

## EAST PALO ALTO

Sustainability efforts in East Palo Alto began in 1916 when Charles Weeks founded Runnymede, a utopian agricultural colony of independently-owned farms whose owners could become economically self-sufficient through the poultry, eggs, and vegetables produced on their one-acre plots. Today, while few signs of the City's agricultural past remain, East Palo Alto is making progress towards sustainability through a variety of efforts.

### Carbon Emissions and Energy Use

In 2001, East Palo Alto completed an urban design plan for the City's northeastern industrial area, known as the Ravenswood Business District. This plan aims to create a pedestrian friendly, dense, efficient, and livable mixed-use district that incorporates energy-efficient and sustainable building design and is sensitive to the character of the City and the adjacent San Francisco Bay. As part of the plan, the City will soon begin constructing improvements to Bay Road, the main east-west thoroughfare in the City. The improvements will create a transit and pedestrian friendly boulevard with enhanced bus stops that will reduce transportation energy use. Over the past few years, the City's Redevelopment Agency has been working to encourage transit-oriented and mixed-use development consistent with the urban design plan. The Agency is also considering policies to encourage or require sustainable building practices in redevelopment projects.

East Palo Alto operates free shuttle programs for residents to meet critical transportation needs and reduce reliance on single occupant vehicles. The City's community shuttle connects residents to Caltrain and San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) routes, the City's youth shuttle provides access to jobs for local youth, and the City's senior shuttles transport seniors to programs, services, and medical appointments. In 2007, the City will implement a pilot transit pass subsidy program for low-income bus riders.

### Housing

The City of East Palo Alto is strongly committed to providing quality affordable housing for residents. The City's Below Market Rate ordinance requires that 20 percent of new residential units be affordable to low-income residents. The City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance limits increases in rent at 2,588 rental units and provides education and mediation for landlords and tenants.

The City is a partner in the Courtyard at Bay Road, a 77-unit, 100 percent affordable housing complex that opened in April 2006. A rooftop solar photovoltaic system powers a portion of the complex. The City also loaned the East Palo Alto Community Alliance Neighborhood Development Organization (EPA CAN DO) \$1.2 million for Nugent Square, a 32-unit, 100 percent affordable housing development that opened in January 2005. In addition, the City is home to California's first Department of Energy-certified Zero Energy Home development—the Shorebreeze Envirohomes. This 40-unit single-family development was completed in 2003 and incorporates solar electric power, tankless water heaters, and sustainable building materials.

In January 2007, East Palo Alto's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building—the new East

Palo Alto YMCA—opened to the public. This state-of-the-art 32,000 square foot green building uses 30 percent less energy than state standards and incorporates sustainable building materials, low volatile organic compound coatings, and water conservation measures.

### Local Hiring and Purchasing

The City's First Source Hiring and Local Business Enterprise ordinance applies to developers, new businesses, and construction contractors. It establishes a goal that 30 percent of new jobs created be filled with City residents and encourages new developments to purchase goods and services from East Palo Alto businesses. The City works with Opportunities Industrialization Center West, the local job training center, to provide training and hold job fairs for local residents.

### Open Space and Trees

East Palo Alto has a severe lack of parks and open space. To address this, the City adopted a Park-in-Lieu Ordinance. It requires housing developers of more than five units to either provide park space based on a formula of three acres per 1,000 residents or pay an in-lieu fee that the City can use to purchase or refurbish parks and open spaces. The City is developing a Bay Access Plan to increase recreational access to the San Francisco Bay and San Francisquito Creek for East Palo Alto residents and workers. The Redevelopment Agency acquired a contaminated rail spur that will be cleaned up and converted into public open space as part of two new residential development projects adjacent to the spur. The City is also moving forward with plans to develop a nature center and recreational resource at Cooley Landing, a former county landfill on the Bay. In addition, the City of East Palo Alto and Canopy, a Palo Alto based nonprofit, launched the East Palo Alto Tree Initiative in 2006 to plant nearly 1,000 trees in East Palo Alto by 2010. The first set of trees was recently planted along freeway soundwalls. These trees are intended to reduce energy use, improve air quality, provide shade, and enhance the sense of community.

### Waste Management and Recycling

In 2004, 84 percent of solid waste generated in East Palo Alto was diverted from landfills through recycling and reuse efforts. This was achieved in part through implementation of the City's construction and demolition debris ordinance. In addition, the City's Corporation Yard helps conserve resources by accepting appliances, furniture, tires, used motor oil, yard waste, scrap metals, and universal wastes for recycling/reuse. Increased public awareness about the Corporation Yard's services helped reduce illegal dumping in the City in recent years. The City also partnered with Allied Waste to provide free compost for City residents.

### Crime Reduction

In 2006, the City made crime reduction a top priority because of the increase in homicides and other crimes that occurred in 2005. Through community involvement, collaboration with outside agencies, and City leadership, homicides were reduced by 60 percent and overall crime was down 11 percent in 2006.