

BEACON



SPOTLIGHT  
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE  
ACTIVITIES



# City of Simi Valley

## Sustainability Best Practice Activities



INSTITUTE FOR  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>SM</sup>

*Promoting Good Government at the Local Level*



# City of Simi Valley

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			
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings	2013 (5%)		
	Natural Gas Savings			
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities	2013		2016
	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 city hosted its first annual "Living Green Expo" in 2010, which brought businesses and experts together in a public arena to display energy efficient technology and practices to residents. Planning for the 6th annual Living Green is underway and the event is scheduled for Saturday, September 24, 2016.

## Gold

2. The city, in partnership with Southern California Edison, conducts at least two workshops per year to educate residents about energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
3. The city, in partnership with Southern California Edison, provides and supports programs to assist residents with energy efficient retrofits.

## Platinum

4. The city is implementing utility manager software networked among city facilities for real-time reporting and management of electricity, water and gas usage.
5. The city has developed a "Choose Green" Recognition Program that recognizes businesses in the community that demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability. A previous "Choose Green" Program recognized high school students that demonstrated a commitment to energy efficiency, and an upcoming program will recognize elementary school students who demonstrate a commitment to water conservation.
6. The city, as part of the Energy Leader Partnership with Southern California Edison, has been reviewing and upgrading city-owned buildings, equipment and operations to maximize energy efficiency, from replacing an inefficient HVAC system, installing energy efficient lighting, installing occupancy sensors in city buildings, to upgrading pumps at our wastewater treatment plants, the city is taking every opportunity to make energy upgrades that will immediately decrease our energy use and have a timely return on investment.





# Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

## Silver

1. The city participates in the emPower Central Coast Program. emPower Central Coast provides free faucet aerators and water-efficient shower heads to residents during Energy Coach site visits, as well as community events. The faucet aerators and low-flow shower heads are provided by Southern California Gas Company.

## Gold

2. The city has installed 85 smart controllers and a weather station in the city's Landscape Maintenance District, providing for two thirds coverage by smart irrigation devices.
3. The city initiated public outreach and involvement activities to facilitate a 15% reduction in community-wide water use. The program resulted in water savings of over 20% in the community.

## Platinum

4. The city promotes the Water Wise Gardening in Ventura County website for finding local solutions for stormwater management, such as rain gardens and detention ponds.
5. The city implemented the Water Conservation Program Ordinance to reduce water consumption within the city through conservation, effective water supply planning, prevention of waste, and maximized efficient use of water within Simi Valley. The Water Conservation Ordinance is designed to reduce water use in the city to at least 15% below the 2009 baseline.
6. The city designed a water efficient demonstration garden at the Simi Valley Public Library on Tapo Canyon Road. The garden includes drought tolerant vegetation, drip irrigation and other smart irrigation technologies. Additionally, mulch and compost was added to the soil to minimize evaporation and help the soil absorb and store water.





# Green Building Activities

## Silver

1. The city has participated in the emPower Central Coast Program since 2014. The program includes an Energy Coach service where coaches spend up to two hours with a homeowner at their residence providing them with information on green building techniques and recommendations to improve their home's energy efficiency. The emPower Program also works with contractors to provide them with training on green building techniques.

## Gold

2. The emPower Central Coast Program has teamed up with the statewide Energy Upgrade California Program to provide homeowners with increased utility rebates for implementing energy efficient upgrades.
3. Since 2016, the city has been a participating member of the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance (VCREA). VCREA offers utility sponsored quarterly green building standards trainings to staff from member agencies. These trainings include but are not limited to updates to Title 24, benchmarking, and HVAC trainings.

## Platinum

4. The city has adopted an Energy Reach Code, which adopts energy efficiency performance standards that reach higher than is required by Title 24 minimums. As part of the first Green Building Ordinance in Ventura County, Simi Valley received CEC approval for the reach code in 2010. The main focus is on efficiency measures that are simple to achieve and enforce, and have the greatest influence on community sustainability. The Reach Code increases energy efficiency requirements for residential and nonresidential structures beyond Title 24, set at 10 and 15% respectively for new construction and substantial remodels.
5. The city has expanded and modernized the transit facility and garage to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification. Improvements include significant energy efficiency, sustainable resource and water conservation enhancements.
6. The city has developed a dedicated page on the city's website that may be accessed through [www.simivalley.org/livegreen](http://www.simivalley.org/livegreen), so residents may find resources and information on green building.





# Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

## Silver

1. The city has implemented a recommended condition for community events exceeding 300 participants to provide for recycling of waste generated at the event.

## Gold

2. The city conducted a waste audit of city facilities to identify additional opportunities to reduce landfill waste as well as expand use and access to recycling collection containers in city offices, public areas, and conference rooms.
3. The city has developed a centralized resource on the city's website for available solid and hazardous waste recycling options that may be accessed through [www.simivalley.org/livegreen](http://www.simivalley.org/livegreen).

## Platinum

4. The city's General Plan Policies IU-5.6 (Composting and Green Waste Recycling Programs) and IU-5.9 (Educational Programs) encourage the city to sponsor public educational programs that promote the benefits of solid waste diversion and recycling, including waste reduction options available at both residential and commercial levels, such as composting, grass cycling, waste prevention and recycling requirements. The city's Live Green Events website provides information on educational opportunities, the most up-to-date information about emerging techniques and technologies, opportunities to volunteer to help keep the environment clean or learn the greenest ways to get rid of all that junk you've been collecting over the years
5. The city provides information to residents about how to stop receiving unwanted catalogues, phone books and weekly mailers.
6. The city educates the community about buying recycled opportunities by providing information on their website for My Freecycle and CalMax, which are websites where residents or businesses can search for free available and wanted materials. The city also displays a directory for repair/reuse/resale options such as thrift stores.





# Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

## Silver

1. The city has established an environmentally friendly purchasing program and policy for city operations that sets required standards for city purchases.

## Gold

2. The city has created an educational program to provide resources to local businesses and consumers on sustainable purchasing practices that may be accessed through [www.simivalley.org/livegreen](http://www.simivalley.org/livegreen).
3. The city includes requirements in city-issued bid specifications for products to contain recycled content that meet or exceed state law mandates.

## Platinum

4. The city conducts an annual inventory of city purchasing activities of products and services that contribute to the sustainability of the environment.
5. The city established a Green Team to promote policy implementation, track policy adherence, draft progress reports, as well as suggest additional items to be included in the city's Live Green campaign.
6. The city considers efficient transportation methods when purchasing goods and services, such as using local vendors and or locally produced goods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.





# Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

## Silver

1. The city has developed a strategy for fleet composition and recommended fuel platforms to provide for improved fuel efficiency over the 2010 base year fleet.

## Gold

2. The city conducts renewable energy workshops for residential, commercial and industrial property owners and provides over the counter permitting and resources for PV systems.
3. The city's Municipal Renewable Energy Program General Plan Infrastructure Policy IU-6.6 (Photovoltaic Panels for Public Projects) provides for the generation of some of the city's energy needs through the use of solar energy panels on public, including municipal, development. This measure specifies the incorporation of renewable energy (such as photovoltaic panels) within new municipal developments that would result in a 20% reduction in the new development's projected energy use from the grid.

## Platinum

4. The city provides resources and permit assistance for businesses that wish to incorporate renewable power supplies into their properties.
5. The city installed three public electric vehicle charging stations as well as one high power charging station.
6. The city adopted General Plan Infrastructure Policy IU-6.5 (Photovoltaic Panels for Private Projects), which requires incentives for providing solar energy panels on private development.





# Efficient Transportation Activities

## Silver

1. The city has completed improvements to expand access to the city's CNG bus fueling facility to the City of Moorpark Transit to facilitate that community's transition from diesel to CNG fueled buses.

## Gold

2. The city has reviewed and adjusted its bus schedules to allow for maximum ridership opportunities.
3. The city has partnered with the Simi Valley Unified School District to make bus transportation more efficient for students.

## Platinum

4. The city promotes available rebate programs, such as the Clean Vehicle Rebate Project for eligible vehicles through [www.energycenter.org](http://www.energycenter.org).
5. The city collaborates with other government agencies to share information and coordinate transportation goals.
6. General Plan Mobility and Infrastructure Goal M-12 (Bicycling as a Travel Mode Option) and Land Use Policies LU-18.6 (Bicycle Facilities) and LU-23.5 (Streetscape Improvements) require the city to address bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The goal and policies encourage the creation of bike lanes and walking paths directed to the location of schools; require adequate bicycle parking; provide for incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new street and highway plans and street upgrades; and provide for a regional bicycle network that connects Simi Valley to neighboring cities within the region. The establishment of these features and multi-use trails will promote off-street bicycle and pedestrian travel as well. In addition to these policies, and in accordance with General Plan Land Use Policy LU-20.5 (Bicycle Facilities), the city should encourage the development of bicycle stations, attended parking and other attended bicycle support facilities at intermodal hubs. As a result of the General Plan policies, the city has made many bicycling improvements in the community including installing bicycle racks at city facilities to promote bicycle use by employees and visitors. The city also has an alternative transportation website that provides alternatives to driving alone including information on biking.





# Land Use and Community Design Activities

## Silver

1. The city participated in SCAG's development of the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), in compliance with SB 375.

## Gold

2. The city has implemented an ordinance to provide incentives to affordable housing projects that incorporate climate friendly and green building techniques.
3. The city has developed and maintains a citywide database of vacant and underutilized infill sites to monitor the city's growth and change, including annual reporting on the number of infill sites that were developed during the previous year.

## Platinum

4. The city has updated its Residential Permit Allocation System to include incentives for projects that demonstrate strategies that reduce GHG emissions.
5. Since 2014, the city has offered the CaliforniaFIRST Program as an energy financing program for residential, commercial, industrial and multifamily property owners to install energy efficient retrofits, solar photovoltaic, or hot water systems on new or existing residential and commercial buildings. In 2015, the city added HERO and Figtree energy financing providers.
6. The city's General Plan includes the following policies that support and encourage green building practices and development patterns that promote sustainable communities: Policies LU-1.2 (Development Location), LU-1.3 (Development Priorities), LU-1.4 (Growth Management), LU-3.2 (Citywide Development Pattern), and LU-8.4 (Sustainable Land Development Practices), Goal LU-19 (Mixed-Use Villages), Policies LU-24.1 (Mixed-Use Development), LU-24.2 (Transit-Oriented Development), and LU-24-3 (Mountain Gate Mixed-Use Village), Mobility Policies M-9.1 (Neighborhood Transportation System), M-11.1 (Transportation Demand Management [TDM]), and M-11.4 (Demand Reduction Programs).





# Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

## Silver

1. The city has implemented a "Going Green on the 118" Program that plants oak trees and low water use vegetation within the Highway 118 interchange rights-of-way to increase the green buffer and offset vehicle emissions.

## Gold

2. The city provides tree planting resources and promotes tree preservation on the city's website that may be accessed through [www.simivalley.org/livegreen](http://www.simivalley.org/livegreen), including benefits to enhancing green space in urban environments, promoting the use of the city's Free Wood Chip Program, and participating in the city's Self-help Tree Program to encourage tree planting in parkways.
3. The city hosts certified Farmers' Markets every Friday afternoon from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm at the Simi Valley Civic Center Plaza.

## Platinum

4. The city's General Plan Natural Resource Policy NR-2.1 (Tree Preservation) and Land Use Policy LU-11.2 (Greenbelts) states that all future development shall be encouraged to preserve native trees and vegetation to the furthest extent possible.
5. For the last ten years, the city has achieved Tree City USA status designation from the National Arbor Day Foundation. The city has demonstrated a commitment to caring for and managing Camarillo's public trees and joins more than 3,400 Tree City USA communities across the nation.
6. The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District in Simi Valley is a special district that has established over 50 parks and preserved over 5,000 acres of open space that is now used for horseback riding and wildlife preservation.





# Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

## Silver

1. The city participates in the emPower Central Coast Program, which provides LED lightbulbs, reusable bags, and other give-away items at community events in Simi Valley to encourage environmental responsibility.

## Gold

2. The city has implemented a Green Page on the its website. The city's Green Page acts as a portal to the other activities in the Best Practice Areas.
3. The city issues a "green" edition of the community newsletter, "City Focus".

## Platinum

4. The city teamed up with the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance to cohost a local household hazardous waste and electronic waste event in November 2015 to provide residents with free energy saving LED light strands during the holiday season. The goal of the holiday light exchange was to educate Simi Valley residents on the benefits of switching to LED holiday lights, which help the environment as well as lower energy use during the high demand holiday season. Simi Valley residents had the opportunity to recycle several strands of their old incandescent holiday lights – whether or not they still work – in exchange for two free strands of LED holiday lights. Another LED holiday light exchange is being planned for Winter 2016.
5. The city distributes maps showing community bicycle and walking trail systems to encourage reductions in vehicle miles traveled.
6. The city collaborates with other local government agencies to share information about climate change and best practices to reduce greenhouse gases. For example, the city participates on an advisory working group for implementing a community choice aggregation program in Ventura County.







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