

MILLBRAE

Millbrae has undertaken a number of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage environmentally-friendly and affordable housing, and promote water conservation. The City will evaluate further strategies through its new Sustainable Millbrae Program. The program aims to improve the health of residents and municipal employees, preserve the environment and property values, save money, and enhance the quality of life and community partnerships.

Carbon Emissions

In November 2006, Millbrae completed a first-of-its-kind cogeneration and grease receiving facility at its wastewater treatment plant that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by roughly 1,178,000 pounds annually, equivalent to planting 166 acres of trees or 116 cars not driven for a year. This cutting-edge project uses inedible waste kitchen grease to produce electricity that will help power the plant. It will produce 1,700,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) each year from a renewable resource, increasing the amount of “green power” generated by the facility’s cogeneration plant by 40 percent and saving about \$112,000 annually.

In 2001, the City transitioned to energy-conserving light-emitting diode (LED) technology for its traffic signals and energy-efficient lights at City facilities. A Facility Assessment Report and an Energy Efficiency Study for the Community Center were developed to help further reduce energy use at City facilities. In 2006, staff contracted with Right Lights to ensure the City uses the most advanced and energy-efficient technology where the lights are brightest. The City also planted more than 300 trees along parts of El Camino Real and side streets to help offset carbon emissions.

City staff is working with the Association of Bay Area Governments’ Local Government Energy Watch Program and Pacific Gas and Electric to identify other energy conservation programs and opportunities for the City, residents, and businesses. From November 2003 through October 2004, City facilities used 1,699,902 kWh of electricity and 20,465 therms of natural gas (includes the library and excludes the wastewater treatment plant and fire station #38).

The City educates staff and the community about Spare the Air days by posting signs at City facilities, preparing educational displays for City Hall, and e-mailing alerts to staff. In 1997 it began purchasing compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles to reduce tailpipe emissions. Currently 45 percent of its fleet consists of CNG vehicles. The City was able to defray part of the cost via funding from the Vehicle Incentive Program through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The City’s General Plan and the Millbrae Station Area Specific Plan promote the development of high-density housing and jobs near transit, thereby encouraging residents to reduce vehicle-related carbon emissions.

Housing

As previously mentioned, Millbrae’s General Plan and the Millbrae Station Area Specific Plan encourage the development of high-density housing and jobs around transit to conserve resources and reduce auto use. The City has 365 residential units approved or under construction within one mile of the new BART-Caltrain Station. The Specific Plan allows developers to reduce required parking by 20 percent within 800 feet of the station. The Station Plan requires developers to contribute significant fees to improve transit and pedestrian facilities.

For the past 20 years the City has worked to improve the pedestrian quality of the downtown and access to public transit. The City is currently designing two pedestrian crossings along El Camino Real to promote access to transit. The City and Redevelopment Agency are working with San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) and 21 other agencies to improve the viability of El Camino Real as a pedestrian corridor via the Grand Boulevard Initiative. The City is currently writing its first Bicycle Transportation Plan, and has already built a significant system of bicycle trails. A crucial element—the crossing of US 101 on Millbrae Avenue—is in design.

The City Redevelopment Agency’s Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund provides funds to meet the state requirement that 15 percent of residential units within a Redevelopment Area be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. The Agency makes non-amortizing second mortgages to School District employees who purchase homes in the City. The agency also has negotiated options to buy 10 percent of all the new housing built in the project area, for resale to low- and moderate-income buyers. Developers must pay \$125,000 for very low-income units, which the agency uses to provide housing in other parts of the City. It also supports the Human Investment Project, a home-sharing program. The agency is preparing to work with a nonprofit organization to buy rental property to provide long-term housing to low-income residents.

The City’s Conditions of Approval for construction and demolition (C&D) projects require waste to be cut in half or more. It distributes the Conditions and C&D guides to building applicants and contractors and the *San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Guide* to interested applicants. Recycling Program staff works with Planning and Building staff and sits on the Staff Review Board to provide input on projects. The City encourages applicants to incorporate green building principles into their projects. In June 2006, the County’s RecycleWorks staff held a green building presentation for Community Development and other City staff.

The City Council and Planning Commission attempt to ensure that modern green techniques are used to the greatest extent possible. This led to the inclusion of many green features in the construction of the new Millbrae Library. While the City has not yet adopted a green building program, there is keen interest in doing so, and first steps have been taken toward establishing a policy. Through its Sustainable Millbrae Program it will evaluate additional means to promote green building.

Water

The City’s Water Resources and Conservation Program helps residents reduce water use through education and incentives, including distributing Lawn Watering Guides, sprinkler gauges, and toilet leak dye tablets; holding workshops on water-wise landscaping; issuing low-flow toilet rebates; and facilitating water awareness activities among students. The City also uses recycled water to irrigate the 101-Millbrae interchange.

The City follows the County’s Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (STOPPP) C3 provisions for development projects to reduce storm drain runoff. New development projects must comply with the STOPPP Better Management Practices.