

# New BLP solar project seems like positive community initiative

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Though it's still early in the process, the Marquette Board of Light and Power is planning a community solar project, which, at this point, seems like a pretty good idea.

The BLP plans to install 200 to 400 solar panels west of its office at 2200 Wright St. They'll have to clear cut about 8,000 square feet of trees and relocate a Noquemanon Trail Network trailhead to make room for the panels, which will be purchased by the utility's customers.

BLP officials are still finalizing details, but the general idea is customers could purchase at least one share in the community solar project, which equates to one panel.

After enough customers sign up for the project and commit to purchasing their share, the BLP have them installed on its property.

As the panels begin generating, that energy is transferred back into the grid and the BLP will provide customers a credit on their monthly bills for the amount of energy produced by their individual panels.

Ultimately, that will mean a smaller monthly electric bill for those participating customers.

Naturally, because of the tilt of the Earth, the northern hemisphere will see more sunlight during the summer months here and customers should see a larger credit on their bills.

However, the panels seem to work even when the sun is low in the sky, like during wintertime, according to David Lynch with the BLP.

In a recent Journal article, Lynch said he installed 14 panels on his home about five years ago that produce about half his power throughout the year.

"I didn't think I would produce that much in the winter time, and it actually does produce significant amounts," Lynch said.

If you're a BLP customer, it may be worth your time to seriously consider getting on board with this project.

Beyond the obvious financial benefit to customers, there is also the long-term environmental upside to consider.

As the industry steps away from coal-fueled generation, this community solar project is another step toward going green and reducing our carbon footprint.

And the long-lasting effects of that are invaluable.

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