

Local Government Energy Efficiency

Best Practices

GREEN BUILDING

City of Chula Vista

Population: 251,600 (2013)

SUMMARY

The City of Chula Vista has a long history of carefully managing its growth and development to maintain high “quality of life” standards for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

The City has distinguished itself as a local government leader by integrating energy efficiency, green building, and other sustainable planning principles into every aspect of the development design review, project approval, and construction inspection process.

Because technologies and standards are constantly evolving, the City’s Sustainable Communities Program also emphasizes ongoing education and support for staff, developers, and permit applicants.

Its overarching emphasis is to investigate and update existing programs, guidelines, and regulations to reflect the advances that have been made in both green building and energy conservation for buildings as well as community- and project-level site planning considerations.

Sustainable Communities Program



Los Vecinos - LEED® Platinum Affordable Housing SCP Assisted Project

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- California Energy Code training for plans examiners and building inspectors.
- Reach code adopted at 15-20% higher efficiency than California’s Title 24.
- Expedited permitting for CalGreen’s Tier 2 (30% more efficient than Title 24).
- Pre-wiring/plumbing required for solar electric and solar thermal systems.
- Updated guidelines for Air Quality Improvement Plans for large projects.
- Integration of sustainability considerations into the City’s Design Manual.
- Development of site- and community-planning evaluation tools (underway).

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Sustainable Communities Program

LESSONS LEARNED

- The Sustainable Communities Program has been guided by extensive community stakeholder feedback and close coordination between multiple City divisions – especially Advanced Planning, Development Planning, Building, and Housing.
- In addition, the Program has created resources, such as online checklists, guides, and tools, to assist developers and permit applicants with understanding and complying with the City's Energy Efficiency and Green Building standards.
- The Permit Counter, staffed by Green Building-trained City employees, provides customers an additional opportunity for one-on-one assistance.
- Finally, the Sustainable Communities Program leverages its interaction with customers to link them to rebates and services available through the local energy utility, San Diego Gas & Electric® (SDG&E®).

THE REST OF THE STORY

The Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) is one of the main components of the Chula Vista Local Government Partnership (LGP) with SDG&E. The SCP was launched in 2009 and is led by a SCP Coordinator with support from other Development Services Department staff. The SCP directly supports a number of goals in the California Long-term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, especially related to “reach” codes and energy code compliance.

The program has made possible the following:

- Adoption of the Reach Code – The Increased Energy Efficiency Ordinance that requires an additional 15%-20% of energy savings (over 2008 Title 24) for new construction and some remodels was adopted in January 2010.
- Expedited Plan Review – Chula Vista also offers a voluntary program that will expedite Plan Review for projects that reach the energy savings of CalGreen's Tier 2 at 30% better than the State Energy Code.
- Future Energy Efficiency Measures – new homes are required to be pre-wired for future Photovoltaics and pre-plumbed for future Solar Thermal Heating.
- Adoption of CalGreen – Chula Vista adopted CalGreen, expanding its scope to include additions/remodels and requiring "Cool Roofs" to be installed on new residential construction in its warmer Climate Zone #10. Cool Roofs must comply with the solar reflectance specifications of CalGreen Tier 2.

The Sustainable Communities Program leverages its interaction with customers to link them to rebates and services available through the local energy utility, San Diego Gas & Electric.

- The development and maintenance of the Sustainability Center website:
www.chulavistaca.gov/goto/sustainability
- Energy Code Tool – an Energy Code Tool that identifies and generates all the Energy Code documents needed for Project Submittal through final Inspection. (Currently available for residential additions and alterations only.)
- Updated Air Quality Improvement Plan (AQIP) Guidelines – all large master planned projects are required to prepare an AQIP that includes an evaluation of the project's performance against a series of sustainability indicators using Criterion Planners' INDEX model. Projects must meet certain threshold scores for each indicator.
- Updated City Design Manual – the updated Design Manual now includes provisions for mixed-use development, energy conservation, resource conservation and adaptive reuse, and energy and water conserving landscape. > [more...](#)

Sustainable Communities Program

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- Community- and Site-Planning Evaluation Tools – currently under development with consultants is the creation of modeling tools to enable the calculation and quantification of energy savings and carbon reductions associated with applying various sustainable land use and design considerations at the site- and community-planning levels. The tools bridge from the LEED-ND system.

The SCP Coordinator position performs the following duties:

- Maintains and updates the Sustainability Center website with program related information and links.
- Public outreach through City information outlets and email distribution lists.
- Develops handouts and process guides for energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability measures.
- Shares program successes, lessons learned and progress with other jurisdictions, at events such as SDG&E Partnership meetings, and at community events.
- Provides regular in-house training to City staff on energy efficiency, renewable energy and green building.
- Participates in pre-construction meetings to explain energy efficiency and green building requirements.
- Maintains current informational material, brochures and handouts at the public counter.
- Conducts field audits to confirm compliance with energy efficiency and green building standards.

GAINING POLITICAL SUPPORT

Energy Efficiency and Green Building standards are an integral component of the City of Chula Vista's Climate Action Plan. As such, the Sustainable Communities Program is viewed by City leaders as an important tool for effectively reducing greenhouse gases and preparing for local climate change impacts in the community.

Energy Code Tool

The Sustainable Communities Program developed an Energy Code Tool that identifies and generates all the Energy Code documents needed for Project Submittal through final Inspection. For Residential additions and alterations only.

On-Line Permitting

Licensed contractors can apply for certain residential utility permits (registration required), and review/request inspections (registration required).

LEARN MORE

Development Services Department:

www.chulavistaca.gov/City_Services/Development_Services/Planning_Building/Default.asp

Sustainability Center & Energy Code Tool:

www.chulavistaca.gov/goto/sustainability

On-Line Permitting:

www.chulavistaca.gov/City_Services/Development_Services/Planning_Building/Development_Services_Center/Int_Permits.asp

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Beacon Participant Profile:

www.ca-ilg.org/beaconaward/chulavista

Local Government BEST PRACTICES

SIMILAR PROGRAMS

■ San Rafael Green Building Ordinance:

The City of San Rafael adopted a mandatory green building ordinance in 2007, applicable only to new residential and commercial buildings. The Climate Change Action Plan, adopted in 2009, recommended updating the ordinance to include existing building remodels, since over 80% of construction activity in the City involves renovations of existing buildings.

Rather than update San Rafael's green building regulations in isolation, the City undertook a collaborative process with other Marin cities, towns and the County to help develop a model green building ordinance for adoption throughout the county.

Download the fact sheet:

www.EECoordinator.info/best-practices

■ Southern Santa Monica's Green Building Design and Construction

Guidelines: The Guidelines include required and recommended practices that are intended to reduce life-cycle environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of both commercial and municipal developments and major remodel projects in Santa Monica. They provide specific "green" design and construction strategies in the following topic areas: Building Site and Form, Landscaping, Transportation, Building Envelope and Space Planning, Building Materials, Water Systems, Electrical Systems, HVAC Systems, Control Systems, Construction Management, and Commissioning.

Guidelines can be viewed at:

www.smgov.net/departments/ose/categories/build-green.aspx

For more information about this case study:
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Green Building

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

■ Best Practices Factsheet on Local Ordinances Exceeding State Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Reach Codes)

www.EECoordinator.info/best-practices

■ **ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability** offers a suite of resources to aid local governments in implementing energy efficiency measures and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

www.californiaseec.org

■ **The Institute for Local Government's Climate Change Program** provides resources, information, and recognition to help local agencies reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability-best-practices-framework

■ **The Local Government Commission** provides many free resources to assist local governments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy use including newsletters and publications, fact sheets, model projects, and articles.

www.lgc.org/SEEC

Investor-owned utilities offer incentives and other assistance to residential and commercial customers.

PG&E: www.pge.com

SDG&E: www.sdge.com

Southern CA Edison: www.sce.com

Southern CA Gas: www.socalgas.com

Check with your municipal utility for similar programs.

Funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by California's investor-owned utilities under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.