

# Shining Cities 2019: The Top US Cities for Solar Energy

## Solar power more than doubled in most major U.S. cities over past six years

Josh Chetwynd July 31, 2019



©ingusk - Honolulu, Hawaii is rated the number one US city for solar energy installed per resident. This performance from Hawaii's capital reflects strong state and local commitments to tackle climate change. In 2015, the Aloha State committed to using 100% renewable energy by 2045.

Over the past six years, solar energy capacity more than doubled in 45 of America's 57 largest cities, according to a new study released today by Environment America Research & Policy Center. The report, *Shining Cities 2019: The Top US Cities for Solar Energy* (<https://bit.ly/>

2UKVaeh), is the sixth annual edition of the most comprehensive survey of installed solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity in major U.S. cities.

Along with the vast majority of cities that showed marked growth in solar capacity, a select group made even greater strides in going solar between 2013 and 2018, the report finds. One-third of the cities surveyed in all of the report's editions more than quadrupled their installed solar PV capacity over that period.

**Table ES-1. The "Solar Stars" (Cities with 50 or More Watts of Solar PV per Person, End of 2018)**

Per Capita Rank	City	State	Per Capita Solar PV Installed (Watts-DC/person) <sup>†</sup>	Change in Per Capita Rank 2017 to 2018	Total Solar PV Installed (MW-DC)	Total Solar PV Rank
1	Honolulu	HI	646.4	0	226.5	4
2	San Diego	CA	247.5	0	351.4	2
3	San Jose	CA	194.9	0	201.7	5
4	Burlington	VT	187.3	+1	7.9	37
5	Las Vegas	NV	162.2	+1	104.1	9
6	Phoenix	AZ	145.3	+1	236.2	3
7	Indianapolis	IN	143.5	-3	123.8	8
8	Riverside	CA	138.3	+1	45.3	16
9	Denver	CO	129.6	-1	91.4	10
10	Albuquerque	NM	128.9	+2	72.0	11
11	Salt Lake City	UT	126.9	-1	25.5	21
12	San Antonio	TX	123.6	-1	186.9	7
13	New Orleans	LA	107.3	0	42.2	18
14	Los Angeles	CA	105.0	+1	419.9	1
15	Washington	DC	91.7	+2	63.6	12
16	Newark	NJ	88.6	0	25.3	22
17	Sacramento*	CA	84.4	-3	42.3	17
18	Charleston	SC	75.5	N/A	10.2	34
19	Jacksonville	FL	62.1	+2	55.4	13
20	San Francisco	CA	57.8	-2	51.1	14
21	Boston	MA	54.6	-2	37.4	19
22	Austin*	TX	53.2	+1	50.6	15
23	Hartford	CT	50.1	+4	6.2	42

“Cities are rapidly adopting solar energy and driving the renewable energy transition across the country, bringing pollution-free power to our homes, schools and workplaces,” said Bret Fanshaw, Go Solar Campaign Director with Environment America Research & Policy Center. “We applaud the leadership shown by many cities and invite even more to let the sunshine in.”

Beyond the historical analysis, the 2018 report expanded to include 69 major U.S. cities. The newest numbers show that Honolulu rates No. 1 for solar energy installed per resident. This performance from Hawaii’s capital reflects strong state and local commitments to tackle climate change. In 2015, the Aloha State committed to using 100% renewable energy by 2045.

“As mayor, I am proud that Honolulu continues to lead the nation with the highest solar PV capacity per capita,” said Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell. “O‘ahu residents are making great use of one of our most abundant resources, the beautiful Hawaiian sunshine. As more residents install rooftop solar to power their homes, heat their water, and lower their energy costs, our city moves closer to achieving the goal of decarbonizing our economy.”

When it comes to overall solar power capacity, Los Angeles remains the leader for the second year in a row, after ceding the top spot to San Diego two years ago. L.A. has taken this spot in five of the six years of the survey.

In addition to the overall rankings, regional leaders for solar capacity per capita were Burlington, Vt. in the Northeast; Washington, D.C. in the South Atlantic; San Antonio in the South Central region; Indianapolis in the North Central region; Las Vegas in the Mountain region and Honolulu in the Pacific region.

“The difference between cities leading on solar energy and those that are lagging is effective public policy – at the state and local level,” said Abigail Bradford, report co-author and policy analyst at Frontier Group. “A dozen cities in our report have made commitments to use 100 percent renewable energy and many more have programs and policies that encourage residents to install solar panels.”

### **About the Author**

*Josh Chetwynd works on national communications and media relations for The Public Interest Network and Environment America. He’s penned seven books, including one New York Times best seller and a National Public Radio (NPR) best book of the year. As a broadcaster, he worked for BBC Radio, among other outlets. Josh is an avid curler and former professional baseball player in both the U.S. and in Europe.*

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