

BACKGROUND

On September 20, 1994 Santa Monica's City Council adopted the city's first Sustainable City Program to ensure that Santa Monica can continue to meet its current environmental, economic and social needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. The program has evolved in the twelve years since its adoption and has been responsible for many positive changes in the community. In 2003 City Council adopted an expanded version of the program called the Sustainable City Plan (SCP), which was developed by a diverse group of community stakeholders and lays out far reaching sustainability goals for the community in eight goal areas ([visit www.smepd.org](http://www.smepd.org) to view the SCP).

MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY

The SCP includes a number of indicators that have been developed to measure progress toward meeting the goals in each area. This indicator data is easily available on the [Sustainable City Progress Report](http://www.smepd.org/scpr) website at www.smepd.org/scpr. The indicator data present a comprehensive picture of our progress toward, and challenges to becoming a sustainable community. The Progress Report website is the definitive resource for community decision makers and residents.

SOME OF OUR SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESSES 2006

RESOURCE CONSERVATION: The Community Energy Independence Initiative was adopted to deploy energy efficiency, solar energy and clean distributed generation into the community and create the potential to become a net zero energy community.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH: The Watershed Management Plan was adopted. It is a comprehensive 20-year approach to improving water quality in Santa Monica Bay, increasing recreational options and controlling local flooding by enhancing investment in stormwater infrastructure and pollution control.

TRANSPORTATION: 81% of the municipal fleet was successfully transitioned to alternative fuel and the Big Blue Bus is at almost 50%. Alternative fuels in use in the city include LNG, CNG, biodiesel, hydrogen and hybrid electric vehicles.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: The City Council allocated funds for the development of a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy to promote sustainable practices and attract and retain sustainable businesses in the community.

OPEN SPACE AND LAND USE: Virginia Avenue Park re-opened and received a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification! It is the very first LEED certified park in the United States.

HOUSING: The city financed \$19million for the production of more than 80 units of affordable housing in 5 projects.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION: Community engagement and dialogue around the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element, The Village at Civic Center and other major civic projects has been exceptional.

HUMAN DIGNITY: The Community Development Program provided over \$6 million to support local family, disability, employment and homeless services.

SUSTAINABLE CITY REPORT CARD

The Sustainable City Plan sets very aggressive goals for a sustainable city and Santa Monica has received attention and praise for its sustainability efforts. This report card describes how we are doing at meeting our aggressive sustainable city goals and highlights areas of success and challenges that face our community in eight goal areas.

GRADING

The primary grade given for each goal area reflects the progress on the part of the community to reach the adopted SCP goals. The grade is based on analysis of indicator data and evaluation of progress toward meeting the targets for each of the goal areas. To better understand this grade, it is important to consider the aggressive vision of sustainability adopted by the community and the extent to which regional conditions and factors are influential. The effort grade for each goal area reflects the level of effort and commitment in the community that is currently focused on achieving the goals.

REPORT CARD



RESOURCE CONSERVATION

	2005	2006
Grade	C	C+
Effort	A	A

If the city as a whole is to meet its aggressive Sustainable City Plan targets, residents and businesses will have to prioritize resource use reduction. Current water use is higher than our aggressive target levels and solid waste generation is beyond the Sustainable City Plan ceiling. However, commitment to water and energy conservation has kept at bay expected increases in resource usage associated with Santa Monica's strong economy and growth in construction activity. Energy conservation measures have been successful and solid waste diversion stayed on track at 67%. Green building blossomed this year with the certification of two new LEED buildings. Five additional LEED buildings are either in design or under construction. The city continues to be a national leader in modeling sustainable practices in its municipal operations, purchasing 100% renewable electricity for its operations and pursuing LEED Existing Building certification for City Hall. The grade improvement reflects the community's collective effort toward green design and construction practices and maintaining stable water and energy use.



ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC HEALTH

	2005	2006
Grade	B	B-
Effort	A	A

This year saw the completion of the groundbreaking Watershed Management Plan, a comprehensive 20-year approach to improving water quality in the Santa Monica Bay, increasing recreational options and controlling local flooding by significantly enhancing the level of investment in our stormwater infrastructure and our pollution control efforts. The city continued its commitment to protecting the bay and its marine habitat by moving toward prohibiting the use of foam plastic and all non-recyclable plastic take-out food service containers. Increased demand for treated, non-potable water from the SMURRF saved 24 million gallons of drinking water. Proper hazardous waste disposal by residents at the Household Hazardous Waste Center increased. Four thriving farmers' markets, one of which is regularly a zero-waste event, provide access to fresh, locally grown and organic produce. However, the grade for this area has dropped because wastewater generation has increased and the city is far from reaching its targets for reducing beach pollution.



TRANSPORTATION

	2005	2006
Grade	C-	C
Effort	A	A

Santa Monica has been a leading advocate for regional transportation planning and the Metro Expo Line, which will eventually reach Santa Monica, is now under construction. The city continues to increase Average Vehicle Ridership by encouraging ridesharing among larger employers. Ridership remains strong on the award-winning Big Blue Bus transit system, which is now almost 50% alternatively fueled. However, traffic and congestion remain significant issues in the community and the current network of bicycle lanes and paths are inadequate to meet the city's targets. Converting greater numbers of people to more sustainable modes of transit has had limited success in offsetting the impacts of increased tourism, commuter traffic and construction of parking lots downtown. The grade improvement reflects the city's increasing use of alternative fuels in its fleet, the opening of a hydrogen fueling station, and testing of biodiesel in many of its remaining diesel vehicles.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	2005	2006
Grade	B	B
Effort	C+	B+

Santa Monica's economy remains strong and diverse with growth in the tourism, retail, and information sectors. To build on this success, the City Council funded the creation of a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy to attract and retain businesses that support economic development, social responsibility and environmental stewardship. However, the rising cost of living and an unbalanced ratio of jobs to housing make it difficult for people to live near their workplace, exacerbating local and regional traffic and parking problems. The grade improvement reflects the continued adoption of business greening practices throughout the community and recent efforts to advance sustainable economic development. The city, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sustainable Works are collaborating on projects to promote sustainable businesses and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.



OPEN SPACE & LAND USE

	2005	2006
Grade	B+	A-
Effort	A	A

In the face of increasing real estate prices and construction costs, the maintenance and expansion of the city's open space over the last decade is remarkable. In particular, development of a public beach club at the former Marion Davies Estate at 415 Pacific Coast Highway will provide beachfront open space for public recreation. Virginia Avenue Park re-opened, establishing the first LEED certified park in the United States. Airport Park and Euclid Park construction are proceeding. Santa Monica's urban forest has grown in number and has diversified the average age and species of the trees. Park accessibility continues to be outstanding with almost 90% of residents living within ½ mile of a park or open space. A number of mixed-use development projects that combine housing, office and retail space have been built which can help reduce traffic and parking congestion and encourage walking and transit use. The grade improvement reflects the opening of Virginia Avenue Park and the progress toward the creation of even more open space.



HOUSING

	2005	2006
Grade	D-	D
Effort	A	A

Since 1999, the affordability of almost half the City's rent controlled housing units has been lost due to vacancy decontrol. This factor, combined with sustained upward pressure on real estate prices, has severely reduced the availability of affordable housing. However, great strides have still been made. The Housing and Redevelopment Division financed \$19 million for the production of more than 80 units of affordable housing in 5 projects in the past year. Half of this housing targets special needs groups. Public involvement in planning of The Village housing development in the Civic Center has been robust. The project will create an additional 160 affordable housing units. The grade improvement reflects these tangible accomplishments in providing affordable housing.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

	2005	2006
Grade	B+	A-
Effort	A	A

Santa Monicans are engaged with their community. They participate in community events and neighborhood meetings and have widespread awareness of community issues. Voter participation rates among residents typically exceed LA County, state and federal averages although off-year voter participation continues to be marginal. The grade improvement reflects active community dialogue around the update of the Land Use and Circulation Elements as well as The Village at the Civic Center and other major civic projects. Further, the Cultural Affairs Division has initiated a Cultural and Community Arts Master Plan, which will forge a common vision of the artistic and cultural life of the city.



HUMAN DIGNITY

	2005	2006
Grade	N/A	B-
Effort	A	A

Santa Monica has historically been very proactive in supporting the ability of its residents to meet their basic needs and live with dignity. The Community Development Grants Program provides over \$6 million annually to support local family, disability, employment and homeless services. Generally, Santa Monica residents feel safe in their communities and feel empowered to meet their basic needs. This year's grade reflects the leadership role the city has taken in addressing regional homelessness with the creation of a new position, the Santa Monica Homeless Czar, and the establishment of a Homeless Community Court and other significant regional initiatives. However, public safety in the Pico neighborhood remains a major concern. Much work remains to be done as the city and the community better define the additional initiatives and investments that will positively impact human dignity.

The summaries and grades reflect the specific indicator data for each of the SCP goal areas. We encourage you to look at this data yourself at www.smepd.org/scpr and begin to use the website to help with your decision-making. In order to become a more sustainable community all community members must be educated and empowered to achieve our goals.

If you have questions please contact the city's **Environmental Programs Division** at 310 458 2213 or email at environment@smgov.net.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT www.smepd.org