attorney fees.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>12. Repowering: In addition to repairing or replacing solar energy components to maintain the system, a solar energy facility may at any time be repowered, without the need to apply for a new Special Use permit, by reconfiguring, renovating, or replacing the solar energy components to increase the power rating within the existing project footprint. A proposal to change the project footprint of an existing solar energy facility shall be considered a new application, subject to the ordinance standards at the time of the request. Expenses for legal services and other studies resulting from an application to modify a solar energy facility will be reimbursed to the Township by the solar energy facility owner in compliance with established escrow policy.</p>	<p>Sapling Solar understands that in addition to repairing or replacing solar energy components to maintain the system, the Project may at any time be repowered, without the need to apply for a new special use permit, by reconfiguring, renovating, or replacing the solar energy facility to increase the power rating within the existing project footprint.</p>

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Gustin Township Application for Special Land Use Permit
Appendix B:	Site Plan
Appendix C:	Participating Parcel List
Appendix D:	Sound Modeling Study
Appendix E:	Decommissioning Plan
Appendix F:	Glare Study
Appendix G:	Real Estate Adjacent Property Value Impact Report
Appendix H:	Preliminary Stormwater Runoff Memorandum
Appendix I:	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

I. PROJECT INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Sapling Solar, LLC (Sapling Solar, or the Applicant), Atwell, LLC (Atwell) has prepared this Application for a Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan for the Sapling Solar Project (the Project) within Gustin Township, Alcona County, Michigan. The Project is proposed for development by Ranger Power, LLC (Ranger Power, or Ranger). The Gustin Township Application for Special Land Use Permit form is included as **Appendix A**.

1) APPLICANT INFORMATION

Project Developer:

Hope Winkler
Assistant Development Manager
Ranger Power
320 N. Sangamon Street, Suite 1025
Chicago, IL 60607

Sapling Solar:

Sapling Solar, LLC
320 N. Sangamon Street, Suite 1025
Chicago, IL 60607

Ranger Power is a utility-scale renewable energy development company headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, focused on bringing well-sited, community-supported solar energy to states in the Midwest. Ranger Power has a development portfolio of approximately 10 GW of active projects ranging in nameplate capacity from 50 MW to 400 MW.

Since 2017, Ranger has permitted more than 2,600 MW and executed over 2,600 MW of utility-scale Power Purchase and Build-Own-Transfer agreements with leading power providers throughout the region. This represents some of the largest volumes of solar development in the Midwest.

Over 1,100 MW of solar projects developed by Ranger have moved into construction, 586 MW of which are now commercially operating--many of these projects represent the largest solar projects operating in their respective states. By the end of 2023, Ranger anticipates that nearly 1 GW of projects developed by Ranger Power will be in commercial operation, delivering on our sustained value and trust to our partners.

Some examples of Ranger's leadership in the market include the recently completed construction on all three phases of the 239 MW Assembly solar project in Shiawassee County, Michigan, which is the largest operational solar project in the State. The Ranger-developed 149 MW River Fork project started construction in 2021. Dressor Plains, Prairie State, and Big River are all Ranger developed projects in Illinois, collectively 347 MW. Prairie State and Dressor Plains became operational in 2Q 2021 and are the largest operating solar projects in the state. Big River became operational in 3Q 2022.

Ranger is led by one of the most experienced teams in the renewable energy space. Their time-tested approach to development, which separates Ranger from the competition, involves working closely with landowners and communities to gain their support when bringing new investment and clean energy to the region.

Ranger Power is an industry leader because of the commitment to work closely with communities to ensure projects are a win-win. Ranger Power projects represent a significant investment and a new clean energy resource that benefits local residents, business owners, and stakeholders through bringing new investment and tax base, employment opportunities, and educational opportunities.

2) PROJECT SUMMARY

The Project will include up to 215 MW (megawatts) of photovoltaic solar panels located entirely within Gustin Township, Alcona County, Michigan. There are 36 participating parcels included in the project, totaling approximately 1427 acres (Project Area). Of this, solar panels have been sited within a fenced-in area of approximately 820 acres. Ten of the 36 participating parcels only contain proposed underground collection line and will not contain panels. Land use within the Project Area is primarily agriculture and undeveloped woodlots. The Project Area was selected based on land use, interest from landowners, and proximity to existing electrical grid infrastructure.

The Applicant has acquired the rights to develop, construct, and operate the up to 215 MW alternating current (AC) solar project located on 36 parcels of land owned by 24 private landowners. These land rights are granted either by easement agreements or by purchase option agreement. A list of participating parcels and landowners included in the Project is included in **Appendix C**. Memoranda of signed lease/easement agreements can be found in **Appendix A**. For instances where a memorandum of the signed lease/easement agreements are not available, a Permitting Consent Letter has been submitted in lieu.

The Project will consist of solar panels and inverters arranged in photovoltaic (PV) arrays. Associated facilities and infrastructure include the Project substation, operations and maintenance building (O&M), overhead transmission line to point-of-interconnection, underground electrical cables (collection) to the Project substation, perimeter fencing, landscape screening, permanent stormwater basins, and gravel access roads to each PV array and Project substation. A battery energy storage system is not anticipated for the Sapling Solar Project. The proposed locations of the solar arrays, inverters, collection lines, access roads, fencing, and other Project infrastructure within Gustin Township are shown in the Site Plan in **Appendix B**.

As demonstrated throughout this application narrative, Sapling Solar made a comprehensive and diligent effort in designing and siting a facility that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance (Zoning Ordinance) and Solar Ordinance. As sited, the Project optimizes efficient use of land to generate solar power, while avoiding impacts to natural resources or existing land uses. Additionally, as designed, the Project avoids impacts to wetlands, streams, and floodplains to the greatest extent practicable. The Applicant is simultaneously seeking a variance for relief from the setback requirements of the Solar Ordinance and, if the variance is granted, the Applicant will comply with all modified setback requirements. The Applicant will also install landscape screening in areas adjacent to non-participating residential parcels and public rights-of-way, where adequate screening does not already exist. The Project plans to coordinate with stakeholders and township officials throughout Project permitting, construction, and operation, and to date has received wide-ranging support from community members.

Construction is expected to begin in 2026, with commercial operation anticipated in 2028. Exact construction and operation dates are dependent on receipt of necessary permits, equipment, and approvals.

Sapling Solar is proud to present a project that will be an asset to community members, local stakeholders, and job seekers alike.

II. SPECIAL LAND USES

In accordance with Article VI, Section 6 – Special Land Uses of the Zoning Ordinance, Sapling Solar has provided the Planning Commission with this application package, which provides the data required for a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) application.

PERMIT STANDARDS

SPECIAL LAND USE APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to Article VI, Section 6.1 Special Land Use Application Submittal Requirements, Sapling Solar understands that all SES are subject to the following application submittal requirements:

- A. An application for a Special Land Use shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator on a special form provided for that purpose at least thirty (30) days prior to the Planning Commission meeting at which the application will be reviewed.**

Sapling Solar understands that the application for a Special Land Use submitted to the Planning Commission must be filed with the Township at least thirty (30) days prior to the Planning Commission meeting at which it will be reviewed.

- B. Uses which require a site plan shall submit five (5) copies of a site plan prepared under the requirements of §5.4. Uses which require a plot plan shall submit five (5) copies of a plot plan prepared under the requirements of §5.1.**

Per Article VI, Section 6 of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant will submit five (5) copies of the site plan prepared under the requirements of §5.4 as specified.

- C. In addition to the required elements of a plot plan or site plan, the application shall include the items listed below:**

- 1. Written description of proposed use, including parking facilities, if required, and any exceptional traffic situation the use may occasion.**

The Project's operations are described in the Project Summary above. The Project's O&M Facility proposes two or three parking spaces. Once fully constructed, the Project will not increase traffic within the surrounding area. Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20**.

- 2. A statement prepared by the applicant appraising the effect on the neighborhood.**

The Project will not produce any impactful sound, glare or other effects that will create any hazardous or disturbing impacts on the neighborhood. The Project would benefit the local, regional, and state economies by creating jobs during construction, and substantial tax revenue once in operation, and would not have an adverse impact on the value of adjacent properties. Refer to the Real Estate Adjacent Property Value Impact Report in **Appendix G**.

In addition, an analysis provided by Ranger Power shows that the Project will generate over \$12 million in personal property tax revenues over the next 40 years, with \$1.4 million of that personal tax revenue generated in the Project's first operational year. This additional tax revenue will provide for local libraries and education resources, community schools, and health and senior services in the local community.

- 3. Other information as may be required by the Planning Commission to assist in the consideration of the Special Land Use application.**

The Applicant understands that additional information related to the Applicant’s satisfaction of the Special Land Use application requirements may be requested by the Planning Commission.

4. The application shall be accompanied by the fee established by the Township Board.

The Applicant has submitted a fee payment pursuant to the amount established by the Township Board as part of this application package. In addition, the Applicant intends to establish an escrow account in the amount of \$5,000 to support expenses incurred related to the Township’s Application review and approval process. The Applicant understands that the Township and Applicant will execute and Escrow Agreement governing the deposit, use, and return of the escrowed funds.

D. The Zoning Administrator will review the materials submitted to assure all information required by the Ordinance has been provided. If the application is incomplete, the Zoning Administrator will send a notice with a detailed list of all deficiencies to the applicant. If the application, including all required additional or related information, is determined to be complete, the Zoning Administrator shall cause the submittal to be placed on the agenda of the Planning Commission meeting as a public hearing after notice has been provided in accordance with §9.5.

Sapling Solar understands that the Zoning Administrator intends to send a notice with a detailed list of deficiencies if the Application is determined to be incomplete.

SPECIAL LAND USE APPROVAL STANDARDS

Sapling Solar understands that all solar energy systems (SES) are subject to the following general requirements set forth in Article VI, Section 6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. ALLOWED SPECIAL LAND USE: The property subject to the application is located in a zoning district in which the proposed Special Land Use is allowed.

Pursuant to the Solar Ordinance, commercial SES are permitted as special land use in the A-R and the Industrial zoning districts. The Project is sited entirely within the A-R zoning district of Gustin Township. Refer to the Zoning Map in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 02.**

2. COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT USES: The proposed Special Land Use shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to be harmonious, compatible, and appropriate in appearance with existing or planned uses and the intended character of the area and the surrounding land, and shall not change the essential character of the area in which it is proposed to be located. The use shall not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future nearby uses. In determining whether a Special Land Use will be compatible and not create a significant detrimental impact, as compared to the impacts of permitted uses, consideration shall be given to the degree of impact the Special Land Use may have on adjacent property, as compared with the expected value to the community.

The Project is designed and will be constructed, operated, and maintained to be harmonious with and in appearance with the neighboring uses. Further, the Project will not change the essential character of the area as the Project’s use characteristics are similar to greenhouses and similar farming operations, and solar energy developments are recognized by the State of Michigan as agricultural/agrivoltaic uses. The Project’s fencing is also designed to be compatible with the agricultural surroundings as the fencing will be constructed with timber posts, zinc-coated woven wire fabric and 6-inch spacing, as shown on the Site Plan. The Project will maintain the area’s low density and will not increase area road traffic once constructed. The Project will produce no smoke, dust, or odor and will not produce impactful sound or glare and will not create any hazardous or disturbing impacts on neighboring uses. Refer to the Sound Modeling Study in **Appendix D** and Glare Study in **Appendix F**. Additionally, please refer to Section II (5) for more information on compatibility of commercial solar uses with agricultural land.

The following types of impacts shall be considered:

1. Use activities, processes, materials, equipment, or conditions of operation;

The overall Project includes security fencing, landscape screening, access roads, PV panels, inverters, underground collection lines, an overhead transmission line to point-of-interconnection, and a substation. A seven-foot-tall security fence will be used surrounding the PV areas and all access points to prevent unauthorized access and potential harm to an individual. The Project will be adequately screened from public streets and adjacent residences with the use of landscape screening in sensitive areas. Access roads have been designed to provide safe and efficient ingress and egress points for maintenance crews and emergency service vehicles. All collection lines from the solar facility to Project substation will be buried underground and there will be one overhead transmission line connecting to the point-of-interconnection. At the time of filing this application, the Project infrastructure include 319,842 *JINKO JKM560* modules from Jinko Solar, 38 *SG 4400UD-MV-US* inverters from Sungrow Power Supply, and one substation transformer type *Hyundai 85MVA*. The location and layout of Project infrastructure can be found on the Site Plans in **Appendix B** of this application.

2. Vehicular circulation and parking areas;

During construction, equipment trucks will park on a gravel pad. Additional parking information is detailed in Section II (C-1) of this narrative and included in the Site Plan Package (**Appendix B**).

3. Outdoor activity, storage, and work areas;

Use of exposed storage areas, trash storage areas, or loading/unloading areas are not anticipated for the Project.

4. Hours of operation;

Typical hours of operation during Project construction are seven days per week for approximately 12 hours per day. The exact hours of operation will vary based on the time of sunrise and sunset. Following the construction phase of the Project, access to the site will be limited to the extend necessary for maintenance, repairs, and other related activities.

5. Production of traffic, noise, vibration, smoke, fumes, odors, dust, glare, and light;

The Project will not generate noise, smoke, fumes, glare, vibration, odor, or traffic hazardous or detrimental to the community during operations. The Project is implementing appropriate setbacks from non-participating properties, public roadways, and residences. Construction of the Project will produce a minor increase in local traffic; however, this small increase will be temporary, and measures will be put in place to ensure traffic safety. During operation, vehicular traffic will not increase in association with the Project.

The Project has been designed to minimize audible sound at non-participating parcel boundaries by siting Project inverters centrally within participating parcels. As demonstrated by the Project's Sound Modeling Study (**Appendix D**), sound levels will not exceed fifty-five (55) dBA (Leq (1 hour)) from an adjacent non-participating residence.

Operation of a PV solar energy system does not generate emissions, smoke, fumes, or odors. Solar panels are constructed of layered glass, aluminum, and crystalline silicon. Crystalline silicon is a common mineral found naturally within the earth's crust, as well as in sand, stone, concrete, and mortar. As such, the Project will not disturb or be hazardous to any surrounding uses permitted within the adjacent zoning districts or produce any hazardous by-products, as the panels are chemically inert. Furthermore, at the end of its operational life, the Project will be removed in accordance with the Decommissioning Plan provided in **Appendix E**, and land may be returned to its current use.

The Project will not result in glare that would impact neighboring properties or vehicles on the road. The solar panels that will be used for the Project have been designed with an anti-glare coating. A glare hazard analysis did not predict glare to be reflected to any residences or businesses. Refer to the Glare Study in **Appendix F** for details. The Glare Study includes a detailed analysis that totals approximately 770 pages. This detailed analysis was not included in the printed application. However, upon request, Sapling can provide an electronic or hard copy of the full Glare Study that includes the full analysis.

The Project will include vegetative screening between the areas containing panels and adjacent residences and roads, where existing screening is not adequate. The Project will not result in sound impacts to the surrounding properties. Refer to **Appendix D: Sound Modeling Study**.

6. The relative ease by which the impacts above will be mitigated.

The Project will not result in an increase in traffic during operation. According to the Project's Sound Modeling Study (**Appendix D**), under highest decibel circumstances, sound associated with and emanating from the Project Area will adhere to requirements in the Michigan Statewide Siting Regulations. A glare hazard analysis did not predict glare to be reflected to any residences, businesses, or roadways. Refer to **Appendix D: Sound Modeling Study** and **Appendix F: Glare Study**.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES:

a. The proposed Special Land Use will not place demands on fire, police, or other public resources in excess of current capacity.

The Project is not expected to require the support of additional local police, fire department, or other public resources.

b. The proposed Special Land Use shall be served adequately by essential public facilities and services including but not limited to streets, police and fire protection, storm water drainage, refuse disposal, water and sewage facilities, and schools.

The Project will be served adequately by the existing streets and highways for the construction and operation of the Project. Transportation and installation of the Project components will not require special accommodations of existing infrastructure. The Project will be closed to the public and surrounded by perimeter security fencing to restrict access. Prior to construction, the Applicant will develop an emergency response plan and coordinate with local emergency services.

The Applicant will coordinate with local utilities to arrange suitable electric, water, and septic services for the facility, as necessary. The Project will also be served adequately by existing refuse disposal services.

The Applicant will obtain all building, electrical, plumbing, and other permits required by the Alcona County Building Department prior to construction of the O&M Facility.

The Project will be built in compliance with the National Electrical Safety Code, National Electrical Code, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers standards. The Project has been designed to avoid impacts to existing drainage patterns, and site terrain will remain generally unchanged.

4. ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY: The proposed Special Land Use shall not be detrimental to the economic well-being of the surrounding residents, businesses, landowners, and the community as a whole. The use will not create excessive additional public costs and will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the Township.

Not only will the Project avoid any negative financial impacts to the community, but taxes generated by the Project are anticipated to contribute to community schools, infrastructure, and services in Gustin Township. Refer to Section II (C-2) for more information on anticipated property tax generation related to the Project.

Additionally, solar facilities of similar size and in similar rural areas in Michigan and across the Midwest have consistently been shown to have no measurable impact on property values in the surrounding area. Refer to the Real Estate Adjacent Property Value Impact Report in **Appendix G**. The Project promotes the use of land within Gustin Township in a socially and economically desirable manner by providing renewable energy to communities in Michigan through a low-profile, strategically sited solar project designed to maintain and protect the land's historical usage for agricultural production. Solar energy generation in Alcona County will contribute to the stability and availability of energy resources in Michigan.

- 5. COMPATIBILITY WITH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: The proposed Special Land Use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, or equipment that will create a substantially negative impact on the natural resources of the Township or the natural environment as a whole. Natural features of the landscape, including but not limited to, ponds, streams, hills, and wooded areas, shall be retained where they afford a barrier or buffer from adjoining properties. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, as far as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and any grade or slope changes shall be in keeping with the general appearances of the neighborhood.**

The Project has been designed to prioritize the preservation of significant natural features such as ponds, streams, hills, and wooded areas, and other unique or significant natural areas to the extent practicable. The Project will be designed to minimize the amount of change to the natural contours and landscape of the site by minimizing the amount of tree and soil removal as best practicable and by implementation of landscaping techniques to produce smooth natural appearing slopes between the Project Area and adjacent areas. In addition, the Project will utilize 25' voluntary setbacks around natural resources, such as wetlands and streams, where applicable. As part of the due diligence for the Project, the Applicant contracted Atwell to complete environmental assessments for the Project including a review of threatened and endangered species habitat and wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, and floodplains. Based on this desktop analysis and the results of on-site assessments, no critical impacts posed by the development of the Sapling Solar Project that would adversely affect threatened and endangered species, water resources and floodplains, protected farmlands and soils, or any other environmental, cultural, historic, aesthetic factors within the Project or its vicinity were identified. The results of these assessments were used to inform Project design and reduce potential impacts to significant natural features. Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) -recommended best management practices (BMPs) will be used to minimize impacts to potential threatened or endangered species (TES) and their habitat during the construction of the Project. Please refer to **Appendix H**, Environmental Impact Assessment for further details on this analysis and the proposed Sapling Solar impact minimization strategies.

Localized grading will be performed as necessary to smooth terrain to suit tracker vendor requirements and optimize post height requirements. Additionally, soil removal and topographic modifications will be completed in accordance with site-specific construction BMPs, and the stabilization of the site will be managed to prevent soil erosion. All topsoil disturbed during site preparation on the property (including grading) shall be retained on site. Minimal tree clearing will occur to ensure project capacity is met while retaining natural features within the township. Perennial vegetative groundcover will be planted and maintained throughout the fenced in Project area similar to cover crops in typical agricultural operations or land enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program.

Sapling Solar has committed to seeding the Project Area with a mix of pollinator-friendly and other vegetation determined to be appropriate for the region that will be compatible with the surrounding landscape. Upon completion of construction activities, native, weed-free grass seed mixtures and pollinator blends will be planted for final stabilization of the site. Establishment of regionally appropriate seed mixes will allow land within the Project Area used for agriculture to become fallow, optimizing soil health and creating the conditions to allow productive farmland to return to a traditional agricultural use after the operational life of the Project. Pollinator-friendly vegetation planted within the project area will decrease erosion, increase stormwater control, increase biodiversity within the project area, and maintain the character of the surrounding area. Ground cover will be comprised of two different seed mixes: a short seed mix that will be spread under the panels and a long seed mix to be spread outside of the panels. These areas will be regularly maintained to ensure that plantings under the array do not present a fire hazard and to properly prune and maintain for aesthetic purposes.

According to the USDA, approximately 50% of the Site is classified as prime farmland if drained, approximately 25% is all areas are prime farmland, approximately 21% is not prime farmland, and approximately 5% is farmland of local importance.

The Project Area covers approximately 1,427 acres of land currently zoned as A-R. The fenced-in areas within the Project, totaling approximately 820 acres, account for 8% of the prime farmland in Gustin Township and approximately 5% of the farmland of local importance in the township.

Additionally, pursuant to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, MCL 324.36101 et seq., the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), subject to appropriate permitting by the local governing body, may permit solar facilities to be built on property enrolled in the Farmland Development Rights Program. The Michigan Legislature and MDARD have determined that solar facilities are consistent with preserving a long-term agricultural use and are a permissible use for land subject to development rights restrictions under Michigan's Farmland Development Rights Program. Properties enrolled in the Program (formerly referred to as the PA 116) may be developed as a solar farm, provided that the solar developer complies with a number of conditions, including that the Project is designed and planted to achieve a score of at least 76 on the Michigan Pollinator Habitat Planning Scorecard for Solar Sites. Currently, Sapling Solar is aware of one parcel (050-022-100-020-01) within the Project Area that is enrolled in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. Sapling Solar will comply with all MDARD requirements for development within these parcels. It should be noted that the number of enrolled parcels may change once a full title search is completed in September 2024.

MDARD has also determined that the placement of structures for commercial solar energy generation on property enrolled in the Farmland Development Rights Program is consistent with farming operations and is consistent with the purposes of the statute. MDARD strives to preserve agricultural land for future use as intended by the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act and allows solar energy systems to be sited on lands enrolled in the Farmland Development Rights Program as the land can be returned to a traditional agricultural use at the end of the operational life of the solar energy system.

- 6. IMPACT OF TRAFFIC ON STREET SYSTEM: The location and design of the proposed Special Land Use shall minimize the negative impact on the street system in consideration of items such as vehicle trip generation (i.e. volume), types of traffic, access location and design, circulation and parking design, street and bridge capacity, traffic operations at proposed access points, and traffic operations at nearby intersections and access points. The proposed Special Land Use shall not cause traffic congestion, conflict, or movement in greater proportion to that normally prevailing for the use in the particular zoning district.**

The Project will not have a negative impact on the street system during operation. The Project is implementing setbacks from non-participating properties, public roadways, and residences. Construction of the project will produce a minor increase in local traffic; however, this small increase will be temporary,

and measures will be put in place to ensure traffic safety. During operation, vehicular traffic will not increase in association with the Project.

The Project does not include any new public roadways and solar panels will be set back from public road rights-of-way (ROWs). During operation, the Project will not generate vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Access roads have been designed to provide safe and efficient ingress and egress points for maintenance crews or emergency vehicles. Refer to the Crossing and Access Road Details in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 23**.

The Project will be served adequately by the existing streets and highways for the construction of the Project. Transportation and installation of the components will not require special accommodations of the existing infrastructure. Workforce and component delivery routes will follow designated and approved routes, and the Project will coordinate with the Alcona County Road Commission prior to the commencement of construction to document road conditions before and after construction to ensure no damage to public roadways has occurred as a result of the Project.

- 7. NON-DETRIMENTAL STANDARDS: The proposed Special Land Use shall not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment, or conditions of operation that will be hazardous or detrimental to any persons, property, or the general welfare by reason of noxious or offensive production of noise, smoke, fumes, glare, vibration, odor, or traffic.**

Please see Applicant's above response in Section II (D-2(5)) of this narrative.

- 8. CONSISTENT WITH ZONING ORDINANCE AND MASTER PLAN: The use will be consistent with the intent and purposes of this Ordinance and meet the goals and objectives of the currently adopted Master Plan.**

The Project is designed to be consistent with the intent and purposes of this Ordinance and meets the goals and objectives of the current Master Plan. One of the principal goals outlined in the Gustin Township Ordinance and Master Plan is that it will "preserve property values while implementing new possibilities, where appropriate, for growth while maintaining the integrity of this townships' rural forest/recreational, family farming, and residential property as well as allowing for industry growth to create and maintain jobs so that families will find a home in this township."

The Sapling Solar Project is being designed and developed in a manner that completely aligns with this stated goal. Located in the A-R District in Gustin Township, the Project will promote the integrity of the Township's family farms and residential property. MDARD recognizes solar energy generation as a consistent use with farming operations. Solar development preserves family farms for future generations by providing stable and diversified sources of income, while also resting the agricultural soils so that nutrients can be restored, and the land may return to agricultural use once the Project is decommissioned. The Project will also have no measurable impact on property values in the surrounding area (see Appendix H for Real Estate Adjacent Property Value Impact Report).

Further, the Project will be consistent with the stated purpose of the Zoning Ordinance as it will be designed to promote and safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare of the people of Gustin Township by helping to balance and meet the needs of citizens for food, fiber, energy, natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land. The Project also furthers the Ordinance's state goal of facilitating "adequate and efficient provision for energy, and other public service and facility requirements."

- 9. COMPLIANCE WITH SUPPLEMENTAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS: The proposed Special Land Use complies with all applicable supplemental development regulations as contained in Article VII of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance.**

The Project will meet or exceed all applicable supplemental development regulations as contained in Article VII of the Zoning Ordinance.

III. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sapling Solar understands that all permitted and Special Land Uses, in all districts, are subject to the following general requirements set forth in Article III, Sec. 3.16, 3.17, and 3.19-3.23 of the Zoning Ordinance:

A. ON-SITE DRAINAGE AND RUNOFF:

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B**: Site Plan Sheet 04. Existing drainage patterns will generally be maintained to follow existing conditions. Localized grading will be performed as necessary to smooth terrain to suit tracker vendor requirements and optimize post height requirements and will not alter the existing drainage patterns to divert large areas away from their existing downstream areas. Impervious surfaces for the Project are limited to gravel access roads and the substation footprint. Fenced-in areas containing solar panels will be vegetated, decreasing runoff compared to existing agricultural fields. Construction of the Project will not cause an increase in run-off to adjacent properties. The Applicant has prepared a Preliminary Stormwater Runoff Memorandum as a part of this application package. Refer to the memorandum in **Appendix H**.

1. **No premises within a residential district shall be filled or graded so as to discharge surface runoff onto abutting premises or in such a manner that will cause inconvenience or damage to adjacent properties. When property is developed adjacent to existing properties previously developed, existing grades have priority.**

Not Applicable.

2. **Where any lot, part, or parcel of land, has located upon it a duly recorded easement for any purpose whatsoever, that portion of such land whereupon the easement stands shall be graded as indicated by the Township and in no event so as to obstruct or substantially slow down the natural flow or course of surface water across such easement. The grade in easements shall in all cases be subject to the approval of the Township.**

The Project is designed to preserve existing drainage patterns and will generally be maintained to follow existing conditions. Localized grading will be performed as necessary to smooth terrain to suit tracker vendor requirements, optimize post height requirements, and will not alter the existing drainage patterns to divert large areas away from their existing downstream areas. Refer to the Preliminary Stormwater Runoff Memorandum in **Appendix H**.

- B. **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: The property owner or developer is required to retain on site all stormwater drainage in excess of natural conditions. This provision may require stormwater retention ponds where appropriate. An exception can be made for water leaving the site via an existing stormwater pipe, or through other stormwater facilities which will be developed at the same time as the proposed new use. All stormwater facilities, including detention or retention ponds, shall be designed at minimum to handle a storm with the projected frequency of once every ten years (ten-year design storm).**

Sapling Solar completed a preliminary stormwater runoff analysis to measure the effects on stormwater runoff due to the resulting change in land use for the proposed project. Refer to the Preliminary Stormwater Runoff Memorandum located in **Appendix H**. The Project will primarily convert areas of agricultural crop development into solar energy development PV arrays with grassy ground cover, elevated solar panels, and gravel driveways to site equipment. Due to land availability, there will also be areas of undeveloped woods and pasture/meadow land cover that will be utilized for PV arrays.

Typical preparation for installation of PV arrays consists of clearing vegetation with minor grading as needed to allow driving panel support posts into the ground. Generally, site grading is avoided or minimized but may be necessary due to topographical constraints (i.e., steep slopes and/or ridges/valleys

within the tracker rows) to comply with tracker vendor requirements. These grading areas are localized and will not alter the existing drainage patterns to divert large areas away from their existing downstream areas.

After the Project is built and proper ground cover established, the resulting land use will consist of a grassy field best categorized as “meadow” classification per Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (“EGLE”), with gravel driveways. The panels are elevated above ground and do not diminish the ability of the ground cover below to accept and treat rainfall. During a rain event, rainfall will either land directly on the ground or flow off the panels and onto the ground below where it will be filtered, absorbed, infiltrated, or run off. The amount of gravel cover for the project is typically very small relative to the overall array area, consisting primarily of narrow driveways distributed throughout the arrays.

Results of the analysis show that areas converted from existing agricultural crop development to a solar PV array with grassy ground cover and limited gravel access drives generally does not increase stormwater runoff that would require the need for permanent stormwater management facilities (i.e., detention / retention basins), and would reduce runoff to downstream land. In areas where all or nearly all the proposed array is sited in land currently categorized as wooded or meadow, the proposed solar array may result in a calculated increase in stormwater runoff. For those areas it is recommended that permanent stormwater management facilities such as detention basins or retention/infiltration BMPs be provided to properly manage the increased runoff volume. Because of this, five permanent stormwater basins are proposed within three areas of the project. Refer to the Site Plans in **Appendix B** for the approximate size and location of proposed stormwater basins.

C. EXTERIOR SITE LIGHTING:

All lighting for parking lots, driveways, external illumination of buildings, or the illumination of signs is planned to direct away from and be shielded from adjacent properties and is arranged to avoid adversely affecting driver visibility on adjacent public roads. The Project will not require exterior lighting within the solar arrays. The Project would include one overhead downward-facing light within the substation and may include another downward-facing light at the O&M Facility for the purposes of security, maintenance, and emergency services. The type of lighting fixtures to be used include the Streetworks UFLD Utility Flood light. Substation lighting will also comply with the requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and Solar Ordinance and will not adversely impact adjacent properties or traffic on adjacent streets, nor produce significant light pollution. Details on the lighting fixture can be found on Sheet 22 of the Site Plans.

D. FENCES AND WALLS:

1. CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE: ALL DISTRICTS

The Project is designed to include a security fence surrounding the Project and all access points. Refer to the Site Plan in **Appendix B** for the locations of proposed fencing. The Project has been designed to be completely enclosed by fencing that will restrict unauthorized access as required by federal regulation. A chain-link security fence, with a barbed-wire apron on extension arms, is to be used around the proposed substation only. The National Electric Safety Code (NESC) requires seven-foot-tall fencing around the PV areas. Outside of the substation, fencing for the Project is planned to be seven feet tall, consisting of timber posts with zinc-coated woven wire fabric and 6-inch spacing, as shown on the Site Plan detail sheets in **Appendix B**, Sheet 22.

E. LANDSCAPING AND BUFFERING:

In addition to the landscape screening requirements set forth in Section 7.31.C.5 of the Solar Ordinance, the Project will adhere to the following provisions in Section 3.21, C&D of the Zoning Ordinance, detailed below.

1. Landscaping Standards:

Perennial vegetative groundcover will be planted and maintained throughout the fenced in areas containing the PV array. These areas will be planted with permanent living plant material within thirty (30) days of operation and will be maintained throughout the life of the Project to be kept free from refuse and debris and healthy. The vegetative groundcover will contain a regionally appropriate seed mix that is free of invasive species. The Project will adhere to all landscaping requirements set forth in Section 3.21, C of the Zoning Ordinance.

2. Greenbelts and Buffers:

The Project will be designed to include vegetative screening when adjacent to a Residential District boundary that does not contain adequate existing screening. Plant material will be chosen to create appropriate horizontal and vertical obscuring effects as determined adequate by the Planning Commission. The Project will be designed with a ratio of deciduous to evergreen trees so that a maximum obscuring effect will be maintained throughout various seasonal periods. The Project will adhere to all buffer requirements set forth in Section 3.21, C of the Zoning Ordinance. Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20**, Landscape Plan in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 21**, and Landscape Details in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 24**.

A. CIRCULATION AND PARKING:

The Project will adhere to all parking requirements set forth in Section 3.22 of the Zoning Ordinance. Additional parking information is detailed in Section II (C-1) of this narrative.

B. SIGNS:

The Project will have informational and safety related signage that adheres to the requirements set forth in Section 3.23 of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance.

IV. SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS ORDINANCE

Pursuant to the Solar Ordinance NO. 2023-01, the Project is defined as a Commercial Solar Energy System. Commercial Solar Energy Systems are permitted as a special land use in the A-R and Industrial zoning districts. The Project is sited entirely within the A-R zoning district of Gustin Township. Refer to the Zoning Map in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 02**.

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 7.31, *Solar Energy Systems*, of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance, states the requirements for Commercial Solar Energy Systems, which the Project will be designed to accommodate.

1. All SES must conform to the provisions of this Ordinance and all County, State, and Federal regulations, and safety requirements as well as applicable industry standards.

Please reference the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist General Requirements section.

2. SES shall be located or placed so that concentrated solar glare shall not be directed toward or onto nearby properties or roadways at any time of the day.

Please reference the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist General Requirements section.

B. COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

- 1. The property owner or applicant for a Commercial Solar Energy System shall provide the Planning Commission with proof of ownership of the subject property, a copy of any lease agreement for a commercial solar energy system, together with an operations agreement, which shall set forth the operations parameters, the name and contact information of the certified operator, inspection protocol, emergency procedures and general safety documentation.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (1).

- 2. Commercial Solar Energy Systems shall be located on parcels of land no less than twenty (20) acres in size.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (2).

- 3. The Commercial Solar Energy System shall be set back two hundred (200) feet from all property lines of non-participating lots. Setbacks should be measured when the panel is at minimum tilt.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (3).

- 4. The height of the Commercial Solar Energy System and any mounts shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet when oriented at maximum tilt.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (4).

- 5. Solar devices shall be screened year-round from view from any existing residential use and the public right-of-way by use of a screening wall, evergreen vegetation, or other screening of similar effectiveness and quality, as determined by the Planning Commission. Screening shall be installed which screen the facility fully from view from the time of planting or installation. Screening shall be maintained throughout the life of the facility including replacing dead vegetation within six (6) months or at the earliest feasible time of the year dependent on the weather.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (5).

- 6. The sound pressure level of a solar energy facility and all ancillary solar equipment shall not exceed forty-five (45) dBA (Leq (1 hour)) at the property line of an adjacent non-participating lot. The site plan shall include modeled sound isolines extending from the sound source to the property lines to demonstrate compliance with this standard.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (6).

- 7. Prior to installation, the applicant shall submit a descriptive site plan to the Planning Commission which includes where and how the Commercial Solar Energy System will connect to the power grid.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (7).

- 8. No Commercial Solar Energy System shall be installed until evidence has been given to the Planning Commission that the electric utility company has agreed to an interconnection with the electrical grid or a power purchase agreement. Any such agreement shall be furnished to the Planning Commission.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (8).

- 9. A condition of every approval of a Commercial Solar Energy System shall be adequate provision for the removal of the system whenever it ceases to be used for one (1) year or more. In the event that a system has been abandoned (meaning not having been in operation for a period of one (1) year), the property owner and developer/applicant shall notify the Township and shall remove the system within one (1) year from the date of abandonment. Removal includes the proper receipt of a demolition permit from the Building Official and proper restoration of the site to the satisfaction of**

the Zoning Administrator. The site shall then be filled and covered with topsoil and restored to a state compatible with the surrounding vegetation.

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (9).

- 10. To ensure proper removal of a Commercial Solar Energy System upon discontinued use or abandonment, applications shall include a description of the financial security guaranteeing removal of the system which must be posted with the Township within fifteen (15) days after approval or before a construction permit is issued for the facility. The financial security shall be: 1) a cash bond; or 2) an irrevocable bank letter of credit or a performance bond, in a form approved by the Township. The amount of such guarantee shall be no less than the estimated cost of removal and may include a provision for inflationary cost adjustments. The estimate shall be prepared by the engineer for the developer and shall be approved by the Township. The applicant shall be responsible for the payment of any costs or attorney fees incurred by the Township in securing removal.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (10).

- 11. If the owner of the facility or the property owner fails to remove or repair the defective or abandoned Commercial Solar Energy System, the Township, in addition to any other remedy under this Ordinance, may pursue legal action to abate the violation by seeking to remove the Solar Energy System and recover any and all costs, including attorney fees.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (11).

- 12. Repowering: In addition to repairing or replacing solar energy components to maintain the system, a solar energy facility may at any time be repowered, without the need to apply for a new Special Use permit, by reconfiguring, renovating, or replacing the solar energy components to increase the power rating within the existing project footprint. A proposal to change the project footprint of an existing solar energy facility shall be considered a new application, subject to the ordinance standards at the time of the request. Expenses for legal services and other studies resulting from an application to modify a solar energy facility will be reimbursed to the Township by the solar energy facility owner in compliance with established escrow policy.**

Refer to the Gustin Township Solar Energy Systems Ordinance Checklist Provision (12).

VI. SITE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Article V, Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance, the site plan will adhere to the following requirements:

- A. CONTACT INFORMATION: Name and address of the property owner(s), developer(s), and designer(s), and their interest in said properties.**

Sapling Solar has provided name and address information for the owners of participating parcels in **Appendix C** Participating Parcels List. Contact information for the Project developer (Ranger Power), the Project designers, and their interest in said properties are shown on the Cover Sheet of the Site Plan in **Appendix B**.

- B. LEGAL DESCRIPTION: The parcel's legal description.**

Legal descriptions for the parcels that make up the Project Area are included within the Participating Parcel List of the Site Plan (**Appendix B**) Sheet 03.

- C. **MAP REQUIREMENTS:** The date, a north arrow, the scale, and name of the individual or firm responsible for preparing said plan. The scale must be at least one (1) inch = forty (40) feet for parcels under three (3) acres and at least one (1) inch = one hundred (100) feet for parcels of three (3) acres or more.

Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheets 05-20.

- D. **BOUNDARY LINES:** The boundary lines and dimension of the property. Show relationship of the subject property to abutting properties. A certified survey of the property which has been prepared and sealed by a professional licensed surveyor may be required by the Zoning Administrator.

GIS parcel boundary lines are included in the Site Plan. A certified survey will be completed and updated boundary lines will be included in the final Site Plan prior to construction. Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 04 and the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheets 05-20.

- E. **NATURAL FEATURES:** Boundary dimensions of natural features such as existing trees and vegetation, forests, water bodies, wetlands, floodplains, high risk erosion areas, slopes over ten (10) percent, drainage, and other similar features.

Natural features on site, such as wetlands and streams, have been mapped through a combination of desktop and field delineations to inform preliminary Site Plan design. Additional field surveys will be conducted to confirm and update boundary lines. Updated line work will be included in the final Site Plan prior to construction. Refer the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 04.

- F. **TOPOGRAPHY:** The topography of the existing and finished site shall be shown by contours or spot elevations. Where the existing slope on any part of the site is ten percent (10%) or greater, contours shall be shown at height intervals of two (2) feet or less.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 04.

- G. **LOCATION OF STRUCTURES AND ACCESSORY FEATURES:** The location, dimension, and height of all existing structures and all proposed uses or structures on the site, including principal building(s), accessory structures, trash receptacles, walkways, signs, exterior lighting, common use areas, recreational areas and facilities, and any impervious surface. Indicate gross building areas.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 04 and the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheets 05-20.

- H. **LOCATION OF VEHICULAR FEATURES:** Location of proposed drives, neighboring drives, vehicle entrances and loading points, vehicular circulation features, size and number of parking spaces, service lanes (show the dimensions of a typical parking stall and parking lot) and loading and unloading areas.

Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheets 05-20.

- I. **LOCATION OF PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION FEATURES:** Location and design of sidewalks, walkways, barrier-free access points, bicycle paths, bicycle parking areas, and areas for public use.

The Sapling Solar Project will be adequately fenced so as to prevent access by the general public. Therefore, sidewalks, walkways, barrier-free access points, bicycle paths, bicycle parking areas, and areas for public use are not included in the Site Plan and are not applicable to the Project.

- J. **SIGNS:** Location, size and specifications of all signs and advertising features with cross sections.

Refer to the Signage Details in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 22.

- K. **ELEVATIONS:** Drawings or sketches of the exterior and elevations, and/or perspective drawings of the building or structures under consideration. Indicate number of stories.

Not Applicable.

L. TYPE OF SURFACE: Types of surfacing such as paving, turfing or gravel to be used at the various locations.

Refer to the Access Road Details in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 23.**

M. SETBACKS: Setback lines and distances between structures and lot lines.

Refer to the Setbacks Table in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20.**

N. AREA OF DEVELOPMENT: Indicate the gross land area of the development and area of the property subject to be covered by structures (not available as open space).

Refer to the Gustin Township Zoning Map in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 02** and Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 05-20.**

O. RIGHTS-OF-WAY, EASEMENTS, AND PUBLIC SPACES: The location and width of all abutting rights-of-way, easements, and public open spaces within or bordering the subject project.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 04.**

P. UTILITIES: Size and location of proposed sewer and water lines and connections. Location of all other utilities on the site.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 04.**

Q. NEARBY STRUCTURES: The location and identification of all existing structures, lighting, signs, ingress drives, roads, and parking within a two hundred (200) foot radius of the site, including road names.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 04.**

R. ADJACENT FRONT YARD DIMENSIONS: The front yard dimensions of the nearest building on both sides of the proposed structure.

Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 04.**

S. ZONING CLASSIFICATION: The existing zoning district in which the site is located and the zoning of adjacent parcels.

Refer to the Gustin Township Zoning Map in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 02.**

T. LANDSCAPING, FENCES, AND WALLS: Location and height of all walls, fences, and screen planting, including a general plan for the landscaping of the development and the method by which landscaping is to be accomplished and be maintained. (Plant materials shall be chosen and installed in accordance with §3.21 of the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance.)

Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20**, the Proposed Landscaping Plan in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 21**, and the Fencing and Landscaping Details in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 21 & 22.**

U. LIGHTING: Exterior lighting locations with area of illumination illustrated as well as the type of fixtures and shielding to be used.

Please refer to Section III (C) of this narrative for information on lighting location and shielding The type of lighting fixtures to be used include the Streetworks UFLD Utility Flood light. Details on the lighting fixture can be found on Sheet 22 of the Site Plans.

V. OUTDOOR STORAGE: Description and location of any existing or proposed outdoor storage facilities (above ground and below ground storage).

This provision is not applicable to the Project.

W. DRAINAGE: The location, size, and slope of all surface and subsurface drainage facilities.

Please refer to Section III-A of this narrative.

X. FLOOR DRAINS: Location and status of any floor drains in structures on the site. The point of discharge for all drains and pipes shall be specified on the site plan.

This provision is not applicable to the Project.

Y. WASTEWATER TREATMENT: Description and location of on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems.

This provision is not applicable to the Project.

Z. WELL LOCATION: Location of existing private drinking water wells, monitoring wells, test wells, irrigation wells, or wells used for industrial processes.

Locations of existing private drinking wells, monitoring wells, test wells, irrigation wells, and wells used for industrial processes are shown in the Site Plan. Refer to Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 04.**

AA. SNOW STORAGE: The location of snow storage areas.

Sapling Solar will coordinate with local contractors to ensure prompt snow removal when necessary.

BB. DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH SOIL EROSION AND STORMWATER STANDARDS: All site plans shall comply with the terms of the Alcona County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Standards. It shall be the applicant's responsibility to provide documentation of compliance with these standards.

The Site Plan has been designed in compliance with the terms of the Alcona County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Standards. The Project will obtain its Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit with Alcona County prior to construction. Refer to the Preliminary Stormwater Runoff Memorandum in **Appendix H** for further details on compliance with Gustin Township stormwater standards.

CC. HOURS OF OPERATION: Anticipated hours of operation for the proposed use. The Planning Commission may impose reasonable limits to hours of operation as a condition of site plan approval when warranted to assure compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Sapling Solar understands that the Planning Commission can impose reasonable limits to the hours of operation of the Project. Operation hours are detailed within Section II (D-2(4)) of this narrative.

DD. RESIDENTIAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS: Site plans for residential projects (multiple family developments and manufactured home parks) shall include the following additional information: Minimum floor area of dwelling units, the total number of units proposed, the number of bedrooms per unit in multiple family developments, and any areas to be used for open space and recreation.

This provision is not applicable to this Project.

EE. PHASED CONSTRUCTION: Where phases or staged construction is contemplated for the development of a project, the site plan submitted must show the interrelationship of the proposed project to the future stages, including the following: The relationship and identification of future structures, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, time schedule for completion of the various phases of the proposed construction, and the temporary facilities or construction of same as required to facilitate the stated development.

The Sapling Solar Project will be constructed in one single construction phase.

FF. IMPACT STATEMENT: The Zoning Administrator may require a statement which addresses the following as applicable to the type of use:

- 1. A complete description of the proposed development including areas of the site; the number of lots or units; and the number and characteristics of the population impact such as density, as it relates to elderly persons, school children, tourists, family size, income, and related information as applicable.**

The Project will consist of 36 parcels, totaling approximately 1,900 acres. Of this, solar panels have been designed to be placed within a fenced-in area of approximately 820 acres. The proposed substation and point of interconnection represent 1.43 acres of the westernmost portion of the Project Area. The Sapling Solar Project will not impact characteristics of the township's population density of elderly persons, school children, tourists, family size, or income. The Sapling Solar Project is zoned within the Agricultural-Residential district and will not directly displace any persons or existing dwellings or impact income of persons in the community as a result of construction, operation, or maintenance, except those directly employed by the Project.

- 2. Expected demands on community services, and how these services are to be provided, to specifically include: school classroom needs, volume of water consumption related to ground water reserves, change in traffic volume on adjacent streets and other factors that may apply to the particular development.**

The Project does not anticipate placing demand on school classroom community services or consumption of groundwater. The only use of groundwater may be during construction for dust control or the Project's O&M facility. Though use of groundwater, if deemed necessary, will be minimal, the Applicant will obtain a Water Supply Construction or similar type of Permit prior to commencement of construction. The Project will be served adequately by the existing streets and highways for the construction of the Project. The Project does not include any new public roadways and solar panels will be setback from public road ROWs. During operation, the Project will not generate vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Access roads have been designed to provide safe and efficient ingress and egress points for maintenance crews or emergency vehicles.

The Applicant will notify the Local Fire Department prior to construction so that the Fire Department can visit the Project during construction to obtain a better on-the-ground understanding of the Project layout and access points. Thus, the Project is not expected to require any additional local police or fire department resources.

- 3. Statements relative to the impact of the proposed development on soil erosion, drainage patterns, shoreline protection, wildlife habitat, air pollution, water pollution (ground and surface), noise pollution and the aesthetics and scale of development in terms of the surrounding environment. Statement of the impact of the development with respect to noise, dust, fire hazard, fumes, odors, vibration, smoke, or excessive light.**

As part of the due diligence for the Project, the Applicant contracted Atwell to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Project including review natural resources such as wildlife, threatened and endangered species habitat, wetlands, streams, floodplains, groundwater, and cultural resources. The Project area has been thoroughly reviewed from a desktop perspective and a preliminary site visit was conducted to verify the findings of the desktop assessments. Please refer to **Appendix I**, Environmental Impact Assessment for additional information on impacts to natural resources.

Additionally, visual impacts were considered during the design phase of the project to assess the visual impacts of the proposed Project. Sapling Solar made a comprehensive and diligent effort in designing and siting a facility that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Gustin Township Zoning

Ordinance and Solar Ordinance. The Project optimizes efficient use of land to generate solar power, while avoiding impacts to natural resources, existing land uses, and important scenic resources. In compliance with the ordinance, Sapling Solar will install vegetative landscape screening consisting of a mix of trees and shrubs that will be planted at heights of eight to twelve feet that will adequately obscure the view from adjacent residences within non-participating residences and public rights-of-way, where adequate screening does not already exist. When feasible, existing wooded hedgerows, natural landscaping, and mature woodlots will remain and be utilized in place of proposed screening. As currently designed, a large portion of the Project will utilize mature woodlots and wooded hedgerows between agricultural fields to screen the panels from public-rights-of-way and non-participating residences. All proposed screening will be maintained adequately throughout the life of the Project. Refer to the Landscaping Plan in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 21** for more information on existing screening and placement of proposed screening.

Additionally, as designed, plant material will be chosen to create appropriate horizontal and vertical obscuring effects as determined adequate by the Planning Commission. The Project will be designed with a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs so that a maximum obscuring effect will be maintained throughout various seasonal periods. The Project will adhere to all buffer requirements set forth in Section 3.21, C of the Zoning Ordinance and all landscaping requirements set forth in Section 3.21, C of the Zoning Ordinance. Based on the analysis of potential visual impacts and adherence with ordinance provisions related to screening and buffering, no adverse impacts to the visual aesthetics of the area or nearby residences are anticipated. Furthermore, Sapling Solar has committed to providing demonstrative visual simulations to Gustin Township before final Site Plan approval.

The Project will avoid impacts to the greatest extent practicable; however, if impacts are foreseen, the applicant will obtain the necessary permits and approvals prior to construction. To minimize impacts, the Project has been designed to prioritize the preservation of significant natural features such as steeper slopes, wetlands, surface water features, floodplains, and other unique or significant natural areas, to the extent practicable. USFWS-recommended BMPs will be used to minimize impacts to potential TES and their habitat during the construction of the Project. If necessary, the Project will acquire an EGLE permit for any impacts to state regulated wetlands, streams, or floodplains.

Refer to Section III(A) of this narrative for detailed information on drainage. Refer to Section II (D-2(5)) of this narrative for detailed information on relative impacts of development with respect to noise, dust, fire, hazard, fumes, odors, vibration, smoke, or excessive light.

VII. SITE PLAN APPROVAL STANDARDS

Sapling Solar understands that all Commercial Solar Energy Systems are subject to the following site plan approval standards set forth in Article V, Section 5.6 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- A. COMPLIANCE WITH DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS: The site plan shall comply with the district requirements for minimum floor space, height of structures, lot size, yard space, density and all other requirements as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, unless otherwise provided.**

The Applicant has prepared a Site Plan in accordance with the district requirements of the A-R zoning district. Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20**.

- B. PUBLIC WELFARE AND ADJOINING PROPERTIES: The uses proposed will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare. Uses and structures located on the site shall take into account the size of the property, uses on the adjoining property and the relationship and size of buildings to the site. The site shall be developed so as not to impede the normal, orderly, and reasonable development or**

improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance nor to diminish the value thereof and will be harmonious in use, appearance, and layout with existing and planned future uses in the immediate area.

See prior responses above, with the entirety of the Project located within the A-R zoning district of Gustin Township, the Project is designed and will be constructed, operated, and maintained to be harmonious with and in appearance with the rural character of the surrounding area. The Project will maintain the area's low density and will not increase area road traffic once constructed. The height of the panels will be similar to that of full-grown corn. The Project PV arrays will be located exclusively on property zoned as A-R land. Overall, the Project is designed to be harmonious and compatible with the general agricultural vicinity and, at the end of the Project's operational life, it will be decommissioned and can be returned to agricultural use. Refer to the Project Decommissioning Plan included in **Appendix E**.

Additionally, as previously stated, the Project's viability is reinforced by MDARD's directive that development of utility-scale solar on agricultural land, including land enrolled in the Farmland Development Rights Program, is consistent with agricultural use and farmland preservation. The Project will serve to supplement farming incomes, allow for nutrient, and land recharge while supporting native vegetation and pollinator habitat species. Soil rest allows soil quality to be maintained and contributes to the biodiversity of agricultural land, increasing nutrient levels and enabling the land to revert to agricultural uses at the end of the operational life for solar installations.

The Project will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare of the community. As required by federal regulations, the Project will not be accessible to the public. As required by federal law, the Project will be surrounded by a perimeter fence, which will reduce the potential for safety or security issues. Overall, the Project will preserve the character of the area through design measures such as perimeter fencing, landscape buffering, and planting of perennial vegetative ground cover throughout the site.

- C. LIGHT, AIR, AND ACCESS: The location, size, and height of the structures, walls, and fences shall be such that there is adequate open space so as to provide light, air, and access to the persons occupying the structures and that there will be no interference with adequate light, air, and access to adjacent lands.**

The Project will adhere to all location, size, and height requirements on structures, walls, and fences to ensure adequate light, air, and access for persons occupying the Project Area. Additionally, the Project will be completely enclosed by a perimeter fence composed of materials that are cohesive to the surrounding environment and will not interfere with the adequacy of light and air in adjacent lands. Refer to Section III-D of this narrative for additional fencing information. Refer to the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20**.

- D. TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE: All elements of the site plan shall be designed so that there is a limited amount of change in the overall natural contours of the site and shall minimize reshaping in favor of elements that respect existing features of the site in relation to topography. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications which result in smooth natural appearing slopes as opposed to abrupt changes in grade between the project and adjacent areas.**

Please refer to Section II (2-D (5)) of this narrative.

- E. DRAINAGE: On-site drainage shall be required. Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties. Provisions shall be made to accommodate stormwater and to prevent erosion and the formation of dust. The use of detention/retention ponds may be required. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected at intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic or create puddles in paved**

areas. Catch basins may be required to contain oil filters or traps to prevent contaminants from being discharged to the natural drainage system.

Please refer to Section III (A) of this narrative.

- F. PRIVACY: The site plan shall provide reasonable visual and sound privacy for all dwelling units located therein. Fences, walls, barriers, and landscaping shall be used, as appropriate, for the protection and enhancement of property and for the privacy of its occupants.**

Plant material will be chosen to create appropriate horizontal and vertical obscuring effects for the Project as determined adequate by the Planning Commission. Refer to the Landscape Plan in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheet 21**. Refer to Section III (D) of this narrative for additional fencing information.

- G. GENERAL ACCESS: Every structure or dwelling unit shall have access to a public street, private road, walkway, or other area dedicated to common use.**

The Project will be adequately served by existing roads and has been designed to provide ingress and egress to all structures on site. Refer to Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20** for the locations of proposed access roads and site access.

- H. VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION: Safe, convenient, uncontested, and well defined vehicular and pedestrian circulation shall be provided for ingress/egress points and within the site. A pedestrian circulation system shall be provided and shall be as insulated as completely as reasonably possible from the vehicular circulation system. Drives, streets, and other circulation routes shall be designed to promote safe and efficient traffic operations within the site and at ingress/egress points. The arrangement of public or common ways for vehicular and pedestrian circulation shall respect the pattern of existing or planned streets and pedestrian or bicycle pathways in the area. Streets and drives which are part of an existing or planned street pattern which serves the project area shall be capable of safely and effectively accommodating the traffic volume and pattern proposed by the project. Where possible, shared commercial access drives shall be encouraged.**

The Sapling Solar Project will be designed to provide safe, convenient, and well defined vehicular and pedestrian circulation for ingress/egress points. Additionally, the site will be adequately fenced so as to prevent access by the general public. Therefore, sidewalks, walkways, barrier-free access points, bicycle paths, bicycle parking areas, and areas for public use are not included in the Site Plan and are not applicable to the Project. The Project will be designed with proper ingress and egress points to and from the Project area and will be adequately served by existing roads where heightened traffic volume as a result of project operation is not anticipated. Refer to Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B: Site Plan Sheets 05-20** for the locations of proposed access roads and site access.

- I. EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS/FIRE AND SAFETY: All buildings or groups of buildings shall be so arranged as to permit emergency vehicle access by some practical means. The vehicular transportation system shall provide for circulation throughout the site and for efficient ingress and egress to all parts of the site by fire and safety equipment. Fire protection measures shall be provided as deemed necessary by the Fire Chief in conformance with all applicable laws of the State of Michigan for the protection of residents and/or occupants of the structures.**

The Project will be designed to comply with all fire and safety requirements in this Ordinance. In the case of a fire or operational emergency, the Project will implement safety and operation protocols to minimize risk and harm to the surrounding properties and community, if they were to arise. The Applicant will notify the Local Fire Department prior to the commencement of construction so that the Fire Department can visit the Project during construction to obtain an on-the-ground understanding of the Project layout, access points, and protocols in place.

J. LOADING AND STORAGE: All loading and unloading areas and outside storage areas, including areas for the storage of trash, which face or are visible from residential districts or public thoroughfares, shall be screened by a vertical screen consisting of structural or plant materials of sufficient height to obscure the direct view from adjacent first floor elevations. The site plan shall provide for adequate storage space for the use therein.

Use of exposed storage areas, trash storage areas, or loading/unloading areas are not anticipated for the Project.

K. SNOW STORAGE: Proper snow storage areas shall be provided so to not adversely affect neighboring properties, vehicular and pedestrian clear vision, and parking area capacity.

Refer to Section VI (AA) of this narrative.

L. EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Exterior lighting shall be arranged so that it is deflected away from adjacent properties and so that it does not interfere with the vision of motorists along adjacent streets. Lighting of building or structures shall be minimized to reduce light pollution. Lighting standards contained in §3.19 shall be adhered to.

Please refer to Section III (C) of this narrative for information on lighting location and shielding.

M. UTILITIES: All utility services shall be provided in a manner least harmful to surrounding properties. All utilities shall be located underground, as applicable, unless specifically waived by the Planning Commission.

The Project will be in compliance with all utility requirements set forth in this Ordinance. Refer to the Overall Existing Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheet 04 and the Proposed Conditions in **Appendix B:** Site Plan Sheets 05-20.

N. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER STATUTES AND REGULATIONS: Site plans shall conform to all applicable requirements of state and federal statutes, and approval may be conditioned on the applicant receiving necessary state and federal permits before the actual zoning permit is granted.

All required permits or agreements will be coordinated and executed/obtained by Sapling Solar.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1) CERTIFICATIONS

The Applicant will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations and will obtain all required federal, state, and local approvals, licenses, permits or variances for the proposed large solar energy system prior to the start date of construction. The Applicant ensures their projects are sited in an environmentally responsible manner and in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

The following list represents some of the permits and approvals to be reviewed as part of this project:

AGENCY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
EGLE-WRD	Water Supply Construction Permit Potential NREPA permits/approvals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Part 31 Floodplains ● Part 301 Watercourses ● Part 303 Wetlands 	Application Anticipated

Alcona County	Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit	Application Anticipated
DTE Energy	Electrical Line Easement Crossing Agreements	Application Anticipated
Michigan Department of Transportation	Driveway Crossing Agreements	Application Anticipated
Private Utilities	Utility Crossing Agreements	Application Anticipated
Alcona County Drain Commission	County Drain Crossing Agreement/ Permit	Application Anticipated

2) CONSTRUCTION CODES AND INTERCONNECTION STANDARDS

Applicant will comply with all applicable state construction and electrical codes and Alcona County building permit requirements, as well as all applicable utility, Michigan Public Service Commission, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission interconnection standards.

3) CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Upon approval of the SLUP application, the below table depicts an anticipated construction schedule outlining major project milestones.

Sapling Solar Milestones	
Start of Construction	Q3 2026
Commercial Operation Date	Q2 2028

XI. CONCLUSION

This submission and its attachments demonstrate the Applicant’s compliance with the Gustin Township Zoning Ordinance and the Gustin Township Solar Ordinance. Upon approval of the Special Land Use Permit and Site Plan, Sapling Solar looks forward to the opportunity to construct the Project. The Project will be an asset to the Township, supply clean renewable energy to the state, and will operate in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.