



BEACON

SPOTLIGHT  
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE  
ACTIVITIES



# City of San Rafael

## Sustainability Best Practice Activities



**ILG** INSTITUTE FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>SM</sup>  
*Promoting Good Government at the Local Level*








# City of San Rafael

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		2013 (19%)	
	Community GHG Reductions	2013 (8%)	2015 (13%)	
	Agency Energy Savings	2013 (5%)	2019 (11%)	
	Natural Gas Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities	2013	2015	2017
	Beacon Award	2013	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. The city converted traffic signals to LEDs.

## Gold

2. The city converted signature downtown "twinkle lights" to LEDs.
3. The city performed energy audits of city facilities.

## Platinum

4. The city implemented city hall lighting retrofit.
5. The city implemented city hall heating, ventilation and air conditioning replacement.
6. The city implemented 731 LED streetlight retrofits.
7. The city implemented high efficiency lighting retrofits for city parking garages & fire stations.





# Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

## Silver

1. The city audited city facilities for water use and will be implementing upgrades.

## Gold

2. The city required dual plumbing for reclaimed water in Northgate Mall renovation and in an 82-unit condominium project.
3. The city adopted a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance in partnership with local water district.

## Platinum

4. The city participated in national Mayor's Water Conservation Challenge in April 2015.
5. The city conducted water conservation pilot with local congregations in the summer of 2014.
6. The city conducted water conservation trainings for city staff for Earth Day 2014.
7. The city conducted a community-wide behavior change toilet leak conservation project.





# Green Building Activities

## Silver

1. The city adopted a Green Building Ordinance—one of the most stringent in the nation.

## Gold

2. The city facilitated a collaborative process between building trades and community organizations to create a model green building ordinance which has been adopted by four Marin jurisdictions.
3. The city requires home performance audits for any residential remodel exceeding \$50,000 in valuation.

## Platinum

4. The city adopted CalGreen Tier 1 for all new building projects, and mandatory plumbing fixture replacement for all remodels.
5. The city promoted Energy Upgrade CA/the Smart Lights Program to residents and businesses through the planning/building counter.
6. The city recently upgraded one fire station at the LEED Gold designation. One other is being renovated to that designation as well. The new Public Safety Center is being built to LEED Gold status and will be complete in 2020.





# Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

## Silver

1. The city adopted a curbside Residential Composting Program.

## Gold

2. The city has created a mandatory Multi-family and Commercial Recycling Ordinance.
3. The city adopted a Zero-waste Resolution.

## Platinum

4. The city conducted a waste audit of city facilities.
5. The city facilitates a collaborative process with local businesses and community organizations to develop a model plastic bag ban ordinance and Styrofoam take-out food container ban ordinance.
6. The city adopted Construction & Demolition Ordinance requiring residential remodels exceeding \$10,000 in valuation to recycle or reuse 70% of the project's waste.
7. The city provided funding for a feasibility study for methane capture project to turn food waste into energy at Central Marin Sanitation Agency in 2011. Project was subsequently built in 2013.
8. The city participates in the Climate Corps Bay Area Program to host one intern annually devoted to zero waste outreach in conjunction with our waste hauler.
9. The city began composting paper towels at city hall and two other city facilities.
10. The city amended its franchise agreement to include specific measures and reporting related to zero waste, recycling and composting.
11. The city conducted a study to determine the best ways to revise our rate structure to incentivize more recycling and composting in the community.
12. The city developed a Waste-Wise Business Spotlight, recognizing businesses that are committed to zero waste.
13. The city has instituted composting at almost all of its facilities and has recycling at all. The city also has two community gardens with onsite composting.







# Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

## Silver

1. The city adopted green purchasing criteria for photocopiers and computer hardware.

## Gold

2. The city adopted a plastic water bottle prohibition among city departments.
3. The city established purchasing requirements for minimum recycled content paper purchases for city departments.

## Platinum

4. The city developed and adopted a comprehensive Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy.
5. The city developed and implemented a surplus equipment donation procedure.
6. The city worked with the farmers' market to implement compostable requirements for food vendors. The most recent audit showed that 80-90% of the products the vendors were using for food service were truly compostable in the local facility.





# Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

## Silver

1. The city participated in formation of the Marin Energy Authority—the only operating Community Choice Aggregation Program in California.

## Gold

2. The city installed four EV charging stations in public garages.
3. The city requires pre-wiring and pre-plumbing for PV and solar hot water installations in new buildings.

## Platinum

4. Partnering with our local wastewater treatment facility and waste franchisee, the city facilitated a commercial food-waste energy project.
5. The city initiates the Solar SEED Fund Program in the North Bay with Strategic Energy Innovations, and became lead agency for a group solar purchasing program, enabling San Rafael and twelve other public agencies in three North Bay counties.
6. The city supported and promoted San Rafael Airport's project with Marin Clean Energy to develop one megawatt of solar on site through a feed-in tariff program.
7. The city upgraded all its municipal electricity accounts to MCE Clean Energy's Deep Green product in 2018, which is from 100% renewable sources.
8. The city installed solar at the Boro Community Center and the C Street parking garage and is currently installing solar at city hall.





# Efficient Transportation Activities

## Silver

1. The city adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, with significant implementation through the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program (one of four communities in the nation).

## Gold

2. The city adopted the Canal Neighborhood Transportation Plan for a dense, low-income neighborhood.
3. The city adopted the Canal Waterfront Design Plan for waterfront bicycle and pedestrian mobility.

## Platinum

4. The city adopted bicycle parking requirements based on the CalGreen code.
5. The city supports and develops projects with Safe Routes to School for bicycle and pedestrian access to several schools in San Rafael.
6. The city instituted an Employee Commute Program in 2013.
7. The city installed six new EV charging stations in San Rafael parking garages.
8. The city mended ordinances to require all new parking lots with 25 spaces or more to pre-wire for EV charging stations.
9. The city worked with San Rafael Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute and Transportation Authority of Marin to develop an employer guide to encourage more efficient commutes.
10. The city has a model employee commute program called the Ministry of Alternative Commute and removed an obstacle to participation by developing a standalone trip tracker that works by text. This makes it easy for people to track their trips and participate in the program.





# Land Use and Community Design Activities

## Silver

1. The city adopted a qualified greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategy.

## Gold

2. The city adopted a Sustainability Element to the General Plan.
3. The city is preparing station area plans for two planned SMART commuter rail stations.

## Platinum

4. The city worked with community and SMART to develop station area plans for new SMART Train stations in San Rafael.
5. The city secured grant funding to conduct traffic improvements around the downtown transit center to enable SMART train access and to widen the Grand Avenue bridge to allow better pedestrian and bike access to downtown.
6. The city adopted a Housing Element update that states: “foster land use patterns and densities which support lifestyles which rely less on carbon-based transportation”.
7. The city has developed four new land use policies for the new General Plan that address sea level rise and flooding. These are being used as a model for other jurisdictions and have been shared through the Bay Area climate adaptation network.





# Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

## Silver

1. The city is promoting local purchasing, including local organic food, through the Resilient Neighborhoods Program.

## Gold

2. San Rafael continues to be a Tree City USA community.
3. San Rafael continues to host a weekly farmers market downtown from April-September.

## Platinum

4. San Rafael has a Wildland Urban Interface ordinance and provides resources to residents to remove fire-prone trees and shrubs including free chipper days.
5. The city partnered with local restaurant Terrapin Crossroads in a public-private partnership to renovate and re-open a defunct park on the canal.
6. The city conducted a tree inventory in the Gerstle Park neighborhood of San Rafael.





# Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

## Silver

1. The city is sponsoring the Resilient Businesses Program to take Natural Capitalism's Small Business Program to 36 local businesses to "green" their operations.

## Gold

2. The city is sponsoring the Resilient Neighborhoods Program to take Low Carbon Diet Program to 100 households.
3. The city is sponsoring the EcoFair Marin to disseminate practical sustainability options to residents in a festival setting.

## Platinum

4. The city continues to host quarterly CAP implementation forums that are open to the public and recently began real-time Spanish translation to include members of our Spanish-speaking community.
5. The city worked with Marin School of Environmental Leadership to develop sustainability curriculum and support students in their efforts through implementing resilient neighborhoods at the school in 2014 and 2015, and coordinating LEED projects related to the environment.
6. The city council liaison to Sustainability and the staff Sustainability Coordinator participate in regular chamber and other local agency workshops as presenters, hosts, and promoters.
7. The city developed a green initiatives facebook page in 2013, which continually engages with community members and partner agencies to promote conservation and efficiency, as well as all things sustainable.
8. The Sustainability Coordinator is chair of the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership and sits on the chamber of commerce's green business committee.
9. The city provides one annual intern for the Resilient Neighborhood Program to encourage homeowners in San Rafael to reduce their carbon emissions through a variety of actions tailored to individual circumstances.
10. The city recently conducted a robust community engagement process to develop a new Climate Change Action Plan 2030.
11. The city worked with Marin Climate and Energy Partnership to support resilient neighborhoods and helped secure a \$250,000 grant to grow the program, which offers climate action team classes to help people reduce their carbon footprints by 25% or more.







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