Solar Project Supports Mission of Stewardship at Stonehill College

Challenge

Students and faculty at Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts take the school’s commitment to environmental stewardship to heart. As part of the Stonehill Goes Green campaign, the college set a strategic goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020, and reinforced this commitment by deciding to purchase electricity via a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) through an on-campus solar system.

SunPower’s Solution

Partnering with Solect Energy and SunPower, Stonehill College has added five large solar carports that feature a total of 6,500 high-efficiency SunPower® E-series panels. Covering 775 parking spaces, virtually the entire student/visitor parking lot is covered with solar carports, which provides power to the local utility grid while protecting vehicles from the elements.

Customer Benefits

The solar carports are expected to produce an estimated 3.4 million kWh of electricity every year. The highly visible structures serve as a powerful reminder of the College’s mission of stewardship and sustainability.

Quick Facts

- $1.8 million Projected 20-Year Savings
- Carport Installation Type
- 2.8 MW Total System Size
- 3.4M kWh Expected Annual Output
Answering the Call for Environmental Action

In Pope Francis’ well-traveled encyclical message, “Laudato Si,” he urged a more active approach to addressing climate change. Being good stewards of the planet has long been part of Catholic teaching, and Stonehill College has always expressed a commitment to educate the whole individual and create a “more just and compassionate world.”

Carport structures offer all the value of traditional solar, yet have the ability to enable solar where the available capital, space and structural integrity are insufficient for ground-mounted or rooftop systems. During heavy Northeastern winters, SunPower’s carports provide an added safety benefit: their V-shaped design directs snow and ice towards the center of the structure, away from vehicles and foot traffic.

PPA Financing Structure Provides Predictable Savings

Solar carports are ideal solutions for campuses with large parking lots since they make productive use of existing assets. Financed through PPA with SunPower, these canopies enable Stonehill to predict energy costs throughout the 20-year PPA term.

“The students appreciate the many benefits of the solar project, including covered parking during inclement weather! The solar carport installation has been a very positive experience campus-wide.”

Craig Binney
AVP for Finance and Operations
Stonehill College
“SunPower provided us the investment backing to ensure that this project would move forward. They have delivered on their promises as a true partner.”

Craig Binney
AVP for Finance and Operations
Stonehill College

Massachusetts-based Solect Energy was instrumental in bringing this project to fruition as the local installation and construction partner. “It is wonderful to be a part of this solar project,” said Scott Howe, partner and Senior Vice President of Sales at Solect Energy. “With the addition of this solar canopy project, the College will be able to reinvest savings earned into areas of need such as student scholarships, maintenance and campus upkeep.”

Other projects implemented as part of the Stonehill Goes Green campaign include the installation of an energy management system, electrical submeters, and lighting retrofits—all of which have helped significantly reduce Stonehill’s energy usage. Thanks to these efforts, Stonehill College has been included in The Princeton Review’s Guide to Green Colleges every year since 2014.

While the College has many sustainability projects and initiatives, the solar project is a visible manifestation that inspires and motivates students, faculty and visitors to be careful stewards of the earth.