



San Gabriel Goes Green 2009 Sustainability Action Plan

Sustainability, Defined

Sustainability as a concept was first defined more than twenty years ago by the World Commission on Environment and Development. It means “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Cities have further explained the concept as one of balancing interdependent elements: environmental stewardship, economic development, social equity, and financial and organizational strength. Only with a solid financial base and strong community institutions can a city achieve its goals for the environment, economic development and social progress.

Sustainability is both a responsibility and an opportunity. It provides a long range way of thinking about our day-to-day decisions.

The specific responses to the sustainability challenge will vary over time. There is a need for flexibility and strategic actions as we move forward.

The City has adopted its first **Green Action Strategy**. The strategy will be updated each year to reflect accomplishments and allow us to set higher standards building on our early success.

Our first Green Action Strategy focuses on what we can do as a city to demonstrate good practices.

Future Action Strategies will also share the lessons that the public and community organizations have learned so that everyone can eventually become a part of the San Gabriel Green Action Team.

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A Strong Foundation

For the past several years, the City Council has taken a number of steps to make our City and our municipal operations more sustainable. Those actions include:

- ✓ **Green purchasing.**
- ✓ **Green standards for new development** in the Valley Boulevard corridor including design, construction, and landscaping.
- ✓ **Begun development of a new Public Works Maintenance Facility**, to incorporate green design.
- ✓ **Green staff team volunteers.**
- ✓ **Green building maintenance.**
- ✓ **New program for electronic waste collection** for homeowners through Athens Disposal in addition to green waste recycling services already provided.
- ✓ **Regular tree planting.** More than 1200 trees have been planted in the City’s parkways since 2003.
- ✓ **Participation in Edison’s rebate program** for replacement of electrical fixtures with ones that save more energy; \$50,000 in incentives paid to the City, and \$47,000 in energy savings projected each year.

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FOCUS

Lights, Camera, and Green Actions at the Mission Playhouse

The Mission Playhouse, historic treasure and theatrical venue, is also taking a leadership role in going green. Anna Cross, Managing Director, reports that all new paper purchased for office use has recycled content. The printers use recycled cartridges. The restrooms are already equipped with green hand soap and paper products with recycled content. Stage lighting was replaced with more efficient bulbs, with funding from Edison. When changes are made to the theater's ancillary spaces like dressing rooms or the green room, paints and carpeting will be purchased that minimize the environmental impact.

Future plans include improved landscaping for the parking lot. Native plants with high drought tolerance will be installed. The landscaping can serve as a model for homeowners looking for ideas for their yards. Who knows? The enterprising Anna and her staff think there might even be room for a tiny community garden as part of the new landscape plan.

A Strong Foundation

Continued

- ✓ Acquisition of 20 alternative fuel (compressed natural gas) vehicles and three hybrid vehicles out of 120 vehicles.
- ✓ Retrofitting some vehicles to meet ultra-low emission targets, including tree trimming and sewer rigs.
- ✓ Cleaning stormwater catch basins.

San Gabriel Goes Green: Options for Action

Brainstorming Ideas

As City government, there are hundreds of things to be done to help make the city greener. However, just as we want to conserve nature's resources, we need to do the same with the City's. The recommended list reflects the input of the community, the Planning Commission and city staff from many departments (Community Development, Fire, Parks and Recreation, Mission Playhouse, Finance, and Administration) to identify the "vital few." The options listed below can be reasonably implemented, tracked, and can form the basis for an annual Green Action Plan that will be presented to Council with new options each year.

Making Choices

The items presented below are organized by resource. Within that category, there are two sections - things we can do, and things we may be able to do with a bit more investigation.

Items can be added to the list. Items can be deleted. It's Council's choice. Staff is ready to move forward at your direction.

Protecting the Earth

General

To do

- Amend the City's CEQA guidance document to encourage more active use of sustainable practices for all projects subject to CEQA review, especially when applicants are seeking concessions/variances from the City's development standards.
- Create a City award for achieving results that ensure sustainability.



- **Revise City policies and procedures to encourage green design and construction** by reducing constraints and providing incentives.

To investigate

- **Streamline development review** for projects that achieve the City's goals for sustainable growth.
- **Adopt State standards on an advanced schedule.** The California Green Building Code was adopted in the summer of 2008. It is voluntary until 2010. Compliance will be required effective January of 2011 and will cover commercial and residential construction. The standards are comparable to a LEED Silver rating. The City could be an early adopter.¹
- **Sponsor a food composting program** for restaurants.²
- **Add sustainability provisions** to the Zoning Code as part of the updating process.

Parks, Recreation, and Trees

To do

- **Plant more shade trees** and vines to help cool city buildings during the summer.

¹The code sets targets for energy efficiency, water consumption, dual plumbing systems for potable and recyclable water, diversion of construction waste from landfills and use of environmentally sensitive materials in construction and design, including eco-friendly flooring, carpeting, paint, coatings, thermal insulation and acoustical wall and ceiling panels. The standards cover commercial and residential construction in the public and private sectors as well as schools of all levels, hospitals and other public institutions. The green thresholds include a 50 percent increase in landscape water conservation and a 15 percent reduction in energy use compared to current standards.

² See stopwaste.org.

To investigate

- **Plant community gardens** on underutilized properties.
- **Strengthen the tree protection ordinance** as part of the Zoning Code update.
- **Purchasing equipment** so that we could mulch tree clippings

Sustainable Economy

To do

- **Implement a "buy local" campaign.**

To investigate

- **Promote green businesses** and green practices on our web site.

Sustainable City Operations

Green Expenditures

To do

- **Form a "Green Team"** of employees from different departments with an interest in promoting sustainability and provide training such as LEED certification to improve their capability
- **Transition from current practices** to purchasing environmentally -- preferable cleaning and office products.
- **Educate the public** about the value of reducing the number of hazardous chemicals in the home.
- **Adopt green specifications** for City remodeling projects to require low-emission and environmentally friendly carpet, sealants, adhesives, paint, flooring, and office furnishings.
- **Purchase vehicles** using clean technology
- **Use recycled paper** for City newsletters and advise readers.

To investigate

- **Determine the cost** of installing cool roof coatings on City-owned buildings.



Green Practices

To do

- **Include environmental tips** on e-mails from City employees.
- **Offer priority parking** for carpools and hybrid vehicles at City facilities.
- **Use duplex photocopying** whenever possible.
- **Build a Green Public Works Yard**
- **Use public transit** where feasible when attending meetings.
- **Create and maintain a green link** on the City's website.
- **Install motion sensor faucets** as a public education/demonstration.
- **Update the A/C system** in City Hall so that the entire system need not run all weekend, and can be turned on only when people are in the building. Install a split/independent system with multiple zones for each system so that smaller areas, rather than an entire area, can be cooled or heated.
- **Build a xeriscape demonstration garden** at the new Public Works Yard or other city-owned property.
- **Purchase furniture/fixtures** with recycled content to the maximum extent feasible.

To investigate

- **Mandate a green building rating system** standard that applies to all new municipal facilities that are not already in the planning stage.
- **Provide incentives to employees** for transit use, carpooling or biking to work and offer information on available transit and carpool options.
- **Partner with neighboring cities** to set up carpool programs.
- **Accept electronic plans** for review by building and planning.

- **Centralize some purchasing** for office supplies and cleaning supplies to ensure purchasing is consistent with environmental goals.

Water Conservation

To do

- **Install drip irrigation** for City landscaped areas

To investigate

- **Investigate alternatives** to front lawn turf requirements as part of the sustainability Code update to examine xeriscape and porous materials.

Energy Conservation

To do

- **Reduce the plug load** by shutting down electronic devices each night.
- **Replace street lights** with more energy saving lights
- **Replace traffic signals** with more energy saving lights
- **Weatherize** City buildings.
- **Replace existing light bulbs** with compact fluorescent bulbs.
- **Use high seasonal energy efficiency ratio** air conditioning in City facilities.
- **Open drapes during the day** and close them at night during fall and winter in City facilities.
- **Participate with the San Gabriel Valley COG** to help secure funding for energy initiatives.

To investigate

- **Explore getting the City off the electrical grid** and install alternative green power generators at City facilities using the sun or wind.
- **Promote solar energy uses** through new building materials/equipment such as solar water heaters.



Cutting Edge

While the ideas listed below require a bit more investigation to ensure they can be implemented successfully and economically, they fall within the spirit of the goals of the City Council.

Social Sustainability

- Invest in neighborhood conservation and community building.

Protecting the Earth

- Participate in regional discussions to implement state laws (AB 32 and SB375) related to reducing greenhouse gases and achieving more sustainable development patterns.
- Adopt sustainability requirements for vendors.
- Use CDBG funds for green building retrofits.

Green Practices

- Eliminate bottled water for meetings in City Hall. Replace with pitchers of tap water and glasses.
- Provide a bike pool for city employee use for short trips to other City buildings.

Conserving Resources

- Develop a point system for new development to rate its sustainability customized for San Gabriel.

Waste Reduction

- Investigate ways to increase our waste diversion.

Return on Investments

To maximize our returns on investment of city resources, staff recommends that we implement the following actions first:

No additional money required

- ✓ Transition to purchasing environmentally preferable cleaning and office products.
- ✓ Adopt green specifications for City construction and remodeling projects.
- ✓ Purchase vehicles using clean technology.
- ✓ Participate with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (COG) to secure additional funding for energy initiatives.
- ✓ Partner with the San Gabriel School District in outreach and education efforts.

Additional money required

- ✓ Build a Green Public Works Yard (the City Council has provided funding for this initiative, setting aside \$5 million for this facility in the capital improvement program; the City is beginning the planning and design process.)
- ✓ Install cool roofs on city facilities.
- ✓ Investigate updating the A/C system in City Hall to only run when people are in the building.



Our Green Report Card

Action	Completed	Underway	Ongoing
Convert vehicle fleet to more sustainable options.		X	X
Plan for a green new public works maintenance facility.		X	
Implement new electronic waste collection.			X
Continue tree planting.			X
Adopt San Gabriel Goes Green: 2009 Sustainability Action Plan	X		
Begin implementation of San Gabriel Goes Green		X	
Establish green e-mail list to send information to citizens		X	
Reduce the city plan check fee for installation of solar roof collectors.	X		

For More Information

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San Gabriel Goes Green

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