

# City of Madison: Celebrates major solar installation milestone, Mayor doubles GreenPower program

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MADISON, WI – The City's GreenPower trainees will be busy for at least the next few years installing solar panels on City buildings at a 'rapid pace,' according City of Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway. At 9 a.m., Oct. 15, 2020, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway celebrated the City reaching its 1 Megawatt goal at Metro Transit, the latest and largest solar installation in City history. Rhodes-Conway spoke during a press conference about the project and what it means for the GreenPower Program expanding moving forward.

"Today we achieve our first goal, that we set for ourselves as a City related to solar energy," Rhodes-Conway said. "In 2014, we adopted a budget to achieve the Madison Megawatt, which aimed to install one megawatt of solar energy on city facilities by 2020, and today we reach that goal."

The solar panel installation on Metro Transit, located at 1101 East Washington Avenue in Madison, pushed the City past its one megawatt goal. The City now has 2.5 percent of its building electric use provided by solar power. The solar production offsets roughly 950 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year, which is equivalent to the emissions of an average passenger vehicle driving 2.3 million miles. Twenty-six City buildings have solar installations, and there are more to come.

"We are going to dramatically ramp up the speed at which we install solar on our rooftops," Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway said. "My proposed budget and capital improvement plan, will achieve our next one megawatt of solar in just two years, by 2022. After that, starting in 2023, we'll start installing close to one megawatt every

year.”

Metro Transit’s General Manager Justin Stuehrenberg spoke during the press conference and explained how the solar installation supports the City’s hardest working building, which operates 24/7 and uses a lot of power. “We are undergoing a rapid transition toward electric vehicles that the solar power will contribute toward,” Stuehrenberg said. “Later this year, we’ll receive three, fully-electric buses. Also, [this will help power] part of our bus rapid transit project, where 27 buses will be fully electrified, bringing our fleet over 10 percent running electric.”

Engineering’s GreenPower Program trainees installed Metro Transit’s solar installation. GreenPower is a program in the Engineering Division where trainees with little to no electrical skills are taught how to install solar. GreenPower crews installed roughly 2,561 solar panels between 2016-2020, and about 982, or 40 percent, of solar panels are on the Metro Transit bus garage on East Washington Street.

“They [GreenPower trainees] may start as trainees, but we will identify and formalize pathways to grow into more senior positions over time,” Rhodes-Conway said.

The mayor also recognized the following City staff for exceptional work on the Metro solar installation project: Metro Transit’s Josh Marty, Engineering’s Eric Haugen, Steve Staples, Master Electrician Matt Parks and current GreenPower Trainee Jose Wanta.

“Jose has worked on this Metro project from start to finish,” Rhodes-Conway said. “His work exemplifies the skills that can be gained through this program and can be used for years to come.”

The GreenPower program has installed 15 systems totaling about 800 kilowatts to date. The Metro Transit installation cuts the bus garages’ electric bill by 20 percent. There are more solar installations planned for the Metro Transit bus garage in the future.