



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

From Prospective Project Managers in the
Oregon Community Solar Program

Regarding City of Portland as a Major Subscriber

Release date: February 18, 2020
Responses due March 20, 2020 by 5:00 pm (Pacific)

Introduction

The City of Portland (City) invites existing and prospective Project Managers in the Oregon Community Solar Program (“Respondents”) to respond to this Request for Information (“RFI”) regarding projects for which the City may be able to serve as a major subscriber.

Organizations that do not respond to this RFI will not be precluded from participating in future community solar procurements.

Background

Community solar has been a policy and program priority at the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) since 2012. This priority emerged out of the recognition that the bureau’s work in renewable energy was not leading to equitable access or outcomes for people of color, low-income residents or Portlanders who aren’t able to install solar on their own rooftops. Community solar was officially integrated into the City of Portland’s and Multnomah County’s 2015 Climate Action Plan as an equity strategy to support projects that “benefit all residents, particularly communities of color and low-income populations” (see *2015 Climate Action Plan, page 68, Action 3C.*)

BPS has played an active role in advocating for and supporting the Oregon Community Solar Program (OCSP) since its inception with the passage of SB 1547 (2016.) As the OCSP moved from program development to implementation, BPS sought to evaluate the following question: “how can the City of Portland, and BPS in particular, advance equity, climate and renewable energy goals within the emerging community solar market in Oregon?”

In late 2018, the City of Portland became a participant in the American Cities Climate Challenge (ACCC). This collaboration has enabled BPS to leverage strategic and technical assistance from the ACCC Renewables Accelerator, comprised of the Rocky Mountain Institute and the World Resources Institute. As the development of the OCSP was underway, BPS partnered with the ACCC Renewables Accelerator to understand best practices, learn from peer cities, and evaluate options for facilitating equitable community solar development. This research yielded four possible roles for BPS:

- Project manager/developer
- Site host
- Major subscriber (a.k.a. “anchor tenant”)
- Convener/facilitator

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Upon evaluation of these roles and the OCSP program rules and implementation guidelines, BPS determined that currently, the most useful role for the City in the emerging market for community solar is to serve as a major subscriber. Like an anchor tenant in a traditional shopping mall development, a major subscriber in a community solar project adds stability and reduces risk for the overall project, Project Manager and other subscribers/owners. Reduced risk also attracts more favorable financing terms.

RFI Objectives

With this background in mind, BPS seeks to achieve the following two objectives from this RFI:

- Identify prospective community solar projects and strategies that align with BPS values and priorities; and,
- Engage in preliminary conversations about serving as a major subscriber for potential community solar projects with project managers in the OCSP.

BPS is interested in RFI responses that expand our knowledge about community solar projects in planning and development. Qualified RFI responses will be reviewed by BPS staff and used as a basis for informing future community solar procurement decision-making. Each qualified RFI submission will be considered as a stand-alone item as well as in potential combination with ideas submitted by others.

The Oregon Community Solar Program went live on December 21, 2019. BPS is especially interested in projects that intend to apply for a reservation in the OCSP’s “Designated Carve-Out.” The “Carve-Out” was created for projects that are either sized at 360 kilowatts (AC) or less or that have a public or non-profit entity as a Project Manager.

The City does not intend to enter into a contract with any community solar developer that responds to this RFI, but rather, intends to issue a subsequent competitive solicitation document for the purposes of entering in agreements for such projects.

BPS Values and Priorities

BPS seeks to identify community solar projects that align with the values stated in BPS’s 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Social justice. We advance equitable outcomes, dismantle institutional racism and correct past harms.

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Collaboration. We build local, national and international partnerships based on trust, shared information and clear decision-making.

Future. We invest, innovate and act with urgency to reach ambitious goals for prosperity, health, equity and resilience.

Inclusive engagement. We empower people to take action and participate in creating solutions.

Excellence. We celebrate our spirit of creativity, opportunity, entrepreneurship and adaptability.

Community Solar Priorities

BPS will prioritize future engagements with community solar projects that achieve the following outcomes:

Align with the goals and objectives of the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund and existing City energy policy. Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF), currently staffed at BPS, and PCEF coalition members have expressed interest in community solar as a means of shifting ownership of renewable energy into the hands of community, reduce energy burden and provide co-benefits. Potential co-benefits of community solar include workforce training and hiring from communities historically not represented in the clean energy economy; local economic development and wealth creation; investment and capacity-building in frontline communities; and anti-displacement.¹

These co-benefits are also named in the City’s 100% Renewable Energy Resolution (#37289), the implementation of which is a priority for the PCEF coalition, environmental justice communities and community-based organizations. BPS seeks projects that align with PCEF goals and existing City policy.

Maximize participation by low-income subscribers. The Oregon Public Utility Commission guidelines for community solar include specific goals for at least 10 percent of each project’s capacity to be allocated to low-income customers. Low-income participation in City-related community solar projects is a priority. BPS is interested in identifying projects that plan to go

¹ The [Living Cully Community Energy Plan](#) is an example of a community-based, equity-centered local energy plan that focuses on the co-benefits of clean energy. The process of developing the plan was led by people of color. The energy plan uses an anti-displacement framework to prioritize local energy projects and pilots.

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above the minimum requirements of the OCSP. BPS also seeks projects that intend to exceed the 20 percent bill savings required by the OCSP.

Led by community-based, non-profit, and culturally-specific organizations. BPS would like to encourage and support new entrants into the renewable energy industry. BPS encourages Respondents to discuss their existing or prospective teams and the roles of various partners. BPS is most interested in identifying prospective projects that have designated Project Managers already, but responses may be submitted by any organization that considers itself the lead proponent or champion of a community solar project.

Sited in areas of Portland historically underserved by energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. BPS recognizes there are myriad factors and complexities in determining where to site a community solar project. Respondents are not required to propose projects that are sited with Portland’s jurisdictional boundaries.

However, best practices and experiences from communities outside of Oregon suggest that 1) people engage differently with community solar projects that are closer to home and visible to the communities they serve and 2) solar projects benefit the utility system the closer they are to the load they serve. For these reasons, BPS prefers projects that are located in Portland neighborhoods.

As part of BPS’s efforts to enable a just transition to a clean energy future and to repair past harm from programs that have not equitably served Portland’s communities of color and low-income residents, we are interested in projects that seek to serve neighborhoods that are home to people of color, youth, elders and low-income people. East Portland (generally determined as the area east of 82nd Avenue to the city’s eastern boundary with Gresham, between the Columbia River and SE Foster Road) is a priority focus area for BPS.

Technical Details

The City of Portland is served by both Portland General Electric (PGE) and Pacific Power. The City has electric load, accounts and meters with both utilities. Ideally, the City would be an anchor tenant in at least one project in each service territory, so that the City is enabling projects for all Portlanders.

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Under current OCSP rules for projects that are pre-certified under the “interim capacity offering,” a City bureau (including its affiliates) may subscribe to up to four (4) megawatts (MW) across multiple projects, so long as it is not subscribing to more than 40 percent of any single project.²

Table 1 provides information about the City bureau energy load that could be subscribed to community solar projects in the OCSP. These forecasts are net of load covered by Oregon’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

Table 1. Forecasted annual City electric load, by bureau and electric utility.

Bureau	2030: PGE (MWh)	2030: PAC (MWh)	2035: PGE (MWh)	2035: PAC (MWh)
BES	5,318	1,252	1,761	1,059
FIRE	353	1,857	99	1,571
OMF	1,145	8,028	123	6,793
Parks	516	3,758	(640)	3,180
PBOT	658	2,978	(1,135)	2,520
Water	4,076	1,260	2,834	1,066
Grand Total	12,066	19,133	3,041	16,190

Interconnection Information

BPS can help Respondents further understand the utility interconnection landscape, as this process presents prospective OCSP Project Managers with some hurdles.

There are potential challenges for interconnecting community solar projects to certain utility feeders and substations in the Portland area. Utilities have expressed concern about the capacity of their infrastructure to accept additional generation in some areas.

BPS’s Technical Services team developed the attached maps based on information made available by Portland General Electric and Pacific Power about the general location and capacity of substations in Portland. The utilities were required by the Oregon Public Utility Commission to share this data, but were permitted to redact information in some instances. These instances are noted on the maps.

² These restrictions may be lifted for subsequent capacity allocations from the OCSP. The OCSP [Program Implementation Manual](#) contains all current OCSP rules and requirements and should be considered the overarching authority on any questions related to OCSP implementation.

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Attachment 1: Portland Substation Peak Loads detail

Provides information about the capacity of each feeder in the substation.

Attachment 2: Portland Substation Peak Loads combined.

Combines the feeder load information into a single peak capacity (MW) per substation.

BPS intends to continue supporting community-led projects with analysis and information that can make it easier for emerging Project Managers in the OCSP to gain a foothold in the market.

RFI Response Guidelines

1. Please respond to each of the ten questions in the order outlined below.
2. Responses should be numbered correspondingly to the questions.
3. Responses should not exceed five (5) pages.
4. One response per project. Respondents that would like to make the City aware of multiple projects should submit a separate response for each project.
5. Respondents are highly encouraged to read and be familiar with the [Oregon Community Solar Program Implementation Manual](#).
6. No attachments please.
7. Submit one (1) Word or PDF copy of the requested information via e-mail to: andria.jacob@portlandoregon.gov
8. **Responses are due by 5:00 (Pacific) pm on March 20, 2020.**

RFI Questions

Respondents should create a new document that answers the following questions:

1. Project manager name/DBA.
2. Registered as a Project Manager with OCSP? (Y or N)
3. Type of organization (indicate all that apply): Community-based organization, non-profit organization, private sector, other (explain).
4. Intend to apply for the Designated Carve-Out? (Y or N)
5. Proposed site address.
6. Proposed system size.
7. Utility service territory (Portland General Electric or Pacific Power).
8. Percentage of low-income customers the project will serve.
9. Describe the proposed development timeline. Explain where the project is in its lifecycle and list dates of expected key milestones like project manager registration, pre-certification, certification, beginning of construction, expected date of commissioning etc.

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10. Please provide any additional information that describes how proposed projects meet City of Portland and Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund values and priorities listed above.

Questions about this RFI?

Please call or email by **February 26, 2020**:

Andria Jacob
Senior Manager, Energy Programs and Policy
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Office: 503-823-7616
Email: andria.jacob@portlandoregon.gov

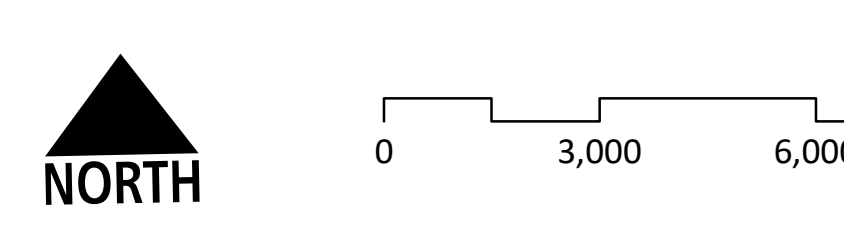
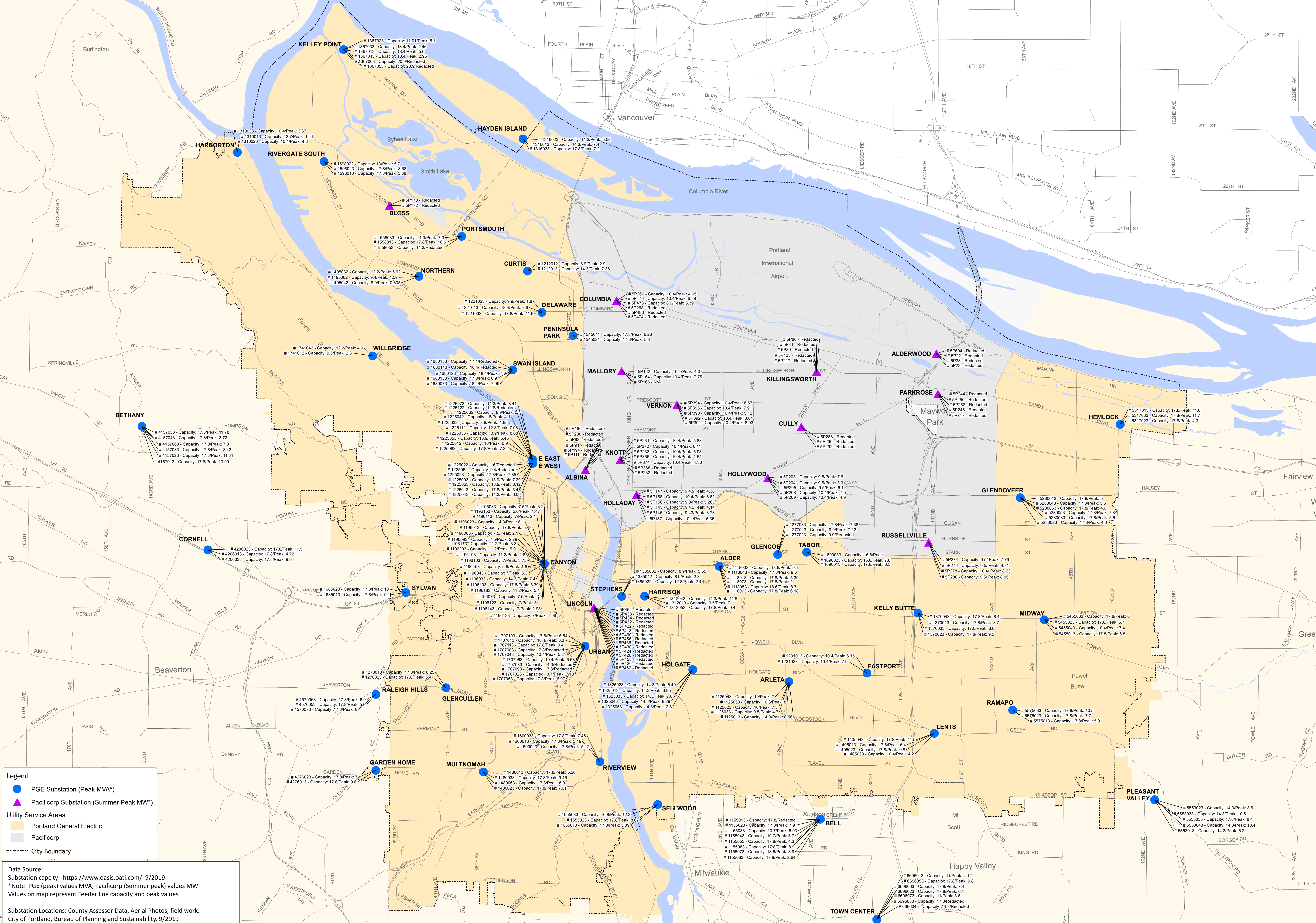
BPS staff will compile answers to all submitted questions in a written document. Please email andria.jacob@portlandoregon.gov to receive the Q&A document on or after **March 2, 2020**.

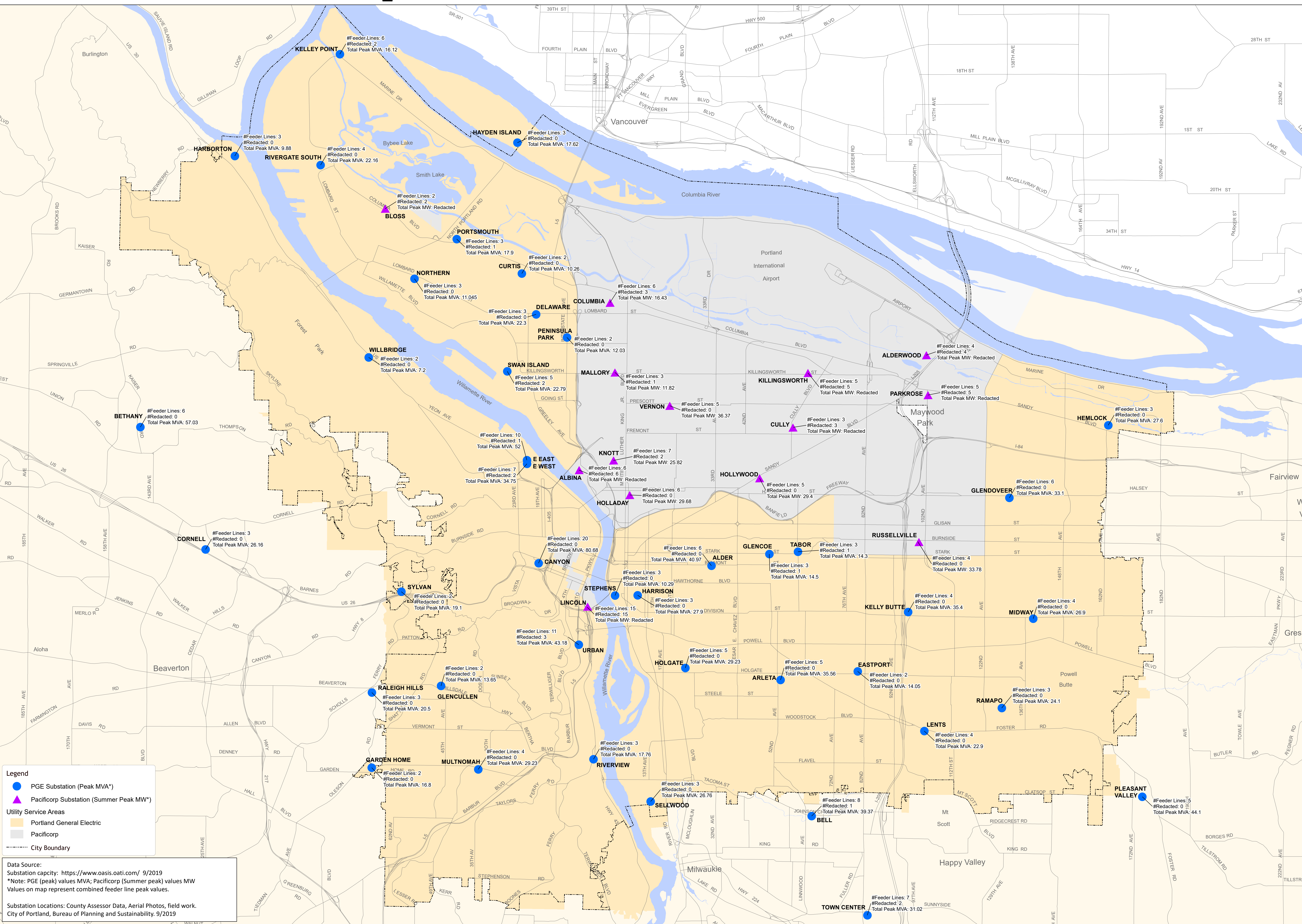
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Legend

- PGE Substation (Peak MVA*)
- ▲ PacifiCorp Substation (Summer Peak MW*)

Utility Service Areas

- Portland General Electric
- PacifiCorp

--- City Boundary

Data Source:
 Substation capacity: <https://www.oasis.oati.com/> 9/2019
 *Note: PGE (peak) values MVA; PacifiCorp (Summer peak) values MW
 Values on map represent combined feeder line peak values.

Substation Locations: County Assessor Data, Aerial Photos, field work.
 City of Portland, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, 9/2019

October 10, 2019

City of Portland, Oregon // Bureau of Planning & Sustainability // Geographic Information System

The information on this map was derived from City of Portland GIS databases. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". The City of Portland cannot accept any responsibility for error, omissions or positional accuracy.

