



BEACON
SPOTLIGHT
AWARD
WINNER
BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



City of Ojai

Sustainability Best Practice Activities









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

City of Ojai

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	2016 (7%)		
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings	2016 (5%)		
	Natural Gas Savings			
	Sustainability Best Practice Activities	2016	2017	2020
	Beacon Vanguard 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 participates in the in Southern California Edison's (SCE) Energy Leader Partnership and has attained the Valued Level Tier. The partnership assists with identifying and addressing energy efficiency opportunities in municipal facilities and pays increased incentives for city energy efficiency projects.

Gold

2. The city completed an Integrated Demand Side Management audit at facilities that use greater than 200kW and has enrolled over 50% of eligible facilities in Demand Response Programs.
3. Since 2014, the city has offered emPower Central Coast and CaliforniaFIRST as energy financing programs for residential property owners.

Platinum

4. In 2015, the city and Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance worked collaboratively to develop the Climate on the Move report, which included energy focused municipal and community GHG emissions inventories for 2010 through 2012, an overview of energy usage in 2010, and a forecast for 5%, 10% and 15% energy reductions targets for 2020. https://www.vcenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/Climate_on_the_Move_Final.pdf.
5. The city participates in the Tri-county Regional Energy Network (3C-REN), which is a partnership between the Counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. 3C-REN offers 1) direct energy saving opportunities to households, with an emphasis on hard-to-reach and underserved communities; and 2) capacity-building services to public and private sector building industry professionals, including workforce training and technical code support. 3C-REN programs take a holistic approach to delivering energy-efficient, resilient and healthy buildings within the tri-county region. These efforts reduce energy use, strengthen local job markets and support climate goals. <https://www.3c-ren.org/>.
6. Ventura participates in the kWh Countdown pilot program, which provides businesses with free energy benchmarking and ASHRAE Level II audits to help business owners analyze their energy usage, save money on utility bills, identify funding sources for energy upgrades and prioritize energy efficiency projects. In addition, effective June 2018, state law (AB 802) requires buildings larger than 50,000 square feet to conduct benchmarking and disclose their energy usage. kWh Countdown helps businesses fulfill these requirements at no cost. <https://www.kwhcountdown.org/>.





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.

Gold

2. The city installed a community demonstration garden next to city hall. The garden provides an educational experience via an interpretive self-tour that displays drought resistant plants, wildlife habitats and natural growing methods, including composting and an organic vegetable garden. A primary focus of the garden is waste reduction and water conservation. The garden is open to the public every day from dawn to dusk and there is no cost to visitors and all workshops are free.
3. The city offers periodic workshops at the community demonstration garden on various topics, such as waste reducing, natural pruning methods, low flow irrigation, and tree maintenance. Upcoming workshop dates are posted on the garden bulletin board.

Platinum

4. The city hosts a Water Wise Ojai website that includes links to water conservation tips, water conservation rebate programs, and free water survey and water saving devices offered by Casitas Municipal Water District. https://ojaicity.org/water_wise_ojai/.
5. The city's Water Wise Ojai website links to information on water-wise gardening as well a water conservation tips, resources, integrated pest management information and classes and other educational opportunities like virtual garden tours. https://ojaicity.org/water_wise_ojai/.
6. A Comparative Analysis for Reduced Water Demand and Recharge by land use type was completed for the city as well as Ojai's Sphere of Influence in order to develop General Plan policies that optimize local, self-reliant and efficient water management.





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 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. The city is 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. In 2020, the City Council, through an ordinance, banned the use of most gas-powered landscape equipment. <https://ojaicity.org/city-of-ojai-bans-use-of-most-gas-powered-landscaping-equipment-effective-april-27-2020/>
5. In 2019, SCE, SoCalGas, Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance, and the city collaborated in the Rebuild Together, Rebuild Well initiative that offered free Energy and Safety Home Assessments and energy efficiency incentives to homes impacted by wildfires. To receive incentives, homeowners were required to rebuild to current Title 24 standards and install certain energy efficiency measures. https://www.vcenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018.06.16-Green-Build-VTA-Strong_-VCREA-Build-Well-EE-Workshop.compressed-1.pdf.
6. The city's website contains Design Guidelines for the Arcade Plaza and East End that contain principals for landscaping with drought tolerant plants, retaining existing trees, and utilizing lighting that preserves Ojai's dark sky. The city's website also contains informational brochures on dark sky friendly outdoor lighting. <https://ojaicity.org/design-guidelines-area-plans/>





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. Ojai residents can bring their used needles and lancers (sharps) to Ojai Valley Community Hospital for proper and convenient disposal.

Gold

2. The city offers instructional information on their website for backyard composting and grasscycling. Composting and grasscycling improve soil structure, as well as release valuable nutrients back into the soil. Both techniques help reduce over-watering lawns and gardens.
3. In 2012, the city adopted a Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance. Retail establishments must stop distributing single-use carryout plastic bags, and grocery stores, including supermarkets, convenience stores, liquor stores and gasoline stations, must begin charging ten-cents for recyclable paper carryout bags.

Platinum

4. The City of Ojai has a Construction and Demolition Debris Recycling Program on their website that provides detailed instructions on how to implement and certify a Waste Reduction and Recycling Summary.
5. The city partners with the County of Ventura to offer free ongoing electronics recovery programs and drop off sites for e-waste and household hazardous waste disposal. The city also provides information on their website for used oil and oil filter recycling.
6. A total of 11,803 passenger car tires were recycled as rubberized asphalt for the city's Road Rehabilitation Project, completed in December 2015. Various streets throughout the city benefited from this project. The program promotes and markets recycled-content surfacing products derived from waste tires generated in California and decreases the environmental impacts created by unlawful disposal and stockpiling of waste tires.





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. The city encourages the practice of not purchasing new materials, such as office supplies and furniture, through the reuse of existing items in surplus when appropriate and feasible.

Gold

2. 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.
3. The city has reviewed current purchasing practices to identify possible green procurement opportunities.

Platinum

4. In 2017, VCREA established a countywide Green Business Program that includes the city. The program works with the business community to educate them about climate-friendly procurement opportunities through social media and traditional marketing.
5. The city considers life cycle pricing to ensure that the maintenance, operating, insurance, disposal, and replacement cost of products or services are considered when evaluating purchase options.
6. The city distributes the SCE energy solutions brochure to all city employees.





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. The city has installed four public charging stations.

Gold

2. The city has installed bicycle racks and other amenities at agency facilities to promote bicycle use by agency employees and visitors.
3. The city has trained agency fleet mechanics to service alternative and fuel efficient vehicles.

Platinum

4. The city coordinates with VCREA and the Community Environmental Council of Santa Barbara to provide free solar workshops to Ojai residents, businesses and industrial property owners throughout the year.
5. The city adopted a Small Residential Rooftop Solar Systems Ordinance, which expedites small residential photovoltaic solar applications to encourage installation of photovoltaic systems on new or existing residential buildings.
6. In 2018, the City Council voted to join Clean Power Alliance (CPA), the newly established community choice energy program based in Los Angeles; thus, allowing the City Council to determine what type of electricity would be sold to customers within the City. The City Council voted to join CPA at a 100 percent renewable energy default, meaning that electricity customers within the city would automatically be enrolled in the new program to receive 100 percent renewable electricity. The switch to CPA and enrollment in 100 percent renewable energy default resulted in a significant decrease in the GHG impacts of energy generation and consumption in the city and demonstrated state leadership in climate change action from Ojai. It is expected that CPA will also create programs designed to assist residents in adding local renewable energy, switching to electric vehicles (EVs) and electrifying appliances. <https://ojaicity.org/clean-power-alliance/>.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. The city has consolidated offices that community members often visit at the same time, such as building permitting and environmental health permitting to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Gold

2. The city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan describes policies, goals, and objectives for developing a safe, convenient, and effective citywide system that promotes bicycling and walking as safe and viable transportation and recreation opportunities.
3. The city participates in SCAG's Go Human Campaign to encourage drivers to slow down and look for people walking and biking. The campaign runs during May and June. The month of May coincides with National Bike Month and is part of Go Human's broader public awareness efforts to promote traffic safety and encourage people to walk and bike more.

Platinum

4. The city established a Complete Streets Committee that sits under the Planning Commission. The purpose of the committee is to study the existing traffic conditions and patterns of city streets and to develop solutions that are designed to balance safety and convenience for all roadway users including pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. The Public Works Director is the liaison to this committee.
5. In 2016, the city has implemented expedited electric vehicle permit streamlining in order to remove unreasonable barriers to the installation of EV charging stations. <https://ojaicity.org/checklist-for-permitting-electric-vehicles-and-electric-vehicle-service-equipment-now-available/>.
6. The Ojai Trolley Service, established in 1989, is owned and operated by the City of Ojai with support from the County of Ventura. The electric Trolley provides daily fixed-route transportation to approximately 7,000 riders per month throughout Ojai, Meiners Oaks and Mira Monte. <https://ojaitrolley.com/>.





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). The addition of the SCS to the RTP means that the RTP now integrates not only transportation and land-use planning, but also housing and environmental planning with the goal of reducing regional GHG emissions. The city uses the RTP/SCS when conducting its own transportation, land use and environmental planning to assist in efforts to reduce regional GHG emissions.

Gold

2. In 2014, the city first offered CaliforniaFIRST 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 buildings.
3. As part of the General Plan Housing Element Update, the city identified potential infill development sites and maintains a community-wide database of vacant and underutilized infill sites to monitor the community's growth and change.

Platinum

4. The city has reviewed zoning codes and development policies to identify changes that could improve implementation of land use and transportation policies that reduce GHG emissions.
5. The city participated in Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance's development of the Ventura County Electric Vehicle Ready Blueprint. The Blueprint's goal is to accelerate and support EV and charging infrastructure deployment throughout Ventura County. The Blueprint's framework is intended to spur rapid adoption of electric vehicles in the region and to make electric vehicles and other clean mobility options fully accessible to everyone in our communities. Development of the step-by-step blueprint for electrifying transportation included robust outreach on the benefits of EVs to community stakeholders, local government staff, employers and multi-family housing complexes. <https://www.vcenergy.org/electric-vehicle-blueprint/>.
6. The city, Southern California Association of Governments, and a consultant are testing a proposed redesign of Maricopa Highway between Ojai Avenue and El Roblar Drive/Cuyama Road. This Go Ojai Demonstration Project will test elements of the city's Active Transportation Project for this stretch of the corridor, including the Maricopa Highway Lane Reduction, on-street parking, Class II and IV bike lanes and intersection treatments for a re-configuration of the roadway that works better for all modes of transportation.





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. The city hosts a year-round certified farmers market every Sunday morning from 9am to 1pm in downtown Ojai.

Gold

2. The city owns and maintains over five parks, which help to ensure the long-term health and viability of trees and other vegetation.
3. The city adopted a Tree Ordinance for preservation, cutting and removal of oak, sycamore, heritage and other designated mature trees. The ordinance recognizes oak, sycamore, heritage, and other mature trees as having significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological importance, and to create favorable conditions for the preservation and propagation of this unique, irreplaceable plant heritage for the benefit of current and future residents of the city. The city's General Plan Conservation and Land use Elements specifically call for the preservation of oaks and sycamores "within and adjacent to the community."

Platinum

4. In 2019, the city hosted a Clean Air Day event at Libby Park to inform their residents about air pollution and how it directly impacts our health. The city highlighted their Complete Streets Project, Bike Trail, and provided a demonstration of the city's battery powered maintenance equipment. <https://ojaicity.org/city-of-ojai-to-host-clean-air-day-event-on-wednesday-october-2-2019/>.
5. In 2019, city facilities and municipal parks became the second Certified AGZA Green Zone in the United States, and the first in Ventura County. An AGZA Green Zone is a defined property or collection of properties on which all routine grounds maintenance is performed with low-noise zero-emission battery-electric equipment and hand tools.
6. The Ojai Recreation Department offers a virtual recreation center to provide activities to improve the community's health and well-being. The Recreation Department also offers low-cost park rental for outdoor fitness classes.





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 Ojai to encourage environmental responsibility.

Gold

2. The city collaborates with other local government agencies to share information about climate change and best practices to reduce GHGs. For example, the city participates on an advisory working group for implementing a community choice aggregation program in Ventura County.
3. Since 2014, the city has participated in a regional climate action partnership with the County of Ventura, VCREA, and the cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks and Ventura. This partnership resulted in the development of the Climate on the Move Report. The report includes GHG inventories for the region as a whole and all eleven participating jurisdictions, 2020 GHG emission forecast and reduction target options.

Platinum

4. In 2019, the City Council formed a Climate Emergency Mobilization Committee with the goal to present high-priority strategies to achieve emission reductions at emergency speed. The Committee is a first of its kind and will be focused on climate related matters.
5. The city participates in the annual Ojai Earth Day event in Libby Park. The event is a community celebration to continue the conversation about advancing a green, sustainable and resilient way of life. The event hosts a variety of interactive activities, demonstrations, dynamic speakers, talented performers and environmentally friendly exhibitors and non-profits sharing information about living with a lighter, more compassionate footprint.
6. The city partners with the County of Ventura and Harrison Industries to host an annual Residential Community Beautification Day at Nordhoff High School. The event accepts household goods, clothing and toys that are donated to Help of Ojai.





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