



Citywide Solar Project Officially Underway

Significant Progress on "Sustainable Santa Fe" Goals: Saving Energy, Water, Money, Quality of Life

Santa Fe, October 19, 2021 -- Last Friday, October 13, Mayor Alan Webber and City Councilors Carol Romero-Wirth and Signe Lindell, City Public Works Director Regina Wheeler and staff, and a representative of Yearout Energy Services Company broke ground for the City's new solar project at the MRC Sports Complex Pump Station.

The solar project will add 2.75 megawatts of renewable energy to the City of Santa Fe's portfolio. Thirty-eight facilities were considered for the project, and 17 sites were ultimately selected for photovoltaic arrays, including seven City facilities, eight water utility facilities, and two Buckman Direct Diversion facilities.

The capacity of the arrays is designed to offset 80% of electricity consumption at selected City facilities and 60% at each of the water and BDD facilities.

In addition to solar, this project includes several other Facility Improvement Measures (FIMs) that will reduce both energy and water consumption. These include:

- retrofitting or replacing lighting fixtures with LEDs at 29 facilities;
- recommissioning and upgrading plumbing fixtures at 15 facilities;
- building envelope improvements, including sealing around windows and doors to improve comfort and efficiency; and
- replacing old transformers with high-efficiency models.

In total, the project is estimated to save more than \$750,000 per year in utility costs, with approximately \$500,000 per year of the savings resulting from solar. The water conservation measures are estimated to directly save over 2.2 million gallons a year. This project is also estimated to reduce CO2 emissions by more than 6,742,000 pounds per year, the equivalent of taking 588 vehicles off the road.

Mayor Alan Webber says: "Santa Fe continues to lead the way toward a renewable future. We are committed to 100% renewables by 2040 and this project will contribute to reaching that goal. Our aim is to be the most sustainable city in America. The more we invest in that, the more we save. We've made a commitment to save energy, to produce renewable energy, and to sustain our way of life in Santa Fe."

Public Works Director Regina Wheeler says: "With these arrays, the City will generate renewable energy at the point of use for less money than it costs to buy it from the grid. This project achieves a major milestone in the city's strategy to solarize all facilities where it is economically and physically feasible. Homeowners and businesses can save money and go green too, by calling a local solar installer. Next, the City is working to make community solar a reality in Santa Fe by making renewable energy from large arrays available for purchase by the City as well as homeowners, schools, businesses."

City Sustainability Officer Neal Denton says: "This project includes energy efficiency in addition to solar production. Energy efficiency is the jelly to solar's peanut butter -- they both work on their own, but together they're magic. This is not only clean energy but good government -- using taxpayers' money wisely."

Sustainability Strategies:

The City identified 91 strategies in the 2018 Sustainable Santa Fe 25-Year Plan to neutralize climate impacts, produce and preserve clean natural resources, generate economic activity, and enhance social equity. Denton reports that 58 of those are underway or complete. The solar project shows the City leading by example in implementing the plan. Other recent examples include:

- Reducing the carbon footprint from streetlights by 60% by installing more efficient LED lights.
- The construction of a combined heat and power plant at the wastewater treatment facility that recycles waste gas into energy. When combined with the existing solar array, this facility is now almost 100% powered by renewable energy.
- Replacing 23 non-emergency fleet vehicles with electric vehicles. This will help cut greenhouse gas emissions, save taxpayer money, and improve public health.

- Coordinating the launch of Solarize Santa Fe, a community solar purchasing initiative being offered to teachers and staff at the Santa Fe Public Schools this fall. The pilot program is designed to make solar power affordable and accessible regardless of income.

Contacts: Caryn Grosse, Project Administrator Sr, clgrosse@santafenm.gov;
Neal Denton, Sustainability Officer, nhdenton@santafenm.gov