

# FOR THE RECORD

February 12, 2020



## COMMUNITY SOLAR GARDEN

The solar array is installed above the Nelson Hydro Generation Station in Bonnington, just outside of Nelson. The size is approximately 60kW and consists of 248 solar modules (panels). The system feeds into the Nelson Hydro grid and is part of Nelson Hydro's capital assets. The system is fully subscribed with investors varying from renters, homeowners, business owners, some of Nelson's Co-ops, several churches, our local schools, and local college. This was a customer lead project and was built after the presale levels were met. Investors receive an annual credit on their Nelson Hydro electric bill in proportion to their investment for 25 years.

This is a first of its kind in Canada, the project is similar to Nelson Hydro's net metering program (which has been offered for several years) and is referred to as virtual net metering. Nelson Hydro's net metering program provides a credit for electricity generated to the customer at the current electric rate, and this is the same model used for this project.

The City of New Westminster provided their customers the same opportunity based on the City of Nelson's Solar Garden project, and due to its success, they have completed their 2<sup>nd</sup> phase in 2019.

The final cost of the project was \$312,154 for construction, materials and installation (2015-2017). The costs were covered by; Investors 71%; grants 17.6% and Nelson Hydro 11.4%. Investors spent \$923/panel. Nelson Hydro spent a further \$17,916 in 2018 for panel replacement (due to theft) and a security system.

It is estimated that the system will generate 70,000 kWhs/year for 25 years. To put it into context, the average home in Nelson uses 10,000 kWhs, so this would be about seven homes worth. The system is on track and has generated close to the estimated amounts each year, and does not rely on the generation during the winter months. The panels are positioned at an angle that will effortlessly shed the snow, and if there isn't enough sun to melt the panels, there also isn't enough sun to generate power. For the day-to-day generation, you can visit [www.nelson.ca/solar](http://www.nelson.ca/solar), and you can also see the monthly output.