

BEACON



SPOTLIGHT  
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE  
ACTIVITIES



CUPERTINO

# City of Cupertino

## Sustainability Best Practice Activities



# City of Cupertino

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			2017 (23%)
	Community GHG Reductions		2017 (13%)	2020 (24%)
	Agency Energy Savings			2016 (22%)
	Natural Gas Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities			2016
	Beacon Vanguard Award		2019	2020

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. In 2009, the city started the GreenBiz to offer free support to interested small/mid-size businesses, non-profit organizations and schools to navigate this rigorous certification process of the statewide Green Business Program. To date the program has helped 39 businesses and seen the following savings; 8,205,700 gallons of water saved, 2,668,797 kWh saved, 5,406 tons of waste diverted. This program has won various awards including; ICLEI's Green Business Challenge Award, 2014 ; Silicon Valley Leadership Group's Red Tape to Red Carpet Award, 2014 Green Technology's Green California Leadership Award, 2013; Acterra's Business Environmental Award.

## Gold

2. The city also partners with Bay Area Regional Energy Network to promote Home Upgrade to residents, holding periodic outreach events to residents in both English and Chinese. The last two events held turned out over 100 residents each.
3. Between 2011 and 2014 the city partnered with local nonprofit Acterra to offer the Green @ Home program to help Cupertino residents saving energy and cut costs on energy bills. This free service utilized software to analyze Smart Meter data, and determine household energy patterns, thus creating a personalized list of recommendations to reduce energy and water use in the home. Over 250 house calls were conducted were trained volunteers installed energy and water savings devices in the home.

## Platinum

4. In 2013 the city completed a citywide public realm lighting efficiency by upgrading city streetlights saving 872,000 kWh/year.
5. Since 2010, the city has made many energy efficiency improvements across its municipal portfolio. This includes the addition of occupancy sensors, lighting upgrades, vending controllers and computer power management software. Annual Energy savings total: \$96,781 kWh.
6. The city created a DIY toolkit out of the success of its Green @ Home program, and to provide residents with a resource to take energy efficiency into their own hands. City residents can check out the DIY Home Energy Savings Toolkit from the local Cupertino Library. The toolkit is stocked with supplies and energy measuring devices to conduct simple weatherproofing, upgrades and tests.





# Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

## Silver

1. The city hired a utility efficiency analyst, who actively monitors water bills to check for usage spikes and communicates with the Public Works Service Center team so that conservation measures can take place immediately.

## Gold

2. In response to the drought, the city created a Think Drought campaign. This provided residents with an update on the drought statewide, as well as what the city is doing as a part of its long-standing water conservation efforts within our facilities and among our fields, parks and medians. In areas that did not need water, lawn signs with the “Think Drought” logo were places to raise public awareness.
3. The city monitors and audits its water and wastewater pumps and motors to identify most and lead efficient equipment, and make efficiency upgrades as feasible.

## Platinum

4. To assist city residents with converting lawn to drought tolerant landscaping, the city partnered with the Santa Clara Valley Water District by adding an additional \$1 to their existing \$2 per square foot rebate for converting lawn to qualifying, low water using landscape. This made the total rebate available to residents \$3 per square foot. (The additional \$1 was added for the first 1,000 square feet for residential sites and for the first 10,000 square feet for commercial sites).
5. Since the Landscape Rebate program was so successful in 2015, the city extended the program offering for the year 2016, again partnering with the Santa Clara Valley Water District by adding an additional \$1 to their proposed square foot rebate for converting lawn to qualifying, low water using landscape.
6. In 2016, the city updated the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) and held a community meeting to gather input. New development projects that include landscape areas of 500 sq. ft. or more are subject to the Ordinance. This applies to residential, commercial, industrial and institutional projects that require a permit, plan check or design review. The previous landscape size threshold in Cupertino was 2500 sq. ft., which shall remain for existing landscapes that are being rehabilitated.





# Green Building Activities

## Silver

1. Between 2014 and 2015 all major city facilities were certified through the County's Green Business Program, which required the city to evaluate energy and water use and their procurement policies. City staff takes pride in keeping up this certification.

## Gold

2. In 2013, the city adopted an aggressive Green Building standard, more aggressive than Title 24, which included minimum LEED Certified from 25,000 to 50,000 SF and LEED Silver for commercial buildings greater than 50,000, or its equivalence.
3. In 2015, the city adopted a Climate Action Plan which requires new agency buildings to exceed the minimum requirements of Cal Green, Title 6, Energy standards.

## Platinum

4. City requires agency landscaping and parks to incorporate smart irrigation technology systems that save water and energy.
5. Since 2009, the city has had a dedicated web page to help residents find green building information and resources.
6. City building and planning staff are trained in appropriate green building standards and technologies to facilitate the permitting and approval inspection progresses, and they are encouraged to seek out new and innovative trainings.





# Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

## Silver

1. In 2013, the city adopted a Reusable Bag Ordinance, which prohibits the distribution of thin plastic carry out bags and requires stores to charge \$0.10 for a recycled paper bag.

## Gold

2. Since, 2010 the city has had curbside residential composting available to all city residents, through its residential organics waste recycling program. Additionally, residents can get free bulk compost for their garden from the food and yard waste collected through the city's organics waste and recycling program.
3. Adopted in 2014, the Foam Container Ordinance, restricts the distribution of food service ware containers made from polystyrene foam (Styrofoam). To help educate restaurant owners, a one page simplified fact sheet and FAQs was created and distributed. Additionally, outreach is conducted through the city's Green Biz program.

## Platinum

4. The city waste prevention guide for outdoor and indoor events at city facilities, to help city staff understand how to set up a zero waste event.
5. The city's mandatory commercial organics recycle ordinance requires high generators of organic waste to compost, at a faster rate than the State managed AB1826. Additionally, property owners are required to install and maintain outdoor waste trio receptacles for public use, which include a landfill, comingled recyclables, and compost.
6. In 2014, the city developed guidelines for non-residential building trash and recycling enclosures. Applicable for commercial, public, industrial, and institutional buildings must have enclosures for garbage, recycling and organics containers.





# Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

## Silver

1. Since 2013, the city is dedicated to continuously review current purchasing practices to identify possible green procurement opportunities.

## Gold

2. Initially adopted in 2007 and updated in 2015, the city adopted an Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy, which outlines guidelines on office paper reduction. Staff is researching ways to implement this measure and track progress. Ideas include reducing the source at time of procurement (buy less paper) and reducing the amount of paper used (use paper with one side printed as scrap paper, or print less).
3. Continue a targeted employee education campaign, with the development of a simplified one page handout cheat sheet for the Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy, to help staff achieve the goals of the Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy when purchasing office and cleaning supplies. Held a series of lunchtime meetings to educate staff. Conduct employee awareness training on the purchasing and use of green products and services and created a user guide for the Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy.

## Platinum

4. In many contracts with consultants and outside vendors, there are requirements for using recycled products and supplies when feasible.
5. Staff places friendly stickers on products around city hall that are out of compliance with city environmental purchasing policy.
6. Through the Green Biz program, we work with the business community to education them about climate-friendly procurement opportunities and provide them with samples.





# Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

## Silver

1. In 2014, the city service yard installed solar PV with annual capacity of producing 103.7 kW of solar PV, which is enough electricity to offset 74% of the sites energy use. It is estimated to save the city approximately \$25,000 a year, over the 25 year life of the system.

## Gold

2. In 2015, the city fleet vehicle composition was 15% zero-or-low emissions vehicles. This is through a mix of hybrids, plug-in hybrids and two new all electric vehicles.
3. In 2015, the city installed five dual port public charging stations at three different locations throughout the city, with grant funding through the Bay Area Charge Ahead Project, a grant program funded by the California Energy Commission. To accelerate and encourage the use of electric vehicles and clean fuels in the community.

## Platinum

4. In 2015, the city developed a GIS map that residents can access online that identifies where solar projects are located throughout the community.
5. In 2009, the city joined California First, to provide PACE financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy and water efficiency improvements for residents, commercial and multi-family properties. The city is currently exploring making additional PACE providers available to Cupertino residents and businesses.
6. In 2014, Cupertino was the first city to take action to join and form Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority, and was a leader in its development along with the cities of Sunnyvale, Mountain View and the County of Santa Clara.







# Efficient Transportation Activities

## Silver

1. Adopted in 2014, the Community Vision 2040, city's General Plan, mobility element outlines the short and long range community transportation goals, objectives and policy. This includes the link between land use and transportation, complete streets and greenhouse gas emissions.

## Gold

2. In 2015, the city adopted the Bikeway Improvement Prioritization Update to the 2011 Cupertino Bicycle Transportation Plan. This is a roadmap designed to encourage cycling as a safe alternative to the automobile.
3. To encourage bicycling within the city for short trips, the city has created a Cupertino Bikeways Map, to display all the bike lanes and routes throughout the city.

## Platinum

4. In 2015, the city piloted Cupertino Safe Routes to School with eight schools participating, modeled after the National Safe Routes to School Program. Engaging community members to identify how to best increase student travel safety by collecting travel data, and organizing a contracted walk audit school sites selected by the working group and city employee programs.
5. In 2016, Cupertino hosted its first ever Pedal for the Planet Family Bike Ride in conjunction with the annual earth day festival, featuring a 6-mile bike ride around the city for families. The event including free bicycle maintenance checks and tune-ups from two local bike shops.
6. City has bicycle fleet available for local travel of city staff around town, including maps, bicycle helmets, locks and tools.





# Land Use and Community Design Activities

## Silver

1. Community Vision 2040, the city's General Plan was adopted in 2014 with the first Environmental Resources and Sustainability Element, which includes goals, policies and strategies that help Cupertino think more holistically about sustainability, and in doing so, improve the ecological health and the quality of life for the community. It addresses climate change, air quality, energy, buildings, natural resources, and water. This element links the general plan to the city's climate action plan.

## Gold

2. Community and Municipal Climate Action Plan that outlines 225 measures to reduce greenhouse gas emission and help reach our goal of reducing GHG 15% below 2010 baseline by 2020.
3. A baseline Greenhouse gas inventory was conducted for 2010 data following the ICLEI U.S. Community Protocol for community wide emissions and Local Government Operations Protocol for municipal emissions.

## Platinum

4. The city housing element encourages compact, efficient and contiguous development of a range of housing types and affordability levels. This includes a density bonus ordinance.
5. In 2009, the City of Cupertino won the Award for Excellence for in the Public Works, Infrastructure and Transportation category of the 2009 Helen Putnam Award program, for the Don Burnett Bicycle Footbridge, which is cable-stayed bridge over Interstate 280, carrying bicycle and pedestrian traffic. To improve connectivity among neighborhoods that was previously divided by a freeway.
6. City requires bicycle racks, showers and other amenities as a part of new commercial development projects to promote bicycle use by new employees and residents.





# Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

## Silver

1. The city has adopted a protected tree ordinance to protect urban forest, including prohibiting the removal of protected trees.

## Gold

2. Increase opportunities for open spaces and other recreation opportunities, including the opening of the McClellan Ranch Preserve Environmental Resource Center, which holds education opportunities for residents and students.
3. The city's CAP community goal five is to expand green infrastructure and enhance the city's existing urban forest on public and private lands. This includes a measure for the urban forest program which includes goals to track and plant 2,500 net new trees by 2020.

## Platinum

4. City has an online GIS map showing location of all trees in the city maintained by public works.
5. City of Cupertino is proud to be a Tree City USA community by Arbor Day Foundation.
6. Through its Parks Master Planning process, the city is committed to increasing the number, type and accessibility of parks and other recreational opportunities in the community, including promoting public health and climate benefits.





# Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

## Silver

1. Green @ School is a pilot program created by the City of Cupertino and initially funded through a Silicon Valley Energy Watch grant to empower students as environmental change agents on their school campuses, at home, and throughout their community to implement sustainability practices. Development of a handbook which outlines how to implement a Green @ School program, complete the sustainability certification process, and educate students, faculty, and staff about sustainability and a healthy campus community.

## Gold

2. The city continues to use social media channels to outreach to the community on environmental actions they can take to help the city reach its climate action goals.
3. Forum on Innovative Transit: New Models for Silicon Valley. A community forum with presentations and discussions with five through leaders in the field of transportation. The forum was broadcast live on the city channel and streamed live on the city website.

## Platinum

4. In 2015 the city created a sustainability commission to help with the implementation and tracking of the city's climate action plan. Consists of five city residents who serve on a voluntary basis, and meet quarterly.
5. In partnership with the Cupertino Library, and Cupertino Library Commission, the city held four events (Sustainability Showcase Series), which were attended by almost 200 community members over the course of four months. This included: a) Earth Day Baby & Preschool Storytime—an earth day themed interactive musical story time and sing-along lead by Cupertino Green Team and Cupertino librarians; b) Materials Magic: It doesn't take a wizard to make your waste disappear—an environmental education show featuring comedy, juggling, magic and craft activities for kids; c) Green Tech Toolbar: Solar & EV Technologies for Your Home & Our Planet—speaker series featuring regional experts on solar and electric vehicle technology; and d) Green Teens Service Hours to Grow Your Green Thumb & Protect Our Parks.
6. Since 2009, the city hosts an annual Earth Day celebration, which brings over 7,000 community members out to enjoy music, games, visit community booths, eat from food trucks and celebrate the environmental and sustainability efforts of the city.







© 2020 by Institute for Local Government  
1400 K Street, Suite 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-658-8208  
[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)

