



MEMORANDUM

To: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
From: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER
Subject: GREEN BUSINESS CERTIFICATION
Date: March 29, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Debra J. Figone, the Town Manager.

The Town applied for and received certification as a "Green Business" and thereby joins four other cities in the County which have received this award.

The Bay Area Green Business Program was developed by Bay Area local governments in collaboration with United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the business community. The Association of Bay Area Governments coordinates the Program, which is implemented by Green Business Coordinators in seven participating counties.

The Bay Area Green Business Program is a successful partnership of environmental agencies and utilities that assists, recognizes and promotes businesses and government agencies that volunteer to operate in a more environmentally responsible way. To be certified "green," the Town was required to demonstrate its compliance with environmental regulations and meet program standards in the areas of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, Energy Conservation, Water Conservation, and Pollution Prevention.

Through our participation in the Program, the Town has committed to meeting the following objectives:

- To comply with all applicable environmental regulations and strive to exceed compliance.
- To conserve energy, water and other natural resources.
- To develop and implement practices that prevent pollution and waste.
- To be an environmentally responsible business within our community.

To maintain our status as a Green Business, the Town must:

- Track rates of water and energy use, and solid and hazardous waste generation.
- Provide ongoing incentives or training opportunities to encourage employee participation the Green Business Program.
- Market the Program and our certification.
- Apply for recertification every three years.

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As part of our commitment to the Program objectives, the Town has developed a cross-departmental team that will regularly review our performance in the identified areas (e.g. energy conservation). The Team will keep abreast of best practices, evaluating policies and technologies for adoption. It will also consider participation in other initiatives and assure compliance with applicable legislation.

The Town's participation in the Bay Area Green Business Program underscores our commitment to environmental protection. In addition to meeting the Program goals, the Town will continue to monitor and evaluate best practices in other areas such as building and transportation so that we can play a positive role in assuring a sustainable community.

Due to ongoing community interest and questions about the Town's environmental leadership role, we have posted the attached summary on our website. The summary will be updated periodically.
(Attachment)

Attachments:

Environmental Protection (Town of Los Gatos web page)

Distribution:

Regular

Environmental Protection Efforts

One part of what makes Los Gatos such a special place is its unique physical environment. It is nestled at the base of the Sierra Azules in the southwestern portion of Santa Clara County, where the Santa Clara Valley meets the lower slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Los Gatos encompasses a wide variety of terrain, ranging from flat topography at the edge of the valley floor to densely wooded hillsides. Both the valley and hillsides are interspersed with creeks, streams, and riparian habitat.

While local residents may disagree over the solutions to specific issues related to the environment, they share a common vision of a culture that is environmentally sensitive. The Town organization takes seriously its task of community stewardship, which includes resource conservation and pollution prevention. For example, it has been certified as a Green Business through the Santa Clara County [Green Business Program](#). To be certified "green," an organization must be in compliance with all regulations and meet program standards for conserving resources, preventing pollution, and minimizing waste.

Following is an outline of some of the many other programs and accomplishments of the Town in the environmental arena:

ENERGY

The Town is a member of the Silicon Valley Energy Program, a joint project of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and the City of San José. With the twin goals of saving energy and saving money, this program offers rebates, classes, energy audits, and technical assistance to businesses and city organizations.

All of the red and green traffic lights in town, and the majority of pedestrian signals and yellow traffic lights, use light emitting diodes (LEDs) instead of traditional incandescent lights. LEDs use about 10% to 20% of the energy of an incandescent bulb, reducing energy costs - and last about five times as long, reducing replacement costs.

As street light fixtures are upgraded and replaced, the old bulbs are replaced with high pressure sodium lamps. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, high pressure sodium lamps are very efficient, providing 50 to 140 lumens per watt, and have a lifetime of between 16,000 and 24,000 hours on average.

The Civic Center's HVAC system, upgraded in 2006, incorporates state-of-the-art technology, including variable frequency drives for the electric motors, which reduce energy consumption.

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Town's Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines, adopted in 2004, contain voluntary green building standards for new construction. These standards include the following goals:

- Siting and design of a structure should take maximum advantage of passive solar heating, natural cooling, and natural light.
- Landscaping should be used to control exposure to sun and wind.
- Building materials selected should reduce the consumption of natural resources and be non-toxic. This includes the use of salvaged or reused building materials.

Solar heat, as an alternative energy source, is encouraged by Town development regulations. For example, for about 20 years the Town has required that all new homes be pre-plumbed for solar water heaters and that solar be used as the primary means of heating swimming pools. To date, the Town has approved more than 1,000 solar panel systems on residential and commercial structures.

WATER

The Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance was adopted by the Town Council in 1992 to promote conservation and efficient use of water. All new commercial developments and residential

developments of five or more units are subject to this ordinance, which requires developers to calculate the water allowance permitted for the site and estimated water usage. The ordinance encourages the use of recycled water irrigation.

In partnership with the West Valley Clean Water Program, the Town sponsored a recycling event at which any West Valley resident, business, or school could drop off old televisions, computer monitors, and laptop computers. These appliances can leach toxic metals, such as lead, mercury, and copper, into our local waterways.

EARTH

April is Keep Los Gatos Beautiful Month. Each April, the Town sponsors a series of events and programs to celebrate National Earth Day, National Arbor Day, and National Volunteer Recognition Week, all of which occur during the month of April. Past events have included a mercury thermometer exchange, tree plantings, and the Bicycle Rewards Program.

Through the Adopt-a-Planter program, residents or businesses may "adopt" one of the 28 raised planting beds located along North Santa Cruz Avenue in the downtown. Planter "adopters" are responsible for purchasing, planting, and maintaining plant materials in their planter. The program adds greatly to the beauty and charm of downtown Los Gatos, and is a way of members of the community to connect to their natural environment.

In Fiscal Year 2006/07, the Town reached a milestone by receiving the distinguished Tree City USA award for the 27th consecutive year. The Tree City USA award is conferred by the National Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the U.S. Forest Service. In order to receive the award, a community must have the following: a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance.

WASTE

The Town Code requires developers to provide an opportunity for the public to salvage building materials from demolished structures. Developers must advertise in a newspaper when the structure is available for salvaging. All wood, metal, glass, and aluminum materials generated from a demolished structure must be recycled.

Through the Santa Clara County Household Hazardous Waste Program, Los Gatos residents can dispose of their household hazardous wastes for free. In FY 2005/06, 934 Los Gatos households participated in the program. The Town provides funds to the program on an annual basis to ensure that all Los Gatans who wish to may participate.

Los Gatos has maintained compliance with the state's solid waste diversion requirements, also known as AB939, and has had its diversion rate certified each year by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. In 2004, the most recent year to be certified by the Board, Los Gatos diverted 56% of its solid waste from landfill disposal.

AIR

Town Ordinance No. 1905, the Wood Burning Ordinance, restricts the sale and use of fireplaces and other wood-burning appliances that do not meet federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. According to the EPA, residential wood burning contributes significantly to particulate air pollution.

As of the fall of 2006, all of the Town's heavy-duty diesel-fueled trucks and equipment, including street sweepers and dump trucks, run on biodiesel. Biodiesel is a renewable fuel; in the United States, most biodiesel is made from soybean oil, though canola oil, sunflower oil, recycled cooking oil, and animal fats are also used. According to the U.S. EPA, switching an existing vehicle fleet to biodiesel reduces emissions of carbon monoxide, particulate matter, sulfates, hydrocarbons, and air toxics.

The Town, in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, helps to reduce auto emissions by participating in the Bicycle Rewards

Program. The program rewards residents for replacing car trips with bicycle trips, with gift certificates for public transit passes and bicycle equipment.

Town street sweeping equipment is certified compliant with Rule 1186 requirements for PM_{10} -efficient sweepers. This certification ensures that the street sweepers will pick up particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less from the roadway; the goal is to reduce contribution to particulate air pollution. The standard was established for Southern California municipalities, and has not yet been required of Bay Area communities, but the Town has voluntarily adopted this more stringent standard.

For More Information

Click [here](#) to search the Resource Directory for Environmental Services resources.