



Montgomery County Government



County Executive
Marc Elrich

Press Release:

Neighborhood Sun and Ameresco Partner to Bring Nation's Largest Community Solar Project 100 Percent Dedicated to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents to Montgomery County

For Immediate Release: Monday, November 15, 2021

The nation's largest community solar farm to be 100 percent dedicated to low-and moderate-income (LMI) residents is coming to Montgomery County. The project's partners, along with Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and other County representatives, launched the project's subscription campaign Monday at an event at the County Executive Office Building in Rockville. Through the subscription program for this new project, Montgomery County residents who are on Pepco and who qualify as LMI are eligible to receive 25 percent savings on their electricity costs every month.

"It should not be a surprise to anyone that Montgomery County is creating the nation's largest community solar farm that will create energy directed to low- and moderate-income residents," said County Executive Elrich. "Our Climate Action Plan calls for us to eliminate 100 percent of carbon emission by 2035, and it is projects like solar farms that will help us obtain this goal. I am very thankful to Neighborhood Sun and Ameresco, Inc for helping us create this community solar farm. And I am proud of the work of the Department of General Services for delivering another solar project in Montgomery County with 18 completed now and four under construction. This project is not only what is good for the environment, but it also serves Montgomery County families who need help with their energy costs as well."

[Ameresco, Inc.](#), a leading cleantech integrator specializing in energy efficiency and renewable energy, and [Neighborhood Sun](#), a community solar company making solar accessible to everyone, in partnership with [Montgomery County](#), announced details of the first-of-its-kind solar farm bringing clean energy to thousands of Marylanders. Community solar farms enable access to affordable, clean energy for residents who are unable to build their own solar systems. Anyone who receives an electric bill can benefit including renters, residents in multi-unit buildings, municipalities, nonprofits and businesses that don't own their roofs. Subscriptions are [now available](#).



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The solar array is sited on the capped Oaks Landfill in Gaithersburg, transforming underutilized land into an environmental asset that brings local jobs and clean, renewable energy to the community. The project, a total of 6 megawatts (MW), is divided into three 2 MW arrays, and will generate approximately 11.7 million kilowatt hours annually. Array 1 is for use by the County and under a power purchase agreement, providing the County government clean, renewable energy at no upfront cost. Arrays 2 and 3, each with 2 MW, will be the community solar project with 100 percent of the generated electricity provided to low-to-moderate income residents.

“The equitable and just deployment of renewable energy in the U.S. is critical to expanding our clean energy economy and addressing environmental injustice,” said Gary Skulnik, CEO, Neighborhood Sun. “As a Montgomery County business, we are especially pleased with the County’s support for expanding energy access into underserved communities. This project blows away by an order of magnitude any other 100-percent LMI project in the state of Maryland and is a testament to Neighborhood Sun’s leading role in bringing energy justice to the state.”

Project construction is expected to begin in early 2022.

“This project provides not only energy cost savings to the County and its participating low- to moderate-income residents, but also leverages the use of an underutilized land asset that will produce revenue for the County, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to its carbon neutrality goal,” said Ameresco Senior Vice President Jon Mancini. “Through this initiative, the County will demonstrate continued commitment to sustainability that will deliver economic and environmental benefits to the Montgomery County Community for many years to come.”

The project also received a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration.

“The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) was pleased to provide for this project over \$950,000 in grant funding through MEA's Low- to Moderate Income Community Solar Program, which provides incentives to reduce the cost of electricity generated from clean energy to Marylanders, with income limitations that result in energy costs being a disproportionate portion of their household expenses,” said Mary Beth Tung, director, MEA.

Maryland-based Neighborhood Sun currently manages nearly 80 MW of community solar projects, enough solar to power more than 10,000 homes.

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