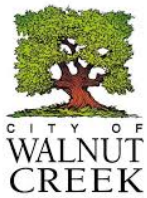


BEACON
SPOTLIGHT
AWARD
WINNER
BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



City of Walnut Creek

Sustainability Best Practice Activities









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

City of Walnut Creek

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			
	Community GHG Reductions		2018 (14%)	
	Agency Energy Savings	2018 (9%)		
	Natural Gas Savings			
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities		2018	
	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. Business Energy Solutions Team (BEST) kicker rebates 2015-2018: the city allocated \$60,000, which was later increased to \$92,000, due to the program's success, to an energy efficiency rebate for small and medium sized rebates. The rebate was layered on top of the East Bay Energy Watch local government partnership's rebate program, allowing Walnut Creek businesses to receive an energy efficiency assessment and installation of measures with 75-100% of costs covered. More than 40 businesses participated.

Gold

2. Energy Audits & OBF project for city facilities: city council approved using PG&E's On-Bill Financing Program to do energy audits of major city buildings and to complete measure installations for items like HVAC upgrades at buildings and LED lighting in all three of the city's garages.
3. California Youth Energy Services Program: the City of Walnut Creek hosted the California Youth Energy Services Program in 2016 by funding the program and additional measures to install. The program hires local youth to learn to do home energy and water assessments for residents and directly install energy and water saving measures. The program saved over 37,000 kWh and 64 therms while serving 231 residents.

Platinum

4. The city partnered with Contra Costa County and the Bay Area Regional Energy Network to host several Energy Upgrade California workshops in Walnut Creek. The first workshop was held on October 2, 2014 and was attended by 85 homeowners interested in learning about whole house energy efficiency upgrades.





Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

Silver

1. Walnut Creek Saves 2017-2018: the city allocated \$86,000 in a combination of federal EECBG grant funds and city one-time funds for a water and energy savings residential program slated to run for one year. The program focused on training local youth, home assessments, and behavior change rather than direct installations of efficiency measures. LED bulbs and smart powerstrips were given to residents at no cost. The program was very successful, and an additional \$29,000 at the end of 2017 was approved to extend the program another 6 months into 2018.

Gold

2. Beginning in October 2017, Heather Farm Park's irrigation was upgraded and new drought tolerant turf was installed in order to save water.
3. The city replaced 5,000 sq. ft. of irrigated turf in front of Tice Valley Gym with minimal landscape, hardscape, and drip irrigation in 2014, saving a projected 100,000 gallons of water per year.

Platinum





Green Building Activities

Silver

1. The city installed five additional level 2 electric vehicle chargers for the public at the downtown library in 2016. Seven other charging stations are also available at the city's three parking garages.

Gold

2. Between 2014 and 2017, the City of Walnut Creek joined multiple PACE programs to allow residents and businesses to take advantage of financing for energy efficiency, water, renewable energy, and electric vehicle charging stations.
3. The city's downtown library opened on July 17, 2010 and became our first LEED certified building in 2011. The building is certified LEED Gold.

Platinum

4. The city had instituted measures to streamline review of residential solar permits before the state required it. The city already handled solar permits through same day, over-the-counter review for small residential solar projects. It also accepted digital plans by email for small residential as a normal business practice, and so was already largely in compliance with AB 2188 in 2015.





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. The city was the first in Contra Costa County to install Big Belly trash and recycling bins in 2017. The solar-powered trash and recycling compactors hold five times as much as regular bins, helping to reduce pickups and transportation emissions while capturing more recycling.

Gold

2. Walnut Creek's Plastic Bag Ban became effective September 2014 before Proposition 67 in 2016 required bag bans. The ban has helped reduce litter in creeks.
3. Beginning in 2014, the City of Walnut Creek is a participant in RecycleSmart's Food Recycling Project, which turns waste into energy. Collected food discards are taken to EBMUD's wastewater treatment facility in Oakland where digesters produce methane gas that is captured by co-generation engines and used to generate electricity. Food scrap recycling bins are available Walnut Creek City Hall (3 bins) and at Civic Park Community Center (1 bin).

Platinum

4. Through the Diversion Incentive Fund, Walnut Creek provided \$200,000 in extra funds for recycling outreach in the commercial and multi-family sectors in 2017 to supplement RecycleSmart's existing outreach efforts. Extra outreach funds were also approved in 2016 and 2018.





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. The city amended its Purchasing Policy on July 5, 2017 to add a section on Environmentally Preferable Purchasing to apply citywide. The EPP contains guidelines for purchasing environmentally preferable goods and services.

Gold

2. The city has used Diversion Incentive Funds (DIF) to purchase parks furniture made from recycled materials, such as shade structures, playground equipment, exercise equipment (recycled steel), fencing, water station (recycled steel) and furniture.
3. The city has used Diversion Incentive Funds to purchase recycled materials for improvements at facilities, such as flooring/carpet and recycled metal roofing for the Civic Park Community Center.

Platinum





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. In 2015, Walnut Creek was the lead agency in bringing a bulk-purchase residential solar program called SunShares to several East Bay cities. The city worked to recruit the cities of Concord, Fremont, and Lafayette to participate as outreach partners and offer the program to their residents, which allowed the program to be run at no cost to the cities. The program was originally administered by the non-profit Vote Solar. More than 30 Walnut Creek homeowners took advantage of the program and installed over 400 kW of solar. As a result of the East Bay program's success and a similar program's success in San Mateo County, the Business Council on Climate Change later took over program administration in 2016 and made the SunShares Program available throughout the Bay Area on an annual basis.

Gold

2. Walnut Creek's city council voted to join community choice energy program MCE in 2016 and enrolled in September 2016 with their default Light Green 50% renewable electricity option for its own facilities. On May 15, 2018, the city council voted unanimously to opt-up to MCE's Deep Green 100% renewable electricity option to be effective in July/August pending adoption of the city's final budget for FY18-19.
3. The city participated in the Regional Renewal Energy Program (R-REP), a municipal bulk purchase solar program, and installed 702kW of solar total at two sites: Boundary Oak Golf Course and Heather Farm Park. The solar installations came online in January 2018.

Platinum

4. In 2015, the city was the first in the nation to switch its 60 diesel-powered fleet vehicles to renewable diesel. The switch is estimated to reduce diesel emissions by more than 60 percent and cut petroleum fuel use by more than 20,000 gallons.
5. In 2012, the city hall used federal EECBG grant funds to install a 45 kW solar project on city hall's roof.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. In 2016, Walnut Creek adopted its Adaptable Work Schedule Administrative Policy for employees, allowing telework and compressed work week schedules, like 9/80s, that help reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Gold

2. The city has partnered with LimeBike to provide dockless bikesharing as part of a year-long pilot program. The citywide launch was on May 11, 2018 (Bike to Work Day) and followed a smaller pilot program that began in January at the Shadelands Business Park.
3. The County Connection Route 5 bus has been running for decades; however, in 2014, the city started a two-year pilot program to subsidize the route and make it free for riders. During the pilot period, ridership on the Route 5 increased substantially from by 602% from 2014-2016, and therefore, in 2016, the city once again signed an agreement with County Connection (the bus operator) to fund the subsidy another two years.

Platinum

4. In 2015, the city piloted a smart phone app called EnLighten using \$22,500 in MTC grant funds to encourage more efficient traffic flow, which helps reduce emissions, by alerting drivers to changes in traffic lights.
5. In 2014, the city implemented two “scramble intersection” where diagonal crossing by pedestrians is allowed in order to make vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow more efficient and safer.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Silver

1. The city adopted its first Pedestrian Master Plan in 2016 to make walking safer, easier, and more popular.

Gold

2. In 2011, the city adopted its Bicycle Master Plan to provide goals, policies, and actions to promote cycling as an alternative form of transportation.
3. The city improved bike lanes and cross walks at Walnut Acres Elementary and Foothill Middle School to make walking to school safer and easier through the Safe Routes to School Partnership.

Platinum

4. The city received a \$500,000 MTC grant to help fund the West Downtown Specific Plan, which is a community-driven plan that defines a vision for the area and develops a regulatory framework for future development and public improvements. The plan is focused on making it easier to walk and bike between the BART station and downtown, as well as promote infill development between Olympic Boulevard and the BART station, while preserving the Almond-Shuey neighborhood. A revised draft plan is publicly available and the city council is in the process of reviewing the plan prior to adoption. Staff began working on the plan in 2012.





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. The city's Boundary Oak Golf Course is designated a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" having demonstrated it meets high environmental standards in several areas.

Gold

2. The City of Walnut Creek celebrated its centennial in 2014 and planted 100 trees from six continents in a new Centennial Grove at Heather Farm Park.
3. The city has had an Integrated Pest Management Policy since before 2010. In June of 2016, the Parks Division partnered with the UC Extension Program to do an experimental research trial to determine optimal control methods for white grub control in turfgrass. A four-month field trial was held in Walnut Creek to determine if 'new to market' biological controls were as effective as our current 'least toxic alternative.' The final study was published in the Anthropod Management Tests journal.

Platinum

4. In 2014, the city opened a new 30,000 sq. ft. all-abilities playground at Heather Farm Park that gives children with disabilities access to a new playground and the outdoors. The \$1.3 million playground was a partnership between the city, Contra Costa County, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the Walnut Creek Civic Pride Foundation.





Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

Silver

1. The city has financially sponsored the East Bay Resilience Challenge, organized by local non-profit Sustainable Contra Costa, for several years. In 2016, 447 actions were registered by Walnut Creek residents to save water, grow food, conserve energy, reduce waste, and build community.

Gold

2. In 2016, the city council approved the development of new community gardens at Heather Farm Park, Arbolado Park, and San Miguel Park. The first new community gardens at Heather Farm Park began construction in 2017, and will be opening soon. The Gardens at Heather Farm is an independent non-profit that will operate the community gardens.
3. The city hosted a Bike to Work Day Energizer Stations at city hall on May 11, 2018 to encourage residents and employees to bike.

Platinum

4. Every October, the community holds Community Service Day for volunteers to assist non-profits, community groups, and public entities with projects. In 2015, the city sponsored several projects at its local parks to convert existing turf to mulch to help reduce water use. The volunteers helped spread over 400 cubic yards of mulch, resulting in an estimated 2 million gallons of water saved annually.





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