

# Forum Overview

## Ward 1 Forum: Financing Community Solar Wednesday, August 22, 2018

CM Reich welcomed the group and explained that over the past couple of years he has been meeting with a group of Ward 1 residents to talk about jumpstarting a community solar project in Northeast, as well as meeting with another group of residents concerned about fast-tracking the City's sustainability goals. Representatives from both groups have combined efforts to focus on rallying support for a community solar project, potentially at the new Eastside Storage & Maintenance Facility due to be completed in 2020.

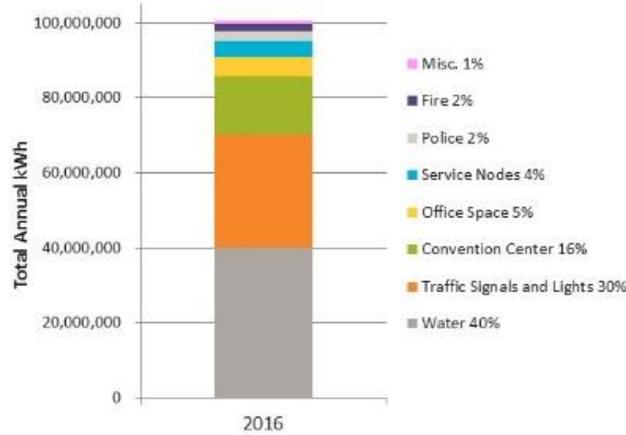
The State Legislature created a Community Solar Garden program in 2013 to allow residents, businesses and governmental entities to participate in solar energy without having to set up their own rooftop solar arrays. Instead they can subscribe to large solar arrays set up by independent solar developers.

Mark Ruff, the City of Minneapolis Chief Financial Officer, offered an overview of the City's current energy usage and breakdown of sources (*see figures on page 2*). The City has a total community solar garden subscription level of 8.5 million kWh annually. He discussed the City's plans for putting solar arrays on the 24 acres of underground water reservoirs and explained that the reason the City has both 5 and 10 year contracts with Renewable\*Connect is so they have flexibility to explore other sources of renewable energy.

Mr. Ruff explained that the roof of the Eastside Storage & Maintenance Facility could be a potential site for a community solar installation. An RFP process would be used to select a solar developer. Based on previous City solar projects, the City would hold 20%, leaving 80% for community subscribers. There's a potential that the marketing of subscriptions could prioritize Northeast and surrounding communities.

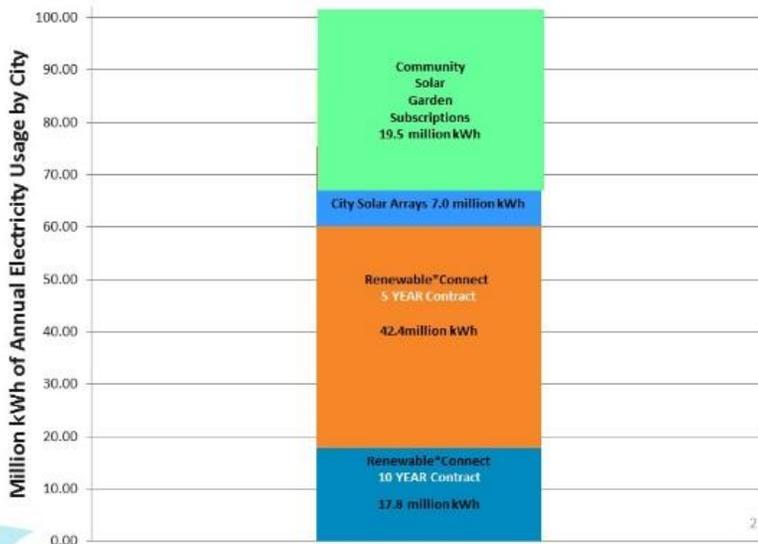
## How Much Electricity is Used by City Operations?

- Since 2010, the total annual electricity usage has varied between 100 – 104 million kWh at a cost of \$12,000,000.
- 2016 Usage by Facility Types:



1

## % Renewably Sourced Electricity used by City at end of 2022



2



## An Eastside Community Solar Garden! Interested in Learning More?

A group of Eastside neighbors have been exploring a community solar project here in the Eastside. As a first step, we'd like to gauge the interest of fellow community members. Do you want to learn more about bringing a community solar garden to the Eastside? Once we have enough households interested in becoming subscribers, we can move ahead with next steps to make it happen!

**What is a Community Solar Garden?** A large array of solar panels that generate electricity from sunlight. Community members "subscribe" to get their electricity from the solar garden, which is typically installed on a large rooftop in or near the community.

**Why subscribe?** Your subscription supports clean energy and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. It supports community-based solutions and saves you money on your electric bill. If you want to know more about our Community Solar initiative, please complete the form below. We'll keep you informed about upcoming informational meetings and next steps.

### SIGNING UP DOESN'T COMMIT YOU TO ANYTHING!

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Name:

Phone:

Email:

- I'd like to learn more
- I might be interested in becoming a Community Solar Garden subscriber
- I might be interested in volunteering to help bring Community Solar to my neighborhood



**Star Tribune** December 17, 2017 (<http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-s-solar-garden-program-takes-off-in-2017/464428133/>)

**Sun-fueled gardens in state grow from 10 to 58, adding enough electricity to power 32,000 homes.**

*Minnesota's Community Solar Garden program, once mired in delays, has grown sixfold in 2017, adding enough electricity to power about 32,000 homes.*

*The state-mandated solar garden program, which covers Xcel Energy's Minnesota territory, has 58 projects online, up from about 10 a year ago.*

*It will get bigger in 2018. Xcel expects another 69 projects — with a total 240 megawatts of generation capacity — to be switched on, primarily over the next seven months. To put that capacity in perspective, Xcel's largest natural-gas and coal-fired plants can respectively produce 530 and 680 megawatts (steadily, whereas solar power works when the sun shines).*

**EARTHER**, January 3, 2018 (<https://earthier.com/lets-stop-making-the-solution-to-climate-change-seem-i-1821714844>)

*This paper concluded policy that helps people better understand climate change, and makes individual actions easier to implement, is the best way to get the temperature rise on the lower end of that scale. The authors posit that community solar programs perfectly demonstrate how making green energy tech more normal and accessible rapidly increases adoption.*

*“These programs make purchasing solar easier for households by lowering the cost, offering financing options, and directly connecting households with reliable contractors.”*