

The Shared Sun

Rewriting the grid with shared local power



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This is a good time to discuss an important solar shift. Happening right in the middle of real estate and energy.

Last month, solar power supplied more of the nation's electricity than coal for the first time in US history. While utility scale projects headline the most of it, there's another revolution right in our backyards.

Community solar.

Historically, participating in the renewable energy transition has required owning a home with a perfect roof. And then writing a check to cash in panels. But this picture is different when energy generation becomes a shared resource.

For new homes and multifamily buildings here's what this means.

The mechanics of shared power

It's best to think of community solar as a subscription model for clean energy. Instead of bolting panels to the roof, developers build a centralized array in or near the community.

It works in three steps:



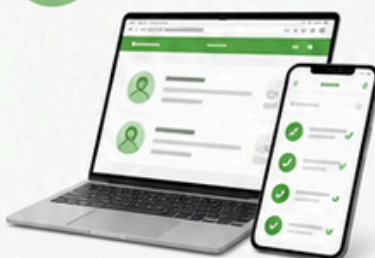
1



The build

A solar array is installed in a nearby field, a large commercial rooftop, or a warehouse district. Basically in a shared space.

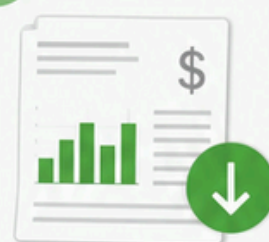
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The subscription

Residents subscribe to a portion of the energy that specific array generates.

3



The payoff

Clean power flows directly into the local grid, and subscribers receive monetary credits on their monthly bills.



In fact “community scale” solar resources have been on a rise. These mid-sized arrays deploy much faster than utility-scale projects. And when paired battery storage, they drastically improve local grid reliability.



01

Spatial efficiency

Urban planners often integrate solar arrays into spaces that can't hold houses. Think solar canopies over shared parking lots, arrays on top of recreation centers, or utilizing odd spaces.



02

Aesthetic harmony

Many Homeowner Associations regulate (or downright avoid) rooftop panels. Sometimes to maintain uniform rooflines. Shared solar allows neighborhoods to meet their sustainability goals without changing how homes look.



03

Aesthetic harmony

Homeowners today actively seek out green amenities. Automatic solar subscription is well on its way to becoming as standard as fast internet access.



The new build blueprint

When designing residential communities from scratch, we have the luxury of baking in clean energy into the site plan from day one. New construction and master-planned neighborhoods are picking it up rapidly.



The C&I to residential bridge



Finding open land for a solar array near a densely packed neighborhood is challenging. Yet we can see some interesting workarounds with commercial real estate in the picture.



Logistics centers, massive retail stores, and industrial warehouses have acres of unused roof space. All flat.



Developers now lease these commercial roofs to build community solar arrays. The building owner gets a new revenue stream from the lease and residents nearby get to subscribe to the power generated down the street.

“

A logistic giant in the US recently crossed 1 GW of solar and storage capacity. A big portion of it comes from community solar projects hosted on their massive warehouse rooftops.



The multifamily unlock

People who rent apartments, live in condos, or own townhomes with a shared roof, have historically been locked out of the clean energy shift.

Tenants don't own the roof. Even if they did, a single roof won't offset the energy usage of a 50-unit building.

And landlords rarely **want** to pay for solar panels if the tenants are the ones benefitting from lower electric bills.

Community solar bypasses this entirely.

“

And for millions of Americans living in multifamily housing, this is the one of the only viable clean energy options available.

Grid democratization while lowering costs.





01



Studio / 1-Bed Apartment

Estimated Monthly Utility Bill (Before Solar)

\$85

Expected Monthly Savings

\$12.75

Projected Annual Savings

\$153

02



2-Bed Apartment / Condo

Estimated Monthly Utility Bill (Before Solar)

\$130

Expected Monthly Savings

\$19.50

Projected Annual Savings

\$234

03



3-Bed Townhome

Estimated Monthly Utility Bill (Before Solar)

\$190

Expected Monthly Savings

\$28.50

Projected Annual Savings

\$342



Estimates assume the average 15% community solar savings rate. Actual savings vary by market, utility, subscription terms, and billing structure.

A billing fix



The clunky billing process was one major hurdle for renters. Subscribers receive two confusing bills one from the local utility and one from the solar provider.



This is still an issue but there was massive consolidation being brought into the subscription space throughout 2025 and 2026.



Programs are increasingly moving to single utility-issued statements although dual billing still is quite common in many places.



2026 and beyond



\$69/kW

Avg. subscription
acquisition cost



12%

Decline in
subscription
acquisition costs
in 2025



10+ GW_{dc}

Community solar
pipeline in the US





Did you know?



When paired with battery storage, community solar can be a building block for Virtual Power Plants (VPPs) when the system is enrolled in a dispatch program and controlled to support grid needs.



Under the broader expansion of VPP programs across the US, battery owners in about half the states have an opportunity to enroll in some form of VPP.



Designing communities with shared clean energy in mind means the local grid becomes more resilient, and living costs become more predictable.



There's a clear path for developers, architects, and energy providers to collaborate now. As we see the boom in multifamily and master-planned communities, shared solar proves the clean energy transition is for anyone to participate in.



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Contact Us : +44 7961627865 | +1 860 880 1115 | +91 9867650526