



EDUCATION + PUBLIC OUTREACH

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Education + Public Outreach



INTRODUCTION

Education and outreach are critical components of climate protection planning because of the changes in citizen behavior and business practices that will be needed in order to meet the City’s emission reduction targets. The City can encourage behavior change through increased public awareness of the challenge and of potential solutions.

This chapter includes strategies that span more than one topic area. Likewise, proceeding chapters contain education and outreach programs tailored to their specific topics. Education and outreach strategies range from workshops and courses to community events and campaigns.

Objective EO-I: Increase Public Awareness and Education About Climate Change
 CO₂EMT estimate not applicable

Existing Actions

The Benicia General Plan includes several programs for public education and outreach consistent with reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Programs include advertising for alternative modes of transportation and water conservation. The Urban Water Management Plan includes educational programs for water efficiency. These programs involve curriculum in elementary schools, observation of May as Water Awareness month, periodic bill inserts, conservation pamphlets, irrigation booklets, and as of 2008, a California Friendly Landscape Contest that promotes water efficient landscaping. Since 2006, the City has jointly hosted annual water wise landscaping seminars with the City of Vallejo. The seminars use the expertise of the Master Gardeners and California Native Plant Society to provide instruction on topics such as water wise design and irrigation.

The City periodically operates a booth at the Farmers Market to interact with the community on an as needed basis and is a great venue to promote greenhouse gas reduction initiatives. The City also provides a variety of water conservation giveaways at a monthly booth at the Farmers Market. Past giveaway items include low flow showerheads, hose timers, and landscape brochures.

◆ Strategy EO-I.1. Update and Maintain Sustainable Development Website



An interactive, informational website could be regularly maintained to include tools and resources about climate change science, food supply, green building technology, waste reductions, energy efficiency, and actions to reduce water and energy consumption. Information on rebates, incentives, and other funding sources could be made available to the public, as well as an online community forum.

Implementation Actions

- Incorporate an email alert system that automatically generates weekly or monthly updates for the public on recent website additions/news items;
- Maintain website.

Education + Public Outreach Objective Table	Emissions Reduction Type	Emissions Reduction
Objective EO-I: Increase Public Awareness and Education About Climate Change	Community & City	n/a



The Benicia Climate Action Plan website (2009).

◆ **Strategy EO-I.2. Sustainability Awards Programs**



Create an awards program administered by the Community Sustainability Commission to recognize outstanding achievements in the community for green building practices, waste diversion and reduction, energy and water conservation, and public outreach.

Implementation Action

- Establish a local awards program administered by the Community Sustainability Commission.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.3. Educational Workshops**



Conduct workshops to educate the community on ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the benefits associated with reducing emissions. Topics may include climate change science, renewable energy and energy efficiency; water efficient landscaping; community composting; food consumption, production and distribution; home and business weatherization, and alternative transportation.

Implementation Action

- Organize and host an educational workshop series, at least once per year, potentially associated with Earth Day in the Spring and International Climate Action Day in the Fall.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.4. Theme of the Month**



Promote different methods for reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the year. Themes should be integrated into the City website, quarterly Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, informational kiosks, and displays at City facilities such as City Hall, Benicia Public Library, and the future Community Center.

Example Themes:

- **Renewable Energy**
Partner with Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to hold educational workshops about ways cities can reduce greenhouse gases related to energy production and distribution, including interactive workshops on potential community strategies.
- **Energy Efficiency**
Partner with local contractors to hold workshops and demonstrations about home and office weatherization techniques and other ways that reduce energy consumption within a home or office.
- **Locally Sourced Food**
Provide community resources that educate the public on the importance of locally grown food, low mercury fish, organic produce, and non-processed foods, among other things.

Implementation Actions

- Identify funding mechanism;
- Promote theme weeks or months with a City-sponsored education and outreach campaign;
- Further coordinate programming through City departments, including the Benicia Public Library and, Parks and Community Services. Coordinate with other organizations.



The City of Benicia celebrates International Day of Climate Action (2009).

◆ Strategy EO-1.5. Eco/Sustainable art exhibitions



Partner with the Benicia Main Street Program, Chamber of Commerce and local arts organizations such as Arts Benicia and Benicia Community Arts to sponsor an art exhibit with a climate change or sustainability theme. Such an exhibit would engage the local arts community and further increase awareness and education.

Implementation Action

- Partner with appropriate community groups to sponsor a local eco art exhibit.

◆ Strategy EO-1.6. Create a Center for Sustainability at a City Facility



A Center for Sustainability could provide a place where residents could take classes to learn about climate change, green building practices, water conservation improvements, and energy efficiency.

Implementation Actions

- Identify appropriate facility and funding source;
- Identify community programming needs;
- Establish a Center for Sustainability.



The Benicia Public Library could develop an extensive 'green' book collection and is well suited for informational kiosks (2008).

◆ Strategy EO-1.7. Increase “Green” Book Collection at Benicia Public Library



Providing educational resources to the community is one of the most important aspects of the Climate Action Plan. Developing a large green book collection at the Benicia Public Library is a cost effective approach to reach a substantial percentage of residents. Book topics may include principles and practices of sustainable development, water conservation, green building, renewable energy generation, and home energy efficiency.

Implementation Actions

- Secure funding for acquisition of “green” books;
- Purchase, or encourage donations of green book collection;
- Implement ongoing green book purchasing and donation program.

◆ Strategy EO-1.8. Informational Kiosks and Info Displays at City Facilities



Interactive kiosks and informational displays are effective communication tools that can be targeted to a variety of topics and age groups. Programming may include sustainable development, climate change, water conservation, green building, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Implementation Actions

- Identify appropriate sites for kiosks and displays;
- Implement content;
- Secure funding and construct and place kiosks and displays.



Citizens discuss how to mitigate climate change at a community workshop (2008).

◆ **Strategy EO-I.9. Utilize Public Access Television**



Identify and develop appropriate content to be aired on Channel 27, Benicia’s public access television station.

Implementation Actions:

- Identify appropriate content;
- Coordinate with television station.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.10. Community Partnerships for Green Workforce Development**



Develop partnerships with community stakeholders such as the Benicia Unified School District, PG&E, and local labor groups to encourage green workforce development.

Implementation Actions

- Identify appropriate partnership opportunities;
- Initiate dialogue with stakeholder groups;
- Develop green workforce development programs.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.11. Emission Reduction Thermometer**



Design and construct a large-scale outdoor ‘thermometer’ to be installed at a highly visible city-owned location as a visual demonstration of City and community progress toward meeting the 2020 reduction targets.

Implementation Actions

- Design and construct GHG ‘thermometer’;
- Determine appropriate location and install accordingly;
- Tie into a larger education and outreach marketing campaign.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.12. Demonstration Gardens**



Work with Benicia Community Garden, the California Native Plant Society and other community groups to create community gardens that demonstrate the use of water efficient landscaping technologies and native drought tolerant plant species.

Implementation Action

- Coordinate with appropriate community groups to create demonstration gardens throughout the Community.

◆ **Strategy EO-I.13. Encourage BUSD to Educate K-12 Students on Climate Change and Ways to Reduce GHG Emissions**



The Benicia Unified School District (BUSD) can take a leadership role in climate change education by encouraging teachers to educate youth about actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Schools can use a “learn by doing” approach, such as establishing an on-campus composting program, installing solar photovoltaics, or using rain barrels for water reclamation.

Implementation Action

- Engage the Benicia Unified School District on integrating climate change curriculum by 2012.

◆ Strategy EO-1.14. Green Science and Technology Fair



Encourage the Benicia Unified School District to partner with other school districts in Solano County and the Bay Area to hold a green science and technology fair to engage and educate youth about water conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

Implementation Actions

- Engage Benicia Unified School District on developing a green science and technology fair;
- Sponsor a green science and technology fair using VIP settlement funds.

◆ Strategy EO-1.15. Car-Free Challenge



Support the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Spare the Air campaign by declaring one day a year as a "car free" day. This could encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation and telecommute and can be incorporated into "Bike-to-Work" day.

Implementation Actions

- Adopt a resolution declaring a car-free day;
- Coordinate car-free day with existing programs and campaigns;
- Expand "car-free day" to a community-wide "car-free challenge," a City sponsored campaign that offers prizes and incentives to residents for using alternative modes of transportation;
- Sponsor regular "Bike Safety" events for children;
- Continue the "Safe Routes to School" program.

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