

SUSTAINABLE SANTA MONICA



SUSTAINABLE CITY REPORT CARD

THIRD ANNUAL
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

Thirteen years ago Santa Monica launched the Sustainable City Plan (SCP), a visionary plan for the community's future. Santa Monica is now an internationally recognized and award winning sustainability leader. This annual Sustainable City Report Card presents a snapshot of Santa Monica's progress toward meeting its aggressive Sustainable City Plan goals.

www.smepd.org

SOME OF OUR SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESSES 2007

RESOURCE CONSERVATION:

Success with Solar: Solar Santa Monica was launched to deploy energy efficiency, solar energy and clean distributed generation into the community and create the potential to become a net zero energy community. 20 solar projects were installed last year!

Better Buildings: The Main Branch of the Santa Monica Public Library received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification last year. The building received the prestigious gold level certification.

Collecting Compostables: The city's food waste composting program kept more than 3 million pounds of food waste from Santa Monica restaurants out of the landfill last year.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH:

Beautiful Beaches: Santa Monica voters approved the Clean Beaches and Ocean parcel tax which will fund a comprehensive 20-year plan to improve water quality in Santa Monica Bay, increasing recreational options and controlling local flooding by enhancing investment in stormwater infrastructure and pollution control.

Market Madness: More than 1,040,000 people annually visit four thriving farmers' markets that provide access to fresh, locally grown and organic produce! The Sunday Main Street farmers' market is a zero waste event and the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District continues to provide locally grown, organic produce to students every day as part of the organic school salad bar program.

Reusing Resources: The amount of recycled water from the Santa Monica Urban Runoff and Recycling Facility (SMURRF) being used in the city increased 35% to a total of 32 million gallons per year.

Helping Households: The Household Hazardous Waste Facility has kept more than 133,000 pounds of hazardous materials out of the landfills. And this year, satellite battery collection sites were launched throughout the community.

TRANSPORTATION:

Friendly Fuels: 82% of the municipal fleet has successfully transitioned to alternative fuel and the Big Blue Bus is almost 100%. Alternative fuels in use in the city include LNG, CNG, biodiesel, hydrogen, hybrid and electric vehicles.

Biking is Big: This year the bike valet program parked 16,310 bikes at events around the city, the BIKE Santa Monica map was released and the community began giving input into the design of Exposition Bike Way.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Still Strong: Santa Monica's economy remains strong and diverse with growth in the tourism, retail, and information sectors. Efforts are underway to strengthen the local economy, promote sustainable business practices and attract and retain sustainable businesses in the community.

Green is Good: Over 20 Santa Monica businesses were recognized for their exceptional commitment to sustainable practices through the Green Business Certification Program and the Sustainable Quality Awards. An additional 20 businesses received comprehensive green business consultations as part of the Sustainable Works Business Greening Program.

OPEN SPACE AND LAND USE:

Places to Play: Airport Park and Euclid Park both opened this year. Together, they represent more than 8.3 acres of new and renovated park space. Airport Park is the first new park in Santa Monica since 1983. Euclid Park is a newly renovated "backyard" park in a densely-populated neighborhood.

Outstanding Open Space: Santa Monica's open space system includes 245 acres of state beach and 26 community parks. Almost 90% of city residents live within ½ mile of a park or open space.

HOUSING:

Bringing New Buildings: The city financed almost \$16 million for the production of more than 60 units of affordable housing in three projects.

Affecting Affordability: The city's progressive legal protections, such as the just-cause eviction protections in rent controlled units, have helped to keep 40% of the controlled units affordable to low and very-low income tenants.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION:

People Participate: Community participation in the update of the Land Use and Circulation Elements has been consistently high. More than 350 people participated in the neighborhood placemaking workshops and more than 100 people participated in the industrial lands workshop, thus taking an active role in shaping the future of Santa Monica.

Community Coming Together: More than 12,000 people attended this year's zero waste community festival which highlights Santa Monica's cultural vitality and environmental sustainability.

HUMAN DIGNITY:

Caring Community: The Community Development Grants Program provided over \$6.7 million to support local family, disability, employment and homeless services.

Helping Hands: Last year, more than 2,700 homeless persons received case management and employment assistance. As a result, 1,116 people were placed in housing and 502 people were employed.

SUSTAINABLE CITY REPORT CARD



RESOURCE CONSERVATION

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	C	C+	C
Effort	A	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. Solid waste generation exceeds the Sustainable City Plan ceiling and continues to increase. Diversion dropped to 62% of generation, down from a high at 67%, thus reversing a nearly ten year record of improvement. Water use increased 3% and remains higher than our aggressive target levels. However, 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 energy use in the city remains stable. The city government continues to purchase 100% renewable power for municipal operations and our commitment to green building resulted in the Main Branch of the Santa Monica Public Library receiving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. The city continues to be a national leader in modeling sustainable practices with the successful launch of Solar Santa Monica, a bold initiative to install solar panels on Santa Monica's rooftops and make a big step towards energy independence. The grade for this area has dropped due to the increases in waste generation and water use and the drop in waste diversion rates.



ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC HEALTH

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	B	B-	C
Effort	A	A	A-

This year Santa Monica voters supported the implementation of the Watershed Management Plan by passing the Clean Beaches and Ocean parcel tax. This allows work to begin on a comprehensive 20-year approach to improving water quality in the Santa Monica Bay, including 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 prohibiting the use of all non-recyclable plastic take-out food service containers. Sales of recycled water from the Santa Monica Urban Runoff and Recycling Facility (SMURRF) increased 35% to a total of 32 million gallons per year. The cumulative number of Santa Monica households properly disposing of hazardous waste at the Household Hazardous Waste Center increased from 29% to 36%. Four thriving farmers' markets, one of which is regularly a zero-waste event, provide access to fresh, locally grown and organic produce. These successes aside, the grade for this area has dropped because wastewater levels continue to be high and the city is far from reaching its targets for beach closures and Santa Monica Bay pollution reduction.



TRANSPORTATION

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	C-	C	C+
Effort	A	A	A

Santa Monica has been a leading advocate for regional transportation planning, including the Exposition Line Light Rail which is an important part of the overall regional strategy to enhance mobility and relieve congestion. The city continues to increase Average Vehicle Ridership by encouraging ridesharing among larger employers. In fact, the current Average Vehicle Ridership of 1.59 exceeds the Sustainable City Plan target of 1.5. Ridership remains strong on the award-winning Big Blue Bus transit system, which is now almost 100% alternatively fueled. The environmentally friendly Mini Blue was launched this year to meet community transit needs. The new bike valet service parked 16,310 bikes last year for free, thus reducing vehicle traffic and emissions while improving air quality and safety in pedestrian walk areas. Additionally, more than 80% of the city's municipal fleet is fueled by alternative fuels. However, traffic and congestion remain significant issues in the community and the current network of bicycle lanes and paths are inadequate to meet the Sustainable City Plan 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 increases in Average Vehicle Ridership, the use of alternative fuels in the municipal fleet, the incentives for bicycling as an alternative to car use, and the commitment to regional transportation solutions.

SUSTAINABLE CITY REPORT CARD



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	B	B	B
Effort	C+	B+	A-

Santa Monica's economy remains strong and diverse with growth in the tourism, retail, and information sectors. The local economy remains resilient with no sector representing more than 25% of the total economic activity. 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. 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. Over 20 Santa Monica businesses were recognized for their exceptional commitment to sustainable practices through the Green Business Certification Program and the Sustainable Quality Awards. An additional 20 businesses received comprehensive green business consultations as part of the Sustainable Works Business Greening Program. 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. Santa Monica's jobs/housing balance rose to 1.52 this year, a further move away from the 1.0 target established in the Sustainable City Plan. The grade improvement reflects the continued adoption of business greening practices throughout the community.



OPEN SPACE & LAND USE

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	B+	A-	A-
Effort	A	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. The city opened both Airport Park and Euclid Park this year. Together, they represent more than 8.3 acres of park space. Airport Park is the first new park in Santa Monica since 1983 and Euclid Park is a newly renovated "backyard" park in a densely-populated neighborhood. A Beach Greening project at the southern end of the 2030 Ocean Avenue Beach parking lot and planned improvements at REED Park are also 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 consistent grade reflects the city's ongoing commitment to maintaining a sufficient and diverse open space system as well as the continued efforts to create land use and transportation policies that promote mixed-use, transit-oriented development.



HOUSING

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	D-	D	D
Effort	A	A	A

Since 1999, the city has lost more than half of its rent controlled housing units due to state-mandated vacancy decontrol. The controlled housing stock affordable to low and very-low income residents continues to decrease from 86% before state-mandated vacancy decontrol in 1999 to 40% in 2006. This factor, combined with sustained upward pressure on real estate prices, has severely reduced the availability of affordable housing. However, the city's progressive legal protections, such as the just-cause eviction protections in rent controlled units, have contributed to keeping 40% of the controlled units affordable to low and very-low income tenants. In addition to preserving the existing stock of affordable rental units, the city is investing in the development of new affordable housing. The Housing and Redevelopment Division financed almost \$16 million for the production of more than 60 units of affordable housing in three projects. Design development for the Civic Center Village is underway and will include at least 160 affordable housing units. The consistent grade reflects the continued loss of housing affordability while recognizing the significant accomplishments being made in both retaining existing and providing additional housing units affordable to low income residents.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	B+	A-	A-
Effort	A	A	A

Santa Monicans are engaged with their community and participate in community events and neighborhood meetings. There are seven active neighborhood organizations and five active business improvement districts throughout the community. More than 49% of residents contacted a city department in 2006 and almost half of all residents attended an arts or cultural event. Santa Monica residents have widespread awareness of community issues. Residents and business leaders have been active participants in the update to the Land Use and Circulation Elements. Santa Monica's voter participation rates typically exceed LA County, state and federal averages, although off-year voter participation continues to be marginal. Santa Monicans also utilize their public resources. Last year, the Santa Monica Public Library celebrated its 1,000,000th visitor. The consistent grade reflects the continued community participation in the update of the Land Use and Circulation Elements as well as major civic projects. Further, it reflects the leadership of the Cultural Affairs Division in developing Creative Capital: A Community and Cultural Arts Plan to forge a common vision of the artistic and cultural life of the city.



HUMAN DIGNITY

	2005	2006	2007
Grade	N/A	B-	B-
Effort	A	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. Generally, Santa Monica residents feel safe in their communities and feel empowered to meet their basic needs. The Community Development Grants Program provides over \$6.7 million annually to support local family, disability, employment and homeless services. Last year, more than 2,700 homeless persons received case management and employment assistance. As a result, 1,116 people were placed in housing and 502 people were employed. However, public safety in the Pico neighborhood remains a significant 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 consistent grade reflects the continued leadership role the city has taken in addressing regional homelessness including the establishment of a Homeless Community Court and other significant initiatives.

THE 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.

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 community sustainability goals. 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.

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](mailto:environment@smgov.net) at 310-458-2213 or environment@smgov.net.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT www.smepd.org

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