

BEACON



SPOTLIGHT
AWARD

WINNER

BEST PRACTICE
ACTIVITIES



County of San Diego






Sustainability Best Practice Activities

County of San Diego

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		2014 (12%)	2016 (26%)
	Community GHG Reductions			
	Agency Energy Savings		2013 (20%)	2014 (23%)
	Natural Gas Savings		2013 (10%)	2014 (22%)
	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. Implementing a Green Business Program that includes mailing thousands of energy surveys to restaurants throughout the county. The surveys will also be available online.

Gold

2. Engaged in a local government partnership with San Diego Gas & Electric, which aims to inform, educate, and implement energy efficiency practices to the county's employees, businesses, residents and other entities within the County of San Diego.
3. Participates in SANDAG's Regional Energy Working Group, which provides input and feedback on issues related to the Regional Energy Strategy and tasks of the Regional Energy Planning Program.

Platinum

4. Participates in SANDAG's Energy Roadmap Program for Local Governments to develop an Energy Action Plan tailored to the unique characteristics of their community.
5. Investing in power metering, building controls and energy monitoring systems in all of the larger county buildings. New meters will better enable facility managers to automate demand responses and allow them to pinpoint the causes for unreasonable spikes in energy usage.
6. Working with SDG&E to create a system that will provide custom energy usage reports to facility managers. It would contain charts and graphs showing energy use throughout the day, which can then be compared to weekend or holiday usage to search for irregularities.
7. Completed eight lighting modernization projects which are expected to save about 973,00 kWh per year which is enough energy to power about 90 average homes.
8. The county's first zero net energy building has been approved to begin design/build and is expected to be completed in 2016.
9. Streamlined and updated the county administrative policy that provides the standards, guidelines and procedures for implementing energy conservation at county facilities.





Water & Wastewater Systems Activities

Silver

1. Uses recycled water for agency facilities and operations, including parks.

Gold

2. Incentivizes the installation of residential graywater systems through the Green Building Incentive Program.
3. Encourages residents to consider harvesting rainwater and hosts how-to resources on the county's website.

Platinum

4. Completed a water retrofit project at the Vista Jail to replace sink fixtures, toilet flush valves and shower heads. The new efficient equipment is expected to save approximately 21 million gallons of water annually, or about 42% of the total water consumption at that facility. That's enough water to supply about 128 average households per year. The project will also save about 7,100 therms of natural gas. A similar project is planned for Juvenile Hall.
5. Adopted a Landscape Water Conservation Ordinance on January 13th, 2010. The ordinance requires new single-family residential projects to conserve water in landscaping by establishing and adhering to water budgets and using recycled water, where available.
6. Published a Water Efficient Landscape Design Manual that explains how the public can comply with the Water Conservation Ordinance, while also creating beautiful landscapes and protecting people from wildfires. The county received an award for Outstanding Environmental Resource Document from the Association of Environmental Professionals in 2011.
7. Adopted a County Parks Water Conservation Plan in 2011 to identify strategies for water conservation at county parks. The plan includes strategies implemented by other agencies, details on efficient irrigation methods, and an implementation strategy for achieving water use reductions at county park facilities.





Green Building Activities

Silver

1. Requires all new agency buildings and facilities to meet at least LEED Silver certification standards.

Gold

2. Established a Green Building Incentive Program is to encourage homeowners and builders to use environmentally sound practices.
3. Four new county facilities completed construction and were LEED certified, including Registrar of Voters (Gold), Rancho San Diego Sheriff Substation (Silver), East Mesa Detention Facility addition (Silver) and Los Colinas Women's Detention facility (Silver).

Platinum

4. Constructed the San Elijo Nature Center, the first LEED Platinum certified building in San Diego County.
5. Continued to implement the Green Building Incentive Program, which is designed to promote the use of resource-efficient construction materials, water conservation and energy efficiency in new remodeled residential and commercial buildings. The program offers incentives of reduction in plan check and building permit fees for projects meeting program requirements. In 2013, the county permitted 13 projects that used the program.
6. Adopted amendments for building and energy codes incorporating the 2011 California Green Building Standards and energy efficiency codes published by the California Energy Commission.
7. Initiated a Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff training program to prepare for and implement the 2013 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which became effective July 1, 2014.
8. Initiated the development of a form-based code for the Valley Center South Village, which will include energy efficiency requirements.
9. Constructed the LEED certified County Operations Complex.





Waste Reduction and Recycling Activities

Silver

1. Instituted a comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Program in agency offices and facilities.

Gold

2. Adopted a Construction and Demolition Debris Ordinance.
3. Implementing Fluorescent Light Recycling Project for the community.

Platinum





Climate-friendly Purchasing Activities

Silver

1. Adopted a Recycled Products Procurement Policy.

Gold

2. Encourages consultants, contractors and grantees to conform to the Recycled Products Procurement Policy.
3. Price preference of up to 5% is given to recycled products when offered as an alternative to non-recycled products. The preference percentage is based on the lowest bid or price quoted by the supplier or suppliers offering non-recycled products.

Platinum

4. Requires the county to solicit bids to the maximum extent possible, from recycled content vendors when purchasing products and supplies for the county.
5. Requires all county departments and agencies to utilize, to the maximum extent practical, products made with recycled materials, reusable products, and products designed to be recycled and shall encourage public and private agencies to do so.
6. Requires the county acquire equipment (i.e., photocopier, typewriter, facsimile, laser printer machines) that is compatible, whenever practicable, with the use of recycled-content paper products.





Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Fuels Activities

Silver

1. Promotes the Renewable Energy Rebate and Incentive Program on the county website.

Gold

2. Installed PV solar arrays at the County Operations Center, the library, the North County Regional Center, and the South Bay Regional Center.
3. The county's fleet composition has 131 hybrid and five compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles. Additionally, 36 electric vehicles are used in campus environments in lieu of gasoline powered transportation. Over the life of a typical vehicle, the current hybrids alone will save approximately 304,000 gallons of fuel for a financial savings of \$1.3 million. The county is also pursuing the possibility of vehicles that use alternate fuels like ethanol, biodiesel and even propane.

Platinum

4. PDS Building Division continues to offer building fee waivers for residential solar PV electrical system permits (since 2011) and residential small wind turbine electrical system permits (since 2008).
5. Effective July 2013, PDS offers online permitting for residential roof-mounted solar PV projects that do not require a meter upgrade. Effective April 2014, roof-mounted PV systems with electrical upgrades to an existing main panel up to 400 amps are eligible for online processing. PDS also created a step-by-step guide for online PV permit processing.
6. Adopted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to codify the use of on premise energy systems, including height and setback exceptions for solar PV systems and establishing an administrative permit process to smaller PV distribution facilities.
7. Approved a Wind Energy Ordinance to provide an update set of definitions, procedures, and standards for review and permitting of small wind turbines. Zoning Ordinance amendments also establish a framework for Large Wind Turbine Systems for off-site energy use through the Major Use Permit process.
8. Initiated the first phase of the Comprehensive Renewable Energy Plan to increase renewable energy opportunities, reduce costs for consumers, and minimize impacts to community and its resources. The first phase will include research, analysis and outreach to stakeholders.





Efficient Transportation Activities

Silver

1. Established reductions in vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) as a high-priority criterion in evaluation of policy, program, and project alternatives.

Gold

2. Fleet maintenance staff provides drivers with fuel saving tips when they take their vehicles to the shop and mechanics will enact preventative maintenance that will include tire pressure and other checks/corrections that affect fuel economy.
3. GPS systems assist departments to control vehicle assets, eliminate misuse, and increase vehicle efficiency through trip planning and vehicle location information.

Platinum

4. Hosted a workshop with San Diego Safe Routes to help applicants apply to the 2014 Active Transportation Program.





Land Use and Community Design Activities

Silver

1. Worked with SANDAG to create the “Riding to 2050, San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan,” which is intended to guide the development of the regional bicycle system by creating interconnected bicycle corridors, support facilities, and programs to make bicycling more practical and desirable to a broader range of people.

Gold

2. Adopted Pedestrian Area Plans for five unincorporated areas of San Diego County to look at existing pedestrian conditions, identify deficiencies, and recommend solutions.
3. Implementing design standards that require streets and sidewalks to be designed for multi-modal mobility and access, including walking and bicycling, to ensure that new development is designed, sited and oriented to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and other mobility and access.

Platinum





Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emission Activities

Silver

1. Established Multiple Species Conservation Program to preserve San Diego's unique, native habitats and wildlife for future generations.

Gold

2. Funded Mount Hope Community Garden in Southeast San Diego.
3. Acquired 4,000 acres of parkland in 2009. The Parks Department currently manages more than 40,000 acres of parks and preserved land.

Platinum





Promoting Community and Individual Action Activities

Silver

1. The county is participating in a local government collaboration that is developing a climate change website portal to share information about best practices and provide the San Diego region with information on government adaptation strategies that are planned in their area.

Gold

2. Provides residents with information and resources relates to planning, air quality, and waste and recycling, water, energy and gardening on the county's website.
3. Educates residents about water conservation through a media campaign, including a tip-sheet, magnet, billboards, bench ads and public service announcements.

Platinum

4. Continued the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Outreach Program, which aims to inform and educate the County of San Diego, its residents, businesses and other entities with in the unincorporated county to implement energy efficiency programs. Participated in over 250 outreach events, interfacing with over 93,000 event attendees to promote energy efficiency and conservation, highlighting the county's partnership with SDG&E.
5. Supported SDG&E conservation programs by providing a link to program information on the county's website and maintaining an informational display in the PDS lobby.
6. The 15th Annual Mowing Down Pollution Lawnmower Exchange was resounding success. County residents were offered an opportunity to "go green" by turning in their old, working gasoline-powered mower and purchasing a new cordless rechargeable electric mower at a deeply discounted price. A total of 586 polluting mowers were scrapped and replaced with new, environmentally friendly electric mowers. Not only was future pollution avoided, but the event also eliminated around 69 metric tons of greenhouse gasses, equivalent to at least 164,000 fewer miles of driving by the average car.





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