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Question

- MG-2** Referring to Figure 1, it appears that the sound wall alignment and the BESS Megapacks layout may have changed from the alignment and layout approved in the Order issued in this proceeding. The material of the soundwall has also been identified as “metal.”
- a. Please discuss how these changes and the choice of soundwall material could individually or cumulatively affect the sound levels at sensitive receptors and the nearest residences.
 - b. If there would be an increase in sound due to these changes, are there any additional sound mitigation measures that the Company is proposing?
 - c. Based on the latest layout and sound wall material, has the Company conducted a revised sound study that models the daytime and nighttime sound levels? If a revised sound study has not been conducted, what assurances can the Company provide that the modeled sound levels described in D.P.U. 22-18/22-19 will not be exceeded?
 - d. Provide the Company’s latest landscaping plan for the Project site. Would the reduction in setbacks cause landscaping or planting constraints?
 - e. Refer to the Department’s condition on page 105 of the Order, directing the Company to ensure local input regarding the sound wall and landscaping. Describe how the Company solicited and considered community input on the landscaping and the soundwall design.
 - f. Discuss visual impacts of the new alignment of the soundwall, and the material of the soundwall. Provide renderings to illustrate the visuals of the sound wall, especially along the northern boundary.
 - g. It appears that the soundwall and the Megapacks have moved closer to Milford Street. Discuss how the Company’s safety design features would perform in the event of a vehicular collision (e.g., a passenger car or heavy-duty commercial vehicle) with the relocated wall.

Response

- a. As discussed, the alignment and layout of the soundwall has been slightly modified to meet permitting requirements. However, the number of Megapacks and project size remains identical. The minimal changes to the alignment of the Megapacks and sound wall will not change the conclusions of the sound study. The sound study indicated that in addition to the other mitigation factors a sound attenuation barrier would be necessary. The sound study stated that the barrier would be “22 feet tall and will need to be constructed of materials with adequate thickness and density to provide appropriate sound level reductions”. The study indicated that this is typically achieved with metal panels that are commonly 4 inches thick, but, contrary to the letters sent by Dr. Yorkis and Mr. Myers, a metal wall was not specifically required.

In this case, the Project has selected a concrete sound attenuation barrier with a Sound Transmission Class (“STC”) rating of 56. This exceeds the STC rating of a standard 4” metal acoustic panel assumed in the sound study. A 4” thick metal acoustic panel is typically expected to have a STC of 40-46. Additionally, the concrete product offered superior aesthetic and texture optionality as compared to a metal wall.

- b. As is required in the Department’s Order and the HCA executed between the Company and the Town, the Project must complete a post-construction sound monitoring study once operational to confirm that the project is meeting all requirements. If the requirements are not met, additional mitigation measures will be implemented by the Company to meet the mandated sound levels. Such mitigation measures could include additional operational restrictions and/or retrofitting the sound wall or Megapacks with additional sound attenuating materials. However, given that the STC of the proposed sound wall exceeds the rating of a standard 4” metal wall, it is anticipated that the sound wall selected by the Company will effectively mitigate Project sound levels.
- c. The Company has not conducted a revised sound study. As noted in response MG-2(b) (above), the Company will conduct a post-construction sound monitoring study to measure actual sound levels from the Project. In the unlikely event the sound levels exceed what is allowed by the MA DEP Noise Policy, the Company will take appropriate measures to operate within the compliance thresholds of the MA DEP.

- d. The Company's landscaping plan is attached as Attachment 1 - sheet LP101. The reduction in setbacks has not impacted the landscaping or planting design. In fact, the landscaping is significantly more robust than what was originally proposed. The addition of hundreds of plants and shrubs, as well as the landscaping maintenance plan was developed in consultation and collaboration with the Town of Medway Design Review Committee (the "DRC"), which was extensively discussed during three public hearings, (June 24, 2024, August 5, 2024 and August 19, 2024). During those meetings, input was received from the public. The recommendations of the DRC are attached as Attachment 3. The Company has accepted all of the DRC's recommendations for the wall design and landscaping plan.
- e. Please see the Company's response to MG-2(d) above.
- f. Documents depicting the visual impacts of the sound wall as compared to the current view of the Project Site is attached as Attachment 2. The proposed product, as accepted by the DRC, is Aftec Sound Tec Wall. These are concrete sound wall panels installed between vertical supports. As is documented in its letter (Attachment 3), the DRC recommends the pattern of "Ledge Stone" in the grey color tone. The DRC recommends a landscaping plan of evergreen shrubs, Virginia Creeper as a climbing wall cover and the installation of an irrigation system. The Company will implement all of the recommendations made by the DRC.
- g. The Medway Fire Department has reviewed the Project plans and has raised no concerns to vehicular safety with respect to the placement of the sound wall or the landscaping plan. The parameters of the Project Site have not changed, and the sound wall will not encroach on the existing right of way. In fact, the set back is further from the street than the vehicles that were parked at the 53 Milford Street service station.