

Solar parking canopy goes online, providing UC Santa Cruz with 2 megawatts of renewable energy

Source: UC Santa Cruz News. September 16, 2021 By [Scott Hernandez-Jason](#)
<https://news.ucsc.edu/2021/09/solar-array-parking.html>



The project will generate more than three million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity each year, enough to power more than 330 houses for a year, according to EPA calculations. (Photo by Nick Gonzales)

A two-megawatt solar parking canopy at the East Remote Parking Lot is now online, increasing the campus's use of renewable energy while reducing its energy bill.

The solar photovoltaic canopy will provide the campus with clean, reliable electricity for at least 20-years and save the campus an estimated \$6 million on its energy bill. The array will generate enough energy to meet about 6% of our total campus electrical load.

“This is a major step towards directly reducing the campus’ carbon footprint. As climate change impacts become more of a reality in all of our day-to-day lives, I am also encouraged that the chancellor is committed to exploring more options for future renewable energy projects on campus to keep us moving in the right direction,” said Elida Erickson, director of the Office of Sustainability.

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The campus is installing a battery storage system, set to be online later this academic year, that will allow the campus to store 1 megawatt of energy to reduce peak demand and shift load to times of day when electricity is less costly. The intelligent use of energy from the storage units

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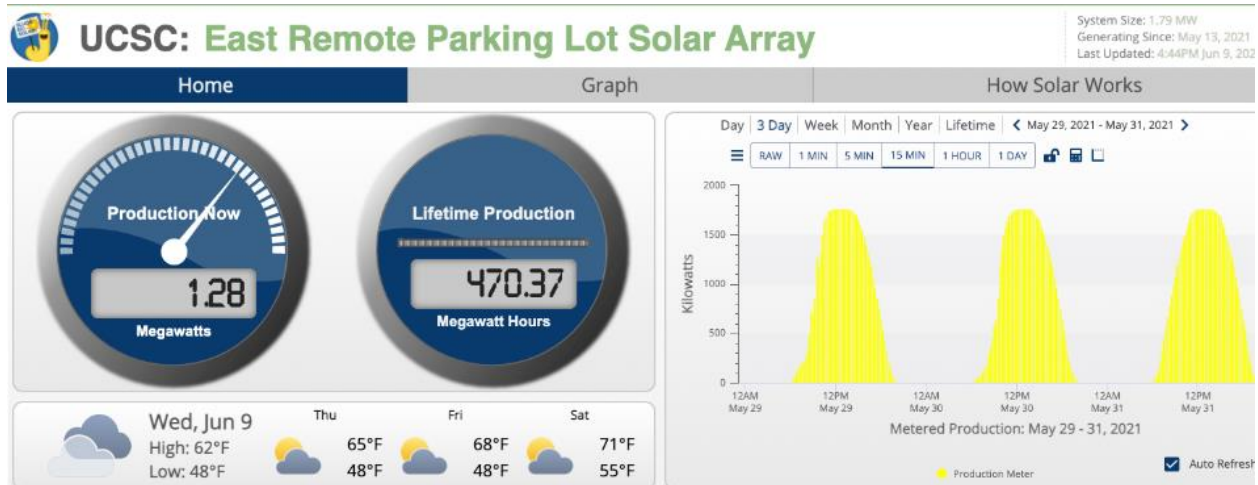
combined with on-site solar energy generation helps maximize clean energy utilization and enhances grid performance.

The campus partnered with ForeFront Power for the project through a streamlined procurement process offered by the School Project for Utility Rate Reduction, part of the Utilities Joint Powers Authority of California Public Schools.

UC Santa Cruz also has a 250 kilowatt photovoltaic array on the McHenry Library, which provides 25 percent of the annual electrical energy needed for the building. It also provides 75 to 100 percent of the power needed for the building during peak times of year. Learn more about UCSC’s renewable energy systems and see real-time energy production from both of the arrays from the [Energy Management website](#).

The 2017–2022 Campus Sustainability Plan calls on UC Santa Cruz to develop a plan to add four megawatts of solar photovoltaic to the campus and the new solar array gets the campus halfway to that goal.

The Office of Physical Planning, Development and Operations is currently assessing the opportunities for solar at UCSC’s Westside Research Park and Monterey Bay Education Science and Technology (MBEST) Center.



Online dashboard to view performance of the solar array.

<https://physicalplant.ucsc.edu/energy-work-management/energy-management/renewable-energy/east-remote-array.html>