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City introduces Community Shared Solar program

By Christopher Roberson

For the next 20 years, the City of Everett will be purchasing renewable solar energy credits from Syncarpha Solar in an effort to lower energy costs for Everett residents.

Syncarpha currently has 11 Community Shared Solar Gardens in Massachusetts. Neil Potter, partnership manager for the program's marketing firm, Relay Power, said each solar farm has approximately "4,000-5,000" solar panels and is expected to produce 76 million kilowatt hours of energy per annum.

With the issue of energy sav-

ings becoming increasingly prominent in recent years, Potter said he is confident that residents will be drawn to Community Solar. "More and more people are looking to be part of the solution," he said.

Each solar garden will be serviced by National Grid. Therefore, all National Grid customers are eligible to participate in the program. Anyone who is interested in Community Solar may contact Relay Power for a free consultation at 781-217-5329 or online at www.relay-power.com/everett.

"As a coastal community, we all recognize the importance of protecting our environment as

we experience more frequent storms and flooding. I'm proud we have entered into this energy savings program," Mayor Carlo DeMaria said in a written statement. "This power purchase agreement will provide the city with long-term energy savings while at the same time supporting a growing solar industry in the Commonwealth. I hope our residents will take advantage of the residential portion of the Community Shared Solar opportunity to purchase clean, renewable, solar energy credits. Those who opt into the new residential program will also save money."

Robert Knowles, a partner at

Renewable Energy Massachusetts, described the city's decision as "proactive and forward-thinking." "We know that everyone who worked very hard over the last 24 months is proud to know the city of Everett is helping to secure more local, clean, renewable energy on the grid in Massachusetts," he said. "We all look forward to several decades of economic and environmental benefit to be realized by these solar farms."

According to Relay Power's website, rooftop photovoltaic panels are not required for Community Solar as energy comes directly from the solar

gardens. As part of the larger Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target Program, Community Solar provides a "perfect solution" for the 80 percent of residents who are unable to use solar energy as their rooftops cannot accommodate photovoltaic panels.

The substantial energy savings will produce a sizable financial savings as well. Relay Power Vice President William Kanzer said consumers can expect to save an average of 10 percent on their electric bills by enrolling in the program. "The customer will have a guaranteed savings," he said. "It actually is a good deal."