

Action

Organize annual Residential Solar Group Purchase program for La Crosse, supported by a program administrator such as MREA or others experienced in solar group purchase programs. Goal: 70 participants and 750 KW installed annually. (BE 4-5)

Introduction

Another important Buildings & Energy action for GHG reduction is organizing an annual residential solar group purchase program. It supports the Climate Action Plan's strategy to increase renewable energy from 0.24% to 5% of community-wide electric use by 2030.

Goal

70 participants and 750 KW are installed annually.

Cost

Staff would have to estimate time commitment or cost for contracted services. Supporting materials may add to costs. Solar incentives from the Federal and State governments have increased, so the city or consultant could assist homeowners in identifying and obtaining grants, tax rebates, and technical assistance to lower their costs.

Work Sequence

- A. Partner with a solar group buy program administrator.
- B. How can we get started with [the Ann Arbor Solarize Tool Kit?](#)
- C. Solicit a contractor.
- D. Identify the target audience and determine pre-qualifying criteria.
- E. Schedule outreach campaigns and informational events.

Consideration

La Crosse worked with MREA on a solar group buy in 2020 which only resulted in 4 properties getting solar panels installed. That amount was not worthwhile for the contractor. The education sessions provided good information for the 90 attendees. Over half of those interested were disqualified because the houses couldn't support a rooftop array or were highly shaded. The investment wasn't possible for many, and they wondered if their credit score would be good enough. Older attendees worried they wouldn't recoup their investment.

Try to get a group of 50 upfront before selecting an installer. Use tools like Project Sunroof to help identify the solar opportunity at each property. City and County staff must step up support and outreach and consider incentives for participation.

Lead

Planning Dept.

Climate Action Implementation Plan - Residential Solar Purchase Program (Revision 10/16/2024)

Support

La Crosse County, Program administrator such as MREA or Renew WI, solar installers, Xcel Energy, Focus on Energy, [Project Sunroof](#)

Complementary Actions

- I. Organize an annual Commercial property and Industrial property group purchase program. Coordinate program with the City's Solar Top 50 effort. Goal: 30 participants with 3,000 KW installed annually. (BE 4-4)
- II. Identify the top privately owned Solar PV sites within the city (including rooftop, ground-mounted, and carport site potential). Efforts should include the development of a Solar PV Site Assessment for identified with estimated installation costs and projections for energy generation and economic payback over a minimum 20-year period. Assessments, along with a summary highlighting the economic potential should be provided to property owners. This strategy could be coordinated with the Commercial property and Industrial property Solarize program. Solar Top 50 assessment efforts could be repeated annually, particularly through 2025. (BE 4-3)
- III. Develop renewable energy programs that increase on-site and community renewable energy and create benefits for low-income community members. Example programs include the [City of Dubuque Low Income Solar Renewable Energy Credit \(SREC\)](#), Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Community Solar for Community Action, and the [Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute Community Solar Program Model](#). Goal: 10,000 MWh of clean energy delivered through programs annually by 2030. (LH 5-1)
- IV. Support the development of community solar projects that benefit all residents, particularly communities of color and low-income populations. Advocate for passage of bill [SB 490](#). (BE 4-6)