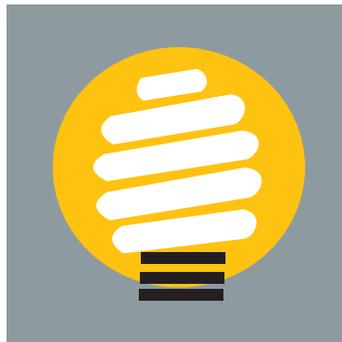
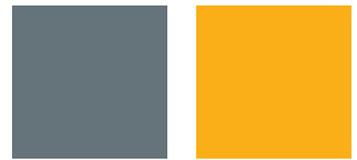
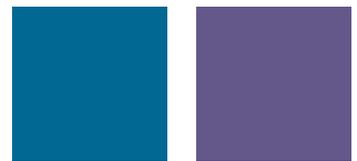




# Sustainability in Special Districts



# About this Resource

## Sustainability Best Practices

The Institute for Local Government's Sustainability in Special Districts offers options for local action in ten areas. The options vary in complexity and are adaptable to fit the unique needs and circumstances of individual communities.

Local officials and staff may use the framework in a variety of ways, including to:

- Generate ideas about programs and policies to pursue; or
- Inform a comprehensive climate action planning process.

Many of the activities can lead to multiple benefits, including:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
  - Energy, water, fuel and cost savings;
  - Improved health; and
  - Increased resilience to climate change impacts.
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## About the Institute for Local Government

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is the nonprofit research affiliate of the California Special Districts Association, League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. The Institute's mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources for California communities.

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)

## About the California Special Districts Association

The California Special Districts Association (CSDA) is a 501c(6), not-for-profit association formed in 1966 to promote good governance and improve core local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for all types of independent special districts.

[www.csda.net](http://www.csda.net)

In 2015, the Institute for Local Government (ILG) and the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) entered into a partnership with the purpose of strengthening good governance at the local level. Through this partnership, both organizations strive to make local governments more ethical, effective, open, collaborative, healthy and sustainable.

Sustainability is not simply about the environment. Sustainable organizations take practical steps to foster and maintain a high quality of life for their communities on an ongoing basis, which create long-term benefits. With over 2,000 special districts in California, these local agencies play a critical role in protecting our natural resources and the environment through:

- Land conservation,
- Water recycling,
- Preserving open space, and
- Renewable energy projects.

The ways that special districts are becoming more sustainable varies as much as the types and sizes of the special districts themselves. This document contains simple to complex measures that all special districts can consider in making their district operations more efficient. Additionally, it highlights how a regional waste management district, a regional park district, a municipal utility district and a cemetery district are implementing innovative sustainability practices to improve their operations and the environment.

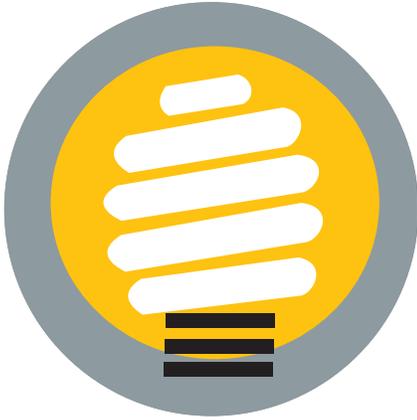
By taking advantage of opportunities to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy, water supply, wastewater management and other sustainability practices, special districts can improve the fiscal health of their organizations and the economic prosperity of the residents and businesses they serve.

If you have a story or best practice to submit for consideration in this document, please contact ILG at [sustainability@ca-ilg.org](mailto:sustainability@ca-ilg.org).

Sincerely,

Martin Gonzalez  
Director, Institute for Local Government

Neil McCormick  
CEO, California Special Districts Association



# Energy Efficiency & Conservation

Energy generation is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Strategies to conserve energy and use it more efficiently in district operations and the community help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, energy efficiency and conservation measures save money and resources.

## Audits and Assessment

- Audit energy use of district buildings to identify opportunities for energy savings through efficiency and conservation measures.
- Use energy management software to monitor real-time energy use in district buildings to identify energy usage patterns and abnormalities.
- Conduct commissioning and retro-commissioning studies of district buildings, including equipment such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and lighting systems to ensure they are operating as designed and installed.
- Benchmark energy use of major district buildings.

## Internal Policies, Procedures, and Practices

- Establish an energy efficiency and conservation policy that provides employees with behavioral guidelines for energy efficient use of the facility such as turning lights, copiers and computers off, appropriate thermostat use, etc.
- Establish energy efficiency and conservation protocols for building custodial and cleaning services and other contract employees.
- Adopt and implement a policy to reduce “plug” load in district facilities by removing personal equipment such as desk lamps and space heaters or installing smart power strips.
- Implement a network cloud-computer system to reduce computer work station energy use.
- Incorporate energy efficiency features in district data centers, such as through implementation of an information technology energy efficiency program.
- Adopt ENERGY STAR® purchasing standards for all new computer equipment, appliances and equipment.
- Require new district buildings to exceed Title 24, California’s energy efficiency building standard.
- Implement off-peak scheduling of pumps, motors, and other energy intensive machinery where possible.
- Work with energy provider to access technical assistance and financial incentives, such as facility audits, rebates, on-bill financing, loans, savings-by-design and demand management programs.
- Require district new construction to be net zero energy.
- Train district building inspectors to understand and enforce Title 24, California’s energy efficiency building standard.
- Develop and implement shading requirements for district buildings and other facilities.
- Prepare and implement an Energy Action Plan for district facilities.

## Retrofits and Upgrades

- Develop and implement a schedule to address no cost/low cost energy retrofit projects.
- Develop and implement a schedule to address capital intensive energy retrofits projects.
- Reduce energy demand by capturing “day lighting” opportunities.
- Install motion sensors, photocells, and multi-level switches to control room lighting systems.
- Replace incandescent lights with more energy efficient lighting, such as compact fluorescents, overhead fluorescent lights or light-emitting diodes (LEDs).
- Upgrade exit signs with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting.
- Add vending misers to cold beverage machines.
- Upgrade pumps, motors and other energy intensive machinery where feasible.
- Replace district appliances and equipment such as vending machines, refrigerators, and washing machines, with energy efficient models.
- Replace district natural gas fueled appliances and equipment, such as boilers, stoves, water heaters, with high efficiency units.
- Replace and/or tint windows in district-owned buildings to reduce heating by sunlight.
- Install cool roof systems on existing and new district buildings.
- Install smart meters on district buildings.

## Outside Lighting

- Use “de-lamping” techniques to reduce lighting levels at parks, sports fields and parking lots, where appropriate for the location and use, considering security and decorative lighting issues.
- Change holiday or decorative lighting to light-emitting diodes (LEDs) or other energy efficient lighting systems.
- Replace incandescent and mercury vapor street, parking lot, park and other outdoor lights with energy efficient alternatives, such as LEDs.
- Work with energy provider to promote use of utility financial incentives to assist residential and commercial customers improve energy efficiency, such as by using on-bill financing, loans and rebates and demand management programs, as appropriate for the customer.

## Engaging the Community

- Host/support compact fluorescent light bulb, LED give-away or incandescent bulb exchange programs.
- Collaborate with schools and colleges to co-sponsor students to conduct energy audits and/or retrofits for district buildings, businesses or homeowners.

### TIP

Evaluate district electric bills to ensure each account is on the optimal rate schedule.



### TIP

Create a system by which monetary savings from energy efficiency projects can be reinvested towards future sustainability initiatives.





# Water and Wastewater Systems

Water and wastewater systems play an important role in sustainability for several reasons. First, energy is used to convey, pump, distribute, treat and heat water, so saving water saves energy. Second, experts agree that the effects of climate change will further reduce the availability of water. Therefore, efforts to conserve water will play an important role saving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and securing water resources for the future.

## Ensure Water Efficiency in District Buildings and Operations

- Audit district's water and wastewater pumps and motors to identify most and least efficient equipment.
- Work with district or company that provides water and wastewater service to implement a cycling and equipment replacement program for least efficient water and wastewater pumps and motors.
- Initiate a water loss program or "leak-audit" of district water infrastructure.
- Upgrade and retrofit district plumbing systems and appliances with water efficient technology and fixtures.
- Retrofit existing district buildings and facilities to meet standards for the LEED® Standards Rating Systems for Existing Buildings (EB), Build It Green, Commercial Interiors (CI), or other equivalent standards.
- Incorporate water-efficient systems in new district buildings that include opportunities for recycled water.
- Require dual plumbing for use of recycled water for new facilities.

## Reduce Water Use in Parks and Landscaping

- Implement all feasible water efficiency strategies included in the Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use in district parks, landscaping and other new developments.
- Install smart water meters to track water usage and the effectiveness of water efficiency activities and programs.
- Assess, maintain and repair existing irrigation systems to minimize water use, including parking lot landscaping, public rest rooms and parks, golf courses and other recreational facilities.
- Install weather-based smart irrigation systems in district parks and landscaping areas.
- Adopt a water recycling master plan that connects parks into a recycled water system.
- Use recycled water for district facilities and operations, including parks and medians, where appropriate.
- Convert all water distributing vehicles, such as street sweepers and tree-watering tankers, to use reclaimed water, where feasible.
- Reduce turf and grass in district landscaped areas. Use native turf and grass, when applicable.
- Implement drought tolerant and hydro-design principles to group compatible plants based upon water needs for district parks and landscaping.
- Use compost, biosolids and mulch in district landscaping as a water conservation measure.

### TIP

For more information, visit ILG's Water Conservation Leadership Guide: Issues for Local Officials to Consider at [www.ca-ilg.org/WaterConservationLeadership](http://www.ca-ilg.org/WaterConservationLeadership).





## East Bay Municipal Utility District

Facing near record-low water supplies in 2015, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) became the first large Bay Area water district to adopt a district-wide goal of 20 percent mandatory water reduction in an effort to align with the Governor Brown's statewide goal. The district implemented strict limits on water use, and imposed a drought surcharge of up to 25 percent in order to pay for the costs of purchasing extra water supplies, additional conservation services and enforcement of water use restrictions. EBMUD also adopted two ordinances, one aimed at stopping excessive water use that penalized households that used more than 1,000 gallons per day (four times the amount of an average residential household) and another aimed at stopping water theft.

In addition to the new regulations, EBMUD implemented a variety of rebate programs and educational activities to help customers conserve water. Through its lawn conversion program, EBMUD provided rebates to more than 900 customers which resulted in almost 1.8 million square feet converted to sustainable landscape. During the drought, EBMUD expanded its recycled water program and began delivering large amounts of recycled water to the Oakland Airport. As a result of the district's efforts, customers in its service territory surpassed the districts goals, recording a 22 percent savings.

Along with helping its customers reduce water usage through the programs and education, the employees and leaders of the organization concentrated on internal improvements too. For example, district staff designed and constructed a new pipeline to carry recycled water from the second floor bathrooms in the district's administration building to an Auxiliary Cooling Tower (ACT) mounted on the roof, allowing the unit to use a 50/50 mixture of potable and recycled water. This resulted in estimated 11 percent savings on the building's annual water use. While they have suspended this activity, the district continues to use recycled water in the public bathroom in the lobby.

## Water and Wastewater Systems

### Create Safe and Efficient Water and Wastewater Systems

- Use non-toxic fertilizers in district parks and landscaped areas to reduce contaminants in run-off.
- Create a Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) Control Program to reduce blockages in the wastewater system.
- Reduce energy use by auditing district's water and wastewater pumps and motors to identify most and least energy efficient equipment.
- Work with district or company that provides wastewater service to implement an audit, cycling and equipment replacement program to increase energy efficiency for water and wastewater pumps and motors.
- Work with local wastewater service provider to determine whether biosolids can be recycled by using them on local landscaping, golf courses, community parks and other programs to improve soil quality and reduce irrigation needs.
- Promote methane capture and enhanced production through co-digestion of other organic waste streams for use as renewable energy at wastewater treatment plants.

### Address Future Water Security

- Construct a new groundwater recharge facility that can hold additional surface water secured in wet years to eliminate possible groundwater overuse in the region.
- Create an urban runoff recycling facility.

### Promote Water Conservation

- Adopt water efficiency principles similar to the Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use for new and existing residential and commercial developments.
- Adopt a retrofit program to encourage or require installation of water conservation measures in existing businesses and homes that exceed state standards.
- Promote water efficiency audits at point of sale for commercial and residential properties.
- Provide free faucet aerators, water-efficient shower heads and low flow hose nozzles to residents at community or other events.
- Pass a water-efficient landscaping ordinance stronger than state standards, where feasible.
- Develop a training program to educate local landscapers and district personnel on practices that reduce the use of water and toxic pesticides.
- Create a water efficient demonstration garden that includes native and drought tolerant plants and requires low volume mulch, irrigation and other water saving features.
- Implement a lawn buy-back program for residents who convert sod or grass to drought-tolerant landscaping.

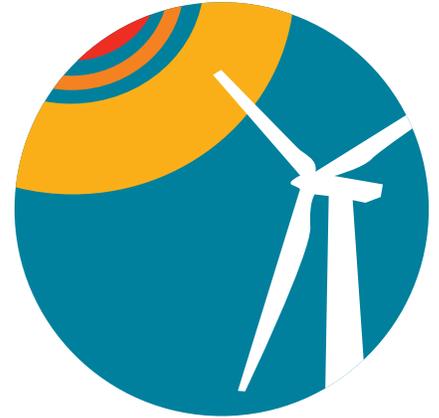
### Promote Water Recycling and Greywater Use

- Incentivize and promote the installation of residential greywater systems that meet appropriate regulatory standards.
- Provide educational resources to encourage residents to harvest rainwater.

### Educate about Water Pollution Prevention

- Install informational kiosks at district parks to educate residents about stormwater pollution.
- Engage the public in riverbank planting events, storm drain marking or stream-cleanup programs.
- Promote bio-retention basins for stormwater collection and treatment prior to discharge.
- Promote local solutions for stormwater management, such as rain gardens, green roofs and detention ponds.
- Develop an educational community program or campaign that engages residents as watershed stewards.

# Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Fuels



Energy generated from renewable sources produces less greenhouse gas emissions than energy generated from conventional sources. Low carbon fuels are those that are formulated to produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

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## Solar Projects

- Purchase solar photovoltaic systems or enter into power purchase agreements (PPA) to meet all or part of the electrical energy requirements of buildings and facilities owned, leased or operated by the district.

## Methane Recovery Programs and Projects

- Install digesters and other technologies at wastewater treatment facilities to capture methane and other bio-fuels.
- Install fuel cells to generate power for wastewater treatment plants.
- Support a robust organic waste program which seeks to turn waste into energy.

## Fuel Efficient and Alternative Fuel Vehicles

- Establish and implement a policy to convert district fleets, including district owned, leased or operated vehicles, to alternative or fuel efficient vehicles.
- Use regional purchasing options or the California Department of General Services bulk purchasing program to buy green fleet vehicles from local auto dealers.
- Train district fleet mechanics to service alternative and fuel efficient vehicles.
- Implement bike sharing program for district employees traveling between district facilities.
- Install bicycle racks, showers and other amenities at district facilities to promote bicycle use by district employees and visitors.

- Install electric vehicle charging stations at public facilities.
- Allow the public to use district facilities that support use of alternate fuel vehicles, such as compressed natural gas fueling facilities and electric vehicle charging stations.



# Land Use and Community Design

Well-planned communities with a balance of housing, jobs, shopping, schools and recreation can reduce the length and frequency of trips and give people the option of walking, biking, or using transit rather than driving. This results in lower greenhouse gas emissions and also promotes physical activity and more vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

## Encourage Compact, Efficient and Contiguous Development

- Establish a policy that increases the available open space (such as parks, green belts, hiking trails, etc.) to support different types of uses and the different recreational needs of the community.

## Support Alternative Energy and Waste Processing Land Use Options

- Adopt a policy or program that offers incentives (such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, or fee waivers) for installation of photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems on new or existing residential and commercial buildings and energy efficiency retrofits on existing buildings.

## Evaluate Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Plan for Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

- Adopt a climate action plan.
- Ensure that the adopted climate action plan complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines to help streamline the CEQA review for future projects that are consistent with the climate action plan.
- Include within a climate action plan procedure to monitor and track greenhouse gas emissions associated with development projects and municipal operations.
- Work with other jurisdictions within the region to identify and address existing and potential regional sources of greenhouse gas emissions under different development scenarios.

### TIP

Consider a public health approach to planning and development that encourages alternatives to single-occupant-vehicle travel and promotes active transportation in order to provide health benefits such as new exercise opportunities (walking and bicycling), pedestrian and bicyclist safety and improved air quality that reduces asthma and other health conditions and diseases.



## Improve Communication, Collaboration and Inclusion

- Collaborate with local, regional and state agencies to share land use and community design-related information, coordinate planning goals and processes, and take advantage of opportunities to combine and leverage scarce resources.
- Coordinate planning and project approval procedures to increase collaboration between planning and other district staff as appropriate.
- Involve a diverse group of stakeholders in planning processes to ensure the district's guiding plans are representative of community's diverse population and interests.
- Use non-conventional methods to gather input from diverse community groups, particularly those that do not ordinarily participate in community planning efforts (for example conduct outreach and education through community groups and non-profits prior to public hearings).
- Analyze impacts of projects on safety and involve emergency responders and public safety staff early and consistently in development of growth plans.
- Develop and implement an approach to planning that identifies and balances economic, environmental and social equity needs.
- Participate in regional planning efforts, such as processes to develop and implement the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy pursuant to SB 375 and, where appropriate, align local general plans and zoning for consistency with the regional transportation plan.

**For other land use and community design-related best practices:** see Green Building, Renewable Energy and Efficient Transportation areas.



# Green Building

Green buildings reduce energy consumption, use water more efficiently and utilize materials with recycled content, thus saving money and natural resources and related greenhouse gas emissions. Local agencies have taken a variety of approaches to embrace green building policies and programs, consistent with the unique characteristics of their individual communities.

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- Adopt a policy that requires new district buildings to exceed the minimum requirements of California's Green Building Standards Code (also known as CalGreen). Options to exceed the standard include CALGreen's built-in tiers and/or certification under Build It Green's Green Point Rated system, LEED® or alternative certification program.
  - Require district buildings to exceed Title 24, Part 6, the State's Building Standard Code which establishes energy efficiency requirements for residential and non-residential new construction and major remodels.
  - Incorporate materials that are renewable, reusable, recyclable, recycled, non-toxic and those that have zero or low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in district projects.
  - Explore using alternate materials such as packed gravel or permeable concrete instead of conventional concrete or asphalt to enhance replenishment of ground water.
  - Develop and implement sustainable landscaping standards for public district facilities to reduce water consumption.
  - Incorporate water efficient plants, trees, green roofs and rain gardens in district landscaping.
  - Use compost and mulch in district landscaping as a water conservation measure.
  - Require verification by a certified third-party rater to ensure compliance with green building standards for all newly built district facilities.
  - Create a dedicated page on the district's website to educate the community about green building initiatives, building information and resources.



## Monterey Bay Regional Waste Management District

Nearly 30 years ago, the Monterey Regional Waste Management District developed one of the first landfill gas-to-electric energy plants in the nation. Presently, the project's four generators provide approximately five megawatts of clean alternative power, meeting all of the district's own power needs.

In 2014, the district expanded its renewable energy program with a "SmartFerm" anaerobic digestion system, a food scrap and organic material composting system. The organic material initially undergoes an aerobic composting process which is then followed by an anaerobic process (a collection of processes by which microorganisms break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen) to release and capture methane gas. The methane gas is then combusted to produce electricity. The electricity, currently enough to power the equivalent of 50 homes, is sold to the adjacent Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control District facility to help power its operations. The district hopes to upgrade its sorting equipment and expand its infrastructure to eventually capture increased organics and produce additional electricity.

In addition to waste reduction and producing renewable fuels, the Monterey Bay Regional Waste Management District promotes community involvement in its sustainability efforts. For over a decade the Monterey Bay Regional Waste Management District has hosted assemblies and tours that inspire local students to "Rethink, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle". In 2016, the district provided a \$750 scholarship to three local artists from California State University, Monterey Bay to create art pieces from recycled products. In addition to the funding, the district gave the students access to their recyclable products which resulted in impressive works of art.

These artists are not the only residents to benefit from unwanted goods at the district's facility. Monterey Bay Regional Waste Management District's Last Chance Mercantile (LCM) reuse store is a favorite shopping venue for families, teachers and DIY enthusiasts. LCM offers an extensive inventory of one-of-a-kind items such as books, boats, scrap lumber, furniture, clothing and household treasures. These items are donated by residents seeking to find a more cost effective and environmentally friendly way of disposing their unwanted goods and by builders seeking to get credit towards waste diversion requirements. Donations and purchases support local jobs and contribute to the area's green economy.



# Waste Reduction and Recycling

The largest sources of human-generated methane, a potent greenhouse gas, comes from improperly managed landfills. Thus, waste reduction and recycling activities reduce the potential to generate methane at landfills, as well as reduces pollutants generated from transporting waste to disposal sites. Waste reduction and recycling also conserve natural resources.

## Reduce

- Implement a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling program in district offices and facilities.
- Create and facilitate a district employee education program highlighting waste reduction and recycling best practices.
- Adopt a policy to encourage paper reduction through activities such as:
  - Promoting a “think before you print” campaign.
  - Reducing margins and logos on district templates, letterhead and memos.
  - Using computer software that removes blank pages and images from documents.
  - Using “eCopy” copy machines that allow users to scan paper documents and distribute electronic copies via e-mail.
  - Uploading bid documents using online resources instead of printing hard copies for contractors.
  - Requiring fewer or smaller-sized copies of project plans or submittals.
  - Establishing a policy to use electronic devices (tablets, computers and projectors) for agendas and notes at meetings.

## Reuse

- Reuse unwanted printed material for other purposes, such as for scratch paper.
- Reuse or redistribute to community non-profit groups office items such as supplies, computer, furniture and cell phones in order to divert items from the landfill.
- Provide and encourage the use of reusable dishes and drinkware at district facilities.

## Recycle

- Adopt a “Buy Recycled” policy for district departments.
- Recycle or refill ink/toner cartridges, as appropriate.
- Provide bins for collection of used batteries and compact florescent lights for proper disposal or recycling.
- Implement a partnership with other public agency offices located within the jurisdiction for green procurement, waste reduction and recycling at those facilities.
- Require all district demolition projects to incorporate de-construction/construction and demolition waste recycling or recovery practices.
- Adopt district or community waste diversion and recycling goals that are higher than existing state law.

## Organics

- Evaluate district facilities and operations to identify opportunities to increase material recovery and beneficial use of organic material.
- Evaluate opportunities to convert district organic waste into biofuels to use in district vehicles.
- Distribute or post materials illustrating best practices for organics collection and composting.
- Establish a program to use the maximum amount of organic waste possible that is generated within the jurisdiction to produce compost for use on district parks and landscaping.



## The Orange County Cemetery District

For the past four years, the Orange County Cemetery District has participated in the Holiday Tree Donation Program, in conjunction with Shadetree Partnership in the City of Irvine. Every year, district staff post notices around each cemetery notifying families that any live trees left on graves will be donated and planted in Orange County after the holiday. Between the three sites, the district collects approximately 200 potted trees each year. By doing this, the district not only illuminates waste going to the landfill, it creates a sustainable program by which the trees can be planted which will, in turn, help offset carbon emissions.

The district's collaboration with the Shadetree Partnership has great financial benefits too. The Shadetree Partnership donated all ground cover for the restoration and weed abatement effort for the back slope at the Orange County Cemetery District's El Toro site. The district also has a partnership with the Orange County Courts which helped coordinate community service workers to do the planting. As a result of these partnerships, the district dramatically decreased the cost of the project.

With more than 70 acres of lawn between its three sites, the Orange County Cemetery District greatly enhanced its sustainability efforts by swapping out traditional fertilizing methods with an organic fertigation program which is helping reduce the amount of fertilizer, chemicals and water needed to keep its lawns healthy and beautiful.

An injector and holding tank were installed on the premises to allow a liquid, organic-based fertilizer to be injected into the irrigation system. Not only does this system create a more efficient way to apply the fertilizer, it increases the absorption of the fertilizer which, in turn, increases the health of the landscape.



# Climate-Friendly Purchasing

Local agencies are large consumers of goods and services. As such, their purchasing practices can have a significant impact on the environment. By purchasing products or procuring services that reduce greenhouse gas emissions relative to competing goods and services, local agencies can remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that conserve natural resources.

- Review current purchasing practices to identify possible green procurement opportunities.

- Adopt and implement a procurement policy that establishes standards for purchasing climate-friendly products and services. Examples may include:

Office and cleaning supplies and equipment that minimize environmental impacts and that do not have a negative effect on human health, such as:

- Paper products that contain a minimum percentage of post-consumer recycled content.
- Cleaning products and services recognized with the GreenSeal or EcoLogo.
- New equipment that meets Energy Star or comparable energy efficiency standards.
- Computers that meet the highest feasible Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) certification level.
- Computer and lighting controls that reduce energy and computer idle time.
- Rechargeable batteries, where appropriate.
- Recyclable or reusable cups, plates and utensils.

Green Building materials that create a healthier and more sustainable environment, such as:

- Building and landscaping materials and systems that exceed the CALGreen building code.
- Carpeting, furnishings or plastic items that contain a minimum percentage of recycled content.
- Paint or carpets that contain low or no volatile organic compounds (VOC).

Fleets that reduce environmental impact, such as:

- Fuel efficient, dual fuel or alternative fuel fleet vehicles.
- Vehicles that have GPS or trip planning devices.

- Conduct employee awareness training on the purchasing and use of green products and services.

- Establish an interdepartmental team to promote policy implementation, track policy adherence and suggest additional items to be included in the policy.

- Report achievements of green procurement program to staff and policy makers annually.

- Consider participating in multi-district procurement pools that have a climate-friendly purchasing component.

- Consider life cycle pricing to ensure that the maintenance, operating, insurance, disposal and replacement cost of the product or service is considered when evaluating purchase options.

- Consider efficient transportation methods when purchasing goods and services, such as using local vendors and/or local produced goods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



◀ The Monterey Bay Regional Waste Management District accepts and sells donated items like books, scrap lumber, furniture and clothing at its Last Chance Mercantile store that sits at the entrance of its landfill. This offers an alternative to throwing away unwanted treasures.

- Consider encouraging 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.
- Ensure that minimal packaging materials are used by the district and that all packaging materials are recycled, non-toxic and/or reusable, where feasible.

### Contracting

- Require consultants, contractors and grantees to use recycled products and supplies, when feasible.
- Require service providers to follow climate-friendly practices, or include a preference in selecting and contracting with service providers to those that use climate-friendly practices.
- Require parks maintenance staff or contractors to adopt water or Bay-Friendly practices, if applicable.
- Require district-issued bids specifications to exceed state law requirements for recycled content.

- When feasible, consider the greenhouse gas emission impacts associated with transportation distances when determining which business or service providers to award contract.
- Provide incentives for the use of fuel-efficient, dual-fuel or alternative fuel vehicles for district contracts for services involving vehicles, such as buses, waste hauling and recycling, and construction.
- When issuing proposals for services, request firms to show current green certifications that demonstrate their technical knowledge and commitment to sustainability.



# Efficient Transportation

Transportation is the largest generator of greenhouse gas emissions in California. Efficient transportation systems, encouraging alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, and reducing the miles that vehicles travel can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help conserve fuel and cut fuel costs, improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and make streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists.

## Planning

- Collaborate with other agencies (such as cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations) to share transportation-related information, coordinate planning goals and processes, and take advantage of opportunities to combine and leverage resources.
- Make reducing vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) a high-priority criteria in evaluation of policy, program, and project proposals and alternatives.

## Infrastructure

- Encourage and/or construct infrastructure for electric vehicle charging and natural gas vehicle fueling for district vehicles.
- Adopt a policy that sets fleet efficiency standards for new district vehicles.
- Purchase or lease fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicles, including zero or near-zero emission vehicles, to save fuel and money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Install low-draw emergency lighting in district vehicles, allowing lights to be used without the engine running.
- Consider purchasing bicycles for local travel by district employees.
- Install battery systems for vehicles with onboard equipment to decrease truck idling while equipment is used.

- Provide fuel saving tips to drivers of fleet vehicles.
- Use Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and integrated software to control fleet vehicles, reduce misuse and increase efficiency through trip planning and location information.
- Establish a crew-based maintenance plan (such as with parks employees) instead of individual assignments, to create a “carpool effect” that lowers the annual miles traveled for maintenance staff.
- Utilize technology options (such as digital service requests accessible by mobile devices) for field personnel to avoid extra trips back to the office.

## Employee Programs

- Offer district employees with incentives to use alternatives to single-occupant auto commuting, such as parking cash-out, flexible schedules, transit incentives, bicycle facilities, bicycle sharing programs, ridesharing services and subsidies, locker/shower facilities and telecommuting.
- Develop a real-time ridesharing program that utilizes smart phone technology.
- Incorporate a guaranteed ride home program as part of district commuter trip reduction incentive programs.

- Provide parking spaces dedicated to employees who use alternative transportation (such as walking, bicycling, bus, etc.) for the rare occasions they need to drive to work.
- Implement a flexible work schedule for district employees, incorporating telecommuting and modified schedules.
- Establish a “bike barn” to enable district employees to borrow a bicycle to use for local meetings.
- Construct bicycle stations for employees that include bicycle storage, showers and bicycle repair space.
- Offer employees incentives to purchase fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicles.

**Note:** Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies can provide guidance on inter-district collaboration and technical support for the adaptation and use of transportation models.

**For other efficient transportation-related best practices:** see Land Use and Community Design area.

**For more options:** see Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels area.



## East Bay Regional Park District

The 120,536 acres of mostly undeveloped, natural, open space within the East Bay Regional Park's jurisdiction offers a variety of grassland, forest, lake, shoreline and wetland environments, which provide essential habitats for a diverse collection of wild plants and animals. The East Bay Regional Parks District has a variety of programs aimed at preserving these environments, while making the land safe and accessible for visitors to enjoy.

The East Bay Regional Park District maintains 65 parks and more than 1,250 miles of trails. Nearly 200 miles of those trails are paved and run parallel to the freeway system. District staff has recorded an increased use of the paved pathways by bicyclists, especially during commute hours. Surveys project that usage of these trails has increased from 6 million annual users in 2011 to 9 million in 2016.

In addition to supporting healthy land use and efficient transportation, the East Bay Regional Park District has created a Climate Action Team which meets every two months. The objective of the team is to increase awareness and participation in the district's various climate action and resiliency efforts. In addition, the district hopes this team will build internal support and collaboration to create and official sustainability plan which will help the district access additional funding, including grants the state's climate investment fund (Cap & Trade).

The East Bay Regional District is already working with CalFire to manage and reduce fire risk in the district's oak woodlands. In addition to thinning management, the district uses cattle, sheep and goat grazing as a sustainable vegetation management tool to reduce fire fuels and improve habitat conditions for plants and wildlife. Approximately 65% of district land is grazed by 6,000 cattle, 1,500 sheep and 1,600 goats, which can be seen by visitors in the winter and early spring.



# Open Space and Offsetting Carbon Emissions

Forests, parks, agricultural lands and open space serve as “carbon sinks” by storing greenhouse gas emissions that otherwise contribute to climate change. Co-benefits of preserving open space and protecting local agriculture may include: making recreational activities available to community residents and, in some cases, reducing vehicle miles travelled.

## Plans and Policies

- Adopt a climate action plan that includes strategies to reduce carbon emissions through open space.
- Adopt a policy to thin district trees and remove brush on district land, as feasible and appropriate, to reduce the threat of fire and release of carbon emissions from forest and range fires.

## Parks

- Increase the number, type and accessibility of parks and other recreational opportunities in the community, including promoting associated public health benefits.
- Increase opportunities for recreational open space.
- Build environmentally sustainable parks by incorporating reused and recycled materials, water-efficient landscaping and water-efficient technology systems.
- Evaluate opportunities to convert closed solid waste landfills to parks or open space.

## Habitat & Open Space

- Protect natural lands through:
  - Partnerships with other agencies, stakeholders and non-profit organizations
  - Land acquisition
  - Conservation easements
  - Other long-term mechanisms
- Evaluate habitat monitoring, management and restoration protocols to consider possible future impacts of changing climatic conditions.
- Work with property owners, state and federal wildlife agencies to create a new or expanded multi-species habitat conservation plan.
- Develop and implement a community-wide urban forestry management and reforestation program to increase the carbon storage potential of trees and other vegetation in the community.
- Manage parks, open space, recreational facilities and other natural areas owned or operated by the district to ensure the long-term health and viability of trees and other vegetation.

**Note:** Greenhouse gas emissions (also called carbon emissions) generally include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro-fluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride. Greenhouse gas emissions are expressed as “carbon dioxide equivalents” which are numbers that translate emissions from different types of greenhouse gases, based upon their climate warming potential, into the equivalent amount of emissions from carbon dioxide.

The Goleta Water District updates its Sustainability Plan annually and issues progress reports to provide an update on the specific initiatives in the Plan, identify areas for adjustment, and describe planned initiatives.



- Support local efforts for a community-wide urban forestry management and reforestation program to increase the carbon storage potential of trees and other vegetation in the community.
- Manage parks, open space, recreational facilities and other natural areas owned or operated by the district to ensure the long-term health and viability of trees and other vegetation.
- Remove invasive non-native plants in order to reduce risk of forest and grassland fires (and the associated greenhouse gas release) and promote sustainable native forests and grasslands.
- Inventory existing trees on property owned or managed by the district and implement a management system to preserve and enhance the tree system.
- Plant native trees and drought tolerant vegetation.

### Agriculture and Food Purchases

- Enact a policy to purchase locally grown food for district food purchases, when feasible, to promote retention of local agricultural land uses.

### Offsetting Carbon (Greenhouse Gas) Emissions

- Achieve carbon neutrality at district-sponsored events and activities through conservation, efficiency, recycling, alternative transportation and other strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Purchase and retire (put out of use) third-party verified greenhouse gas emission reduction credits.

### Tree Planting

- Provide tree planting resources and information on the district website to encourage tree planting by residents.
- Participate in regional tree planting efforts to mobilize and encourage the community to plant trees.
- Create a district-sponsored tree planting program that offers free shade and other trees to residents, businesses, schools and non-profits, as well as education about the care and benefits from trees. Collaborate with the local utility if it has a tree planting program to help get the word out.

### Agriculture and Food Purchases

- Assist efforts by community groups and non-profit organizations to create community gardens.



# Community and Individual Action

Providing reliable and objective information helps inform residents about the causes, impacts and possible responses to climate change. Involving the community in the development of proposed sustainability policies and programs builds buy-in and awareness. Providing practical information that helps individuals reduce their greenhouse gas emissions empowers them to take action and make a difference.

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## Inform

- Develop and implement a community climate change education program that provides community members with basic information about climate change.
- Host informational workshops to educate residents and businesses about sustainability opportunities, such as those from energy efficiency and water conservation.
- Inform the public about the environmental, community and financial benefits of actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Issue a sustainability edition of the district newsletter.
- Include information in local district mailings, websites and other media about actions that individuals and businesses can take to address climate change.
- Share progress with community members on the implementation of district and/or community climate action plans and sustainability policies.
- Use the district's social media channels to inform the community about district sustainable activities.
- Distribute give-away items, such as reusable bags and compact fluorescent lightbulbs, to encourage environmental responsibility.

## Consult

- Create ongoing opportunities for community members to provide feedback on proposed sustainability policies and programs, such as through surveys, online or public forums and at stakeholder meetings.

## Involve

- Host a green leadership summit for community leaders, school groups and private entities to gather and share experiences, expertise, strategies and ideas for the development of a healthier and more sustainable community.
- Involve diverse stakeholders, including such groups as ethnic chambers of commerce and neighborhood groups, in developing sustainability policies and programs.
- Provide programs and/or incentives to individuals, groups and businesses that adopt practices that reduce their carbon footprint. Incentives can be financial or non-financial, such as official recognition of participants' efforts.

## Collaborate

- Invite community members, organizations and other local agencies to participate in ongoing conversations regarding future sustainable plans and policies.
- Collaborate with local utilities to create and publicize energy efficiency opportunities for residents and businesses, such as through an energy showcase home or model sustainable landscape projects that reduce water and energy.
- Collaborate with other local government agencies to share information about climate change and best practices to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Partner with other organizations to implement a bulk purchase discount program for such items as energy efficiency equipment and photovoltaic solar systems.
- Create an inter-district local or regional climate action partnership and/or action plan with one or more agencies or neighboring jurisdictions.
- Build relationships with cities and counties to support local climate action planning and implementation.
- Seek funding in partnership with other local agencies for sustainable efforts.

# Additional Resources



## CSDA Professional Development

[www.csda.net/professional-development/](http://www.csda.net/professional-development/)

## Cap and Trade Resource Center

[www.ca-ilg.org/capandtrade](http://www.ca-ilg.org/capandtrade)

## SB 375 Resource Center

[www.ca-ilg.org/sb-375-resource-center](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sb-375-resource-center)

## Adapting to Climate Change

[www.ca-ilg.org/adapting-climate-change](http://www.ca-ilg.org/adapting-climate-change)

Additionally, ILG has resources related to public engagement, collaboration and partnerships, ethics and transparency and local government basics. To access these resources and learn more, visit [www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org).



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