



PSE&G BENNETTS LANE SUBSTATION
160 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD (C.R. 615); BLOCK 84.03, LOTS 1 & 2.02
135 DAHMER ROAD; BLOCK 84.03, LOT 2.10
TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE & SITE PLAN CHECKLIST
COMPLIANCE STATEMENT
January 12, 2026

I. PROJECT NEED

The existing Bennetts Lane Substation (Station) is a 230/69kV switching station and a 230/13kV substation that was previously upgraded in 2009. The existing Station serves roughly 17,500 customers in Franklin Township and the surrounding communities.

The Station upgrades will include installing one (1) 230/69kV transformer, removing one (1) existing 230kV lattice tower and replacing it with one (1) new 230kV monopole, expanding the existing control house and expanding the existing six (6) breaker 69kV AIS to a seven (7) breaker 69kV ring bus. Additionally, the existing Bennett's Lane 13kV switchgear will be replaced as part of a larger program that evaluates the options of upgrading and modernizing older and poor performing 13kV switchgear across New Jersey.

The upgrades to the Station are being facilitated as part of a larger new Class H station project in the Harlingen area. Once installed, the proposed Station upgrades will help to satisfy the growing electric energy requirements in the area as well as offload the overloaded Sunnymeade and Mount Rose Substations.

II. EXISTING SITE LOCATION

The existing Station is located at 160 South Middlebush Road (Somerset County Route 615) and situated on Block 84.03, Lots 1 and 2.02 in the Township of Franklin, Somerset County, New Jersey. PSE&G purchased 135 Dahmer Road, Block 84.03, Lot 2.10 in 2022 as "property for future use" and is enclosed by a 6-foot-high perimeter chain-link fence. Lots 1 and 2.02 are currently developed as an electrical substation with a combination of transformers, breakers and a switchgear. The Station is surfaced with loose crushed gravel throughout the station yard and a macadam access drive around the station. The Station is enclosed with a 7-foot-high chain-link fence topped with 1-foot of barbed wire, except along Bennetts Lane. Access to the Station is provided from Bennetts Lane.

The property is bordered by South Middlebush Road to the west and Bennetts Lane to the south, beyond which are agricultural properties. The property is bordered to the north by a wooded area, with residential properties beyond, and Dahmer Road to the east, with residential properties beyond. Properties owned by the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority and NJDEP are located to the northwest.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed improvements include demolition of the existing 13kV switchgear and control house, installation of a six (6) row a 13kV sheltered aisle switchgear with twelve (12) 13kV circuits; new 69kV breaker to expand the existing ring bus to a seven breaker ring bus, new 230/69kV transformer, expansion of the existing 69kV control house that will store 13kV relaying and communication equipment, demolition of one (1) existing lattice tower and installation of one (1) new monopole and demolition of one (1) A-frame structure and installation of one (1) "double" A-frame structure.

All proposed equipment is anticipated to be supported by spread foundations or slab-on-grade type foundations. The expanded Station yard will be surfaced with 6" of ¾" loose clean gravel with a macadam access road and waterbound macadam access drives through the station and a small scale bioretention basin along the east side of the Station. The existing perimeter fence will be removed, and the Station will be primarily enclosed with new 10-foot-high anti-climb/anti-cut security fence. No barbed wire is proposed on the new fence. A new 13-foot-high pre-cast concrete wall is proposed along the northwest side of the station to provide protection for critical infrastructure.

PSE&G intends to use Lot 2.10 for temporary laydown and staging of material, contractor parking, trailers, etc. for the duration of construction for the proposed Station improvements. All disturbed areas will be restored to existing conditions once construction is complete.

Soil disturbance will be made throughout much of the site for the construction of the below-grade installations such as foundations, duct banks, conduits, grounding cable and new water and sewer connections. Additionally, 39 trees will be removed, 19 replacement trees are required and will be replaced with 31 trees and 57 shrubs at the Station. Upon completion of grading, construction of utility process equipment, construction of a stormwater bioretention basin, and installation of landscaping, total impervious coverage will be 2.54 acres, an increase of 0.11 acres.

The Station is and will remain an unmanned facility, visited periodically by PSE&G personnel for routine maintenance and inspections with estimated 2-4 employees visiting the site approximately 2 times per month. The visits involve trips to and from the location for scheduled checks, equipment servicing and general upkeep to maintain reliable operation. Access to the Station will remain secured at all times, with controlled entry for authorized personnel only. The internal access drives within the Station will allow for on-site parking for PSE&G personnel and contractors performing maintenance and inspection tasks. No significant traffic impacts are anticipated as visits will be infrequent and limited to small crews using standard service vehicles.

The project will require preliminary and final major site plan approval with conditional d(3) use and height d(6) variances as well as various minor bulk variances and certain design exceptions and submission waivers as well as the removal and/or modifications of restrictions on the existing use per prior resolutions as detailed herein.

Effect of Proposed Development on Surrounding Properties and Scenic Corridor

As an existing electrical switching station/substation that has been in operation since late 1960s, the addition of the proposed improvements will not change the character of the neighborhood or scenic corridor, nor create any undue hazard. In fact, the installation of the proposed improvements will improve the health, safety, and welfare of residents and businesses in the surrounding area by increasing the reliability and safety of the Station that serves the residents of Franklin and the surrounding communities.

The operation of the Station will not generate any dust, smoke, smog, observable gas, fumes, odors or other atmospheric pollution, glare, heat, noise or vibration beyond the boundaries of the site. The proposed improvements will not result in any hauling of materials, goods, or products to or from the site nor the dissemination of thermal energy, chemicals, waste or other matter.

IV. ZONING COMPLIANCE

PSE&G owns and operates the Station located on Lots 1 and 2.02 and purchased Lot 2.10 in 2022 as "property for future use". The Station is divided between the Agricultural (A) Zone and the Single Family Residential (R-40) Zone whereas Lot 2.10 is situated in the R-40 Zone. The Station occupies approximately 3.01 acres of the 8.27-acre site.

In accordance with the Township of Franklin, Chapter 112 Land Development Ordinance (LDO), we reviewed the Township's Code and below is an analysis of the ordinance to identify applicability, compliance or non-compliance for which variances are requested. All responsive comments have been italicized

§112-34 Conditional Uses

- A. The use is listed as a conditional use set forth in Schedule 1;

Compliant: Public utility installations are listed as conditional uses in the A and R-40 Zones.

- B. The use is designed, located and proposed to be operated to protect the public health, safety, welfare and convenience;

Compliant: The proposed Station upgrades are for the public health, safety, welfare and convenience and will provide safe, reliable and adequate electric supplies.

- C. Adequate landscaping and screening is provided;

Compliant: There is a vegetative screen along the rear property line and common property line with Lot 2.10. Some tree removal is required for the upgrades, however, replacement plantings will be provided, where feasible, due to security measures and clearance restrictions with overhead transmission and distribution infrastructure.

- D. Adequate parking and loading and ingress and egress causes minimum interference with traffic on abutting streets; and

Compliant: Sufficient parking areas for PSE&G personnel will be in the Station. Access to the Station and Lot 2.10 will remain off Bennetts Lane. Traffic impact onto surrounding streets will be negligible since normal operations consist of only weekly visits from a PSE&G technician.

- E. The use conforms to applicable regulations governing the A Zone and R-40 Zone.

Non-compliant: Refer to Bulk Table on Site Plan for compliance with bulk regulations. PSE&G is requesting variances for the following:

- *Corner Lot Minimum Frontage – The minimum lot frontage is 400 feet in the A Zone. The lot frontage along South Middlebush Road is 136.16 feet and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this nonconformance. Note, this is an existing non-conformity.*
- *Minimum Front Yard Setback – The minimum front yard setback along Bennetts Lane is 100 feet in the A Zone and 40 feet in the R-40 Zone.*
 - *The existing transmission lattice tower is setback 51.8 feet from Bennetts Lane within the A Zone and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this nonconformance. Note, this is an existing non-conformity.*
 - *The proposed electrical process equipment is setback 38.5 feet from Bennetts Lane within the R-40 Zone and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this nonconformance.*
- *Minimum Front Yard Setback – The minimum front yard setback along South Middlebush Road is 200 feet in the A Zone as per scenic corridor requirements. The existing transmission lattice tower is setback 30.2 feet from South Middlebush Road within the A Zone and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this nonconformance. Note, this is an existing non-conformity.*
- *Minimum Side Yard Setback – The minimum side yard front yard setback is 75 feet in the A Zone and 25 feet in the R-40 Zone. The setback from the proposed precast perimeter wall is 49.1 feet from the side property line within the A Zone and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this nonconformance.*
- *Maximum Impervious Lot Area Coverage – Maximum impervious lot coverage is 20% within the A and R-40 Zones. The Project is proposing to increase the impervious coverage from 40.5% to 40.9% and therefore a bulk ‘c’ variance is requested for this*

nonconformance. Note, this is an existing non-conformity with prior variance approval.

- *Maximum Building Height – The maximum building height is 35 feet (2 ½ stories) within the A and R-40 Zones. The project proposes the following structures with heights as indicated all of which will require a d(6) height variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55-D-70(d) to exceed 10%, or by more than 10 feet, of the maximum permitted height of 35 feet:*
 - *Height of Proposed “double” A-Frame: 76.2 feet*
 - *Height of Proposed Transmission Monopole: 161.4 feet**
 - *Height of Existing Lightning Masts: 61.7 feet; This is an existing non-conformity.*

*Note: * Tallest structure*

PSE&G proposes to construction one (1) “double” A-frame in order to reach overhead transmission circuits and a new 161.4 foot tall transmission monopole. The new structures will appear as an extension or continuation of the public utility use.

In addition to the requirements outlined above, there are landscaping and buffer requirements for zone districts within the Township. There are no buffer or landscaping requirements in the A Zone that would apply to the site. The following requirements are specific to the R-40 Zone:

Buffer requirements:

1. The buffer zone shall consist of a strip of land to be landscaped which is 15 feet wide along the property line which abuts a residential zone.

Compliant: Residential properties exist to the northeast of the Station. There is an existing landscape buffer between the Station and nearest residential property. Supplemental plantings will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10 adjacent to the residential property within a 25-foot buffer strip. PSE&G intends to only clear those trees necessary for the proposed Station improvements.

2. The buffer zone shall contain plantings of shrubs or trees, installed in the following manner: Three feet on center row, and the row shall be located between three and six feet from the adjoining property line. Shrubs shall be at least three feet in height at the time of planting and at least six feet in height after three years.

Compliant: Supplemental plantings of trees and shrubs will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10, in between existing trees to remain, adjacent to the residential property within a 25-foot buffer strip at approximately 3-6 feet from the property line. All shrubs will be a minimum of 3-feet at time of planting, spaced accordingly and will have potential to reach 6-feet at 3 years.

3. Shrubs are expected to produce a year-round dense screen, and shall consist of the following plant material or equal: (a) *Juniperus chinensis* (Chinese Juniper). (b) *Juniperus virginiana* (Red Cedar). (c) *Taxus cuspidata* (Japanese Yew).

Compliant: Supplemental shrubs will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10, in between existing trees and plant material to remain, adjacent to the residential property. Plant material will consist of deciduous and evergreen, mostly native, species, to provide a year-round dense screen with species, color, shape, to break-up monotony and to avoid problems with monoculture.

4. Trees that are planted for the purpose of screening shall be planted in a single row not less than four feet from the lot line and shall be spaced six to eight feet on center, each tree having a minimum caliper of two inches, or as approved by the Planning Board assisted by the applicant's landscape architect.

Compliant: Supplemental plantings of trees will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10, in between existing trees to remain, adjacent to the residential property within a 25-foot buffer strip at a minimum of 4 feet from the property line and spaced a minimum 6' spacing depending on the species. The evergreen trees will be a minimum of 6-7 feet in height at time of planting. Three ornamental deciduous trees will be planted in the front yard area along Bennetts Lane and will be a minimum of 2.5-3 inch caliper at the time of planting.

5. Trees are expected to produce a year-round dense screen, and shall consist of the following plant material or as approved by the Planning Board assisted by the applicant's landscape architect: (a) *Abies concolor* (white pine). (b) *Picea canadensis* (white spruce). (c) *Pinus strobus* (white pine). (d) *Pinus nigra* (Austrian pine). (e) *Tsuga canadensis* (Canadian Hemlock).

Compliant: Supplemental trees will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10, in between existing trees and plant material to remain, adjacent to the residential property. Plant material will consist of deciduous and evergreen, mostly native, species, to provide a year-round dense screen with species, color, shape, to break-up monotony and to avoid problems with monoculture.

6. No access driveways, loading areas, outdoor storage nor any principal or accessory structures shall be permitted within the buffer zone.

Compliant: No access driveways or loading areas are proposed within the buffer zone. The outdoor storage area on Lot 2.10 will be configured so that it does not impede buffer areas.

7. Underground utility easements may be permitted, when deemed necessary by the Planning Board.

Not applicable as the Project is not proposing any new underground utility easements.

8. In areas where a residential zone borders an industrial use, but the immediate contiguous land is to be used for parking, the buffer zone may be reduced to 10 feet, provided that a fence be erected, not less than one foot from the property line, which fulfills the following requirements:
 - a. The fence shall be of semitransparent design using either board and batten, solid picket, staggered board, or louver panel format.
 - b. The fence shall be at least five feet high and not more than six feet high.
 - c. Both sides of the fence shall be treated with an exterior stain and preservative.

Not applicable as the Project is not proposing parking areas.

9. Special uses screened. Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures within 25 feet of a residentially zoned property shall be subject to screening. The screening shall consist of a fence or shrub row along the side facing the residential zone.

Compliant – Residential properties exist to the northeast of the Station. There is an existing landscape buffer between the Station and nearest residential property. As part of this project, PSE&G is proposing to utilize Lot 2.10 for temporary construction trailers and temporary parking throughout the duration of the Project. To alleviate any visual impacts, PSE&G is proposing to enhance the existing buffer on Lot 2.10 along the common property line with Lot 3.01. Supplemental plantings of trees and shrubs will be installed along the side yard of Lot 2.10, in between existing trees to remain, within a 25-foot buffer strip

10. Maintenance. It shall be the responsibility of the owner to assure the continued viability of plant materials and to maintain the area, including fences.

Compliant – PSE&G will maintain all existing and proposed landscaping on the property including perimeter fences.

11. Lighting. Lighting of parking areas or other areas on the industrial property shall be screened from adjoining residential properties.

Compliant – All proposed lighting has been designed in compliance with municipal regulations. Adequate screening exists between the Station and adjacent residential properties.

Landscaping Requirements

Two trees of at least 1-3/4 inches caliper measured at a point one foot above the ground shall be planted in the front yard area except that the code enforcement office may waive this requirement if trees exist on the lot.

Compliant: Three ornamental deciduous trees will be planted in the front yard area along Bennetts Lane fronting the Station and will be a minimum of 2.5-3 inch caliper at the time of planting. These trees will supplement the existing trees and shrubs located within the front yard area. The corner property Lot 2.10 has numerous existing trees that will remain within the front yard area along Bennetts Lane and Dahmer Road, ranging in caliper from 10 – 21 inches. Additional trees are not proposed along these frontages due to the existing trees and the proposed water lateral being installed. There is natural overgrown vegetation along the South Middlebush Road frontage that will remain, with no additional trees installed.

§112-48 Public Utility Installations

The location of all public utility installations shall be permitted upon authorization by the Planning Board in accordance with the following standards and site plan review:

- A. No public utility electric or gas main transmission line shall be located within 100 feet of a school, church, or other public buildings.

Compliant: The existing Station is not located within 100 feet of a school, church or other public building.

- B. No permanent storage of vehicles or outdoor storage of materials shall be permitted.

Compliant: Sufficient parking areas for PSE&G personnel will be located within the Station yard during normal operations. Lot 2.10 is intended to be utilized for temporary construction trailers and temporary parking for the construction duration of the project. The Station and adjacent site will not be used for permanent storage of vehicles or material.

§112-201 Scenic Corridor District Overlay

South Middlebush Road is considered a “scenic roadway” as depicted on the Township Zoning Map. The scenic corridor extends 1,000 linear feet in both directions from the center line of South Middlebush Road. As shown on the attached Site Plan, a portion of the Station including some of the proposed upgrades falls within the designated scenic corridor.

Per Township LDO, all proposed development within the scenic corridor shall be subject to the requirements set forth in Article XXIII (Site Plan Review). Additionally, any application for a variance made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70c and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d within a scenic corridor shall be subject to the standards contained in this section (and outlined below).

§112-201.F. Regulations

- (1) Use standards set forth in Schedule 1 of this chapter shall govern;

Compliant: Public utility installations are listed as conditional uses in the A and R-40 Zones.

- (2) Setbacks.

- a. The construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any building or structure in a scenic corridor shall have a front setback distance equal to the lesser of:

1. At least twice the required front yard setback for the zone district in which the property is located; or
2. At least 1/2 the lot's depth, as measured from its frontage along the scenic roadway; or
3. A distance approved by the Board if it can be demonstrated that the proposed construction will not be visible from the road.

Compliant: The Project is not proposing improvements within the front yard setback along South Middlebush Road. All upgrades to the station will occur within the existing Station yard footprint other than some replacement landscaping and a proposed stormwater bioretention system which will encroach upon the scenic corridor.

- b. If compliance with the preceding heightened setback standards is impractical due to the presence of identified wetlands, substantial wooded areas, an active agricultural operation, or other substantial environmental features, a structure may be located in accordance with the prevailing zone standards, provided that a naturalized landscaped screen is established to preserve the scenic corridor viewshed. Additionally, the preceding heightened setback standards may be relaxed by the Board for development on substantial hillsides, in which case development should be located at the foreground or midground of the hill with appropriate naturalized landscape screening to not create a barrier visible from the scenic corridor.

Not Applicable. The Station is situated approximately 855 feet from the centerline of South Middlebush Road.

- (3) Height standards set forth in Schedule 3 of this chapter shall govern all structures, with the exception of farm buildings and related structures which shall be governed by the provisions of Article XXI, Right to Farm.

Non-compliant: The maximum permitted height in the A and R-40 Zones is 35 feet. PSE&G is proposing a 76.2 foot tall "double" A-frame structure and one (1) new 161.4-foot tall transmission monopole to replace the existing 154.9-foot-tall lattice tower. Both structures are located beyond the limits of the scenic corridor.

As part of this application, PSE&G is requesting d(6) height variances for the aforementioned structures.

- (4) Signs.

- a. Sign standards set forth in Schedule 4 of this chapter shall govern.
- b. In addition to Subsection F(4)(a) above, to ensure a sign's aesthetic compatibility with the surrounding visual environment, natural, earthtone colors should be utilized.
- c. Signs may be indirectly illuminated via spotlights, provided adjacent properties and approaching vehicles are adequately shielded.
- d. Internally illuminated signs shall be prohibited.

Compliant: Site identification signs and “warning” signs will be secured to the perimeter fence in accordance with PSE&G standards. The signage will not be illuminated.

(5) Fences and Walls.

- a. Fences located in a scenic corridor shall be no more than 50% opaque, i.e. picket, or post-and-rail. Chain link fences or fences with vinyl or aluminum slats shall be prohibited from scenic corridors except for security purposes for utility installations. Fences shall not incorporate barbed wire unless in conjunction with an active agricultural operation.

Non-compliant: The existing perimeter fence will be removed in its entirety and majority of the perimeter will be secured with new 10-foot-high anti-climb/anti-cut security fence with 1-inch mesh which will provide more than 50% opacity. Within the limits of the scenic corridor, PSE&G is proposing to install approximately 141 linear feet of new fence. No barbed wire is proposed.

- b. Decorative walls in a scenic corridor shall not exceed four feet in height and shall consist of natural stone or other indigenous material that is consistent with the scenic character of the overlay district.

Non-compliant: A new 13-foot-high pre-cast concrete perimeter wall along the northwest side of the Station is proposed. Approximately 238 linear feet of wall will be within the limits of the scenic corridor.

Additionally, PSE&G is proposing a 26-foot high pre-cast concrete isolation wall which will partially fall within the limits of the scenic corridor. The wall will provide protection for critical infrastructure at the facility.

- (6) Design standards: All site layouts, landscape planting, signage, erosion control plans, proposed building plans and designs for principal and accessory structures shall take into consideration the following:

(1) Site layout.

- (a) Preservation. All development shall promote the preservation and protection of the aesthetic character of natural features such as rock outcrops, individual trees or stands of trees, hedgerows, streams, ponds, meadows, open fields, mountain profiles or ridgelines, plateaus, water bodies and watercourses and similar elements that individually or collectively constitute an important part of the visual landscape of the scenic road or scenic corridor. Additionally, site designs shall promote the preservation and protection of significant man-made features such as stone walls, wooden fences, historically or architecturally important structures such as barns, agricultural outbuildings, places of worship or residences that individually or collectively constitute an important part of the visual landscape of the scenic road or scenic corridor.

Compliant: The Station has been operating at this location for approximately 60 years. All proposed upgrades to the Station will occur within the existing Station yard footprint other than some replacement landscaping and a proposed stormwater bioretention system which will encroach upon the scenic corridor. The proposed project will not create any adverse impacts to the scenic road or scenic corridor.

- (b) Building location. The establishment of building envelopes and building sites in open fields shall be avoided. Building envelopes and sites shall be adaptively located on and along the edges of established fields to the greatest practicable extent. Existing tree lines, woodlands and hedgerows that frame open fields shall be preserved and used to effectively screen new buildings from view, or used to blend new development into the scenic landscape. Building setbacks should be varied in order to avoid a monotonous site design.

Compliant: PSE&G is proposing an expansion to the existing control house located on the east side of the Station, beyond the limits of the scenic corridor. The existing control house located near the access driveway will be removed and replaced containment curbing for a future mobile transformer. Mobile transformers are temporary and only needed if a transformer fails and is in need of repair/replacement.

Additionally, the existing 13kV feeder row equipment and switchgear will be removed and replaced with a newer more condensed 13kV switchgear, all of which to occur within the limits of the scenic corridor.

The proposed upgrades have been configured appropriately within the Station yard. The proposed project will not create any adverse impacts to the scenic road or scenic corridor.

- (c) Farmsteads. The visual appearance of the farmsteads and farmlands shall be preserved to the greatest practicable extent by adaptive use or reuse of farm buildings and features, together with the preservation of contiguous open space adjacent to such buildings.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing any farming operation/use.

(2) Roadways and driveways.

- (a) Traffic circulation. Traffic circulation in scenic corridors shall be via either established scenic roadways identified by the circulation element of the Master Plan. New residential streets shall be constructed in accordance with the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). The establishment of rural streets and lanes is encouraged, provided paved road widths are adequate to accommodate response and placement of emergency vehicles. Lot-to-street access shall be designed so vehicles do not back out of lots onto a roadway. On-street parking shall be prohibited.

Compliant: Access to the Station and Lot 2.10 will remain off Bennetts Lane. Traffic impact onto surrounding streets will be negligible since normal operations consist of only weekly visits from a traveling utility worker. PSE&G personnel accessing the facility will utilize internal access drives for off-street parking during routine visits.

- (b) Roadway orientation. Established scenic roadway orientations shall be maintained, unless otherwise specified by the circulation element of the Master Plan. New rural lanes shall follow existing grade contours to minimize the extent of cuts and fill. Rural lanes shall follow existing linear features of the tract or site, including existing farm or other lanes, trails, stone rows, tree lines or hedgerows, and shall not be located in nor traverse open fields.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing any new roadways.

- (c) Driveways. It is recommended that access points be limited along scenic corridors to promote the flow of traffic while also maintaining the scenic qualities of the roadside views. Driveways shall follow existing linear features of the tract or site, including existing farm or other lanes, trails, stone rows, tree lines or hedgerows. Common driveways and rural lanes are encouraged in order to reduce improvements and additional impervious coverage. Maximum driveway width shall be 12 feet, except at street intersections as necessary to provide for turning movements.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing any new access points to South Middlebush Road. Access to the Station and Lot 2.10 will remain off Bennetts Lane.

- (d) Reverse frontage lots may be incorporated into site designs in order to minimize driveway cuts to scenic roadways and rural lanes, provided existing natural features are preserved.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing any new lots.

- (3) Stormwater management. Stormwater management shall be designed to make minimal changes to natural drainage patterns and systems. Utilization of existing and new swales is encouraged, except where not practical due to topography, and provided a balance is achieved between the aesthetic value of the scenic corridor, stormwater management and enhanced water quality. Where stormwater management facilities are required, they shall be designed to occupy as small an area and involve as little disturbance as possible within the scenic corridor. Retention basins may be utilized where a basin is needed or appropriate, and such basin may be designed to resemble and function as a natural pond with a view toward the creation of wildlife habitat. Landscaping standards for stormwater detention facilities are contained in Subsection G(5)(d).

Compliant: The proposed bioretention basin will be partially located in the scenic corridor. The basin has been designed to occupy as small an area possible while still meeting the requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:8 and Township's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

- (4) Curbs, sidewalks and bikeways.

- (a) Curbing shall be installed along scenic roadways only if, where, and to the extent necessary to provide for adequate stormwater management or road stabilization. When so required, sloped granite block type curbing shall be installed.
- (b) Shoulders may be used instead of curbs when soil and/or topography make their use preferable, or to preserve the rural character of the scenic corridor. Shoulders shall be constructed of materials such as stabilized earth, gravel, crushed stone or bituminous treatment.
- (c) Concrete sidewalks shall not be located parallel to scenic roadways, and may only be located along internal rural lanes or driveways where deemed appropriate. Where it is deemed necessary to provide a safe pedestrian environment along a scenic roadway, bituminous treatment may be utilized.
- (d) Bikeways shall be provided along scenic roadways and within developments as set forth in the bikeway element of the Master Plan. If bikeways are called for, no sidewalks shall be required. Bikeways should consist of bituminous treatment and be separated from the scenic corridor cartways.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing any of the aforementioned items along South Middlebush Road.

- (5) Landscaping, clearing and planting.

- (a) The preservation of existing hedgerows both along scenic roadways and in other areas is essential to the continuing aesthetic quality of the scenic corridor. Accordingly, the preservation of such hedgerows shall be considered crucial when balanced with other site improvements associated with new development such as road widening, utilities, curbs, sidewalks or stormwater management facilities.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing the removal of any hedgerow along South Middlebush Road or any removal of vegetation within the scenic corridor.

- (b) Landscaping in a scenic corridor shall utilize native grasses, wildflower patterns, evergreen and deciduous trees, ground cover that, to the greatest degree possible, replicates and complements the natural environment. Extensive residential lawns shall be avoided in favor of naturalized planting and screening. Existing vegetation shall be preserved to the greatest degree practical via the establishment of conservation easements.

Compliant: There is naturally overgrown vegetation along the South Middlebush Road and Bennetts Lane frontages that will remain. Existing lawn areas, active farmland and existing trees within the PSE&G right-of-way, west of the existing Station will also remain

unchanged. A proposed stormwater bioretention basin will be installed within the scenic corridor, near the Station's westerly driveway access. The basin will be planted with herbaceous plugs and seeded in accordance with NJ BMP Manual Chapter 9.7 small scale bioretention basin.

- (c) The age, condition and species of vegetation to be planted or cleared in conjunction with development shall be considered in context with the visual landscape of the scenic road and scenic corridor. To the greatest extent possible, existing vegetation shall be preserved. Existing vegetation should be used to screen or break up visually incompatible project elements, or to enhance the relationship of the proposed development to its surrounding visual environment. The long-term viability of existing vegetation should be ensured.

Compliant: There will be no tree removal within the scenic corridor. Existing vegetation located west of the Station, extending to South Middlebush Road will not be altered.

- (d) Stormwater detention facility landscaping.

1. All basin structures shall be designed to blend into the landscape in terms of construction materials, color, grading and planting. The screening of outfall structures and emergency spillways from public view is of particular importance in the landscape design. This may involve integration of these areas as aesthetic landscape features or naturalized wetland areas.

Compliant: A proposed stormwater bioretention basin will be installed near the Station's westerly driveway access. The basin will be planted with herbaceous plugs and seeded in accordance with NJ BMP Manual Chapter 9.7 small scale bioretention basin.

2. All plants shall be tolerant of typical floodplain and wetland conditions.

Compliant: A proposed stormwater bioretention basin will be installed near the Station's westerly driveway access. The basin will be planted with herbaceous plugs and seeded in accordance with NJ BMP Manual Chapter 9.7 small scale bioretention basin.

3. Basins designed as naturalized wetland areas should be planted with a quantity of trees equal to the number necessary to cover the entire area of the interior of the basin to the emergency spillway elevation. Of this number, 10% shall be two inches to 2.5 inches caliper, 20% shall be 1.5 inches to two feet caliper, and 70% shall be six feet to eight feet height whips. The trees shall be planted in groves and spaced five feet to 15 feet on center.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing basins designed as naturalized wetland areas.

4. Basins designed to function as dry basins shall be planted with trees in areas of the interior of the basin in a naturalized pattern where there will not be interference with the maintenance of the basin and low-flow channel, as determined by the Township Engineer. The ground should be seeded with a wildflower or wet meadow grass mix, but in unique circumstances may require sod or hydroseeding to stabilize the basin slopes. Planting other than wildflowers and grasses shall not be located within 10 feet of low-flow channels to facilitate drainage.

Compliant: A proposed stormwater bioretention basin will be installed near the Station's westerly driveway access. The basin will be planted with herbaceous plugs and seeded in accordance with NJ BMP Manual Chapter 9.7 small scale bioretention basin.

5. The planting of the perimeter of the water's edge of a stormwater retention facility shall accentuate views of the water and other vistas. Plantings shall include native, informally massed deciduous and evergreen trees and wildflowers.

Compliant: A proposed stormwater bioretention basin will be installed near the Station's westerly driveway access. The basin will be planted with herbaceous plugs and seeded in accordance with NJ BMP Manual Chapter 9.7 small scale bioretention basin.

(6) Utilities.

- (a) New utility distribution lines and services to new locations shall be installed underground, except for those lines or services serving active agricultural operations.

Compliant: Utility distribution lines are placed underground, except for those lines necessary to operate the above-ground substation, therefore satisfying this requirement.

- (b) To the maximum extent practical, electric transmission lines not installed underground shall be located on existing poles or towers.

Compliant: Electrical utility transmission lines are located on existing towers or underground to the maximum extent possible, therefore satisfying this requirement.

- (c) No new streetlighting shall be installed except where required for public safety as required by the Franklin Township Police Department.

Not Applicable. The Project is not proposing streetlighting along any road frontages.

(7) Erosion control measures.

- (a) In order to maintain the existing visual quality of the area and its soil supporting natural vegetative cover, subsurface soil conditions shall be maintained in a fashion that is as close as possible to natural conditions.

Compliant: The Project will not adversely impact the visual quality of the area and soil conditions.

- (b) The visual impacts of certain erosion control measures which may be implemented in conjunction with development shall be considered in order to require the use of visually unobtrusive or natural materials, such as vegetative cover, fiber mesh matrices and natural stone to replace more visually obtrusive measures, such as rock riprap or concrete structures, wherever possible.

Compliant: Visual and natural materials have been implemented where practicable.

- (8) Proposed building plans. Proposed structures within the scenic corridor shall be designed in harmony with the corridor's topography, viewsheds, architectural styles, colors, character and appearance.

Compliant: The proposed structures have been designed to maintain the existing site aesthetic.

Article XIII Performance Standards

The Project complies with the Township's Performance Standards at §112-115 through 112-126. The Station will be in operation 24/7. During operation, minimal traffic will be generated by the Station. PSE&G personnel will visit the facility weekly to monitor and maintain equipment. The new equipment will not discharge any pollutants into any watercourse in the Township. The existing septic system and potable well that services the 13kV control house will be removed and a new bathroom will be constructed within the control house expansion. Connections to public water and sewer are proposed. Due to the infrequent use of the facilities, there will be negligible impact to the public systems. No industrial wastes will be produced by the equipment or discharged into the public sewer system. Noise levels will meet N.J.A.C.

7:29. The equipment will not produce any heat, glare, smoke fly ash, dust, air pollution or vibration. The equipment does not contain hazardous chemicals or flammable or explosive equipment and is not a fire and explosive hazard. The proposed equipment does not contain radioactive components, and no radioactive activities will occur at the Station. The Project proposes to utilize Lot 2.10 for temporary construction trailers, outdoor storage/laydown and contractor parking during the construction of the upgrades. All side yard setback requirements will be maintained (no rear yards). Lot 2.10 is secured with an existing 6-foot high chain link fence and which will remain in place.

Summary of Variance and Design Waiver Relief:

The following table summarizes the bulk variance relief is requested:

Township of Franklin Bulk Requirements					
	Required A Zone	Required R-40 Zone	Existing	Proposed	Variance (Y/N)
Corner Lot Minimum Area	6 Acres	40,000 SF	361,383 SF (8.296 ac)	No Change	N
Corner Lot Minimum Frontage	400 feet	200 feet	136.16 feet S. Middlebush Road	No Change	Yes*
Front Yard Setback					
Bennetts Lane	100 feet	40 feet	51.8 feet in A Zone	No Change	Yes*
			33.6 feet in R-40 Zone	38.5 feet in R-40 Zone	Yes
Dahmer Road	N/A	40 feet	328.9 feet	No Change	No
South Middlebush Road	200 feet	N/A	30.2 feet	No Change	Yes*
Side Yard (one)	75 feet	25 feet	45.2 feet in A Zone	49.1 feet in A Zone	Yes
Side Yard (two)	150 feet	75 feet	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rear Yard	200 feet	50 feet	N/A – No Rear Yards		N/A
Maximum % of Lot Coverage	10%	10%	0.2%	0.7%	Yes
Maximum % of Impervious Coverage	20%	20%	40.5%	40.9%	Yes
Maximum Height	35 feet	35 feet	Transmission Lattice Tower – 154.9 feet A-Frame – 75.4 feet Lightning Mast – 61.7 feet*	Transmission Monopole – 161.4 feet “Double” A-Frame – 76.2 feet Ex. Lightning Mast – 61.7 feet*	Yes
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Not Lised		N/A	N/A	N/A

*Pre-existing nonconformity

Design Exceptions – (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-51)

The following is a list of design exceptions that are being sought as part of the Site Plan application:

- § 112-88 Interior driveways. Where there is no parking, interior driveways shall be at least fifteen feet wide for one-way traffic movement and at least 22 feet wide for two-way traffic movement.

A waiver for this design requirement was granted by the Planning Board in 2009 (PLN-09-00018). If necessary, PSE&G requests a design exception for this requirement as part of this application.

Variance Checklist Exceptions

In accordance with the Township of Franklin, Chapter 112 Land Development, Attachment 29 – Schedule 8 Variance Submission Checklist, the following checklist waivers are requested:

10. Proof of submittal to the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority, if applicable.

A submission waiver is requested from this checklist item as PSE&G will submit proof of submission to the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority under separate cover. A “Will Serve Letter” from Franklin Township Sewerage Authority dated November 20, 2025, is included herein indicating that sanitary sewer service is available for 160 South Middlebush Road & 135 Dahmer Road.

18. Plan no greater than 24 inch by 36 inch in size.

A submission waiver is requested from this checklist item as PSE&G utilizes a standard sheet size of 44” x 34”.

Site Plan Checklist Exceptions

In accordance with the Township of Franklin, Chapter 112 Land Development, Attachment 29 – Schedule 9 Site Plan Submission Checklist, the following checklist waivers are requested:

13. Proof of submittal to the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority, if applicable.

A submission waiver is requested from this checklist item as PSE&G will submit proof of submission to the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority under separate cover. A “Will Serve Letter” from Franklin Township Sewerage Authority dated November 20, 2025, is included herein indicating that sanitary sewer service is available for 160 South Middlebush Road & 135 Dahmer Road.

23. Plan no greater than 24 inch by 36 inch in size and drawn at a scale not less than one inch equals 50 feet.

A submission waiver is requested from this checklist item as PSE&G utilizes a standard sheet size of 44” x 34”.

44. Signage plan showing existing and proposed signs, location on site and/or building, size, and details showing dimensions, type of construction, proposed illumination and proposed colors. Provide calculations and design specifications to demonstrate compliance.

A partial submission waiver is requested from this checklist items. No signage is proposed on the proposed control house expansion. All fence signage will be installed in accordance with approved plans and PSE&G requirements.

V. PERMITS AND OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED

The following approvals, permits and/or certifications are required for this project:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – **To Be Submitted**
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection – Freshwater Wetland Letter of Interpretation (LOI) Line Verification – **Approved on 7/28/2025 under File No. 1808-24-0005.1 LLI 24000**
- Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission – Individual Permit – **To be Submitted**
- Somerset County Planning Board Site Plan Exemption – **To Be Submitted**
- Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Certification – **Pending**
- Franklin Township Zoning Board of Adjustment Board – Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval with use and height variances – **Pending**
- Franklin Township Board of Health – Removal of Existing Septic System – **Pending**
- Franklin Township Construction Office for Construction Permits – **To Be Submitted**
- Franklin Township Sewerage Authority for Sewer Connection – **To Be Submitted**
- Franklin Township Department of Public Works for Water Connection – **To Be Submitted**