

# SPRINGVILLE TIMES

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## Progress for potential solar farm in Concord continues

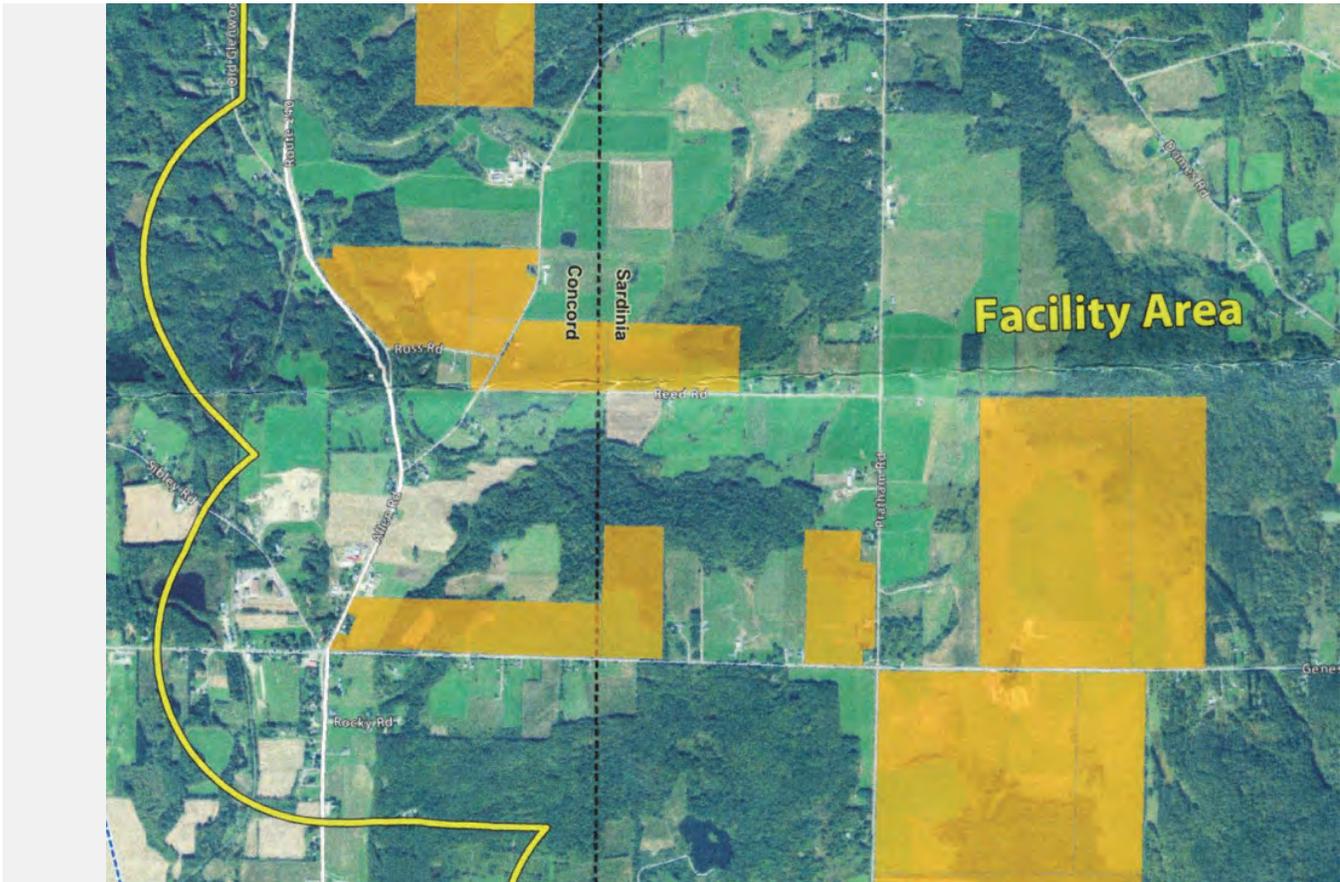


Image provided

This map from Storke, LLC shows where some sites for a potential solar farm in Erie County could be located in the towns of Concord and Sardinia near and around Genesee Road.

### **By Kellen M. Quigley**

An update to the potential project to install a solar farm in Erie County with some of it located in the town of Concord was given to the Concord Town Board during its most recent meeting Sept. 12. Ryan Storke, of Storke, LLC, told the board that the 350-megawatt solar project, which has been cleared by the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), has been submitted to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) for bid approval. Storke said they will know by January 2020 if the project was successfully picked up or not. The proposed project's scope will be for about 2,500 acres of leased land, with a majority of the project expected to be in Sardinia. Storke said about 1,800 to 2,000 acres will be "in the fence," or for the solar panels themselves, with the rest for access roads and setbacks. The access point for the energy created would be at the corner of Genesee and Warner Gulf roads in with a majority of the parcels leased near Genesee Road.

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An initial public meeting on the project was held Aug. 7, Storke said, with about 50 people attending. As part of the process for making the project a reality, he said they have to hold four more meetings for the public, the next of which will be scheduled sometime in October or November.

"We'll give all of you ample notice of when that is and when we have it firmed up and where we're going to do it," Storke said. "It sounds like at this point it will be over more in the Sardinia area." The third and fourth meetings will be held in the spring and summer of 2020.

The construction is expected to begin in 2022 if everything goes smoothly, Storke said, and lasting until the commissioning of the project in 2024. He said a road use analysis will begin in its early stages after a Property Improvement Plan (PIP) is filed and they receive feedback.

"We plan to file our PIP on Dec. 27," Storke explained. "Once we submit our PIP, they will notify the municipalities that it has been released, and they can start to make comment with the county and other towns on the process of the next steps moving into the application phase."

For Article 10 permitting, Storke said the project would receive a permit from the state's Public Service Commission on a power production project greater than 25 megawatts. He said several entities would have to approve the project.

"From a local community standpoint, the two municipalities get to put into a pool two people to sit on the sighting board with the state," he said. "That would be the local representation for the project. Each municipality and county that it's in is allowed to administer two representatives to the pool for Albany to pick out of." Storke said how people are picked is up to the state.

After the pre-application phase is complete, the application phase that would begin in early 2020 takes about eight months to a year to complete, Storke said, which includes nominating the two local representatives for the sighting board.

"When we get to the hearing and decision phase, that's when you would hopefully have had your two individuals on the sighting board for the process and then going through that yearlong process of reviewing the project with a fine-tooth comb," he said.

Once construction begins, Storke said they hope to have many local jobs created for the project, including area materials providers and laborers, as well as the integration of sheep from local farms to eat the grass in the fields where the solar panels would be.

"Hopefully local farmers will want the business and revenue to manage and operate sheep during the season to mow the fields," he added.

Another aspect of construction for the town to think about is the storage of the energy produced and where the storage and maintenance buildings would be located. Storke said it would just be for storage of what the farm itself produces, not extra energy from the greater grid.

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## Green Springville solarize campaign entering home stretch



Photo Submitted

As the summer winds down the time to go solar with the Solarize Southtowns Campaign is limited. All summer long Green Springville, Solar by CIR, PUSH Green and town officials have been promoting the Solarize Southtowns campaign.

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And now that September is here, residents only have a month left to go solar.

The Solarize Southtowns campaign has two options — one to put solar panels on a roof, barn or pole near your house and one that helps low to moderate-income residents enroll in Solar-for-All.

In a traditional Solarize campaign, a town or non-profit organization negotiates a bulk discount with a solar installation company and, with NYSERDA's help, vets that company to make sure they offer quality products and are a reputable company.

The Solarize Southtowns Campaign has negotiated a base rate of \$2.60/watt (before any additional credits or incentives are applied) with Solar by CIR. When this price is combined with NYSERDA's incentive, a New York State tax credit and a Federal Tax credit, the payback period can be anywhere from 6 to 10 years.

And with panel warranties lasting for 25 years, it's like getting 15 years or more of free energy. Solar is unique to every situation which is why Solar by CIR provides a free estimate.

In addition to the traditional campaign, the Solarize Southtowns is also working to promote NYSERDA's Solar-for-All program. Customers who have NYSEG and National Grid for their electric utility and meet the income requirements can sign up to receive a solar provided bill credit.

The program is absolutely free and allows utility-paying residents who rent or can't afford solar panels to participate with renewable energy.

To learn more about either program, contact Green Springville on Facebook, at [GreenSpringvilleInfo@gmail.com](mailto:GreenSpringvilleInfo@gmail.com) or visit [www.SolarizeSouthtowns.com](http://www.SolarizeSouthtowns.com).