

League of Women Voters North County San Diego*

Status of Sustainable Practices: A Survey of North Coast San Diego Cities

Executive Summary

Sustainable communities are those that strive to fulfill the economic, social and environmental needs of their present constituents, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. The League of Women Voters (LWV) North County San Diego undertook a survey to determine how North Coast San Diego cities measured up in their efforts to promote sustainability.*

The LWV North County San Diego Sustainability Issues Group undertook the second biennial survey of sustainable practices in 2010. The coastal cities that participated in the survey were Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Oceanside, Solana Beach and Vista. The survey was formatted as a yes/no questionnaire that also allowed for elaboration where desired. The questionnaire was composed of 23 questions that were divided into 8 categories. The categories were: green-house gases; planning; water conservation; governance; innovation; solid waste; environmental stewardship and community involvement. The questionnaire gave us a good snapshot of the effort and commitment to create sustainable communities.

The table summarizes our findings. The cities varied in implementation sustainability efforts, as would be expected given differences in population and operating budgets, as shown in the bottom of the table. The percent positive response ranged from 52% for Carlsbad to 79% for Solana Beach.

The survey showed that all cities had, or were in the process of determining their Green House inventory. All cities with the exception of Del Mar had in traffic coordination programs in place to facilitate transportation flow and reduce GHG emissions. Only Solana Beach currently mandates LEED standards for all new public buildings. All cities, with the exception of Vista had achieved reduced energy consumption in the last two years. Carlsbad, Solana Beach and Vista now have General Plans that encourage residential buildings new public transportation.

Most of the cities were found to promote water conservation. All cities, with the exception of Solana Beach required drought resistant landscaping in new commercial or residential sites. All six cities utilized drought resistant planting in municipal properties. Carlsbad, Encinitas, Oceanside and Solana Beach use reclaimed water for irrigation. Del Mar was unique in having a policy that promotes the collection and use of grey water.

We found that with the exception of Del Mar and Carlsbad, the cities have continued to spend at or above 2009 levels for sustainability efforts. All cities, with the exception of Del Mar have implemented new and in many instances creative sustainability practices. In all cities except Del Mar, sustainability efforts have resulted in cost savings. Encinitas, Solana Beach and Oceanside have been able to create new innovative, or cost saving programs that promote sustainability.

In the area of solid waste, Oceanside and Solana Beach require that their green waste contractors compost yard waste, rather than divert it to landfills where it creates methane gas. All cities, with the exception of Carlsbad mandate recycling of building debris after demolition or renovation. In support of environmental stewardship, all cities are implementing the Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance, AB 1881. All cities also consider existing landscape prior to approving new development. With the exception of Solana Beach, all cities are involved in a Habitat Conservation Management Plan. However, Solana Beach has a program to protect habitat in South America as a method to offset carbon emissions. Currently, no city has an ordinance that requires the use of non-toxic, biodegradable products to minimize the flow of toxic materials into waterways. However Encinitas, Solana Beach and Vista utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices that use natural pest control and non-toxic precuts in some of their city properties.

Encinitas, Del Mar, Oceanside, and Solana Beach participate in public education forums on sustainability to engage their citizens. Solana Beach monitors mandated sustainability efforts of all its departments through periodic reports. Both Encinitas and Solana Beach have public committees that monitor sustainability efforts and report to the city council. Del Mar, Encinitas, Oceanside, Solana Beach and Vista provide citizens with reports on the results of their sustainability efforts.

**formerly LWV North Coast San Diego County*