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Solar project would be Dayton's largest ever: Electricity could power 13k homes

LOCAL NEWS

By Cornelius Frolik, Staff Writer

Updated Jan 24, 2023

A new proposed solar project would be the largest ever in Dayton and could produce enough electricity to power more than 13,000 local homes.

TED Renewables wants to turn a 263 acres of agricultural property north of the intersection of Hoover Avenue and Olive Road in West Dayton into a solar park.

The company says the project will be 49.9 megawatts and will connect into the Dayton area's electrical grid.

"One of most the exciting aspects of this project is all of the electricity generated will flow right back into the city of Dayton and the surrounding communities," said Ian Edwards, manager of project development with TED Renewables. "Not only does this provide grid resilience, it enhances Dayton's identity as a clean energy leader in the state of Ohio."

The Gem City Solar Project would connect to the local electrical grid through a transmission line on the property, Edwards said. An electrical transformer substation is needed for the electricity to flow safely into the grid.

The project this week received an important approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals because utility substations are a conditional use.

TED Renewables, which is based in Kansas, works with communities that want to provide residents and businesses with clean, affordable and reliable electricity, Edwards said.

The company has a portfolio of more than 1,500 megawatts of renewable projects around the country, including 170 megawatts in Ohio, he said.

"The Gem City Solar project is one of our most advanced solar development projects and we are very excited to partner with the city of Dayton and the community to achieve their

Officials said the solar project likely will resemble one of Dayton's largest solar installations, which is at the University of Dayton's Daniel J. Curran Place (the former NCR headquarters near Carillon Park).

UD has about 1.35 megawatts of solar power on campus, the lion's share of which (1.26 megawatts) are produced by more than 4,000 solar panels that cover 4.5 acres at Curran Place, plus the rooftop of Fitz Hall.

Dayton's Environmental Advisory Board sent a letter in support of the project to the Board of Zoning Appeals that said the project supports energy grid resiliency and "adds ecological value" to the Dayton area.

TED Renewables has land agreements in place for about 600 acres in the target area, but the fenced-in solar installation will be about 263 acres, Edwards said.

The company plans to replant the land beneath the panels with a mix of native seeds to prevent runoff.

The project could get underway next year, and the construction timeline is likely around 10 to 14 months, Edwards said.

Given the size of the project, it's likely all of the electricity the installation will generate will be used locally, he said.

Dayton Board of Zoning Appeals member Timothy Bement said, "I think this is a great project."