



BEACON
SPOTLIGHT
AWARD
WINNER
BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



County of Sacramento

Sustainability Best Practice Activities









ILG INSTITUTE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENTSM
Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

County of Sacramento

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

SPOTLIGHT AWARD		SILVER LEVEL	GOLD LEVEL	PLATINUM LEVEL
Areas of Accomplishment				
	Agency GHG Reductions	2017 (9%)		
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings		2014 (16%)	
	Natural Gas Savings		2014 (18%)	
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities			2014
	Beacon Award			

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. The county adopted a county-wide Energy Conservation Policy in May 2002. This includes requirements to turn off electrical loads, such as lighting, appliances, printers, etc. when not in use and establishes office heating and cooling protocols and temperature settings.

Gold

2. Converted 589 incandescent traffic signals to LED signals in 2010. The county is in the process of converting 22,000 street lights to LED – 1,700 completed to date, producing \$69,000 in annual energy saving and 932,000kwh annual savings.
3. Implemented a county-wide IT energy management system that automatically powers down computers and servers based on usage, saving 1.7 Gwh of electricity per year.

Platinum

4. Implemented an energy-managing project that automatically controls the thermostats for more than two million square feet of the county's buildings. The project saves 400 kilowatts of energy annually.
5. Upgraded a 3,000-ton chiller plant with variable-frequency drives and added controls to reduce annual energy usage. The project resulted in an electricity savings of 500,000 kilowatt hours and more than \$50,000 per year.
6. Sacramento International Airport has completed its initiative to improve lights in the parking garage by replacing 1,820 high-pressure sodium light fixtures with energy-efficient LEDs – reducing 1.7 million kilowatts of energy annually. The project translates into \$184,000 of savings a year in maintenance and energy costs for the airport.





Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

Silver

1. Conducted an audit of the agency's water and wastewater pumps and motors to identify the most and least efficient equipment.

Gold

2. Upgraded and retrofitted agency plumbing systems and appliances with water efficient technology and fixtures.
3. Adopted a Water Conservation Plan in 2005.

Platinum

4. The Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA), in partnership with the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD), has developed a recycled water system that treats and delivers up to five million-gallons-per-day of recycled water. This water is used for irrigation purposes thereby conserving and extending the life of our precious drinking water resources.
5. Sacramento County is part of the River Friendly Partnership Coalition (a collaboration of public agencies, non-profits, designers and private landscape architects in the greater Sacramento region) who created the River Friendly Landscape Guidelines. The guidelines won an award by the U.S. EPA in 2009.
6. Installed smart meters on all service connections throughout the county water agency boundaries. The county will be fully metered by the end of 2014.
7. In collaboration with other water agencies in the region, Sacramento County implemented a sophisticated communications and outreach plan, which includes incentives to encourage water use reductions, primarily in the area of landscape irrigation. As a result, the region led the state in water conservation efforts for the summer of 2014.





Green Building Activities

Silver

1. The county has incorporated materials that are renewable, reusable, recyclable, recycled, and nontoxic and those that have zero or low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in agency buildings, where feasible.

Gold

2. Developed and implemented Sustainable Landscaping Standards for public agency facilities to reduce water consumption.
3. Enacted a Construction and Demolition Debris Recycling Ordinance in 2009, including a Recycling Facility Certification Program. There are currently five certified C&D recycling lines in the county.

Platinum

4. The Animal Care and Regulation Building and Vineyard Surface Water Treatment Plant are both LEED Gold. The Sacramento International Airport Terminal B and Fleet Maintenance Facility are both LEED Silver.
5. The county uses cool roofs on agency buildings.
6. Replaced county golf course turf with less water intense grasses (water savings of 7-15% to date) and replanted landscape with drought tolerant, water efficient plant materials at county facilities.





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. The county operates an integrated waste management system of education, outreach, material collection and facility operation that emphasizes recycling and reuse, which resulted in a landfill diversion rate of 73% in 2012 and 2013.

Gold

2. Through a public-private partnership, opened a bio-refinery on county land that uses anaerobic digestion to convert food waste into compressed natural gas vehicle fuel. The plant will soon have a capacity of 100 tons of food waste per day.
3. In partnership with California Electronic Asset Recovery, one of the world's premier e-waste recycling companies, the county operates an aggressive e-waste recycling program. This includes rolling advertisements, curbside collection and facility drop off and transport. 6200 tons have been recycled since 2007.

Platinum

4. Supports and provides outreach for the Paint Care Program, which allows residents to recycle unused paint at no charge.
5. Promotes backyard composting through agency website to encourage household gardens that reduce green waste at landfills via county website.
6. Adopted a policy instructing employees to review how supplies, materials and equipment are manufactured, purchased, packaged, delivered, used and disposed of prior to ordering in an effort to generate and reduce waste material.





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. Adopted an Environmental Purchasing Policy in January 2003.

Gold

2. The county conducts life-cycle cost analysis when considering purchase of fixed assets.
3. The county requires the use of alternative-fueled trucks in waste hauling and street sweeping contracts.

Platinum

4. Adopted and implemented a procurement policy that establishes standards for purchasing climate-friendly products and services. Examples may include office and cleaning supplies and equipment that minimize environmental impacts and that do not have a negative effect on human health.
5. The county encourages all departments to purchase green building materials that create a healthier and more sustainable environment, such as building and landscaping materials and systems that exceed the CALGreen building code, carpeting, furnishings or plastic items that contain a minimum percentage of recycled content, and paint or carpets that contain low or no volatile organic compounds (VOC).
6. The county purchases fleets that reduce environmental impact, such as fuel efficient, dual fuel or alternative fuel fleet vehicles and vehicles that have GPS or trip planning devices.





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. The county landfill has been producing renewable energy using landfill gas since 1999. There are two power plants producing 14Mwh of renewable power, enough to power 9000 homes.

Gold

2. The entire county garbage and recycling collection fleet (over 100 trucks) and half of its long-haul fleet consists of natural gas-powered trucks. The county has converted 15% of its light fleet to hybrid vehicles, which resulted in the county being awarded a 50 Best Government Green Fleet Award in 2013.
3. After four years of fleet reductions, the county is beginning to replace gasoline only cars with Toyota Prius models. The county has vehicle replacement standards so that cars are replaced when they are no longer economical to own due to wear and costly maintenance.

Platinum

4. Authorized a Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE) in November 2013.
5. Sacramento County has begun switching to compressed natural gas (CNG) from liquified natural gas (LNG) for its fleet by awarding a contract to TruStar Energy for fueling infrastructure.
6. Sacramento County will soon be using CNG street sweepers to clean the county's streets as a result of a contract awarded by the Department of Transportation.
7. Rather than using traditional equipment, the county used sheep and goats for weed control at the county's Kiefer Landfill where these animals can munch 250 acres more cheaply and efficiently than any machine.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. Implemented a Complete Street Strategy, which included the completion of Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans, and a policy of designing and constructing all public road projects as complete streets. The county's first green and sustainable street was completed in 2013.

Gold

2. Installed five electric vehicle charging stations, three at the downtown complex and two at the suburban branch complex.
3. Implemented an aggressive Safe Routes to School Program (\$4,850,000 programmed in 2014-15 alone) to provide safe alternatives to motorized transport to schools.

Platinum

4. Prepared a Bicycle Master Plan to guide bikeway policies and development standards to make bicycling safer, more convenient and enjoyable for all bicyclists.
5. Increased the number of bicycle lanes, lockers, racks, paths and signage throughout the community.
6. Integrated bike lanes into street overlay and ADA projects wherever possible to advance active transportation.
7. Collaborated with park agencies and DOT projects for joint funding applications on bike trails and roadway improvement projects that advance connectivity, walk and bike ability.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Silver

1. Adopted the county's Housing Element 2013-2021, which sets sustainable policies and programs such to "promote public health, safety and livability through community design and the built environment"; and "master plans for residential developments, mixed use, commercial, office and retail developments, in existing and new communities that are designed, built and maintained so as to promote the health, safety and livability of residents, employees, visitors and the community."

Gold

2. Adopted Corridor Plans and Development Code that streamline and advance infill development, especially in transit priority areas allowing for a mix of land uses and reducing regulatory requirements. Several corridor plans have been adopted including North Watt and Fair Oaks Blvd, more are underway.
3. The County Infill Program started in 2011 to assist with and advance infill development in the county. Infill Home Plan Program with energy improvements exceeding Title 24 done in cooperation with SMUD and the City of Sacramento. Plans are preapproved reducing plan review time and permitting costs.

Platinum

4. Implemented improvements along Freedom Park Drive that included planting trees, plants that naturally prevent water pollution from going into local creeks, and a street design that utilized approximately 4,000 recycled tires used in the road's asphalt and eliminates 964 lbs. of greenhouse gases annually. Freedom Park Drive won an American Planning Association award. The first street of its kind, it was awarded for its sustainable landscape and design.
5. Implemented an Environmental Horticulture Program that focuses on sustainable landscaping through a comparison of species that require less water and mowing, and the development of economical practices that reduce use of natural resources and protect the environment.
6. Advanced infill and transit oriented development by completing infrastructure technical studies around transit station areas on Regional Transit's Gold line within the county. Assets, opportunities and barriers are identified so that critical infrastructure projects can be coordinated and advanced.





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. Adopted a Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance.

Gold

2. In partnership with the Sacramento Tree Foundation, supports the Green Print Initiative, striving to double the region's tree canopy over the next 40 years.
3. Established the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP), encompassing 341,270 acres and 40 species of plants and animals, ten of which are threatened or endangered. The SSHCP a regional approach to addressing issues related to urban development, habitat conservation and agricultural protection. The SSHCP will consolidate environmental efforts to protect and enhance wetlands and upland habitats to provide ecologically viable conservation areas. It will also minimize regulatory hurdles and streamline the permitting process for development projects.

Platinum

4. Adopted a Climate Action Plan that provides an overall approach to addressing climate change and a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and managing resources.
5. Worked with the State Lands Commission, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and Sac Valley Conservancy to acquire 11 acres of open space along the American River Parkway.
6. Initiated a Park Prescription Program with county regional parks and 18 recreation and park agencies throughout the county in collaboration with the county's Public Health Officer. The goal was to increase park and open space use and resident accessibility while promoting health. Partnering with the Sierra-Sacramento Valley Medical Society for monthly Walk with a Doc Programs in parks throughout the county.





Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

Silver

1. Created online options for 53 county services, allowing customers the option to save trips to county offices.

Gold

2. Launched the Green Sacramento County website in 2012. This includes news on the county's sustainability efforts, information on sustainable living, links to bicycle maps, vehicle charging stations, the county's Climate Action Plan and other associated organizations.
3. Sponsored "Recreate", a Reuse and Recycling Educational Program delivered to every 3rd and 4th grade class in each of the 78 elementary schools in the unincorporated area.

Platinum

4. The county's Business Environmental Resources Center (BERC) helps businesses be green. Also called Sustainable Business, staff assists businesses through the environmental regulatory process, permitting and provides other business support. There is an awards program to recognize sustainable businesses. Sacramento County has resources to help county businesses "go green" at the Business Environmental Resources Center (BERC) on the Sacramento Area Sustainable Business page.
5. Created a sustainability handbook, available online and in hard copy, that outlines the steps residents and businesses can take to go green, such as by reducing energy and water use, recycling and using alternative transportation.
6. Distributed give-away items, such as reusable bags and compact fluorescent light bulbs to encourage environmental responsibility.





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1400 K Street, Suite 205
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-658-8208
www.ca-ilg.org

