

## Tioga Energy Powers Santa Barbara



**Challenge** › Installing the largest solar array possible given the amount of space available

**Solution** › Power Purchase Agreement from Tioga Energy

**Benefits**

- › Hedge against rising utility electricity costs
- › No upfront capital investment or ongoing maintenance responsibilities
- › Optimized design for maximum renewable energy production
- › Supports the City's Sustainability Goals

### Background

The City of Santa Barbara is serious about energy conservation. Located along the central coast of California, this city of 400,000 is known as a national leader in the green building movement and a proponent of sustainability. Its commitment to sustainability is evidenced by projects such as a fuel cell generator at a wastewater treatment plant that turns methane gas into electricity, and solar panels atop a fire station that produce 15 kW—half the station's power.

With the success of its first venture into solar power, the City Council directed the Facilities department to pursue this renewable resource on a much larger scale. The City favored a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) in which the City would pay a predictable rate for power generated by photovoltaic panels over the 20-year life of the contract, with no upfront capital expense or ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

### Challenge

In early 2007, the City contacted a pair of firms that had been partnering on building and maintaining solar generation systems. Soon after, however, the partnership disbanded. The City then turned to a renewable energy program sponsored by the State of California. But statewide budget cuts soon terminated that program.

The City of Santa Barbara had already filed for a rebate reservation with the California Solar Initiative (CSI). However, a deadline was looming to make progress on a proof-of-project milestone in late September 2007, or lose the reservation. The City needed to move forward quickly to issue a Request for Proposal, evaluate responses, and select a Power Purchase Agreement provider.

### Solution

Nearly 30 teams responded to the Request for Proposal issued by the City. After evaluating each firm, the City invited eight to submit a formal Request for Proposal. Two finalists were selected, including the team of Tioga Energy and El Solutions. Tioga Energy partners with leading national and regional installers like El Solutions to build and operate efficient and reliable solar facilities. El Solutions is one of California's fastest growing providers of large-scale distributed solar power systems and a strategic partner for Tioga Energy.

## CASE STUDY: City of Santa Barbara

“The EIS and Tioga team submitted a lower bid,” says Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor, who drove the vendor selection process. “But more importantly, they offered the largest generation capacity, which was a mandate from our City Council. And they demonstrated that they knew what they were doing.”

Tioga worked closely with the City during the final stages of the bidding process. “All negotiations with Tioga were in the spirit of the RFP, so we all knew where we stood,” says Ferguson. “By holding true to their proposal, it helped us move forward on the agreement. Conversations during the negotiation were open and objective and Tioga continued to be responsive after they were selected. For example, there was a last-minute change to clarify some language in the contract. It was late in the game, but they worked very hard with us to get that resolved.”

As a PPA provider, Tioga retains ownership and management responsibility for the solar generation system. That shields the City of Santa Barbara from all the complexities associated with financing, construction, and ongoing operation, allowing City staff to focus on their other duties.

With permitting completed in mid summer 2008, the project moved into the construction phase, installing 1,830 Suntech 210 photovoltaic panels covering six roofs at the City’s Public Works campus with a capacity to generate up to 384 kW DC (331 kW AC).

While construction is being handled primarily by EI Solutions, Tioga, as overall project owner, continues to be involved, attending status meetings and following the progress of the project. “Tioga communicates with us on a regular basis,” says Jim Dewey, Facilities and Energy Manager for the City. “Overall project management has been very professional.”

## Benefits

The Tioga SurePath<sup>SM</sup> Solar Power Purchase Agreement relieves the City of Santa Barbara of the financial and administrative burdens of owning, operating, and maintaining a complex solar installation. There is little or no impact on the City’s facility department and staff.

The PPA also enables the City to take advantage of federal and state tax incentives and rebates not normally available to government entities. This makes solar more cost effective from the first day of operation.

Over the long haul, the PPA provides a hedge against rising electric costs. Tioga locks in long-term electricity rates, putting the City in control of its energy costs, even if prices charged by the public utility increase dramatically.

The City of Santa Barbara proudly promotes its green image. The PPA agreement from Tioga Energy highlights the municipality’s long-term commitment to renewable energy and the wellbeing of the environment.

*Tioga Energy enables commercial, government and non-profit organizations to reduce their energy costs while lowering carbon emissions. Through the SurePath<sup>SM</sup> solar power purchase agreement (PPA), Tioga Energy owns and operates renewable energy systems that provide organizations a hedge against energy price volatility and accelerate their access to clean energy without any capital outlay.*

**For more information call 877 333 9787 or visit [www.tiogaenergy.com](http://www.tiogaenergy.com)**



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