



2024

Annual Sustainability Report

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA



County of Santa Clara
**Sustainability
Master Plan**
Livable. Equitable. Resilient.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heartfelt thanks to the following departments for providing updates on their sustainability goals for 2024:

CEO	Office of the County Executive
CEPA	Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
DESJ + ODEB	Division of Equity and Social Justice and Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging
DPD	Department of Planning and Development
FAF	Facilities and Fleet Department
OEM	Office of Emergency Management – Office of the County Executive
OSH	Office of Supportive Housing – Office of the County Executive
OSR	Office of Sustainability and Resilience – Office of the County Executive
Parks	Parks and Recreation Department
PRC	Procurement Department
PHD	Public Health Department
RDA	Roads and Airports Department
Reentry	Diversion and Reentry Services
ROV	Registrar of Voters
SCCLD	Santa Clara County Library District
SCVH	Santa Clara Valley Healthcare
SSA	Social Services Agency

Thanks also to University of California Cooperative Extension and Joint Venture Silicon Valley.

PHOTO CREDITS

CEPA, FAF, OSR, Parks, PHD, ROV, SCVH

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Jay Jasper Pugao, Arjun Rajagopalan, Spade & Plow, Veggielution, Zero Foodprint





REFLECTIONS

The County of Santa Clara's sustainability vision is to build a livable, equitable, and resilient community.

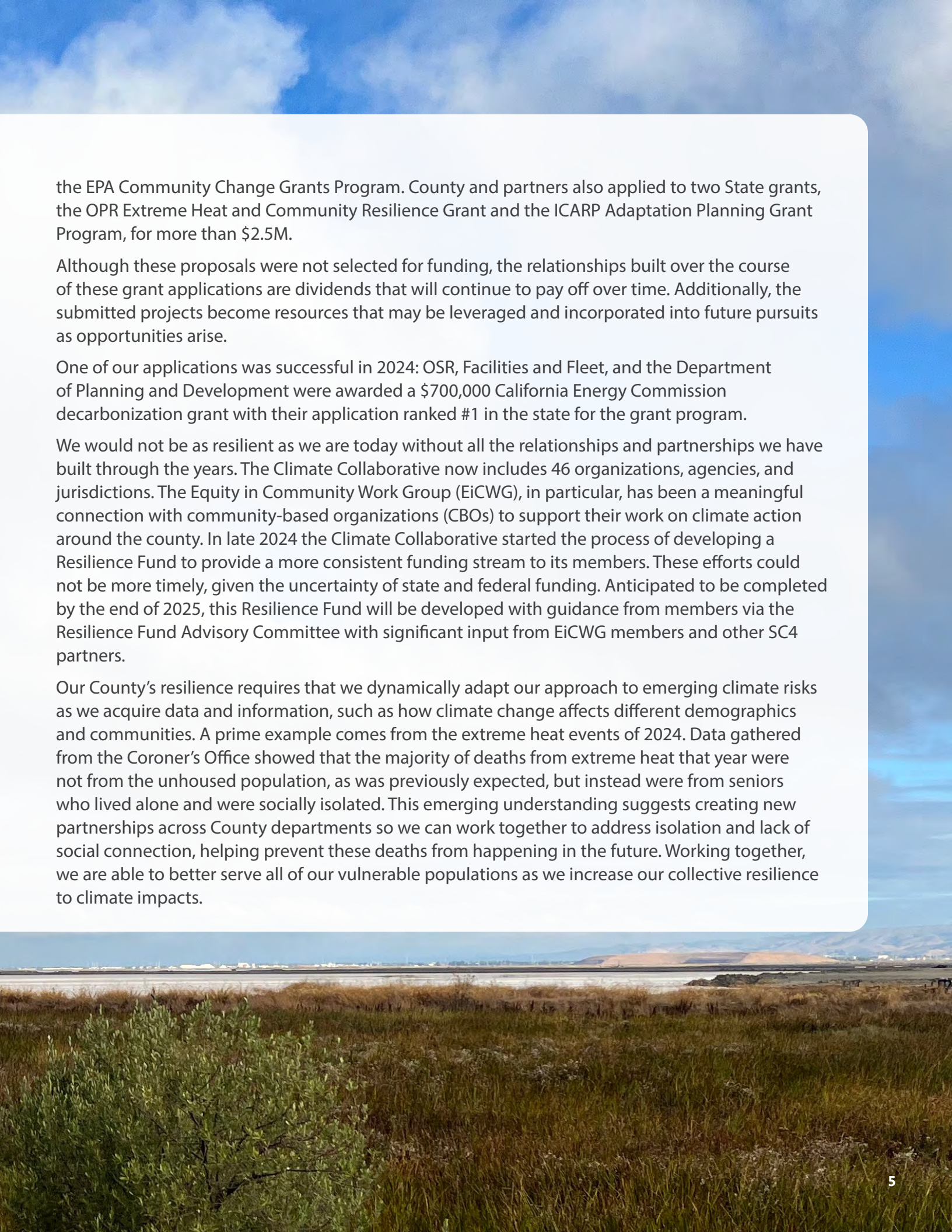
We continue to prioritize our fight against climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from county operations. Among our most exciting efforts are the electrification of Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC)'s chiller units, the implementation of a new waste management contract that consolidates and streamlines services and provides more accurate data in pursuit of our Zero Waste goal, and the addition of more plant-based menu options in our hospitals.

We work to be resilient even in the most challenging of circumstances. Housing costs and high cost of living continue to affect Californians, with local governments – including Santa Clara County – experiencing a budget deficit in part due to lower tax revenue from fewer property sales as housing costs continue to rise.

The Office of Sustainability and Resilience (OSR) responded to the County's budget reductions in FY 2024/2025 by allocating a significant amount of staff time and resources to apply for grant funding, in many cases partnering with other departments, agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), nonprofits, and academia in acknowledgement of the relationships required to do meaningful climate work.

Mostly through relationships cultivated through the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative (Climate Collaborative or SC4), nine grant applications were submitted across various funding programs. Over \$250M was requested across six applications involving more than 14 partner organizations to the Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (EPA CPRG) Implementation Grants. The County worked with 14 CBO partners to apply for \$20M from





the EPA Community Change Grants Program. County and partners also applied to two State grants, the OPR Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grant and the ICARP Adaptation Planning Grant Program, for more than \$2.5M.

Although these proposals were not selected for funding, the relationships built over the course of these grant applications are dividends that will continue to pay off over time. Additionally, the submitted projects become resources that may be leveraged and incorporated into future pursuits as opportunities arise.

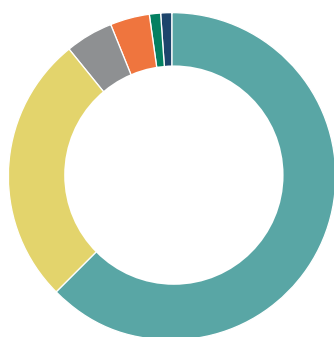
One of our applications was successful in 2024: OSR, Facilities and Fleet, and the Department of Planning and Development were awarded a \$700,000 California Energy Commission decarbonization grant with their application ranked #1 in the state for the grant program.

We would not be as resilient as we are today without all the relationships and partnerships we have built through the years. The Climate Collaborative now includes 46 organizations, agencies, and jurisdictions. The Equity in Community Work Group (EiCWG), in particular, has been a meaningful connection with community-based organizations (CBOs) to support their work on climate action around the county. In late 2024 the Climate Collaborative started the process of developing a Resilience Fund to provide a more consistent funding stream to its members. These efforts could not be more timely, given the uncertainty of state and federal funding. Anticipated to be completed by the end of 2025, this Resilience Fund will be developed with guidance from members via the Resilience Fund Advisory Committee with significant input from EiCWG members and other SC4 partners.

Our County's resilience requires that we dynamically adapt our approach to emerging climate risks as we acquire data and information, such as how climate change affects different demographics and communities. A prime example comes from the extreme heat events of 2024. Data gathered from the Coroner's Office showed that the majority of deaths from extreme heat that year were not from the unhoused population, as was previously expected, but instead were from seniors who lived alone and were socially isolated. This emerging understanding suggests creating new partnerships across County departments so we can work together to address isolation and lack of social connection, helping prevent these deaths from happening in the future. Working together, we are able to better serve all of our vulnerable populations as we increase our collective resilience to climate impacts.

COUNTY OPERATIONS

2022 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY FOR COUNTY OPERATIONS BY SECTOR



64%
employee
commute



27%
buildings, facilities,
public lighting,
and utilities



5%
vehicle fleet



4%
solid waste



<1%
closed landfills



<1%
reimbursed
employee miles

PROGRESS TOWARDS CARBON NEUTRALITY

In 2024, the County completed an update to its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for County operations. Using data from 2022, the GHG inventory includes emissions from the following sectors: Employee Commute, Buildings and Facilities, Fleet Vehicles, Solid Waste, Reimbursed Employee Miles, and Closed Landfills. Total 2022 county operations emissions were 136,658 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e). This represents a 58% increase from 2020 county operations emissions and a 19% increase from 2019 emissions.

EMPLOYEE COMMUTE is the largest contributor of current emissions, accounting for 64% of total emissions. It is the only sector in the GHG inventory where emissions have increased from baseline year 2010. Employee commute emissions increased 115% from 2020 and 101% from 2010 due to employee growth, post-COVID impacts, and model changes.

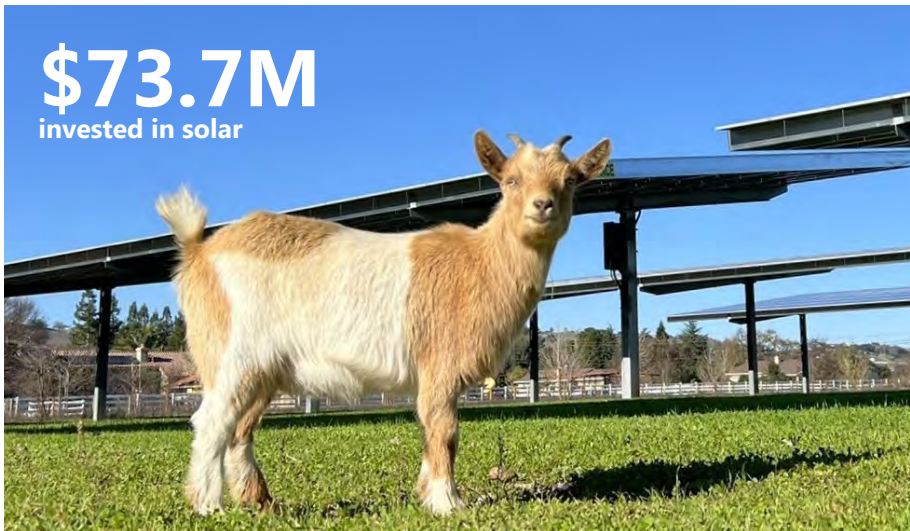
Buildings and facilities is the second largest contributor to total emissions at 27%. Emissions from this sector decreased 37% from 2010. Emissions reductions from 2010 baseline levels also occurred with Vehicle fleet (-35%), Solid Waste (-42%), Reimbursed employee miles (-42%), and Close landfills (-57%).



CARBON NEUTRALITY IN OUR FACILITIES, FLEET, AND EQUIPMENT

Renewable Energy

THE SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN (SMP) target is to transition to a 100% renewable energy system by 2045, which aligns with Senate Bill (SB) 100 Renewable Portfolio Standard. The County operated using 71.8% renewable electricity in 2024. This decrease in renewable energy usage compared to CY2023 reflects the County's decision in FY25 to unenroll in premium renewable energy rates offered by local Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) and forgo the purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates to help address the County's budget deficit. The drop in renewable electricity does not significantly impact emissions as the County's electricity supply is still over 95% carbon-free, which includes renewables as well as hydro and nuclear sources procured by local CCAs and PG&E.



Solar Systems Update

The County's solar portfolio has a capacity of 18.9 megawatts (MW) that are spread across 18 County properties and generate 25.3 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of renewable energy per year. To date, the County has invested approximately \$73.7 million in solar energy systems through a variety of creative funding methods including power purchase agreements, Clean Renewable Energy Bonds and Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds.

The County is currently working to implement the Renewable Energy Aggregated Procurement (REAP) Solar Project. Under the REAP Project, in CY 2024, solar systems were built at the Animal Shelter, Fleet Admin and Muriel Wright facilities. Remaining REAP sites, which include the Tasman campus, Valley Health Center Morgan Hill, and Saint Louise Regional Hospital, are in various stages of permitting, design and pre-construction activities.

The economics of the REAP Project rely partly on the Investment Tax Credit (ITC), a federal program offered to subsidize investment in renewable energy. While the status of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding for renewable energy at the federal level is currently volatile and unpredictable, experts are predicting that the ITC program will continue as a statutory tax credit offering due to its positive economic impact and longstanding bipartisan support.

As of March 25, 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency **ranked the County 19th for most on-site renewable energy generated** by any organization, public or private, in the United States!

BUILDING DECARBONIZATION CHALLENGE AWARDED

\$700K
grant to decarbonize County owned and unincorporated buildings

The Office of Sustainability and Resilience, Facilities and Fleet, and Department of Planning and Development were awarded a \$700,000 grant by the California Energy Commission Local Government Building Decarbonization Challenge, scoring #1 among grant applications in the state.

This CEC grant includes three components: developing a comprehensive roadmap to electrify gas packs and domestic hot water heaters in county facilities, creating a permit support pilot and enhancement program, and implementing a neighborhood electrification planning pilot program in the east foothills and Alum Rock areas of unincorporated Santa Clara County that qualify as disadvantaged communities.



COUNTY FLEET
CURRENTLY INCLUDES

329

hybrid electric vehicles

154

plug in hybrid
electric vehicles

70

electric vehicles

2

hydrogen fuel cell
electric vehicles

44

pieces of electric equipment
(e.g. carts, forklifts, traffic
signal boards)

Electrifying our Fleet and Equipment

The County continues to systematically expand our fleet of alternatively fueled vehicles, including electric vehicles (EVs), hybrid electric and plug in hybrid electric vehicles, and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles as well as electric equipment. The County's targets from the Roadmap to 2030 Carbon Neutrality for Operations are to cut fleet carbon emissions by 75%, achieve a total of 1,000 level 2 and DC fast chargers by 2030, and replace 75% of light duty fleet vehicles with zero-emission vehicles by 2030.

31%

of County fleet is
alternatively fueled

In the past year, alternatively fueled vehicles accounted for 31% of the County fleet. The County has on order or will be purchasing 237 EVs, plug-in hybrid, or hybrid electric vehicles to replace gasoline-powered vehicles before the end of FY 24/25. These new additions are anticipated to increase the fleet of alternatively fueled vehicles to 38% of the county's total fleet.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE is replacing gasoline-powered patrol units with 32 hybrid electric vehicles. 35 first-generation hybrid electric vehicle patrol units in the fleet are also being replaced with second-generation technology.

COUNTY PARKS At least 20% of gas-powered landscaping equipment such as blowers, line trimmers, and chainsaws have been replaced with their electric equivalents. The switch to electric equipment will continue as the gas-powered equipment wears out.

PARKS DEPARTMENT is implementing a Mobile Off-Grid Solar Charging Station and EV Truck Pilot. This project will test the viability of a pair of electric trucks powered by two mobile off-grid solar charging stations to support Parks fleet operations and the range requirements for fleet vehicles in the remote areas where the Department operates. Community Resilience Grant funding from Silicon Valley Clean Energy will offset the cost to purchase the two mobile charging stations and one trailer. Parks has funded the replacement of two half-ton trucks with two similar size electric trucks to support the grant.

THE COUNTY HAD A TOTAL OF 310 EV PORTS AT THE END OF 2024, a slight increase from 306 the previous year. The County's goal is to increase the number of EV chargers at County facilities. A new parking garage (Parking Structure 3) was completed at SCVMC in 2024 that includes 43 level 2 EV charging ports for County employees, but these ports have not been added to the total number for 2024 as they opened to employee use in 2025.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

Site design is underway for two new EV charging projects. The Berger EV Charging Capital Project will add up to 34 level 2 charging station ports for County fleet vehicles. A grant from the PG&E EV Fleet Program will provide 46 level 2 and DC fast charging stations at 10 County facilities for County fleet vehicles.

Parks Mobile EV Charging Unit





Employee Commute Options

27%
of employees
telecommuted

According to the 2022 emissions inventory for County Operations, the employee commute sector generates 64% of total emissions for the county. To reduce emissions from employee commute, the County continues to implement Transportation Demand Management Programs including hybrid work schedules, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) SmartPass, and bicycle infrastructure. In 2024, 27% of employees telecommuted, a decrease from 31% in 2023. The VTA SmartPass, valid on all VTA local buses and light rail, has been extended through calendar year 2025 for all County employees.

60
bicycles can be securely held
in new bike enclosure for employees

The SCVMC campus added a new parking garage that includes a secured bike enclosure to store up to 60 employee bicycles to make it easier for employees to select alternate ways of getting to work. Another secured bike enclosure exists at the SSA Julian campus with capacity for 24 bicycles. Bike enclosures, sometimes referred to as bike rooms or bike cages, are the most cost-effective way to store bicycles on larger campuses.



SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES CUT CARBON EMISSIONS

Santa Clara County is making significant strides towards SMP carbon neutrality goals by making sustainability a key consideration across its operations. These sustainability achievements and initiatives often not only cut our carbon footprint, but they can also lead to improved experiences for staff, patients, and the residents we serve, as well as cost savings for the County.

Changing the Default from Paper

Santa Clara Valley Healthcare (SCVH) has found many opportunities to save paper by defaulting to electronic versions or shortening After Visit Summaries and patient labels, as well as offering QR codes and links to patients instead of paper resources and educational materials. They are also using double-sided printing when feasible, transitioning to electronic faxing, and purchasing paper with 30% recycled content which also meets SB 1383 requirements. Importantly, these efforts also ease the paper burden for patients.

The Division of Agriculture (Ag Division) at Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA) continues to increase the number of businesses using online bill payment. Pest control business registrations and weights and measures device registrations are now all online. Similarly, the Santa Clara County Library System is taking measures to reduce paper waste and increase convenience for patrons by offering text messages for library notifications. Paper mail and notices are no longer provided unless the patron opts into it.

Using Less and Considering Better Options

Efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of metered dose asthma inhalers is progressing with therapeutic interchanges to allow pharmacists to switch to therapeutically equivalent lower emissions inhalers. For albuterol, we have saved 52.7 MTCO₂e over 6 months, which is almost one-tenth of total annual emissions from the Reimbursed Employee Miles or Closed Landfill sectors at the County. Additional inhaler types were added in late 2024 to increase the impact. Starting in 2025 we will expand this program to pediatric patients.

Data can help drive change. The anesthesia care team created a sustainability dashboard to track emissions related to anesthetic gas use by each provider and is seeing improvements in reducing emissions due to anesthetic waste. In addition, both O'Connor Hospital (OCH) and St. Louise Regional Hospital (SLRH) are substantially reducing nitrous oxide emissions by decommissioning nitrous oxide piping and transitioning to nitrous tanks. Decommissioning for SCVMC is planned in 2025.

REDUCING WASTE ACROSS OPERATIONS

SMP Strategy 1.5 Zero Waste focuses on reducing overall waste generation by supporting the sustainable consumption of resources and diverting or reusing materials. The County is undertaking efforts across departments to use less, re-use, and divert waste from landfills. One notable example is in healthcare.

SCVH HAS BEEN MAKING SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON REDUCING WASTE GENERATION BY FOCUSING ON GLOVES - the highest volume disposable product purchased in the organization. SCVH purchased 41 million nitrile exam gloves in 2023, resulting in 287,000 pounds of plastic waste and carbon emissions equivalent to driving 2.7 million miles in a gasoline-powered vehicle. The Use Gloves Wisely project successfully piloted in the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) and Plastic Surgery (Plastics) clinics in 2024 with 27% reduction in glove use per patient visit. One of the inpatient rehabilitation units (4ARU) saw an 18% reduction in glove use over 3 months, which has the potential to safely eliminate 49,000 gloves and 1274kg CO₂e annually for that one unit alone. In 2025, we plan to extend this project to other sites at SCVH.

To cut waste and reduce emissions to meet SMP zero waste goals and decarbonize healthcare operations, the operating rooms at SCVMC have made great strides in transitioning from single use to reusable medical necessities including:

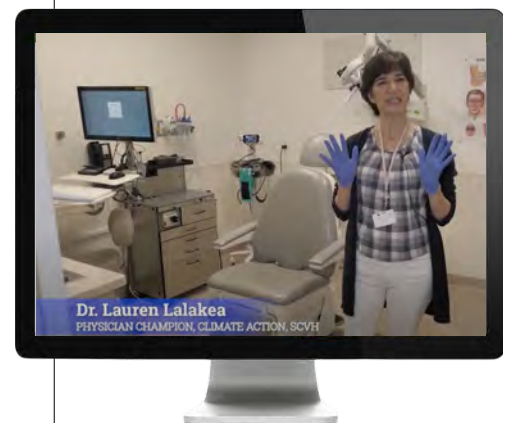
- + Reusable linens for operating tables save an estimated 20,000 pounds of waste, with a cost savings of \$100,000 per year
- + Reusable scrub jackets save 3,850 pounds of waste each year
- + Reusable blood pressure cuffs and gel padding are being piloted to further reduce waste to landfill

ENT AND PLASTICS CLINICS

27%
reduction in glove use per patient

4ARU INPATIENT REHABILITATION UNIT

18%
reduction in glove use over 3 months



[View](#) this short video that highlights the Go Greener Together Initiative on glove use with Dr. Lauren Lakakea

Other SCVH Waste Reduction Efforts

- + A new pharmacy project that is switching certain oral liquid medications to chewable tablets with a lower waste and emissions profile, with a 10% shift in prescriptions so far. This project will also lead to less antibiotic waste in landfills and reduce development of antibiotic resistance.
- + To keep medical equipment out of the landfill, SCVH has recently added additional types of surgical devices for repurchase, as well as reprocessed oxygen saturation probes, rather than buying new devices.
- + Plastic recycling has started in the SCVMC operating rooms. Plans for 2025 include other initiatives to reduce plastic waste, such as transitioning to paper medication cups for pill dispensing on inpatient wards.

HIGHLIGHT: ZERO WASTE

Santa Clara County has a goal of diverting 100% of achievable waste from landfills.

According to the 2022 GHG emissions inventory for county operations, solid waste accounts for 4% of total emissions. The County has created a strong foundation for making significant progress towards this Zero Waste goal by entering into an agreement with GreenWaste Recovery (GreenWaste) to begin providing waste services to all county facilities on January 1, 2024.



KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE ZERO WASTE PROGRAM for this new contract include serving all county-owned facilities (including South County, North County, and County Parks), providing exceptional customer service while maintaining competitive rates, providing accurate data to effectively track and support the County’s sustainability goals, and advancing the County’s Zero Waste goal.

Coverage and Consolidation of Waste Services

Under the new agreement, GreenWaste collects material from all County-owned facilities stretching from Gilroy in southern Santa Clara County to Palo Alto , and Milpitas in the north. Their service also includes facilities in the East Foothills and unincorporated Santa Cruz Mountains, areas that were previously managed by multiple haulers. Consolidating waste services under one vendor has greatly improved customer service and streamlined waste management across key County facilities such as Facilities and Fleet Department (FAF), County Parks, and Health and Hospital System (HHS).

Customer Service Improvements

Another way that GreenWaste has streamlined waste management is by introducing a dedicated phone line and email for County requests. This direct connection allows facility managers and maintenance staff to reach a customer service outreach specialist who is specifically assigned to County accounts and familiar with County facilities. As a result, there has been a 65% reduction in waste management requests directed to FAF staff, leading to an overall increase in satisfaction reported by field staff.

Accurate Data and Diversion Tracking

Tracking and supporting the County’s sustainability goals requires accurate data. Through this new agreement, accurate tonnage data from waste generated at County facilities is now available because GreenWaste keeps waste generated at County facilities separate from other sources. GreenWaste also regularly provides updated diversion rates based on how clean – and therefore how marketable - each load of materials is. Cleaner materials have higher resale value, which leads to a higher diversion rate. Waste containers from County facilities are monitored to review contamination levels and adjust service schedules as needed.

Zero Waste Progress

With all of the new actions and consolidation of waste services under GreenWaste as described above, 2024 will serve as the new baseline year for measuring progress towards the County’s Zero Waste goal of diverting 100% of achievable waste from landfills. In its first year of servicing County facilities, GreenWaste diverted 8,779 tons of waste with a diversion rate of 30.3%.

While this baseline diversion rate presents opportunity for growth, the new agreement, along with other strategies outlined in the Carbon Neutrality Roadmap, puts the County in a strong position to move towards achievement of its Zero Waste goal over time.

The Zero Waste program will be developing a comprehensive Zero Waste Plan and revising the Zero Waste Policy in 2025 to guide the County’s waste diversion efforts into the future.

STAFF OUTREACH AND
TRAININGS COMPLETED
IN 2024

3
Accounts Payable
trainings

10
Maintenance crew
trainings

4
Staff presentations

4
Facility Tours

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE
WASTE DIVERSION IN 2025

**right-sizing large
facilities and campuses
such as Elmwood, SCVMC, Civic
Center, Juvenile Hall ,
and Berger**

**adding organics
collection
to all South County facilities**

**expanding
recycling efforts
at County Parks**

**enhancing organics
collection
at County health clinics**

RESILIENCY IN OUR FACILITIES AND CAMPUSES

Planning for Microgrids

SMP Strategy 2.2 on Emergency Preparedness and Response has a target to install at least five microgrids by 2025 at the County's most critical operations, such as the Emergency Operations Centers and County Communications. In 2024, Phase 1 of our microgrid feasibility study was completed. Phase 2 will consist of more detailed investment grade audits and basis of design development. The sites under consideration are Animal Services Center, Berger Office Complex, Sherriff's Office, Valley Health Center (VHC) Gilroy, VHC Mckee, and William F. James Boys Ranch.

Continuity of Operations and Resiliency Study Completed for Hospitals

A core goal of the County as reflected in the SMP is to increase preparedness and resilience to respond to the shocks and stressors that impact the county and the critical services it provides to our communities. To identify and provide possible solutions for single points of failure in emergency infrastructure systems through System Reliability Assessments, a Continuity of Operations & Resiliency Study was completed in 2024 at SCVMC, O'Connor Hospital, and St. Louise Regional Hospital. Climate hazard assessments and adaptation strategies were also identified.

Reducing Water Use

County Parks implement a variety of practices to reduce water use, including replacing regular toilets with low flow toilets during renovations or repairs, converting turf to water efficient landscapes and planning for the planting of drought tolerant landscaping, prioritizing water leak detection and repairs, and reducing the run-time of irrigation timers for landscaping in developed areas of Parks by 15%. The Department is also expanding its use of water system telemetry to better monitor and manage water use at our permitted water systems.



Pesticide Management

Climate change and increasing pest populations are making it tougher to manage pests in County facilities. The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program is working to reduce chemical pesticide use in county operations, most recently working to build in-house capacity for site-specific IPM plans at facilities such as the Vietnamese American Service Center, O'Connor Hospital, San Martin Airport, and Elmwood Correctional Facility. In the past year, the IPM program:

- + Approved nine pesticide use exemptions for one-time use to control drywood termites or as part of forest fuel reduction and invasive species control projects on County parkland,
- + Provided Pesticide Applicator Safety Education to 67 applicators and handlers, and
- + Performed comprehensive IPM assessments and provided pest management strategies for a dozen county-owned structures, including healthcare and correctional facilities.

See [2023-2024 Integrated Pest Management Annual Report](#) for additional information.

>>>LOOKING FORWARD

The IPM program will soon be renamed the Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Program to reflect a broader focus on the interconnectedness of pest management and natural resources. Future strategies will emphasize minimal chemical use through improving sanitation and cultural practices, and expanding initiatives in urban forestry, water conservation, and sustainable landscaping.

SUSTAINABILITY-GUIDED PURCHASING

With leadership and support from the Strategic Source Officer and Sustainability Purchasing Policy (SPP) work group, County departments are looking for opportunities to purchase more sustainable supplies and undertake actions driven in part by SB 1383. Based on the spending history for office supplies and paper products ordered from Staples across the County, percentage compliance with SB 1383 was 30% in 2024 compared to 27% in 2023.

To date, 28 contracts have been executed that focus on meeting sustainable purchasing best practices focused on compost and mulch, good food purchasing, sustainable landscaping, office and cleaning supplies, waste disposal, and more.

The Sustainable Procurement Program launched an internal website to support County employees and departments in complying with SB 1383 requirements. The website provides a detailed overview of SB 1383 requirements, comprehensive guidelines, centralized recordkeeping tools, and useful lists of compliant paper products across categories, such as office supplies, food serviceware, and janitorial paper products.

The SPP work group and Strategic Sourcing Officer worked with County hospitals to:

- + Complete the SCVMC Food Waste Reduction study and provided suggestions for implementation such as better food production planning, food inventory management, and food donation to reduce food waste
- + Identify contracts that are up for renewal to implement sustainable purchasing best practices
- + Transition paper product purchases for compliance with SB 1383 requirements for recycled content

Choosing Good Food and Water

The Public Health Department (PHD) is in its third year of implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) at SCVMC, O'Connor Hospital, and St. Louise Regional Hospital. FY24 GFPP reassessment data shows \$561,309 in local food purchases, out of a total of \$3.9M spent on all foods and beverages at the three hospitals. This presents a unique opportunity to use County purchasing power to increase community health, climate action, and local economic opportunity. Procurement has been working with PHD and the hospital system on food-related solicitations to bring in high quality foods that are antibiotic-free, hormone-free, and climate friendly to the hospitals.

All three County hospitals are now stocking water in non-plastic containers and water in non-plastic containers as the only option for inpatients who request water in closed containers (rather than pitchers of water). In 2024 (through 12/15/24) 1,063 cases of water in non-plastic containers replaced water in plastic bottles at all three hospitals. In April 2024, the County began a new procurement contract with local seafood vendor Real Good Fish, which meets the Good Food Purchasing Program criteria for the Local Economies, Valued Workforce, Animal Welfare, Environmental Sustainability, and Community Nutrition. Additionally, all three hospitals have significantly increased the number of plant-based offerings for cafeteria patrons. See highlight on the Greener by Default Pilot Program at SCVMC.



ACHIEVING
SB 1383 GOALS

30%
compliance with SB 1383
for office supplies and
paper productions

28
contracts executed to meet
sustainable purchasing

**internal website
launched**
to support employees with
SB 1383 compliance

WATER IN PLASTIC BOTTLES
WERE REPLACED WITH

1,063
cases of water in
non-plastic containers

HIGHLIGHT: GREENER BY DEFAULT PILOT PROGRAM

Healthy food is a key sustainability impact area for Santa Clara Valley Healthcare.

There is also growing recognition that plant-based diets are supportive of better health outcomes. As a result, in recent years, SCVH has been offering more plant-based options for patients and staff in their cafes and cafeterias.



PILOT PROGRAM: GREENER BY DEFAULT

In the fall of 2024, SCVMC, in partnership with the PHD and the SCVH Office for Wellness and Experience, started a three-phase pilot program to locally implement Greener by Default in SCVMC's three rehabilitation (rehab) units. Greener by Default is part of a broader national effort to help institutions like our county hospitals serve sustainable and inclusive food – by default. On top of patient satisfaction and health, implementation by organizations such as New York Health + Hospitals shows a 59 cent per meal cost savings when plant-based entrees were served during their pilot program compared to meat and dairy-based entrees.

Offering Plant-Based Entrees

In the first phase of the Greener by Default Pilot Program in October 2024, SCVMC added one plant-based breakfast entree to the rehab patient menu (Coconut Berry Parfait). This was followed by the addition of a plant-based lunch entrée (Fiesta Burrito Bowl) in November 2024 for phase 2 and the addition of a plant-based dinner entree (Curried Lentil Dal) beginning in January 2025 for phase 3. These 100% plant-based recipes created by the SCVMC foodservice team have been very well received by rehab patients and staff based on feedback and sales data.

The goal is to incorporate the plant-based items that have been introduced by this pilot program into the patient menus for all SCVMC units on March 4, 2025. Additionally, piloting Greener by Default at O'Connor Hospital and St. Louise Regional Hospital is currently being explored. The SCVMC foodservice team recently engaged chefs from these two hospitals for a Greener by Default plant-based culinary training session. Expanding Greener by Default more broadly across the SCVH system would better support patients who are on vegan, vegetarian, or specialized medical diets with more menu options that align with their diagnoses, dietary preferences, and religious mandates. Expansion would also increase access to healthy and sustainable plant-based food for all patients.

Providing Food that Represents Diverse Cultures

Another key opportunity in expanding Greener by Default is serving food that better aligns with the cultural preferences of the many diverse communities in Santa Clara County as 40% of county residents are foreign-born. Since the start of the pilot program, survey responses from both patients and staff have expressed support for plant-based and sustainable meals as well as food that expresses the diverse cultures of our region.

Based on a patient survey with 58 respondents, 53% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that their culture was represented in the food they were offered at the hospital. 38% of respondents were somewhat or strongly in favor of and 42% of respondents were neutral to adding more sustainable options such as meatless entrees to the menu. More nutritious and locally produced foods are the top two values patients would like to see in the food served.

Based on a staff survey with 269 responses, health and nutrition are important in deciding what to eat. 33% of staff respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that their culture is represented in the food they eat at SCVMC. 52% of staff respondents agree or strongly agree with adding more sustainable options such as meatless entrees to the menu. The top two types of food staff would like to see more of are vegetarian options and fruits.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER
Santa Clara Valley Healthcare

Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
Introducing Smart Fridges!

What's Inside:

- Local & Seasonal Items
- Grab & Go Options
- Ready to Heat & Eat Meals
- Chilled Salads & Sandwiches

Location: New menu options are available in the rehab units and café.

Be Part of the Change!
Join millions of Americans embracing healthier, more sustainable food choices.

Plant-Based Offerings

Current Pilot Program

Breakfast:

- Coconut Berry Parfait (Oct. '24)

Lunch & Dinner:

- Burrito Bowl (Nov. '24)
- Curried Lentil Dal (Jan. '25)

Partnership
Santa Clara Valley Medical & Greener By Default

Goal: Promote healthier, sustainable and more inclusive meals for patients, staff and visitors.

New menu items are available in the rehab units and café.

Burrito Bowl

Coconut Berry Parfait

Curried Lentil Dal

WHY PLANT-BASED?

SUSTAINABILITY
On average, the greenhouse gas footprint of plant-based meals is half that of animal-based meals.

HEALTH
Plant-based diets are associated with significantly lower risk of chronic diseases.

INCLUSIVITY
Plant-based meals are more inclusive of those with allergies and cultural or religious restrictions.

BOTTOM LINE
Incorporating more plant-based foods can provide health and savings.

Questions? Contact: Scott L. Kule at skule@hhs.sccgov.org



Photo Credit: Jay Jasper Pugao

59¢
per meal cost savings when
using plant-based entrees
according to New York Health
+ Hospital System

52%
of staff want sustainable
food options

OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

STAFF PARTICIPATION

1,197
county staff have completed
the climate change training

Climate Change Training Encouraged for All County Employees

The course Climate Change: What We Can Do was developed to provide employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to address climate challenges, including within their roles, to support departmental sustainability goals and contribute to organizational resilience and adaptation.

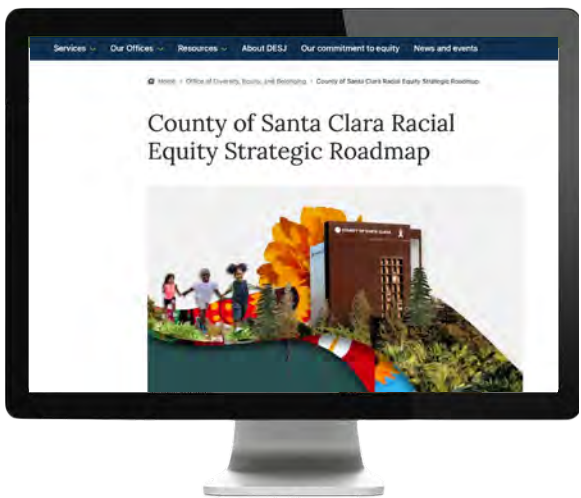
By the end of 2024, 1,197 County employees have completed the course, with 81 currently in progress and 55 registered to begin. The Public Health, Environmental Health, and Parks and Recreation departments have made this course mandatory for staff, setting a model for other departments to follow.

Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap and Training

Beginning in December 2023, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (ODEB) facilitated the co-design of the County's first Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap.

The process included Countywide engagement of departments and agencies, as well as engagement and partnership with the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits' Racial Equity Action Leadership (REAL) Coalition. The Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap was completed in June 2024. Deliverables include an equity definition with guiding principles for achieving transformative racial equity in government. The Roadmap also establishes a countywide vision, priority areas, goals, strategies, and measures for racial equity in County programs and services.

Implementation started in October 2024, requiring all County departments to identify their role within the internal goals and strategies outlined in the roadmap and work with ODEB to build an action plan to track, monitor, and communicate progress. In 2024, ODEB also trained over 220 county executives on how to lead for racial equity and prepared them for the [Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap](#). ODEB is actively working with 35 different teams across the County to provide technical assistance and with the County Executive Office to build Countywide infrastructure and increase capacity for more data-driven and community-centered operations. The training strategy for 2025 is to train mid-level managers on foundational racial equity concepts and provide skills training on the Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit.



RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC ROADMAP IMPLEMENTATION IN 2024

220
County executives
trained

35
teams working to build
Countywide infrastructure

2,380
County staff have attended
an ODEB Racial Equity
training since the office
began in January 2022

ADDRESSING THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Active Transportation Plan

The Roads and Airports Department (RDA) is finalizing the County's Active Transportation Plan after soliciting feedback in 2024.

To date, 13 partner agencies, 8 commissions and committees (4 County, 4 external), 5 County departments, 500+ first phase online comments, 200+ Draft Public Plan comments, and hundreds of in-person special events have provided feedback into the Active Transportation Plan. This Plan will include a prioritized list of projects to guide the County in making investments in active transportation to create safe and accessible streets for our communities.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

The Active Transportation Plan is expected to be brought to the Board in mid-2025.

Environmental Justice and Health

To address health inequities and the disproportionate pollution burden experienced by priority communities, environmental justice objectives and policies are being added to the Health Element of the County's General Plan. After getting feedback from the community in 2023, Public Health worked to finalize a draft of the Health and Environmental Justice Element Update in 2024 as timelines were extended to allow for more robust input from across the County.

>>>LOOKING FORWARD

A final public version of the Health and Environmental Justice Element is planned for Board review in 2025.

In October 2024, Reid-Hillview Airport became the first airport in the nation to sell a new type of unleaded aviation fuel (avgas) called G100UL. This unleaded avgas, which has been approved for use in all aircraft that use avgas, will produce better health outcomes for the surrounding community because it does not contain lead, a health contaminant. The County phased out the sale of leaded gas at both county airports in January 2022.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN COUNTYWIDE FEEDBACK

13

partners agencies

8

commissions and committees

5

County departments

500+

online comments

200+

Draft Public Plan comments

hundreds

of in-person events

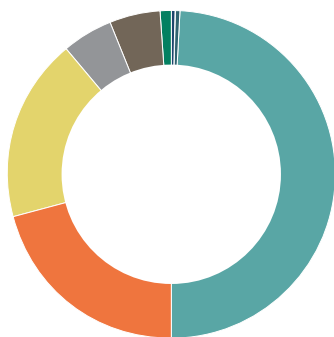


New Sustainability Commission Launched

In 2024, the County launched the Sustainability Commission to provide community input on Sustainability Master Plan and climate work implementation. This 11-member commission includes two youth members, highlighting the value of youth perspectives in climate and sustainability actions. In its first year, the Sustainability Commission met five times and started implementing its inaugural work plan, which included in-depth training on the Sustainability Master Plan and reviewing and providing input on the Community Climate Roadmap 2035.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

2022 COUNTYWIDE GHG EMISSIONS INVENTORY



50%
on-road
transportation



21%
building
natural gas



18%
building
electricity



5%
off-road
equipment



5%
solid waste



1%
agriculture



<.1%
water



<.1%
wastewater

CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

The 2022 Santa Clara County GHG emissions inventory was completed in 2024. On-road transportation was responsible for half (50%) of total emissions for the county, while natural gas usage and electricity usage in buildings generated 21% and 18% of total emissions, respectively. These three sectors together comprised 89% of total countywide emissions in 2022.

Unincorporated County GHG Emissions

For Unincorporated Santa Clara County for which the County has jurisdictional control, 2022 and 2017 GHG emissions can be compared in Table 1. In 2022, Unincorporated County experienced significant decreases in GHG emissions from the electricity and natural gas sectors. This decrease is largely due to increased renewable and carbon-free electricity provided by Silicon Valley Clean Energy to Unincorporated County residents. Natural gas usage also went down due to permanent closure of the Lehigh Cement Plant and Quarry in 2020. Other sectors including off-road transportation, water and wastewater, and agriculture saw slight to significant increases in GHG emissions. Note that the on-road transportation sector cannot be compared between the inventory years due to methodology changes to the data sources.



Photo credit: Spade & Plow

Table 1: Comparison of Unincorporated County GHG Emissions between 2017 and 2022

SECTOR	2017 GHG EMISSIONS	2022 GHG EMISSIONS
NATURAL GAS	39.3%	32%
AGRICULTURE	12%	20%
ELECTRICITY	24.4%	16%
WASTE	9.1%	12%
ON-ROAD TRANSPORTATION	9.3%*	11%*
OFF-ROAD TRANSPORTATION	4.1%	6%
WATER AND WASTEWATER	1.6%	3.4%

*Cannot be compared across years due to methodology changes



CLIMATE MITIGATION: REDUCING EMISSIONS AT THE START

The Public Review Draft of the County of Santa Clara Community Climate Roadmap 2035 was presented to the Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation committee (HLUET) in January 2025. The Roadmap is expected to be brought to the County’s Board of Supervisors in Summer 2025.

As part of the \$1M EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) grant received by the Office of Sustainability and Resilience, a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for the Santa Clara County and San Benito County Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was developed in March 2024. The PCAP includes policies, practices, and technologies that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) and air quality emissions, create high-quality jobs, spur economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for the communities in Santa Clara and San Benito Counties.

Completion of the PCAP made it possible to apply for EPA implementation grants. At least six EPA implementation grant applications were submitted in our MSA in 2024, although they were ultimately not awarded funding. OSR partnered on two focused on direct incentives for home decarbonization in underserved communities with Association of Bay Area Governments for \$95M and food recovery and compost expansion with San Benito County, StopWaste, and Joint Venture Silicon Valley for \$41M.

>>>LOOKING FORWARD

A Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) is underway and is expected to be completed by December 2025 as part of the next phase of the CPRG process.

HIGHLIGHT: CLIMATE RESILIENCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

To support community and climate resilience, the PHD launched the Climate Resilience Leadership Academy (CRLA) with nonprofit partner Veggielution in 2023.

CRLA was co-developed with and designed to empower CBOs in Santa Clara County, particularly

- those working in underserved communities that are experiencing disproportionate climate impacts, to take action by launching climate resilience and adaptation projects. CRLA is
- funded by the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) Grant and the Public Health
- Infrastructure Grant (PHIG)¹.



EACH COHORT PARTICIPATES IN AN ELEVEN-MONTH PROGRAM that helps CBOs develop climate literacy and practical experience in addressing the specific challenges of their communities. Each cohort progresses through 12 to 16 hours of climate education workshops that prepare them to launch a climate resilience project. Additionally, each CBO receives a mini grant ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to support their participation and chosen project. To date, two cohorts totaling 19 CBOs from across the county have participated in the CRLA.

Project Highlights from the First CRLA Cohort Include:

DAY WORKER CENTER OF MOUNTAIN VIEW hosted a workshop on how to utilize sustainable landscaping techniques such as cob building to make shade and rest structures. Workshop attendees can pass on this information to their community through a “train-the-trainer” model, amplifying the effect of the CRLA project.

COLLABORATING AGENCIES’ DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT (CADRE) promoted air quality and disaster response education by coordinating the dissemination of tailored informational materials in seven languages throughout the county. CADRE partnered with cities, schools, and community organizations to provide information on topics like air filtration and monitoring air quality.

Project Highlights from the Second CRLA Cohort Include:

KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES (KACS) tackled waste reduction by replacing paper cups with reusable cups for daily senior nutrition meal services, conducting community education on home recycling, and digitalizing materials to eliminate paper waste. KACS said the response to their new policies has been overwhelmingly positive.

NUEVA VIDA COMMUNITY distributed 50 trees to families in East Gilroy and 20 air filters to families with health conditions. They also hosted six community meetings on various climate topics like air quality.

RECOVERY CAFÉ SAN JOSÉ offered 10-week classes on “navigating a cold winter,” where community members recovering from homelessness learned strategies for coping with cold weather, locating warming centers, and installing transit apps on their smartphones. In Spring 2025, another 10-week session will begin for “navigating a hot summer.” Recovery Café San José will also purchase air purifiers, fans, and canopies for their office space to provide a more welcoming and comfortable environment for their members.

As each cohort completes its CRLA program, the goal is to connect these CBOs to the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative, a network of 46 organizations that work on climate action and resilience throughout the county, to foster collaboration and partnerships that deepen and broaden their climate work in communities. CRLA’s third cohort is scheduled to launch in 2025 pending federal grant funding.

COHORT PROGRAM

12-16
hours of climate education

\$5-10K
grant to support their participation and project

FIRST COHORT OF CRLA (2023/2024):

- + Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment
- + Collaborating Agencies Disaster Relief Effort (CADRE)
- + Community Health Partnership
- + CommUniverCity
- + Day Worker Center of Mountain View
- + Envision Your Pathway
- + Latina Coalition
- + Loaves & Fishes
- + School of Arts and Culture
- + West Valley Community Services

SECOND COHORT OF CRLA (2024/2025):

- + AWO Center
- + Bibleway Christian Center
- + Community Agency for Resources, Advocacy, and Services (CARAS)
- + International Children Assistance Network (ICAN)
- + Korean American Community Services
- + Latinos for a United America (LUNA)
- + Nueva Vida
- + Recovery Café San José
- + Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation (VIVO)

¹This work was supported by the Cooperative Agreements 6 N0E1EH001451-04-01 and 5 NE11OE000074-03-00 from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Engaging the Community on Induction Cooking in Cupertino and San Martin

The Office of Sustainability and Resilience partnered with Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) to host two sold-out live induction cooking experiences with celebrity chefs in 2024.

In April, the County hosted an induction cooking demonstration in Cupertino with Chef Martin Yan, who entertained and engaged the audience of over 200 community members as he made signature dishes from his new cookbook and dispelled myths about induction cooking. With live Chinese interpretation at the Quinlan Community Center, this event was held in partnership with City of Cupertino and the Peninsula Chinese Business Association. Free childcare was provided to attendees.

The County held a live Spanish induction cooking demonstration in San Martin featuring Michelin-Star Chef Rogelio Garcia and special guest Supervisor Sylvia Arenas in November. Glorybella from radio station Amor 100.3 hosted as Chef Garcia demonstrated how to make tacos and charred salsa from his new cookbook using an induction cooking stovetop. Silicon Valley Clean Energy brought their Electric Dream Home trailer to show the community what an all-electric home can look like.

Waste Diversion Education and Outreach

Outreach requirements in SB 1383 have led to the development of direct mail and online resources, including updates to the Integrated Waste Management Services (IWM) website. To help educate residents about proper sorting to maximize diversion from landfills and ensure the cleanliness of recyclable materials, the 16,177 residential and 507 commercial customers in the Unincorporated County service area each receive a minimum of two direct mail outreach pieces per year, in addition to bill inserts and bill messages, online printable tools, push notifications by text, email and hauler customer service apps. Key outreach materials have translations available in Spanish and Vietnamese.

Implementation of the Annual Public Education and Outreach Plans (PEOPs) with Unincorporated County's three franchised haulers resulted in multilingual staff at customer service centers being able to serve customers in Spanish and Vietnamese in calls. Overall customer satisfaction has been very positive with a rating of Good or Excellent at 84%, based on customer surveys in 2022.

Ongoing route monitoring required by SB 1383 was conducted over the past two years (2023 and 2024) and represents 4% of residents and 10% of businesses. The County is still in the educational and technical support phase for compliance but may consider automatically enrolling some commercial businesses in SB 1383 required services after a third direct mail reminder in 2025.



SB 1383 OUTREACH

16,684

total Unincorporated County residents and businesses that received outreach materials on sorting of recyclables

Incentives for Electrification of Homes and Businesses in Our Communities

In 2024, BayREN provided \$736,455 in rebates to 833 homes in Santa Clara County, saving 339,499 kWh, along with rebates for 448 home energy assessments (called Home Energy Scores). Nine multifamily properties in Gilroy and San Jose received \$478,000 for energy efficiency and electrification upgrades for 143 units, creating more efficient and comfortable homes for renters. Over 564 households received free Energy Savings Kits and Green House Calls.

BayREN also provided \$27,500 to support six CBOs receiving PHD's Climate Change Resiliency Mini-Grants to boost local climate resiliency work. The funds enabled these CBOs to distribute BayREN and electrification information to their community members. For example, one of the CBOs, Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action, trained students on the relationship between energy savings and air quality; the students then provided presentations to others in their schools and communities.

The County also promoted and coordinated reach codes training for local government staff from building, planning, and sustainability departments. 95 local government staff from 13 jurisdictions attended 29 trainings and forums this year, including a new training program for facilities staff.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

BayREN is launching a new program in 2025 called EASE Home to serve moderate-income homeowners with low-cost upgrades and personalized guidance and support. For local jurisdictions, BayREN is launching new services providing free technical support and trainings to help with decarbonization projects and facility upgrades.



833 HOMES IN
SANTA CLARA COUNTY
RECEIVED

\$736,455

in BayREN home rebates
saving 339,499kWh

Building Business Resilience

The Green Business program focused on business resilience this year, integrating resources such as rebates from BayREN and SVCE to provide a comprehensive toolkit for small to medium sized businesses. In 2024, 30 Green Businesses were recognized, of which 40% are BIPOC/LGBTQIA². This is a 7% increase in BIPOC/LGBTQIA-owned businesses being certified compared to last year.

33 BUSINESSES IN
SANTA CLARA COUNTY RECEIVED

\$422,027

in incentives through BayREN -
saving 205,022 kWh

²BIPOC/LGBTQIA = Black, Indigenous, People of Color/Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual



Protecting the Vulnerable from Extreme Heat

The PHD conducted a 10-week Extreme Heat social media campaign, generating over 12 million impressions in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The campaign highlighted heat-related illnesses, cooling centers, and the effects of extreme heat on vulnerable populations. Additionally, 18 organizations across the county volunteered as Heat Ambassadors, sharing campaign materials through their networks to reach clients and community members.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate and Children's Health

Pediatric clinicians have created climate educational resources for families and are sharing these - along with heat and air quality flyers from PHD colleagues - during patients visits. SCVH pediatricians are also partnering with the County's Office of Education to collaborate with schools regarding medical advice for days with excessive heat or poor air quality, including specific information for individual children as needed. Pediatricians are also recommending children for the PHD air filter distribution program to keep kids safer.

Resilience Hubs Planning

The Community Resilience Hubs team of the PHD is collaborating with contracted partners, including San Francisco Public Health Foundation, Regional Pacific Islander Task Force, Somos Mayfair, Si Se Puede Collective, Carry the Vision, Nueva Vida Community, and Community in Action Team - Mountain View, to enhance community resilience hubs. These hubs aim to deliver essential services before, during and after natural disasters or emergencies, while also serving as gathering spaces that address basic needs, enhance community capacity, and foster resident leadership. The collective of partners has recently achieved a significant milestone by completing an annual community health assessment and developing an action plan aimed at increasing access to resources and services, as well as coordinating efforts to prepare for and respond to climate change, health promotion and educational workshops, and wellness and physical activities.

Planning for Future Climate Hazards

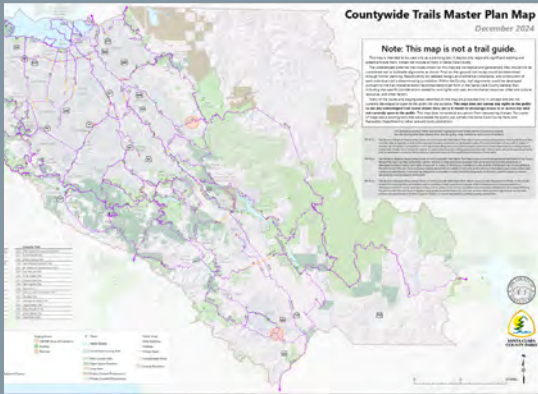
On November 21, 2024, the Board adopted the revised 2023-2031 Housing Element Update which addresses new strategies and policies to meet the challenges of climate change impacts on existing and future housing stock. The next step is for the state to conduct a final review of the Housing Element Update and issue certification for our County.

Significant strides were made in implementing the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) across the operational area (OA), advancing our collective capacity for hazard mitigation and risk reduction in Santa Clara County. In February 2024, this plan - adopted by the County in 2023 - received FEMA's five-year approval establishing hazard mitigation criteria compliance for all participating OA jurisdictions, which provides them access to potential grant funding sources to mitigate hazard conditions.

SB 379 requires cities and counties to include climate adaptation and resilience strategies in the safety element of their general plans. The County completed community outreach in the Safety Element Update in 2024. Internal department review is ongoing and the update is expected to be complete in 2025/2026.

REMOVE BARRIERS TO NATURE AND THE OUTDOORS

The Parks and Recreation Department focuses on improving access to our parks and open spaces for residents of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Improving our regional trail connectivity and addressing gaps in the trail network is one target in this strategy.



Countywide Trails Master Plan Map Update Completed

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Countywide Trails Master Plan Map Update in December 2024, including updating the map in the County General Plan. The [Countywide Trails Master Plan](#) envisions a comprehensive network of regional, sub-regional, and connector trails throughout Santa Clara County and was developed with extensive public and stakeholder outreach by County Parks.

Increasing Trail Connections and Recreational Opportunities

The County Parks Department conducted trail construction and maintenance work at the Coyote Canyon site at Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch County Park, which will include part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a regional trail identified in the Countywide Trails Master Plan, along with other park trails. The trails are anticipated to open in spring 2025.

County Parks also continues to work in partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) towards connection of the Stevens Creek Trail between Stevens Creek County Park, Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve, Saratoga Gap Open Space Preserve, Upper Stevens Creek County Park, and Monte Bello Open Space Preserve. In 2024, County Parks was awarded \$500,000 in Priority Conservation Area grant funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the trail feasibility and planning process. The Stevens Creek Trail is a key sub-regional trail identified in the Countywide Trails Master Plan.

County Parks is in the process of preparing a site plan for the recently acquired 47-acre Fortini Property, which includes planning for a countywide trail connection between Santa Teresa County Park and Calero County Park.

Children and Families in the Outdoors

Public Health, County Parks, and other partners are addressing equity and park access for children and families. The Juntos Program (Park Rx) offers nature activities including hikes and gardening experiences to families. In 2024, over 2,300 people participated in the program. In partnership with County Parks and SCVH, 2,000 free parking passes were provided to Juntos families by SCVH pediatricians this past year. Three youth who participated in the Juntos Captains of the Forest (the leadership component of the program) also engaged in the County Youth Summit and promoted the benefits of spending time in nature.

Public Health partnered with the San Jose Library System on several events focused on the importance of the outdoors and summer learning; over 100 participants attended the events.

Public Health also worked with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to finalize and roll out a Transit to Parks campaign. The campaign included a bus wrap, messaging inside of transit, social media video posts and an interactive webpage. The campaign highlighted 20 parks that are accessible by public transportation with the goal of getting more people to use transit to explore parks and open spaces.



PREVENTING POLLUTION, CONTAMINATION, AND INVASIVE WEEDS

Stormwater Outreach to Students

The Watershed Protection Division (WPD) conducted stormwater outreach to students in Unincorporated County in school year 2023-24, sponsoring 11 virtual classroom presentations at San Martin/Gwinn Environmental Science Academy, Rucker Elementary School, and Nixon Elementary Schools through the CalRecycle Beverage Container Recycling City/County Payment Program. For school year 24-25, WPD increased the allocation for EcoHero presentations to \$5,000 to offer more presentation formats for the 7 elementary schools in the Unincorporated County area.

Cleaning Up and Protecting our Watershed and San Francisco Bay

Cleaning up our rivers and streams ensures the health of our Bay and oceans, and ultimately, human health. On May 18, 2024, Santa Clara County Parks participated in National River Cleanup Day. Four sites hosted 70 volunteers who picked up approximately 439 pounds of trash and recyclables. Across the county, 690 volunteers cleaned up over 17,000 pounds of litter that would have entered our rivers and streams.

On September 21, 2024, five county parks hosted California Coastal Cleanup Day with 139 volunteers picking up 2,624 pounds of trash and recyclables. Countywide, 953 volunteers picked up over 32,000 pounds of litter along the shorelines!

Any time of year, community members can now [request free cleanup supplies](#) from the WPD webpage for community litter cleanups. Litter grabbers, gloves, and trash bags are available to keep trash out of our waterways.

WPD continued inspecting commercial and industrial facilities in the unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County. These routine facility inspections ensure that best management practices are being implemented to prevent discharges of polluted stormwater into the County's storm drain system and local water bodies. WPD conducted a total of 49 commercial/industrial inspections in 2024.





Litter and Community Clean Ups

To help address illegal dumping, the County continues to implement three different models for community cleanups in South County, which have seen strong customer participation:

- 1 Drop-off bins at the Morgan Hill airfield
- 2 Drop-off at the Recology transfer station
- 3 Vouchers for drop-off at a nearby landfill

Franchise Agreements starting on July 1, 2025 will standardize cleanups by offering one annual drop-off at a community location in each district, as well as one annual landfill voucher for drop-off at a nearby landfill in each district.

Safe Disposal of Hazardous Wastes

The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program saw a noticeable increase in collection over the past year as it continues to safely manage and divert from the landfill hazardous waste generated by Santa Clara County residents. 2,765,195 pounds of hazardous materials were collected by the program during 2024, an increase of 7% from the previous year. This reflects the continued commitment of the community and stakeholders to responsible waste management and sustainability.

The Very Small Quantity Generator Program (VSQG) provides a safe, affordable, and environmentally sound option for disposal of hazardous wastes for qualifying businesses, non-profits, and government agencies. Participation in the program has remained steady in 2024 with 310 participants. Overall engagement continues to reflect a strong and consistent interest in the program.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM COLLECTED

2,765,195
pounds of hazardous materials

7%
increase from previous year

Invasive Weeds and Pests

As part of Noxious Weed Grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Ag Division is monitoring previously identified A and B noxious weeds at sites throughout the County. A new, highly invasive weed, Japanese knotweed, was identified in the county for the first time and has been added to the list of target weeds.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, the Ag Division will implement a county-wide monitoring program for the invasive shot-hole borer, an invasive species recently found in San Jose. The invasive shot-hole borer has been found on over 60 tree species, including native species like western sycamore, willows, and box elder, that are important to urban tree canopies, parks, and open spaces.

FEEDING THE COMMUNITY

Food Security and Food Production, Waste, and Recovery

The Food Systems Manager in the Office of the County Executive (CEO) coordinates cross-departmental food systems work, including the following:

- + Creation of the Kitchen Cabinet to foster ongoing communication and greater collaboration among County programs working on food-related initiatives. Two quarterly meetings of the Kitchen Cabinet have been hosted, which initiated discussion with County staff from ten departments.
- + Launch of the Resident Advisory Committee in a collaboration between the PHD and East San Jose-based nonprofit Veggielution. This committee launched in March 2024 and is comprised of ten community members to propose food system and climate-related policies grounded in the principles of community governance, equity, and inclusion.
- + Improving food security and public health through the California Food & Vegetable Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Pilot Program, which began in October 2023 and ran through 2024. This new program allowed participants to receive up to \$60 per month of free fruit and vegetables at five participating markets in the county. 7,228 unique households received a total of \$461,768 to purchase fruits and vegetables during the pilot, which ended in January 2025.

Recent highlights from the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program include supporting, tracking, and enforcing the recovery of almost 15 million pounds of surplus food as required under SB 1383. The recovered food provided over 13 million meals to people in need at an estimated value of over \$64 million. This is equivalent in emissions reduction to removing nearly 5,000 gasoline-powered vehicles from the roads for a year (2023 data reported in 2024).

The Office of Sustainability and Resilience submitted an EPA implementation grant for \$41 million for a food recovery expansion program and a compost expansion program with partners San Benito County, StopWaste (Alameda County Waste Management Authority), and Joint Venture Silicon Valley, although it was ultimately not awarded.

CALIFORNIA FRUIT & VEGETABLE EBT PILOT PROGRAM

\$60

per month of free fruit
and vegetables

7,228

unique households
reached

\$461,768

total funds distributed
to purchase fruit and vegetables



Photo credit: Veggielution

AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE
INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM
AWARDED

\$199,000

to 12 farmers for climate-smart
land management practices



Photo credit: Spade & Plow

Helping Farms Implement Climate-Smart Practices

The County's Agricultural Resilience Incentive (ARI) grant program awarded \$199,000 to 12 farmers, providing financial incentives for climate-smart land management practices on 214 acres. This program also ensures the county complies with the state-mandated SB 1383 by re-directing food waste from landfills into compost that can be applied to farms and ranches to increase soil health and reduce carbon emissions.

The county also leveraged \$70,000 in State grant funds to expand the ARI program through a partnership with Zero FoodPrint, a Bay Area nonprofit that directs compost and funding from local municipalities to farmers. The funds will support compost application on more than 10 Santa Clara County farms, removing more than 1,200 tons of carbon from the atmosphere.

In the past year, the University of California Cooperative Extension Santa Clara County Team's Agricultural Liaison supported 10 small farms with regulatory and permitting compliance, promoted the benefits of agriculture in Santa Clara County through a monthly show on KKUP Radio called Food for Thought, assisted CEPA with outreach on a farmworker housing survey, and organized and led several farm tours to educate the public about the challenges and realities of farming in the Santa Clara Valley.



Photo credit: Zero Foodprint

ADDRESSING BASIC NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

The SMP priority area on Community Health and Well-Being addresses many of these basic needs through strategies to ensure that all residents have access to safe affordable housing, healthcare, food, economic self-sufficiency, and that our children and most vulnerable are protected. Many County departments work diligently every day to ensure that children are safe, the formerly incarcerated can begin new chapters with dignity, older adults have sustenance and community, and low-income families and individuals receive necessary health, nutrition, financial, and employment services, because the need for the basics of life never ends.

Protecting Children and Supporting Youth

In FY 2023–2024, the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) invested over \$10.2 million across 33 contracts with 23 community-based organizations, serving more than 18,000 clients through 21 culturally responsive, prevention-focused programs. Guided by a three-year Comprehensive Prevention Plan approved in Fall 2023 under the Families First Prevention Services Act, DFCS expanded its upstream efforts to reduce child welfare involvement and strengthen families. A key strategy included launching the Strengthening All Families Equitably (SAFE) program, which connected over 1,100 families to voluntary services through a new community pathway, offering support such as housing, mental health care, and parenting education. Other programs, such as Safe, Secure, and Loved—Resilient Families, served 286 individuals and achieved an 81% completion rate, with nearly all participants reporting a positive impact on their families. Similarly, New Hope for Youth supported 122 youth ages 12 to 25, with 80% completing a risk and resiliency assessment six months after program participation. All assessed youth showed increased resiliency, greater personal achievement, and a reduction in risky behaviors.

These efforts reflect DFCS's shift toward a "community supporter" model, emphasizing early, equitable, and voluntary access to support before crises escalate. With strong community partnerships, a data-driven approach, and a focus on healing and resilience, DFCS is building a more responsive and effective prevention system to ensure every child in Santa Clara County grows up safe, supported, and loved.

Restoring Dignity as Formerly Incarcerated Start New Journeys

Department of Reentry Services (DRS or Reentry)'s Reentry Resource Center (RRC) hosted its annual 5K run/walk in 2024, with 476 participants registered to support reentry clients. The event raised \$22,104, reflecting a 13.1% increase from 2023. All proceeds are used to purchase new clothing and provide essential support for individuals transitioning back into the community from jail or prison. Having clean clothes and other necessities to begin their reentry journey helps restore dignity and reduces the likelihood of recidivism.

Reentry provided over 7,756 services - including bus passes, bus tokens, DMV vouchers, food pantry support, hygiene kits, lunch bags- to clients in 2024. This reflects a growth of 17% from 6,621 services delivered in 2023.



REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER 5K RUN/WALK EVENT

476
participants

\$22,105
funds raised

13.1%
increase participation
from 2023

In 2024, DRS and Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) connected at least 2,743 clients to housing services, representing a 35% increase in clients served from the previous year. Housing services include linking clients to shelters, emergency assistance programs, and external resources, as well as conducting vulnerability assessments to prioritize and address housing needs effectively. Clients can also be referred to the Reentry-funded subsidized housing and emergency assistance programs.

DSR collaborates with Behavioral Health to provide essential behavioral health services to RRC clients, serving at least 1,746 unique individuals over 2,304 encounters in 2024, reflecting an increase of 11.6% from the previous year.

Social Services Agency (SSA) provided a range of services to 3,497 unique clients through 7,721 encounters by DRS referral, representing a growth of 13% in clients served and 16% in encounters over the previous year. These services include General Assistance, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, continuing benefits forms processing, handling of discontinuances, application processing, verification, EBT card replacement, and more.

Reentry has also partnered with the Valley Homeless Health Care Program (VHHP) Medical Mobile Unit to deliver essential services including primary care, mental health support, substance use treatment, and dental care for recently incarcerated individuals at the Reentry Resource Centers. In 2024, the Medical Mobile Unit served 2,087 unique clients in 6,953 encounters, reflecting an increase of approximately 29% and 24%, respectively, from the previous year.

REENTRY CLIENTS CONNECTED TO HOUSING SERVICES

2,743



Senior Nutrition Programs Serve Many and Continue to Innovate

The Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) at SSA implements nutrition programs for older adults. These critical programs served 1,561,997 meals to community members, of which 820,272 meals were dine-in/to-go and 741,725 were home delivered meals. 16,592 unique clients were served in 2024 (similarly to 16,613 in 2023) of which 7,757 – almost half - were newly enrolled. DAAS also launched therapeutic meals for homebound older adults. Neighborhood Meals on Wheels (NMOW) expanded in South County and the County's partnership with Everytable allowed us to offer fresh meals to homebound clients. The Senior Nutrition Program at Alviso Community Center has also reopened.



The Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solution for Seniors (CHAMPSS) program launched, providing healthy meals in a dine-in experience at select restaurants.

HEALTH COVERAGE THROUGH MEDI-CAL

411,842

children, adults, and
seniors received coverage

THE COUNTY ASSISTED

270

CalWORKs families
with housing this year

Medical Coverage for More County Residents

In Santa Clara County, 411,842 children, adults, and seniors receive health care coverage through the Medi-Cal program—almost a quarter of the County's 1.9 million population.

As part of the state's Healthy California for All initiative, full-scope Medi-Cal was expanded from 2016 through 2024 to be available to low-income residents regardless of immigration status. Effective January 2024, the most recent (and final) expansion encompassed ages 26-49; 42,574 residents transitioned to full-scope Medi-Cal this year. In total from 2016-2024, the Healthy California for All initiative positively impacted over 70,000 residents who now receive full-scope medical insurance regardless of immigration status or age.

Overcoming Earnings and Housing Challenges

The County implements the California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program which provides a vital safety net for low-income children and their families. There has been significant growth in CalWORKs participation throughout the County. In FY 2023-2024, 16,922 community members participated in the CalWORKs program; this comprises 5,776 families including over 10,000 children. Over 270 CalWORKs families were assisted with housing this year. Most of these families utilize CalWORKs temporarily to recover from economic crises caused by unexpected events such as layoffs, serious illness or accidents, and the loss of a family wage earner. The General Services Agency provided cash grants and vocational services for 5,400 low-income adults without dependents who are ineligible for state or federal cash assistance programs.

Partnerships and community outreach are key to the success of SSA's Department of Employment and Benefit Services (DEBS). In FY 2023-2024, DEBS collaborated with Santa Clara County Healthcare and CBOs to increase Medi-Cal Redeterminations and Medi-Cal Expansion enrollment to serve more residents. DEBS also worked with public higher education institutions in the County to enroll students who needed CalFresh support.



OUTREACH PERFORMED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS IN FY 2023-2024

15

training sessions held for staff from
46 CBOs and County Departments

30+

events tabled and attended
CBO meetings

trainings

for CBOs and 10 County offices/units on
CalFresh 101, Public Benefits 101 and BenefitsCal
Application Assistance to staff from various CBOs,
colleges, and government agencies

websites in English, Spanish,
and Vietnamese
created and launched by DEBS

EMPOWERING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPRESSION OF DIVERSE VOICES

County Libraries Offer Much More Than Books

SMP Strategy 6.5 Education focuses on targets to increase Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) patron access and lifelong learning through programming, increasing the number of e-materials downloaded, and increasing the number of visits to the SCCLD student portal to help with homework, research, and study.

In FY 2023-24, the numbers of inside programs, outreach programs, and virtual programs offered at county libraries all increased, leading to a corresponding increase in total attendance of 260,553 (compared to 174,541 for FY 2022-23).

Electronic materials including eBooks, audiobooks, digital comics, music, movies, and TV show series continue to be popular and can be downloaded or streamed. Total usage of e-materials including eBooks, audiobooks, music, stream videos, and eMagazines was 3,591,548 in FY 2023-24, a growth of 24% from the previous year.

County Libraries offers new and improved student portals for elementary and middle school students (<http://student.scclld.org>) and high school students (<https://hsstudent.scclld.org>). Total visits to student portals in 2024 was 10,775, which is lower than the previous year at 14,264.

Santa Clara County Parks is partnering with SCCLD to offer free parking passes for patrons for three weeks at a time so that everyone can access and benefit from our parks and outdoor spaces. In 2024, SCCLD expanded the County Parks pass program to all county libraries including bookmobile.



Easy and Accessible Voting

The Registrar of Voters (ROV) successfully conducted the historic 2024 presidential primary and general elections, ensuring an easy and accessible voting process for all.

SMP Strategy 6.1 Civic Engagement aims to increase the percentage of historically marginalized communities engaging in civic participation such as voting. ROV hosted and participated in over 290 voter education and outreach events across Santa Clara County in 2024. These events engaged thousands of community members from a wide range of backgrounds on how to register to vote, voting options, opportunities to get involved as an election worker, and more.

Notable highlights included high school and student outreach events, as well as a series of voter language workshops presented in 14 languages. Through these efforts, the ROV continues to empower all eligible voters, alongside the next generation of voters, inspiring them to have a voice in shaping the future of their community and to participate fully in the electoral process.

Over 61,000 voters have joined ROV's Go Green Campaign, a sustainability initiative to receive voter guides electronically, resulting in the conservation of an estimated 170 trees each major election.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, ROV will focus on reaching smaller language communities and encouraging college-aged young adults to update their voter registration upon arrival at school.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Climate Collaborative

The Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative (SC4) provides an invaluable space to create and foster connections to help amplify climate efforts in the region. SC4 grew over 30% in 2024 with 46 organizations now participating.

In the past year, Collaborative members helped shape our new [Strategic Plan](#) to guide current and future climate action and community resilience efforts. The [2024 SC4 Annual Report](#) highlights the year's accomplishments and impact, with 95% of Annual Survey respondents finding the work groups and their activities useful in advancing climate efforts and goals. Multiple partnerships across sectors resulted in at least nine grant applications in 2024, in the process strengthening relationships and building a foundation for resource sharing and future work together.



CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS PARTNERED TOGETHER ON AT LEAST NINE GRANT APPLICATIONS IN 2024



EPA CPRG IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

\$250M grants

over six applications

14+ partner organizations covered variety of sectors including transportation, food recovery, composting, and decarbonization



ICARP ADAPTATION PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

\$650K grants

partners

Coastal Quest, County of Santa Clara, Climate Resilient Communities, Farallon Strategies



EPA CPRG COMMUNITY CHANGE GRANTS PROGRAM

\$20M grants

partners

County of Santa Clara with 14 CBO partners, Climate Resilient Communities, CADRE, CARAS, Ashes to Beauty, and others



OPR EXTREME HEAT AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GRANT

\$1.9M grants

partners

County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara University, and five CBOs/non-profits

To help secure funding to support climate resilience projects in Santa Clara County, the Climate Collaborative is launching design of the Santa Clara County Collaborative Climate Resilience Fund through \$200,000 in seed funding from the Packard Foundation. This fund aims to identify and secure diversified funding streams that will provide multi-year support for climate resilience projects in our County. As SC4 continues to strive to activate climate work in our county, this Fund will be a valuable resource in advancing community-centered climate resilience.

>>>LOOKING AHEAD

The Resilience Fund will be developed in 2025 through leadership from a Fund Advisory Committee and input from Collaborative members to help guide its design and governance structure.

Partnering to Cleaning Up Litter and Managing Waste

The Watershed Protection Division (WPD) at CEPA completed the \$2 million Countywide Litter Abatement Program (SB 170 program) in partnership with CalRecycle, San Jose Conservation Corp (SJCC), and the City of San Jose in April 2024. WPD staff presented the Program and its results at the 4th Annual Statewide Conference on Illegal Dumping in May 2024. In total, SJCC completed 29,997 hours of work and removed 114 tons of waste in 774 cleanups. The City of San Jose completed 1,262 hours of work and removed 196 tons of waste in 112 cleanups.

WPD also continued to oversee the SJCC/Caltrans litter abatement contract for litter cleanups along freeways and interchanges and on Caltrans properties within Santa Clara County. In 2024, the crews completed 20,402 hours of work and removed 141 cubic yards of waste and 1,418 cubic yards of vegetation and debris.

COUNTYWIDE LITTER ABATEMENT PROGRAM

\$2M
in funding

29,997
hours of work

114
tons of waste removed
in 774 cleanups

Youth Climate Initiative

The [Santa Clara County Youth Climate Initiative \(SCCYCI\)](#) was launched in May 2023 through a \$2 million grant from the California Natural Resources Agency awarded to the Office of Sustainability and Resilience with the goal of increasing climate literacy and leadership among grades 9-12 in various programming ranging from classroom and field-based curriculum, climate leadership opportunities, and exposure to climate careers. The projects and activities of SCCYCI are implemented by a Core Project Team comprised of OSR and ten education institutions and nonprofit partners serving youth in Santa Clara County. To date, this Initiative has engaged 1,941 youths through focus groups, tabling at events, and youth led summits, with over \$600,000 dispersed to CBOs and other organizations to support these existing projects in addition to piloting and developing new opportunities for students to move from climate knowledge to action.

Supporting Youth in Workforce Development

The County continues to work with BayREN and Rising Sun Center for Opportunity to support the Green House Calls program in Santa Clara County.

564

**Energy Saving Kits and
Green House Calls made in 2024**

470

**youths participated in the
Intern & Earn Program at SSA**

In 2024, the youths in the Green House Call program provided 564 Energy Savings Kits and Green House Calls. Each kit is free and filled with water conservation and energy efficiency items. This year 3,911 LED globe lights, 339 Smart power strips, 1,115 faucet aerators, 1,128 draft-stopping outlet gaskets, and other items were distributed to homes throughout the county. Together, this saved 130,0659 kWh and 118 metric tons of CO₂, equivalent to saving 13,312 gallons of gasoline and charging 7,816,355 smart phones.

To further support climate workforce development, the Program coordinated the placement of three youth Energy Specialists and Site Program Managers with internships at two Santa Clara County organizations – Acterra and Silicon Valley Clean Energy.

The Intern & Earn program at the SSA offers youth ages 16-24 enrolled in the CalFresh, CalWORKs, or Foster Care programs an opportunity to obtain practical work experience, build their soft skills, and benefit from mentorship and guidance. In this past year, 470 youths participated in the program, earning \$18.75 per hour for up to 30 hours per week. This is up from 400 participants last year.



About 36,000 newts have been killed along Alma Bridge Road since 2017.

Safe Animal Crossing on Alma Bridge Road

RDA has been working with Midpen and several other agencies to improve wildlife connectivity primarily for California newts on county-owned Alma Bridge Road adjacent to Lexington Reservoir.

A study completed in 2021 estimates that of the nearly 14,000 adult California newts that attempted to cross this county-owned road during the rainy season in 2020-21, almost 40% were killed by vehicle collisions. About 36,000 newts have been killed along Alma Bridge Road since 2017. Two project alternatives – both involving elevated roadway segments with wildlife passage underneath and directional fencing - are moving into the next phase. County will oversee final design and implementation with current construction estimated for 2027, depending on project approvals and funding.



Weeds and Pesticides

In 2024, the Ag Division at CEPA worked on the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the Santa Clara County Weed Management Area group to coordinate activities necessary to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of noxious weeds in Santa Clara County. This collaboration will allow for a more integrated weed management approach throughout the County.

The Ag Division regulates the use of pesticides in structural and agricultural settings, reviews restricted materials applications, and prioritizes the use of alternative materials and mitigations with less environmental impact.

HIGHLIGHT: PREPARING FOR WILDFIRES AND IMPROVING ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

Living safely within a fire-adapted ecology requires taking proactive measures

to reduce the risk of loss of life and property for residents, as well as utilizing fire as a tool to protect the health and functionality of our ecosystems. Prescribed burns, fuel reduction, and invasive weed management are some of the actions the County Parks Department is taking to address wildfires. Due to the scale of wildfire, much of this work is done through partnerships at a landscape level to maximize benefits and results.



In coordination with the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative, a 938-acre project (of which 300 acres is county park land) is underway that focuses on creating ecosystem resilience, mitigating the risk of catastrophic wildfires, and increasing the safety of communities in southern Silicon Valley. The project also aims to protect and enhance watershed health and habitats for sensitive native and endemic species. The county received a \$2.5M CAL FIRE grant for this work. See <https://sccfiresafe.org/projects/lgwatershedhealth/> for more project information.

Proactive forest management practices conducted in the Parks include implementing the Tree Safety Program to reduce the risk of tree failure in the urban forest. Fuel reduction projects include removing brush encroachment, thinning forested land to encourage the growth of larger mature trees, and establishing and maintaining shaded fuel breaks and defensible space to protect structures and communities.

The County and CAL FIRE have been conducting prescribed burns for over a decade to limit large, destructive wildfires by reducing hazards in targeted wildland areas. In 2024, 650 acres of grassland and oak woodland were managed using fire. Prescribed burning benefits public and fire personnel safety and natural resource management goals of increasing biodiversity, enhancing habitat, and controlling noxious weeds.

County Parks also implements grazing on roughly 20,000 acres to increase biodiversity and improve soil health, while also reducing fuel for wildfires.

The County completed a \$850,000 CAL FIRE grant funded project to remove fire-prone eucalyptus across 22 acres at Mt. Madonna County Park and reduce fuel loading along 2.5 miles of Pole Line Road to improve community safety and escape routes.

Outside of County Parks fire management activities, the Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council is working with government agencies and community groups to complete development of annexes to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). These annexes will complement the countywide plan and provide information on specific topics and project recommendations tailored to specific geographic areas to mitigate wildfire risk. The goal is to complete all annexes to the CWPP in 2025.



650
acres of grassland and
oak woodland were
managed using fire





PREPARED BY: County of Santa Clara Office of
Sustainability and Resilience
DESIGN: Cartwright Design Studio



County of Santa Clara
**Sustainability
Master Plan**
Livable. Equitable. Resilient.