

BEACON



SPOTLIGHT  
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE  
ACTIVITIES



# City of Santa Cruz

Sustainability Best Practice Activities




# City of Santa Cruz

California communities are leading the fight against climate change. From small projects to large-scale programs, cities and counties are making great strides to create healthy, sustainable and economically prosperous communities. Participants in ILG's Beacon Program serve as leaders in this effort, making measureable contributions to reducing energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and sharing their sustainability best practices.

This document represents a collection of activities your agency has completed in 10 areas of sustainability. While local governments have a wide range of choices available to address climate change, these activities represent the unique opportunities and values in your community. These voluntary actions are essential to achieving California's goals to save energy, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and create more sustainable communities.

## SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Areas of Accomplishment		SILVER LEVEL	GOLD LEVEL	PLATINUM LEVEL
	Agency GHG Reductions		2015 (15%)	
	Community GHG Reductions			2017 (23%)
	Agency Energy Savings	2014 (9%)	2017 (18%)	
	Natural Gas Savings	2019 (7%)		
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities	2014		2015
	Beacon Award	2019		

Cities and counties throughout the Golden State should be proud of the accomplishments made through the hard work, innovation and collective community action. The Institute for Local Government applauds your achievements and thanks you for your continued participation in the Beacon Program.

The Beacon Program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC). SEEC is an alliance between three statewide non-profit organizations and California's four Investor-Owned Utilities. The Beacon Program is funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.





# Energy Efficiency and Conservation Activities

## Silver

1. Set a goal to reduce energy use in municipal building by another 40%. The city completed a municipal facility benchmarking study of 20 city facilities and implemented energy reduction strategies to reduce energy use in them by an additional 10% over the baseline.

## Gold

2. Installed an energy accounting system to reduce usage and costs of electricity and natural gas.
3. Wastewater Treatment Facility averages 58% on-site energy generation from digester gas. Outdoor plant lighting was replaced with low energy LEDs, saving 79 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year and \$600,000.

## Platinum

4. The San Lorenzo Park lights were converted to LED in 2013. The city went from 175 watt bulb usage to 56 watt per light x 9 lights = 1,071 total watt savings.
5. Phase three streetlight LED conversion is complete, converting 1,198 street lights to LED (over half way to the 100% goal) reducing our energy use by 502,469 kilowatts annually and emissions by 81 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/ year.
6. Use real-time metering and off-peak scheduling for water and wastewater treatment plants.
7. Virtualized data centers resulting in energy savings.
8. Worked with Central Coast Energy Solutions to offer federal subsidies for energy efficiency upgrades to low income properties via city's rental inspection program.
9. The city's Green Business Program conducted three special green business challenges resulting in 16 additional businesses becoming certified. Cumulatively, the city's green business programs will save 2,892 tons annually.





# Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

## Silver

1. Converted irrigation in city medians to drip systems reducing the city's water needs.

## Gold

2. Installed waterless urinals in East Zone parks, netting an annual water savings of 1,120,000 gallons.
3. Adopted a Water Efficient Landscaping ordinance and standards.

## Platinum

4. The city requires mandatory water conservation retrofits upon the sale of all properties within service area.
5. City partnered with Ecology Action to replace pre-rinse spray valves at restaurants throughout service area in 2014, saving a total of 7,916 thousand gallons per year.
6. In 2014, the wastewater treatment plant made reclaimed water available for commercial power washing services and sewer line cleaning operations.
7. In 2014, the Parks and Recreation Dept. implemented numerous water conservation efforts to reduce irrigation throughout parks resulting in browning of some areas, installation of highly efficient drip irrigation and computerized irrigation and moisture sensing probes at golf course.
8. In 2014, cold-in-place asphalt recycling process used on the city's two most recent major road paving projects.
9. In 2014, the city Storm Water Program expanded its Low Impact Design guidelines for new development and municipal properties.
10. The city's Resource Recovery Collections Corporation Yard installed a water-saving cart washer, which saves 75% the amount of water.





# Green Building Activities

## Silver

1. The City of Santa Cruz's Green Building Program was one of the earliest founders of a mandatory Green Building Program nationwide. Adopted green building regulations in 2005.

## Gold

2. In 2014, 21 projects earned the city's Green Building Award level status in 2014, more than doubling the number awarded in 2013.
3. Planning Department and Fire Department began a pilot project to explore ways to streamline the inspection process for the majority of the solar permits on residential buildings. We are hearing positive feedback on the one-call system and significant strides have been made in easing the administrative burden for inspection scheduling for both departments.

## Platinum

4. Green Building has made a few changes at permit tracking software to provide the necessary reports to track solar generation.
5. Mandatory Green Building standards for both commercial and residential construction (Jan. 2007). Adopted a residential green building program in 2008.
6. Implemented a "lot-by-lot" development program to help provide low density affordable housing options for residents.
7. In 2002, Santa Cruz encouraged increased density through changes to the permitting process, which allowed for the construction of accessory dwelling units.





# Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

## Silver

1. Adopted zero waste as a long-term city goal.

## Gold

2. The School Recycling and Waste Reduction Program assists schools with developing and maintaining recycling programs and waste reduction strategies.
3. City Resource Recovery staff is collaborating with UCSC staff to offer UCSC Zero Waste Move-Out events in June to off-campus students to reduce illegal dumping.

## Platinum

4. The community center has implemented software to allow residents to make reservations by phone and email reducing the amount of paper used.
5. With strong support from environmentally minded businesses, organizations, and residents, city council voted unanimously to prohibit local shops from sending home their products in single-use plastic bags.
6. City residential refuse customers are provided with a 68-gallon cart for deposit of yard trimmings, grass clippings and other organics. GreenCycle helps prolong the life of the landfill and keeps valuable organic material from being thrown away.
7. The city has a new urban wood reutilization program – mulch debris on site for landscaping.
8. The city has a new urban milling program producing Benches and bridges use recycled materials and felled trees.
9. The city has ongoing bulk item pickup.
10. The city has a garage sale weekend.
11. The city implements goat grazing for onsite vegetation management at several sites.
12. The city's Resource Recovery facility began a new carpet diversion program.





# Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

## Silver

1. Adopted a “Buy Efficiency” resolution to purchase energy efficient products.

## Gold

2. In 2014, the city formalized a policy specifying the process to designate in the budget which capital improvements projects implement the city’s climate action plan through direct or indirect green house gas emissions reductions.
3. In 2014, in collaboration with the city manager’s office, finance department and sustainability team, the Climate Action Program initiated formalization of a sustainability fund administrative procedural order to capture rebates and energy efficiency savings in a dedicated account to be utilized for carbon reducing projects.

## Platinum





# Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

## Silver

1. Set a goal to increase solar to 2000 residences and 200 businesses by 2016.

## Gold

2. Installed over 100 kW of solar photovoltaic systems on city facilities since 2000, including solar parking arrays near city hall complex and police station, saving 150 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year.
3. The California FIRST PACE solar financing program is now up and running.

## Platinum

4. A plug-in electric vehicle charging station has been installed on the wharf.
5. Of the city's 433 vehicle fleet, 174 are low-carbon fuel vehicles. Departments are investigating opportunities to purchase additional electric vehicles.
6. Resource Recovery collections purchased one CNG and one hybrid refuse/recycling collection truck to evaluate operation maintenance and fuel performance.
7. In 2014, the Climate Action Program launched a Go Solar Santa Cruz campaign.
8. In 2014, the Climate Action Program launched the Santa Cruz Energysage Solar Marketplace and promoted heavily to community.
9. In 2014, The Santa Cruz summer CNG trolley service expanded from one to two trolleys. For only 25 cents, tourists and residents can park and ride one of two Downtown/Beach shuttles during the summer season from 11am-9pm.
10. City has installed a total of 14 public and 6 city fleet electric vehicle charging stations in 10 locations in the Downtown, Beach and east side parking areas. A total of 40 public charging stations are available within Santa Cruz County.
11. City has six Nissan Leaf plug-in electric vehicles for the City fleet and in 2014 deployed six additional all-electric work vehicles into the fleet.





## Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

### Platinum

12. Public Works, Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance and Electric Auto Association hosted the 5th annual Electric Vehicle Exhibit at Earth Day and National Plug-In Day Santa Cruz 2014.
13. The city participated in writing the Monterey Bay Plug-In Electric Vehicles Readiness Plan to promote the rapid adoption of plug-in electric vehicles in the tri-county area, linking with the PEV plan for the greater Bay Area.
14. In 2014, Public Works added 5 additional hybrid waste collection vehicles for a total of 6-hybrids. One CNG side loader and 2 CNG front loaders are currently on order. The residential waste collection has seen a 45% reduction in fuel use, placing Santa Cruz in the top 10% of 110 national hybrid collection fleet vehicles.





# Efficient Transportation Activities

## Silver

1. City staff completed an employee commute survey that reported 17% of staff carpooled, 9% used public transportation, 31% biked and 16% walked at least once a week during the 2010 calendar year. More than 35 employees presently drive vehicles that get 35 miles per gallon or better.

## Gold

2. In 2014, Arana Gulch multi-use trail was completed, linking the Live Oak community with Santa Cruz via a protected open space trail.
3. In 2014, new bike lanes were installed on the uphill section of Western Drive between Mission and Echo (sharrows on the downhill). Green bike markings on were installed in the Laurel Street repaving project. Public service announcements are airing on the significance of both safety markings.

## Platinum

4. In 2014, Westlake Elementary Safe Routes to School upgrades were completed, providing new pedestrian and bike safety infrastructure.
5. In 2014, in collaboration with and mentorship from the city's Climate Action Program, People Power (now Bike Santa Cruz County) worked with UCSC interns to host 10 grant-funded bike commute workshops for businesses to encourage alternative commute options (including one for city staff).
6. Public Works completed construction of the San Lorenzo River Trestle Ramp, which is a part of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Segment 8, providing safer bike access to the trail.
7. The city council and the Transportation and Public Works Commission approved development of an Active Transportation Plan, which will guide the next investments in active transportation infrastructure.





# Land Use and Community Design Activities

## Silver

1. The city has several community gardens available for city residents to use their green thumb to grow vegetables for the table, flowers for the home and native plants to attract bugs and birds. Trescony gardens is an organic garden with 54 plots for City of Santa Cruz residents. The Lighthouse gardens is an organic garden with 18 plots for City of Santa Cruz residents.

## Gold

2. The City of Santa Cruz Public Works Department is working with Ecology Action on a two year project to create a Complete Streets Plan for Santa Cruz City schools - researching 10 school sites to take inventory of what conditions exist in order to create visioning plans for the future.
3. In 2014, Public Works partnered with Ecology Action and completed the Santa Cruz City Schools Complete Streets Master Plan to increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school safely.

## Platinum

4. City allocated staffing to address state low impact development standards.
5. Parks and Rec hired a planner to assist with identifying sustainable land use and community design opportunities for implementation.
6. Arana Gulch bike trails and open space project completed.





# Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

## Silver

1. Established Urban Forest Program and recognized as a Tree City for several years.

## Gold

2. The city implements a neighborhood tree program. As city residents remove trees that are in decline, they can select as their mitigation requirement to make a donation to the "tree trust fund." Donations are then used to purchase young trees and materials. These trees are given out to neighborhoods for free. Staff helps coordinate with residents the type of tree and the quantity of trees each home will receive.
3. In 2014, Santa Cruz Fruit Tree Alliance and City Parks Department partnered to plant a fruit orchard at Riverside Gardens Park.

## Platinum

4. Arana Gulch open space preserved and tar plant restoration project completed.
5. San Lorenzo River Alliance 2014.
6. McCrary Trail link city's downtown to UC Santa Cruz completed to facilitate bike and pedestrian transportation modes in Pogonip Park.





# Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

## Silver

1. The eco-tour of the city coastline and wharf has been in place for six months. Out at the beautiful Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, there are shops and restaurants that are visited every week by locals and tourists alike. The city is committed to helping the environment is apparent as you walk around– the city does everything from recycling to working with research groups to find ways to harness wind power.

## Gold

2. UCSC just received a \$4.5 million sustainable energy education grant in partnership with universities in Denmark.
3. Adopted a Clean Ocean Business Program. The total number of green business certifications increased substantially in 2012: 2011/12 certified green businesses 47 currently in-process: 49 total certified businesses in Santa Cruz: 111 total GHG reductions = 500 tons annually.

## Platinum

4. The city Parks Departments hosts a Street Tree Planting Program, which offers free 15 gallon trees for the city right-of-ways in front of residents homes.
5. City hosts an annual Earth Day community event for the whole family. It consists of a teen recycled fashion show, poster and video contest and other games.
6. In 2014, the Climate Action Team tabled at Earth Day and presented at other environmental events to inform community of city actions and encourage residents to pledge to take action to reduce emissions 30% by 2020.
7. In 2014, the Climate Action Team conducted 6 public residential solar PV decision-making workshops.
8. In 2014, the city launched a free GreenWharf-centric EcoTour mobile phone app.
9. AMBAG Energy Watch Education workshops completed.
10. City sponsored 2014 Earth Day and Arbor Day.
11. City schools public meetings completed in support of a Complete Streets Master Plan.
12. Wharf Master Plan and 100 year celebration completed both with sustainability focus.





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