

Going Solar - *It just makes cents* – By Lauren Crandell, City Manager's Office

Solar power is currently growing faster than any other energy technology, doubling worldwide every two years since the year 2000! With new solar technology and a deeper understanding of its benefits, the City of San Rafael has committed to this growing trend by planning to install solar on City Hall, DPW,



the C Street Parking Garage, Boro Community Center, Terra Linda Community Center and San Rafael Community Center over the next couple of years. Once all projects are completed, 57% of the City's electricity usage for buildings and facilities will come from solar power, saving the City an estimated \$1.4 million over 20 years!

Did you know:

- The *electric power industry creates 33%* of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions, more than any other sector.
- A residential photovoltaic (PV) system that can meet just half of an average household's electricity needs is estimated to avoid *100 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2)* over a 30-year lifetime.
- Californians currently pay one of the ten *highest electricity rates* in the nation. But you could lower that rate if you went solar.
- The average 5 kilowatt solar panel system has a *life of 20-30 years*, but pays for itself in about only 10 years.

What HOMEOWNERS can do:

If you're a homeowner, you can choose to lease or own your solar panels. There are distinct advantages to each:

- **Lease:** If you choose to lease your panels, you benefit from **no out-of-pocket costs and an immediately reduced total electricity payment.** Every month you'll purchase the electricity produced from the solar panels directly from the solar company at a lower rate than you would purchase electricity from your regular utility.
- **Own:** In many situations, if you can afford the outlay or can easily secure financing, the cost to install solar **becomes an investment with a return often outpacing even the strongest performing mutual funds.** While you'll incur the up-front cost with the purchase of a home solar panel system, you stand to reap the rewards of a significantly lower or eliminated electric bill, a federal tax credit that will allow you to deduct 30% of the total cost from your taxes, AND if your system supplies more energy than you use, your utility company must pay you market rate for the extra electricity you're supplying to the grid!



[Click here](#) for more information on the benefits of buying/leasing solar systems in California!

If you're a RENTER, or not ready to commit to a large solar installation, you can still:

- Purchase a portable solar energy appliance that provides grid-tied solar power to supplement your home or business energy needs through the use of a standard outdoor outlet. These units are a fraction of the cost of roof systems (but also supply a fraction of the energy) and can be installed on decks, patios or in the yard.
- Consider investing in solar and receive a return on your money with companies like [this](#).
- Many jurisdictions and energy companies will now allow you to choose to go green, paying for energy derived from renewable sources. Go [deep green](#) with Marin Clean Energy if you live in Marin County, unincorporated Napa, Benecia, El Cerrito, Richmond or San Pablo; sign-up with [SFCleanEnergy](#) if you live in San Francisco; or choose the [EverGreen](#) option with Sonoma Clean Power if you live in Sonoma County.

As always, we're here to help if you have any questions.

Love,
Your Employee Green Team
<http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/greenteam>

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