

Community microgrids ville neuss

Not so long ago community microgrids were novel. Typically more cumbersome to build than microgrids for businesses or campuses, they were slow starters in the microgrid development race.

Community microgrids are still far from plug and play, but we're seeing many more of them being announced. Climate change and natural disasters are a big driver. Microgrids offer an effective one-two climate protection punch for communities that want to convert to cleaner energy to meet long term sustainability goals but also must find immediate ways to keep the lights on when storms, wildfires, droughts and other calamities threaten the grid.

Here we highlight eight community microgrids that are breaking new ground. There are many more -- especially through government or utility sponsored programs in places like California, New Jersey and Maryland. So it was hard to cull the list. We chose these eight projects -- some operating, some still being built -- because we were struck by their origins, ambition, unique features and forward looking approach. Here they are in no particular order.

Located just outside of Boston, this microgrid-in-planning provides an example of what can be accomplished when city officials and community groups join forces for the greater good. Most fascinating, this is a "microgrid without borders," meaning it's being designed not just for use by one or two critical buildings but for as many Chelsea residents as possible. To get a sense of some of the philosophical underpinnings of the microgrid, check out the book "Hope" by David Sayre, a consultant to the project. Massachusetts City Plans "Microgrid without Borders"

Community microgrids offer a way for neighborhoods, villages, towns and cities to meet their energy needs locally. Some make a community's electricity more reliable and green; others serve critical facilities like fire, police and water treatment facilities; and still others are built for remote outposts that otherwise lack access to electricity.

Because their development can be complex, community microgrids often take more time to build than microgrids for businesses, institutions or campuses. So there are fewer in operation. But they are beginning to emerge worldwide. Here are four model community microgrids that illustrate a range of approaches to local energy.

The Brooklyn Microgrid, run by LO3 Energy as a test project since 2016, began in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn as a way for tenants in a handful of apartment buildings to track the output of their solar panels and eventually to swap energy among participants.

Brooklyn Microgrid was the first energy project in the US to use blockchain technology for energy

transactions. Blockchain is a secure, online ledger used for crypto currencies such as Bitcoin. It has the ability to bring down costs for very small transactions that otherwise would not be economically viable due to transaction costs. LO3 Energy's vision is to create a platform for peer-to-peer energy trading, creating communities of true prosumers -- producers and consumers of their own energy supply.

"Local energy networks provide a wide range of benefits," Smith said. "They can help grid operators balance supply and demand for electricity, they can provide consumers with greater choice and cheaper energy, and they can prevent blackouts from extreme heat or snow storms."

Brooklyn Microgrid's goals fit well with New York's Reforming the Energy Vision plan that is seeking market based solutions to incentivize clean energy. New York's near term target calls for the state to derive 50% of its electricity from renewable resources by 2030.

Horizon Power's poster child for the shift to a distributed renewable grid, the Western Australia Pilbara town of Onslow, says its solar and battery microgrid is already helping to deliver more reliable and cleaner power with the installation of a 1 MW solar and battery microgrid.

"We are achieving up to 90% of the power being delivered in Onslow coming from renewable sources with the commissioning of the solar and battery," a company spokesperson said. "However, this is not constant and depends on how much demand, time of the day, cloud cover, etc. The expected reduction in CO2 emissions is 820 tons a year."

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