

AC Transit engages with SunPower to save \$5 million with clean solar power



AC (Alameda - Contra Costa) Transit District in California serves more than 215,000 commuters every day, and is dedicated to improving the quality of life and the health of the environment. As a public organization, they must comply with strict requirements to ensure that the use of tax money is expended as efficiently as possible. In alignment with their environmental initiatives to explore alternatives and adopt the latest technologies, they had always been interested in going solar but were concerned about the economic viability, since the payback did not seem to justify the cost at the time. In 2005 however, they found a way to leverage the benefits of solar electricity without burdening the cost by taking advantage of the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) service offered by SunPower Access™.

BENEFITS

- Lifetime energy savings of \$5,000,000 over 30 years
- Provides 100% of the energy required to run their hydrogen fuel facility
- No initial installation or ongoing maintenance costs to AC Transit
- Project completely funded by partners: private investment, \$1.8 million grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and 30% federal tax credit

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Location 1: Oakland, California

Completed: April 2007

Installation Type: Commercial Roof

System Size: 226 kW

Energy Production: 275,750 kWh/year

Number of Panels: 1,078

Products and Services:

- SunPower PowerGuard®
- SunPower Access™

Location 2: Hayward, California

Completed: April 2007

Installation Type: Commercial Roof

System Size: 395 kW

Energy Production: 491,066 kWh/year

Number of Panels: 1,859

Products and Services:

- SunPower® Solar Panels
- SunPower Access™

“AC Transit’s move towards solar power was greatly enhanced with the partnership of SunPower Access.”

- Rick Fernandez
General Manager
AC Transit

EASY AND AFFORDABLE SOLAR POWER

Through the SunPower Access™ Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) service offering, MMA Renewable Ventures (a private investor) pays for the solar electric system, its installation, and its maintenance costs, thereby minimizing (and practically eliminating) the costs to AC Transit. In exchange for hosting the solar installation on the roof of its buildings, AC Transit gets to buy the solar power at a fixed rate for 10 years, enabling them to sidestep rising electricity prices. This innovative solution transfers the benefits of clean and renewable solar energy to AC Transit and allows them to demonstrate environmental leadership to the community.



CARRYING SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

Without having to pay for the solar electric systems or installation, AC Transit had SunPower install commercial roof systems on seven of its buildings across two site locations. These systems consist of over 2,937 photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and now produce 621 kW of electricity collectively – enough to power 600 homes during the daytime. SunPower panels deliver the highest efficiency, output, and performance over any competing solar panels on the market today.

BENEFITS FOR THE LONG HAUL

Over the next 30 years, the solar installations will help AC Transit reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 7,300 lbs., which is equivalent to planting 2,100 acres of trees, or removing 1,400 cars from the roads. “Oakland’s site alone generates 275,750 kilowatt hours per year, more than offsetting the 189,000 kWhr/yr needed to run the steam reforming hydrogen production facility for HyRoad zero-emission buses,” says Jaimie Levin, Director of Alternative Fuels Policy and Marketing for AC Transit.

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