

## Maximizing Onsite & Offsite Solar Solutions

How Pivot Energy helped the University of Denver implement a blended approach to meet ESG goals and offset costs

### Project Details

- 3,407 MW onsite capacity  
(across 19 rooftop arrays)
- 22.2 MW offsite capacity  
(across 6 projects)

### Stakeholder Overview

- Overall Property: 125 acres
- Student Population: 12,000+  
(undergraduate & graduate)
- One of the first universities to sign the Carbon Neutrality Pledge (2022)



### Challenge

Decarbonizing a university's footprint presents unique challenges due to the complexity and scale of operations in academic institutions. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive strategy for overcoming technical problems while obtaining stakeholder engagement necessary for reducing carbon emissions and meeting sustainability goals.

University of Denver (DU) committed to an ambitious goal in 2022: **achieving carbon neutrality by 2030**. This was no easy feat given the physical and logistical constraints, and the high energy demands required to operate an active university campus.

### Solution

DU required a customized multi-phased approach that incorporated several solar solutions. Pivot Energy was brought on board as a trusted partner to guide and implement the following initiatives:

#### Testing the Waters with Onsite Solar (2019)

DU embarked on its first major sustainability project with Pivot Energy by installing rooftop solar panels on 18 of its 88 campus buildings. This installation included over 7,000 photovoltaic panels.

#### Outcome:

*DU's first onsite solar installation was **2.25 megawatts (MW)** and accounted for 8% of the campus' energy consumption.*

#### Expansion to an Iconic Campus Location

DU re-engaged Pivot Energy to install **another solar array** atop the Ritchie Center. This move not only bolstered DU's renewable energy capacity but also underscored its commitment to sustainability in high-visibility areas of the campus.

#### Outcome:

*The second installation was **1.157 MW**, further increasing the amount of DU's energy consumption from renewables.*

#### Venturing into Offsite Solar (2024)

The partnership expanded further into **virtual net energy metering (VNEM)**, allowing DU to harness solar energy from offsite locations. This initiative included six additional sites, coupled with **another new onsite solar array** on the Ritchie Building.

#### Outcome:

*The new installation and agreement includes a **1.2 MW onsite solar system** and a **VNEM agreement**, spanning six locations (within Larimer County, Adams County, Mesa County, and Weld County) and accounts for a whopping **22.2 MW** capacity.*



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### Outcomes

Between these three projects, DU has made massive leaps toward offsetting the campus' overall energy consumption and achieving its sustainability goals. Additionally, this strategy aligns with new building performance requirements enacted by the City of Denver, ensuring that DU remains compliant with evolving environmental regulations.

Notably, **DU decided to retain 100% ownership of the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)** produced over the lives of these solar installations. This allows DU to claim legal ownership of the environmental, social, and other non-power benefits.

Once the offsite solar arrays are complete, they will be used for student learning and field trips providing additional pathways to advance the clean energy workforce of the future.

### Impact



25.607 MW of solar energy capacity



49,115,000 kWh energy produced annually (est.)



34,311 tons of CO2 avoided per year (carbon equivalent)



8,166 gasoline-powered cars off the street per year (carbon equivalent)

### Learn More About the Partnership

[Watch Commercial Solar Project Review \(Onsite + Offsite solar\)](#)



*"...the power purchase agreement was the key financial contract model for us. No Capital expense upfront, no operating cost, no cost to maintain the systems over a 20-year period. The best part of all, is the utility cost for the solar production is less than what we pay for electricity on the grid. We are actually saving money and utilizing renewable energy here on campus."*



-Lynn Bailey  
Director, Energy & Sustainability

