



Green Building: Snapshot of Local Agency Programs and Policies 2009

About the Snapshot

In spring 2009, the Institute for Local Government's California Climate Action Network surveyed cities and counties to gather information about activities, policies and programs in five areas related to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions: green building, [commercial recycling](#), [land use and community design](#), [efficient transportation](#), and [civic engagement](#).

Case stories were prepared for ten communities to provide more detailed background information. While the information gathered does not reflect the all of the civic engagement programs in California's communities, it does provide a snap shot of trends, opportunities, constraints and lessons learned.

This project was conducted in partnership with the California Air Resources Board.

Snapshot Summary

- A growing number of cities and counties are adopting voluntary or mandatory green building programs for new residential or commercial construction.
- Some communities require certain residential or commercial remodeling projects to incorporate green building features.
- Most cities and counties developed the green building program in collaboration with the building community and virtually all agencies responding require green building features for new agency facilities.

Climate Action Connection

Green buildings reduce energy consumption, use water more efficiently and utilize materials with recycled content, thus saving money and natural resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Highlights of Local Agency Civic Engagement Activities

- The number of cities and counties that are adopting either voluntary or mandatory green building programs or ordinances is increasing. Although it appears that the majority of programs are voluntary, any agencies that previously had adopted voluntary programs are transitioning to mandatory programs.
- Virtually all local agencies responding lead by example and impose the same green building requirements on their own facilities.

- While the majority of green building programs apply to new residential construction, a growing number also apply to new commercial construction as well as remodeled residential or commercial projects, although most of these are voluntary.
- Cities and counties routinely work with architects, builders and others when crafting the local green building programs or policies.
- The overwhelming majority of the green building programs or policies from those agencies responding are based upon either LEED, BuiltItGreen, the State of California's new green building code, or a customized local agency policy.
- Some local agencies have adopted their green building program or policy as part of a broader climate action plan. Few of those responding have calculated the amount of resulting greenhouse gas emissions from the programs.
- Some agencies provide incentives to encourage voluntary compliance, while others include incentives in mandatory programs based upon different levels of "green" features incorporated.
- Many agencies offer green building education through workshops, website, or resource guides.

Opportunities, Constraints and Lessons Learned

- Many communities use existing green building frameworks, such as the State's Green Building Standard or Build It Green for new residential construction, and LEED for commercial. Still others use elements from multiple other programs and craft their own framework unique to their community.
- In some communities, fee waivers for green features or exceeding a minimum threshold encourages green building. For example, in one community the incentives for building green are quicker plan check timelines and more rapid building inspections.
- Working collaboratively with the development community helps avoid unintended consequences and community support. One agency's green building ordinance was a successful collaborative effort of agency staff, architects, building professions and residents.
- Incorporating a transition period between voluntary and mandatory compliance can be helpful. One community adopted an 18 month voluntary program before the mandatory requirement took effect.
- Using a regional approach can be helpful.

So, What are Counties and Cities Doing?

Counties and cities that have adopted voluntary and/or mandatory green building guidelines or requirements.

	Mandatory	Voluntary	Pending
Counties	San Mateo San Diego Tehama	Sacramento San Benito	Monterey Santa Cruz
Cities	Beverly Hills Daly City Fremont Garden Grove Hillsborough Huntington Beach Irvine La Mirada Livermore Loomis Los Gatos Morgan Hill Mountain View Pasadena Paso Robles Petaluma Richmond San Leandro Santa Clarita Santa Cruz Santa Rosa Tiburon Windsor	Apple Valley Arcadia Bellflower Belmont Calistoga Carlsbad Corning Grass Valley Kingsburg Laguna Beach Laguna Hills Laguna Niguel Ojai Orinda Poway South Pasadena Woodland	Manhattan Beach River Bank Vista

Types of green building policies that counties and cities have implemented.

	Mandatory	Voluntary
Agency's own buildings	Counties: Tehama	Counties: Monterey San Diego San Mateo Santa Cruz
	Cities: Garden Grove Huntington Beach Loomis Paso Robles Petaluma River Bank	Cities: Beverly Hills Fremont Hillsborough Irvine La Mirada Livermore Los Gatos Morgan Hill Pasadena Richmond San Leandro Santa Clarita Santa Cruz Santa Rosa Tiburon Windsor
New residential buildings	Counties: San Diego	Counties: San Mateo Santa Cruz
	Cities: Beverly Hills Daly City Garden Grove Hillsborough Huntington Beach Irvine La Mirada Loomis Los Gatos Mountain View Paso Robles Petaluma San Leandro	Cities: Fremont Livermore Manhattan Beach Morgan Hill Pasadena Santa Cruz Santa Rosa Tiburon Windsor

	Mandatory	Voluntary
Residential remodels/additions	Counties: Monterey San Diego	Counties: San Mateo Santa Cruz
	Cities: Beverly Hills Daly City Fremont Garden Grove Hillsborough Huntington Beach Irvine La Mirada Livermore Loomis Los Gatos Morgan Hill Mountain View Paso Robles Petaluma San Leandro Santa Rosa Tiburon Windsor	Cities: Santa Cruz Tiburon
New commercial and/or industrial buildings	Counties: San Diego	Counties: San Mateo
	Cities: Daly City Fremont Garden Grove Huntington Beach Irvine La Mirada Loomis Los Gatos Morgan Hill Mountain View Paso Robles Petaluma River Bank San Leandro	Cities: Beverly Hills Daly City Livermore Pasadena Santa Cruz Santa Rosa Tiburon Windsor

Counties and cities that have green building programs based on one or more of the following industry standards or on custom made policies and requirements.

COUNTIES (Click on links to read about that county's activities.)
Monterey San Diego San Mateo Santa Cruz Tehama

CITIES (Click on links to read about that city's activities.)
Beverly Hills Daly City Fremont Garden Grove Hillsborough Huntington Beach Irvine La Mirada Livermore Loomis Los Gatos Manhattan Beach Morgan Hill Mountain View Pasadena Paso Robles Petaluma Richmond River Bank San Leandro Santa Clarita Santa Cruz Santa Rosa Tiburon Vista Windsor

Examples of industry standards in green building:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Build It Green/GreenPoint Rated▪ California Green Builder▪ LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)▪ Energy Star▪ California Green Building Standards Code▪ Customized agency designed program

Tell us about your agency's programs
Is your city or county's green building program missing from our lists? Let us know what your community is doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through green building by completing our Climate Leadership Story Form – Green Building .