San Carlos

During 2006, the City of San Carlos continued to make significant progress towards sustainability. The City's "Enhancing the City of Good Living" initiative developed by Council Member Inge Tiegel-Doherty is designed to involve the community in making the City a better place to live and includes programs to advance sustainability.

Carbon Emissions and Energy Use

Key efforts to reduce carbon emissions and energy use include installing photovoltaics at the City Corporation Yard (saving $15,000 per year in electrical and energy costs); upgrading the City Hall heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system; and implementing energy efficiency improvements (saving $80,000 per year). The solar system addresses the increasing cost and fluctuation of energy prices while increasing renewable energy production. Other efforts include replacing office lighting with fluorescent bulbs and ballasts and replacing traffic signal lighting with light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

An electric truck is being used for maintenance at one of our parks. In addition, at the City Corporation Yard, two Senior Park Maintenance professionals are forming a Global Warming Prevention Committee to create policies to combat global warming at the City level.

Housing

The San Carlos City Council has amended the City's Municipal Code to increase the number of affordable housing units required in new developments. For developments of seven or more units, the developer must now set aside 15 percent (formerly 10 percent) of the units to be affordable to low-income residents.

The City Council has also waived all fees for permits requested by residents and businesses in San Carlos that want to add solar and photovoltaic panels and systems. This is designed to make the housing and commercial building stock in the community more energy sufficient and sustainable. The City Building and Planning Departments also use the *San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Guide* and have approved green homes in the past year.

The City is working with the Joint Powers Board on their plans to develop surplus land adjacent to the San Carlos Caltrain Station. The proposed development includes over 200 transit-oriented housing units.

Water Use

A 32 member Citizens Advisory Committee on Athletic Fields completed its work with the Parks and Recreation Department in 2006. The Committee recommended the installation of synthetic turf athletic fields at three sites in San Carlos. Depending on the size of each playing field, this could save two to three million gallons of water per year.

Recycling

San Carlos has a Construction and Demolition Ordinance that requires the recycling of materials associated with remodels and new construction.

San Carlos residents and businesses are provided with free recycling collection services for paper, cardboard, bottles, and cans, and reduced recycling service charges for organics (food waste). The City has teamed up with San Mateo County's Environmental Health Department to offer battery recycling at several City buildings including City Hall as well as composting and recycling programs. Partnering with Allied Waste and the South Bayside Waste Management Authority, San Carlos community members now can include pumpkins in their yard trimmings cart for composting.

In the Parks and Recreation Department, wood chips from downed trees are reused in parks as part of our Integrated Pest Management Program. The Parks and Recreation Department also conducts composting workshops for the community. In addition, multiple youth programs incorporate picking up trash and cleaning up the parks. Partnering with Allied Waste Services, the Youth Center now recycles plastic, aluminum, glass, paper, and food waste, teaching youth to be eco-friendly.

City of San Mateo

The City of San Mateo continues to be a leader in advancing sustainability in a comprehensive manner. Its commitment is apparent in both the policies and practices that are advanced each year to address sustainability. From the adoption of land use policies that promote transit-oriented development to the incorporation of green building standards in new civic facilities, San Mateo's progress remains a role model for other cities.

Civic Facilities Go Green

The City recently completed construction of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver-certified new Main Library. The 90,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility will save energy by maximizing natural light and ventilation so that no heating or cooling will be needed 60 percent of the time. The library has energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems with an under-the-floor air supply which reduces energy consumption and improves indoor air quality. More than 90 percent of the materials and debris from the old library building was recycled, and many of the new building materials are of sustainable content. To conserve water, the library's landscaping is irrigated with rainwater collected from the roof. As a public building with more than 3,000 visitors a day, the new Main Library also educates and increases the awareness of environmentally responsible building practices.

The City has made progress on plans to build a new Police Station and reconstruction of Fire Station # 24, both of which will incorporate sustainable development and green building features wherever possible.

The City also completed the first phase of construction of Shoreline Parks, which promotes sustainability in several ways. The new parks provide more than 70 acres of outdoor exploration and feature educational stations with interpretive signs and information

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about the wildlife and natural habitat. The parks also include two outdoor classrooms, one near the wetlands area and one along the bay. These classrooms offer teachers and educators an opportunity to provide hands-on environmental education activities. Overall, the Shoreline Parks not only offer the community a beautiful spot to enjoy the outdoors, but they also foster greater awareness and understanding of our natural surroundings.

Carbon Emissions

The City has reduced carbon emissions through multiple strategies, including reducing its direct consumption of energy and encouraging residents to conserve energy and use alternative, environmentally-friendly energy sources. The City has incorporated biodiesel into its fueling program and almost a third of the City's vehicle fleet uses alternative fuels, including seven hybrid, four electric, and 79 vehicles that use biodiesel fuel. After auditing the overall use of energy in all City operations, City staff increased fluorescent lighting and installed variable frequency drives on air-circulation equipment in one of the City's garages. The City decreased its gas usage in most of its civic facilities by almost 30 percent between 2001 and 2005, and reduced its electric usage by about five percent during that time. The City also plans to evaluate the feasibility of using solar panels in any newly constructed City buildings, such as the new Police Station for which construction will begin in 2007.

The City encourages residents to conserve energy and use alternative, environmentally-friendly energy sources through multiple avenues. The City created a wall map of all of its parks and recreation areas as a user-friendly resource to encourage residents to visit City parks. The City is also working on mapping all pedestrian, bike, and public transportation routes linking highly frequented areas throughout the City, such as schools, commercial areas, and parks. The City is a member of the Peninsula Congestion Relief Alliance and works with the Alliance to reduce single-occupant automobile travel within the county. The City helps residents curb their energy use by posting many forms, maps, and information on its website so that residents do not have to travel to City facilities. Similarly, the City offers a variety of online services so that residents can complete their business tax application, register for recreation classes, or complete other tasks online.

The City of San Mateo Public Library, the 2007 SSMC Green Building Award Winner. Photo courtesy of the City of San Mateo.

Land Use, Housing, and Transit-Oriented Development

The City has several housing policies and programs that promote sustainable development, from promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) to increasing affordable housing and embracing green building practices. The City adopted its Transportation Corridor Plan which provides for TOD and created two zones for such development, one close to the new Hillsdale train station and one near the Hayward Park train station. The Bay Meadows Specific Plan Amendment, adopted in 2005, also includes TOD. The City also operates a below market rate (BMR) housing program, which requires that 10 percent of the units in a new residential development be below market rate. The City is currently reviewing its land use policies in relation to housing, particularly focusing on potentially increasing the BMR requirements for new development. Also, the City and its Redevelopment Agency approved the acquisition of a site within the new TOD zone for affordable housing and a second site downtown to provide single-resident only housing and some assistance to the homeless population. Lastly, the City started a process to define expectations for sustainable development in private projects. In June 2006, the City Council approved a Sustainable Development Strategy which relies on the voluntary inclusion of sustainable development elements into private developments.

The City uses the *San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Checklist* to promote sustainable development when discussing potential projects and provides information at the Building and Planning permit counter in City Hall.

Water

The City requires new development to meet water conservation design standards. The approved Bay Meadows Main Track development will be installing a parallel distribution system to permit the use of reclaimed water if it is available from the wastewater treatment plants in the City or Redwood City. The City is currently exploring the viability of using reclaimed water from the Redwood City wastewater treatment plant for irrigation purposes. The City also uses an automated sprinkler system in most of its parks which allows for central monitoring of water use and automatically adjusts the timing and flow of irrigation based on weather conditions.

The City manages a wastewater treatment plant that serves 130,000 people and businesses in our service area, which includes San Mateo, Foster City, half of Hillsborough, and parts of Belmont and unincorporated San Mateo County, at an average flow of 12 million gallons each day.