



New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

NEWS RELEASE

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N.J. Board of Public Utilities Highlights Proposed Montclair Microgrid

Montclair, N.J. – New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (Board) President Richard S. Mroz and Commissioner Joseph L. Fiordaliso were joined by Montclair Acting Township Manager Timothy F. Stafford, Esq. and elected local officials at a press conference today highlighting the Board’s approval of Montclair Township’s application for funding to conduct a Town Center Distributed Energy Resource microgrid feasibility study. Montclair’s proposal is unique amongst the other twelve approved feasibility study applicants as the town center microgrid would include a mass transportation component in New Jersey Transit’s Bay Street Station.

“Montclair presented an excellent proposal for a Town Center microgrid that would keep electricity flowing to critical facilities in the community should they ever face a major power outage in the future,” said President Mroz. “What makes this project particularly interesting is the inclusion of a transit component as part of the proposed microgrid.”

Montclair submitted a microgrid application with core partners including the Montclair School District, United Methodist Communities, New Jersey Transit and Hackensack UMC – Mountainside Hospital. The project’s critical facilities include the Montclair fire department headquarters, Glenfield Middle School, Pine Ridge Senior Living housing, Mountainside Hospital and New Jersey Transit Bay Street Station and Garage. The Montclair project is the only feasibility study approved by the BPU with a transportation component.

“This grant from the NJ BPU – enabling us to create a Feasibility Study – represents an excellent opportunity for Montclair, and also for several of the critical emergency facilities in our township, said Acting Township Manager Stafford. “Just by planning and preparing for possible disruptions, we bring resilience and security to our communities. Being aware and being prepared are the indicators of responsible local governments.”

Montclair's feasibility study will evaluate approximately 2.3 MW of new power capacity that may include solar and dispatchable generation such as combined heat and power, battery storage and other new electric infrastructure to allow the proposed project to operate during normal and emergency conditions. The Board is providing approximately \$142,480 in funding for Montclair's feasibility study, which should be completed in approximately eleven months.

"After living through Sandy this plan will provide us with an important way of keeping our vital institutions and services up and running should we experience another such major event," said Montclair Mayor Robert Jackson. "We are very pleased the BPU recognized the planning and work that went into our feasibility study proposal, and we welcome the opportunity to move forward on this plan."

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the Christie Administration made it a priority to improve energy resiliency and the emergency preparedness and response of the utility companies. The [2015 Energy Master Plan Update \(EMP\)](#) contained a new section on hardening and improving utility infrastructure resiliency which supports the establishment of Distributed Energy Resources (DER) such as microgrids to improve the grid's resiliency and reliability in the event of a major emergency.

The EMP Update also directed the Board to continue its work with the utility companies, local, state and federal governments, and other strategic partners to identify, design and implement Town Center microgrids to power critical facilities and services across the state.

Microgrids are mini grids powered by onsite distributed generation that provide electric, heat and cooling to critical facilities such as a hospital, public safety headquarters, town halls, schools and other buildings that can serve as emergency shelters during a crisis which are located in a small geographic area. These smaller grids, operating on their own, "islanded" from the main power grid, can separate and protect themselves from any problems with the main grid and keep vital services in place.

The Board established a Town Center Microgrid Feasibility Study program to fund all 13 applications at a total cost of \$2,052,480. The program was developed to provide incentives for local and state government agencies to study the feasibility of Town Center DER microgrids.

The Board approved funding for applications submitted by: Atlantic City, Camden County, Cape May County MUA, Galloway Township, Highland Park, Hoboken, Hudson County, Middletown Township, Montclair Township, Neptune Township, Paterson, Woodbridge Township, and the State of New Jersey Department of Treasury with the partners Mercer County, Mercer County Improvement Authority and Trenton.

Information regarding the board's approval of the 13 applications for feasibility studies is below: www.state.nj.us/bpu/newsroom/announcements/pdf/20170630_MicrogridFeasibilityStudies.pdf