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Sifton Properties Limited opens Canada's largest solar parkade at West 5

(London, ON, Canada) – In September 2019, Sifton Properties Limited completed construction of Canada's largest solar parkade at West 5 – London's first neighbourhood powered by the sun, and Ontario's first community to target net zero energy.

The two level parkade provides parking for 164 vehicles within 49,000 square feet. The building occupies 25,500 square feet providing covered parking to tenants and customers of West 5's first three commercial buildings. The solar parking canopy consists of 1116, 360 Wp bifacial solar modules, for a total capacity of 401 kWp. The annual energy generation from the array is estimated at 452,000 kWh, which is enough to power 45 Canadian homes for a year on average. The solar canopy supplies energy to the Sifton Centre, home of Sifton Properties' Head Office, a second office and retail building immediately adjacent to the parking structure, as well as an electric vehicle charger.

[CLICK HERE to watch a short video clip.](#)

The solar parking canopy was designed by Architects Tillman Ruth Robinson and engineered by German Solar Corporation in London, Ontario, with Canadian climate in mind. The solar canopy shields parked cars from sunlight and heat in the summertime, and offers protection from snow accumulation in the winter, as well as rain year round. In summer months, the canopy provides shade from the sun, making it more comfortable for drivers to enter their vehicle and reduces the energy needed to cool it upon start up.

"Becoming a net zero community is not easy, and there is never enough space on buildings for the number of solar panels needed. So you must become creative," says Richard Sifton, president and CEO of Sifton Properties Limited. "This is why we looked at the top level of our parking garage as an opportunity for more solar."

"While solar parking structures are a common approach in many other jurisdictions around the world, provincial regulation and restrictions have slowed the progress and uptake in Ontario," shared Dennis German, President of German Solar Corporation. "Energy costs and economies of scale are now in a place that further justifies the deployment of solar arrays using this approach in Ontario."

Sifton Properties' design team engineered and designed the unique profile of the solar parking structure racking to protect from rain and snow, as well as divert rain and melt water to discrete collection points avoiding rainwater contact with the parking lot floor and the oils and greases that can be found there. The racking configuration was also designed to hide unsightly wiring for the modules, providing a more esthetically pleasing array. When using bifacial solar modules, the racking enhances energy production efficiency by maintaining an unobstructed back face of the solar module, where



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diffused light is converted to more useable energy, as compared to a standard solar module. Finally, the bifacial modules allow for light to pass through the canopy providing light to pedestrians and vehicles. On the side of the building, a unique set of coloured stripes represents the amount of energy produced by the solar canopy. A design feature created to bring awareness to solar energy production. Inside the parking structure, Sifton Properties has also installed its first electric vehicle (EV) charger, furthering their commitment to using renewable energy sources and sustainability. The EV charger is a Level II charger, providing a convenient charge to visitors. Depending on the vehicle, the charger will fully charge a plug-in hybrid from empty in 3-4 hours, and a full EV in 4-8 hours. With two plug-in heads, it can charge two EVs simultaneously. This is the first of many EV chargers to come to West 5.

“Innovative solutions like those in London’s West 5 community are the future of greener, more sustainable community planning,” said Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London. “Through our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, our government is committed to providing people and communities the tools they need to do their part to fight climate change and improve local climate resilience.”

ABOUT SIFTON PROPERTIES LIMITED

Sifton Properties Limited (www.sifton.com) is a family-owned business that started in 1923 building new homes. The company has since diversified into Neighbourhood Developments, Commercial Properties, Retirement Living and Residential Rentals and is now in the process of developing Ontario’s first net zero community www.west5.ca. Once completed, Sifton Properties’ 1,900 multi-family units at West 5 will be the largest Zero Energy project on the continent, by a factor of nearly three. (2018 Zero Energy Residential Buildings Study, <https://teamzero.org>).

ABOUT ARCHITECTS TILLMAN RUTH ROBINSON

Since 1908, the predecessor firms of architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson (www.attr.ca) have been integral to the advancement of public life and institutions in Ontario. They continue to be inspired by clients as they work together to transform places and ideas. This passion drives a collaborative effort to develop creative solutions and innovative design for complex building challenges. Behind each project is a group of over 35 architects, designers and planners in two studios: London and Toronto.

ABOUT GERMAN SOLAR CORPORATION (GSC): GSC (www.germansolarcorp.com) is a Solar Photovoltaic Company with its head office located in London, Ontario. GSC specializes in customized solar project development on commercial rooftop spaces, as well as ground mounted solar parks. GSC has strong solar project development knowledge, well suited for the Ontario market conditions. Since 2009, German Solar Corporation has completed the development and construction of over 16 MWs of rooftop & ground mounted solar projects in Ontario representing over \$50m in private investment.

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