

2023 FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Pathway to Solar Project?

CBH's *Sustainability Task Force* (STF) has identified “energy independence” as an early priority for our congregation’s greening efforts. As Jews, we must combat climate change to participate in the mitzvah of *Tikkun Olam*. However, the installation of a solar array ALSO significantly benefits our financial bottom line each year going forward.

Why is it important?

Congregation Bet Haverim needs a solar array to support our campus with economical green electricity! This project is the single most important capital expense we can undertake that addresses all three of our foundational congregational mission elements: fiscal responsibility, community/earth stewardship, and the fulfillment of our religious obligations.

Why do it now?

We can take advantage of a 30% direct Federal payment (a new program of the Inflation Reduction Act) to offset a sizable portion of total project costs. In addition, due to nimble action by the Board in March 2023, our PG&E interconnection application was submitted prior to an unfavorable rate change that would have made this a less profitable investment. We must complete the project within two years to keep the highly advantaged rate (known as NEM 2.0).

Where will the panels be installed?

The 114 panels will occupy the Social Hall’s east-facing roof and the Sanctuary’s south west-facing roof.

How much will it cost?

Construction of the solar array alone, without rebates and the necessary roof prep work, is **\$120,000**. The reroofing portion is approximately **\$50,000** and is a prerequisite to installing the panels. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, we are eligible to receive a 30% direct payment from the federal government for the array portion, which brings that portion's total down to **\$84,000**. That's why our total is calculated as follows:

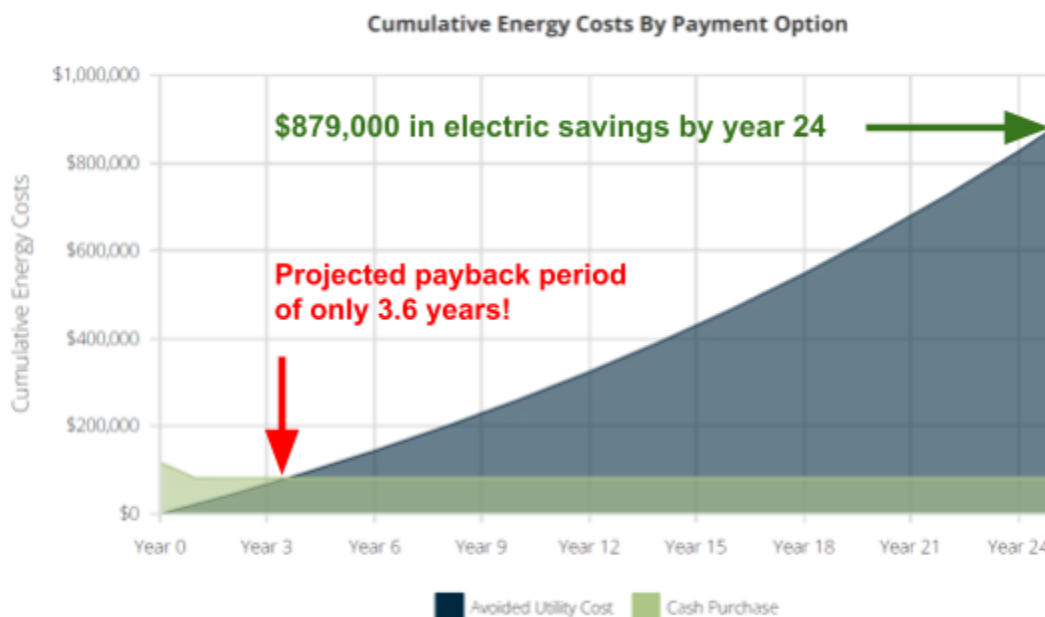
$\$120,000 - 30\% = \$84,000$
+ \$ 50,000 in roof work
= $\$134,000$, which we rounded to $\$140,000$ to cover incidentals, CPA cost, etc.
 $\$140,000$ divided by 114 panels = $\$1230$ per panel
The committee chose **\$1236** because it represents 1200 plus double chai!

How much will we save in the future by installing solar?

The proposed project significantly reduces the synagogue's operating costs in the future, varying from \$22k in savings at Year One to a projected \$53k per year at Year 24, and cumulatively saves a projected **\$879,000** on electric bills over the life of the array. For those who like metrics, here are the projected return figures:

IRR (Internal Rate of Return) Term	27.9%
Net Present Value	\$368,043
Payback Period	3.6 Years
ROI (Return on Investment)	677.3%

Even without the environmental/religious impetus, we should undertake this as an act of fiscal stewardship since it represents a low-risk high-return investment.



Who is managing the project and what are their credentials?

By 2022, STF had solicited three bids from solar contractors. After reviewing them critically using a weighted decision matrix, STF recommended *Citadel Roofing's* proposal due to their qualifications and optimal pricing, as well as their ability to perform re-roofing work under the same project manager (as necessitated prior to the array install). Our Executive Director will be the site project manager with assistance and technical support from members of the Sustainability Task Force and Finance Committee.

When will it be done?

Because the queue for getting roof work done is long in our region, we may not see the panels up until 2024. But rest assured we are attempting to see this project to completion as soon as we are able... the Interconnection Agreement with PGE is complete, the contract is signed and all is in order to begin when the roofing company is able to start.

What are the biggest hurdles for this project?

The biggest hurdle we've faced was to determine how to finance the solar array. Three years ago, we believed we had among our Partnership those who already understood the benefits of solar and who were ready and willing to contribute specifically to this capital project without changing their donating habits for other fundraisers that we use to generate operating revenue. However, we weren't sure if people would come through with as much enthusiasm as we anticipated! Thus, we committed to raising HALF the total cost quietly by speaking with likely individuals, and then going to the general partnership after meeting that initial goal. Because of the success of the "quiet campaign" we have commitments of over HALF the project cost (as of September 2023). Whether the rest of the fundraising effort counts as a "hurdle" is up to us all!

How are donations held until they are needed to fund elements of the project?

Donations made by check or Paypal online will be tagged as dedicated to this project and kept specifically for this work. They will be held in a segregated, restricted fund.

What happens if we raise money in excess of project costs?

If we are lucky enough to meet our goal and exceed it, any additional monies raised will be saved in a restricted fund for use on other Sustainability and Greening projects on campus! Those projects will include the energy improvement of our existing buildings (insulation, new windows, air sealing, smart thermostats, etc.) and the future electrification of our two remaining gas-fired furnaces.

How will donors to this project be recognized and kept informed?

During the Pathways to Solar campaign ending December 31, 2023, donor names will be listed in the E-Tone and other CBH communications but only if donors give permission. No amounts will be listed. As the project begins in 2024, regular updates will be sent out to the donors and to the congregation.

How can I give?

There are many ways:

- You can write a check or set up a one-time or monthly payment through your bank.
- You can pay by credit card, remembering that you need to add in the credit card fees.
- You can consider giving appreciated stock. You may be able to deduct the full market value of the stock and avoid capital gains. Please contact the CBH office for details and consult with your financial advisor.
- A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA. If you are over 70½, you can withdraw up to \$100,000 tax free; if you're 72 and over, these amounts will count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD.) You can request detailed information from the trustee of your IRA.
- Remember – you can share a gift with your friends and family. For example, groups have already committed to fund a full panel of \$1236 together.

Thank you for considering a gift to green our campus!