



Fitzgerald Auto Mall Drives Savings and Sustainability with Solar Canopy

Challenge

Fitzgerald Auto Mall was looking for a way to offset energy use, reduce operating costs and provide shaded parking on top of its parking garage for its customer vehicles and fleet.

SunPower's Solution

SunPower Commercial Dealer Aurora Energy, Inc. designed and installed an 890 kW long-span canopy system for the parking garage, located in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The system utilizes 2,475 SunPower® 360-watt modules to cover the top of a 44,600 square foot parking garage—the equivalent of just over one acre of solar.

Customer Benefit

Fitzgerald Auto Mall's solar canopy is expected to offset 83% of the auto mall's existing campus power needs, saving the organization an estimated \$258,000 in electricity costs in the first year alone and is projected to reduce the organization's carbon emissions by more than 19,000 metric tons over the next 25 years.



Quick Facts



890 kW

Total System Size



83%

Annual Electricity Offset



\$258,000

Estimated First-Year Savings from Solar



\$5.2 Million

Estimated Savings Over Life of System

“The solar canopy on the parking garage just made sense for us. Customer’s cars and inventory are shaded while the panels generate energy on site. It’s a win-win that aligns perfectly with our Environmental Management System that’s certified to ISO 14001.”

Jack Fitzgerald
Founder & Chairman, Fitzgerald Auto Mall

A Solar Canopy for Rain or Shine

Fitzgerald Auto Mall Gaithersburg is a multi-brand auto dealership with locations in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Florida. For a company with clear goals in sustainability, competitive pricing and customer-focused business practices, installing a solar canopy made good business sense.



Investing in solar was the next logical step in Fitzgerald’s broader focus on green practices—including strategies in using clean energy, recycling and maintaining energy efficiency. Prior to adding onsite solar, Fitzgerald was purchasing its energy from renewable energy sources. Plus, as a member of the Clean Energy Partnership and a Green Power Partner in the EPA’s Leadership Club, Fitzgerald had already implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS), incorporating its focus on environmental issues into everyday business decisions.

The long-span decked canopy on Fitzgerald’s garage is expected to save the company an estimated \$258,000 in the first year alone. Over the next 25 years, the system is expected to save an impressive \$5.2 million.

In addition to generating 1.1 GWh (gigawatt hours) of clean energy per year, the array manages water runoff on the underside of the canopy, providing the potential for water re-use in onsite irrigation; integrated LED lighting keeps the garage well-lit at night; and EV charging enables fast, convenient charging for customers and employees.

Making the Most of Their Solar Investment

In addition to their project expertise, Aurora Energy helped Fitzgerald identify financial incentive programs and constructed the array over the winter to minimize disruptions. Including EV charging also enabled the project to qualify for a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration’s Parking Lot Solar PV Canopy with EV Charger Grant Program—a reminder of the state’s ongoing support of renewables and EV infrastructure in parking areas.

When it comes to incorporating renewables into business, the Fitzgerald motto says it all: “There’s just no better way to go.”

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