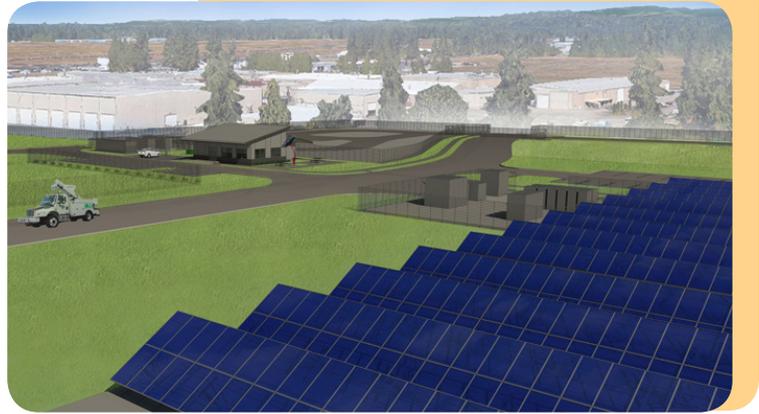


In 2018, Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) began the design for a microgrid and Clean Energy Technology center to be located in Arlington, WA. Snohomish PUD is the largest publicly owned utility in Washington State and the 12th largest in the nation in terms of customers served. The utility serves one of the fastest growing counties in the Pacific Northwest and is home to large employers Boeing, Fluke and a U.S. Naval Station. The utility serves a diverse population and topography, ranging from beach communities to rural farmlands to dense alpine forests.

The Clean Energy Technology center will demonstrate the opportunities and challenges of using a microgrid to provide solar energy integration and grid support. The project includes a 500 kW solar array paired with a 1 MW/1 MWh battery sited at a new customer service office in the north end of the utility’s service territory. The microgrid will provide day to day grid support and power emergency services at the new office in the event of outages due to storms, earthquakes, or other natural disasters.



*Rendering of the proposed solar array in Arlington.
Source: Snohomish PUD*

The utility had been exploring the idea of offering a community solar program for a while. When the microgrid project concept was developed, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to leverage development resources to pilot community solar. By offering a community solar program in connection with the microgrid, the project will raise community awareness of microgrid benefits, such as testing vehicle to grid technology, integration of renewables onto the grid, and grid resiliency.



The PUD is asking customers to weigh in on program branding via a website poll.

The primary goal of the community solar program is to expand access to the benefits of solar to a wider customer base, while recovering the costs of the solar array construction. Other community solar goals include providing additional options for customers to support renewable energy, maintaining a relationship between the utility and the participants, and designing a customer-centric program.

The PUD is currently designing the subscription details and marketing plan for the community solar offering and is soliciting input from customers on program branding. The PUD is also exploring options to support subscriptions for low income customers. Adding a low-income component will contribute to the utility’s goal of expanding access to the benefits of solar to a wider customer base, while providing an opportunity for some of our most vulnerable customers to lower their energy burden.

