

City of La Mesa Climate Action Plan

Annual Report 2024



CITY OF
LA MESA
JEWEL of the HILLS

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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Dear La Mesa Community,

As we reflect on 2024, I am proud to share the continued progress the City of La Mesa has made in advancing the goals set forth in our Climate Action Plan (CAP). Since its adoption in 2018, the CAP has guided the City's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and build a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable future for all who live, work, and visit La Mesa.

In 2024, we celebrated a major milestone: the completion of a comprehensive update to the Climate Action Plan. Informed by extensive community engagement throughout 2023 and 2024, the updated CAP includes strengthened targets and refined strategies that align with State targets set in Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 1279 and respond to the evolving needs of our community and climate. It continues to serve as a qualified GHG reduction plan under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, reaffirming our commitment to local and regional climate leadership.

The 2024 CAP Annual Report highlights key achievements in strategy areas of Energy, Transportation and Land Use, Solid Waste, Water, and Green Infrastructure. In 2024, we expanded our community outreach, deepened partnerships, and launched new initiatives to further foster sustainability throughout the La Mesa community. Efforts such as free bike education classes, Litter Free La Mesa community clean-up events, and staff trainings helped amplify community engagement and environmental stewardship.

La Mesa was once again recognized for being at the forefront of sustainability in the region. The city received the SANDAG Diamond Award Gold Level, and Tree City USA for the 44th consecutive year, and was awarded grant funding to implement CAP projects.

I am honored to share the sixth CAP annual report as a reflection of our shared commitment to environmental action. As we look ahead, let us stay united in our efforts to protect and preserve our environment for future generations. Together, we will continue to lead by example and shape a liveable La Mesa for all.

Dr. Mark Arapostathis



ABOUT THE ANNUAL REPORT

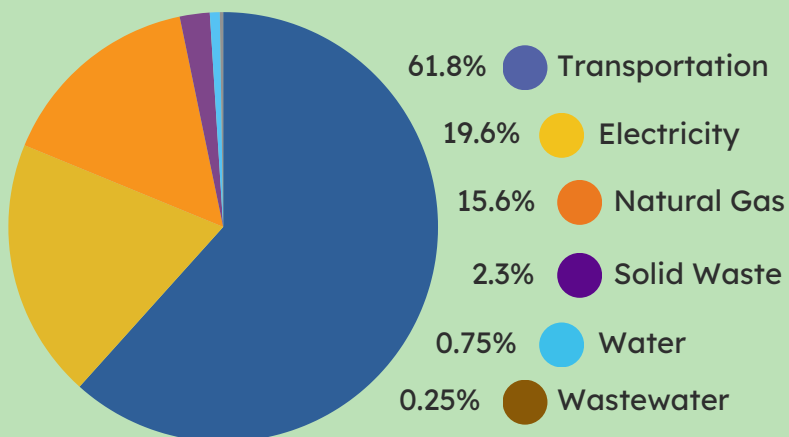
In alignment with La Mesa's 2018 Climate Action Plan (CAP), the City continues to publish annual reports and provide biannual updates to the City Council. This 2024 Annual Report outlines progress made on CAP measures and actions, while also identifying key priorities for the year ahead.

The report incorporates the most current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data available from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) ReCAP, along with project highlights and relevant updates. Detailed information on each CAP measure is available in the Appendix and on the City's Climate Action Plan webpage.

La Mesa remains committed to transparency and community involvement, striving to keep residents informed and engaged as we work together toward achieving our GHG reduction goals. The five prior Annual Reports are listed on the City's website.

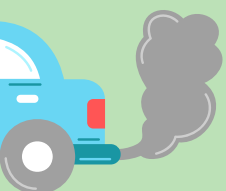


GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY



The City has received GHG inventories from the SANDAG ReCAP to monitor progress. The City's 2016 ReCAP Snapshot GHG emissions inventory is 383,800 MT CO₂e, a 10.93% decrease from the 2010 baseline. GHG emissions were calculated for electricity, natural gas, solid waste, water and wastewater. The 2016 GHG inventory is the best available data the City has received.

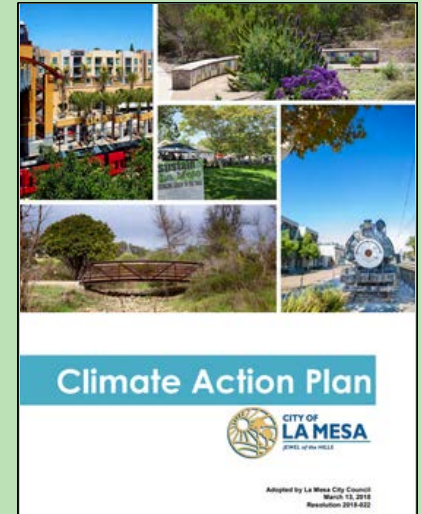
Transportation remains the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in La Mesa. Most emissions come from gas-powered vehicles used by residents, workers, and visitors. Additionally, on-road travel from cars and trucks passing through the city contributes significantly to local emissions



2018 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Since the adoption of La Mesa's first Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2018, the City has remained committed to reducing community-wide GHG emissions by 35% from the 2010 baseline by 2020 and 53% from the 2010 baseline by 2035. The CAP outlines 23 measures with specific key actions to guide this work in the CAP strategies listed below.

In 2021, the City Council adopted a Climate Emergency Resolution and Climate Emergency Resolution Response in January 2022. This reaffirmed the City's commitment to climate action and supports existing CAP implementation efforts. These foundational efforts continue to shape the City's approach to sustainability and have laid the groundwork for the 2024 CAP Update.



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES:




CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

From May 2022 to November 2024, community input played a vital role in shaping the CAP Update. Through surveys, workshops, and meetings, residents helped ensure the updated measures and actions reflect equitable and community-driven priorities.



 **850**
Total people engaged

 **22**
Presentations to Commissions

 **266**
Survey responses

UPDATED STRATEGIES



Clean and Renewable Energy



Clean and Efficient Transportation



Building Energy Efficiency



Waste Reduction



Water Efficiency



Urban Natural Environment

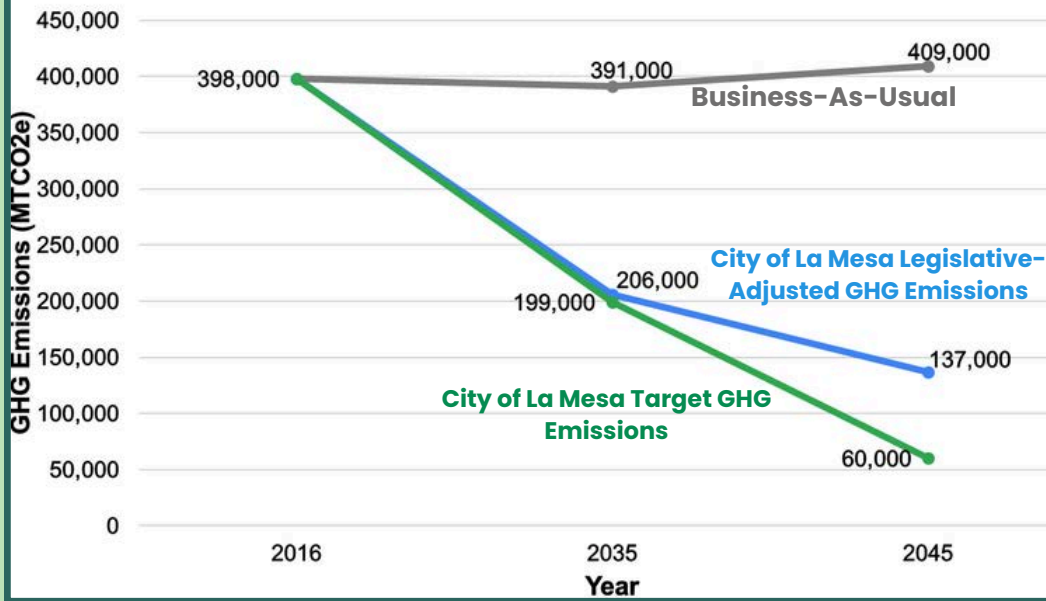


CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

In 2024, the City of La Mesa finalized its Climate Action Plan Update, building on work from 2022 and 2023. Staff and consultants updated emissions projections, aligned targets with State goals, and refined key measures based on current data and community input. The CAP Update was approved by the City Council in November 2024 and will guide La Mesa's climate efforts moving forward.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory



The 2024 CAP Update's GHG targets were developed to align with the statewide GHG reduction targets established by Senate Bill (SB) 32 and Assembly Bill (AB) 1279. Estimating equivalent reductions needed from the 2016 baseline, the City aims to reduce community-wide GHG emissions in the 2024 CAP Update with new updated GHG targets:

50 percent below 2016 levels by 2035 (aligned with and extrapolated from SB 32), and 85 percent below 2016 levels by 2045 (aligned with AB 1279).

2024 CAP UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS



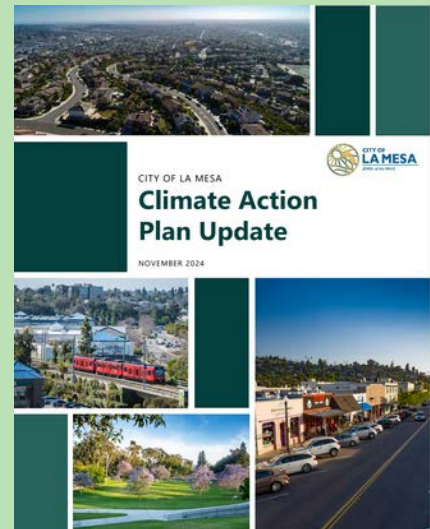
Equity: The CAP Update incorporates data tools to identify communities most vulnerable to climate impacts, ensuring that strategies and actions prioritize those disproportionately affected.



Adaptation: The CAP Update includes strategies to build resilience and prepare for local climate risks like extreme heat, flooding, wildfire, and drought.



Co-Benefits: The CAP Update highlights co-benefits that extend beyond GHG emission reductions



Livability



Air Quality



Public Health
and Safety



Resilience



Reduced Cost
of Living



Jobs and
Economy

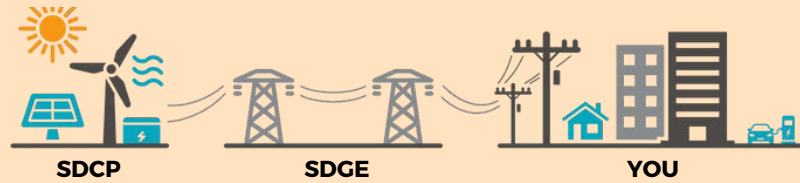




ENERGY



San Diego Community Power (Community Power) supplies renewable electricity to La Mesa residents and businesses, and all municipal accounts are enrolled in Power100, a program that provides 100% of electricity from renewable sources. The City continues to partner with Community Power at events to develop and support community-focused energy programs.



Accounts

Opt-ups to Power100

Participation Rate

27,928

12

95.1%

SOLAR & BATTERY STORAGE

Solar Permits Issued

Megawatts (MW) of Solar Installed

Battery Storage Permits Issued

392

2.7
MW

12

The rollout of California's Net Energy Metering (NEM) 3.0, in 2023, has reduced incentives making new solar installations less financially attractive. As a result, La Mesa has seen a decline in residential solar permit applications from last year.

DIY ENERGY SAVING & SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

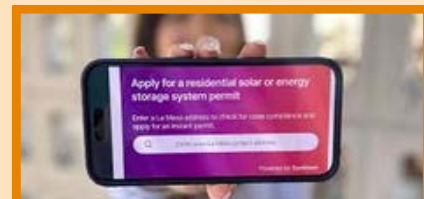
The City continues to encourage residents to monitor energy use at home through the DIY Energy Saving and Sustainability Toolkit program.



Toolkits that were checked out by residents

La Mesa launched an Instant Residential Solar Permit Program using the Symbium platform. This program reduces permitting costs and accelerates solar adoption by allowing homeowners to apply for and receive permits through a streamlined process. By improving access to solar installations, the City is helping residents transition to generating more renewable energy.

Symbium × CITY OF LAMESA
JEWEL of the HILLS



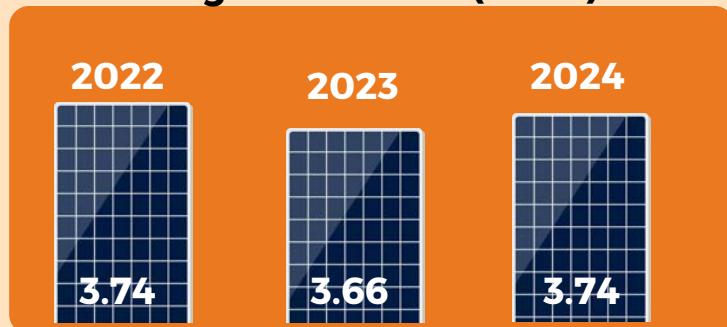


ENERGY

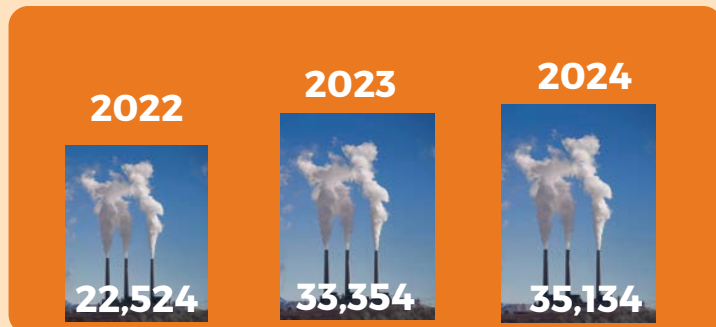
MUNICIPAL ENERGY USE

In 2024, the City of La Mesa experienced an increase in natural gas consumption compared to the previous year, largely due to the completion of repairs at the municipal pool, which resumed normal operations. However, overall natural gas usage in 2024 remained 40% lower than in 2021 levels. Since March 2021, all municipal electricity accounts have been powered by 100% renewable energy through San Diego Community Power's Power100 program.

Municipal Electricity Usage Megawatt Hours (MWh)



Municipal Natural Gas Usage (Therms)



ENERGY UPGRADES AT MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

In 2023, the City kicked off the Energy Services Company (ESCO) Project to implement a comprehensive energy program that will include projects for energy efficiency, onsite renewable energy and storage, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure for City fleet vehicles at City facilities. In 2024, building analyses were conducted and project recommendations were reviewed.



GRANTS AWARDED

San Diego Community Power Member Agency Grant

\$50,000

Developed an E-Bike Incentive Pilot Program in 2024 to reduce car trips and lower GHG in La Mesa. The program is planned to launch in 2025.

La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation Grant

\$100,000

Partnered with the Foundation to host education events and purchased mobile solar light towers and electric utility vehicles for parks and events.

Department of Energy: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

\$120,000

Developed strategies to reduce energy consumption and to improve energy efficiency in municipal operations and throughout the community.





TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) refers to residential development within walking distances of transit and other services, encouraging the reduction of personal vehicle trips. TOD has the highest potential GHG reduction. In 2024, two TOD projects were completed. Construction progressed at 8181 Allison Avenue and 7385 Colony Drive.



From 2023 to 2024, La Mesa experienced a notable reduction in overall traffic volumes alongside an increase in bike use and pedestrian trips.

↓ 39%

Decrease in vehicle volumes on weekdays from 2023

↑ 37%

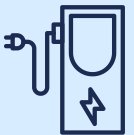
Increase in pedestrian volumes on weekdays from 2023

SANDAG SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATES



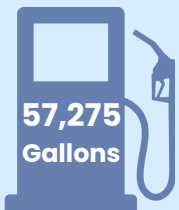
ELECTRIC VEHICLE FLEET

In 2024, the City acquired three fully-electric vehicles, bringing the fleet to a total of six electric vehicles used by City staff. The City has a total of 18 hybrid vehicles.



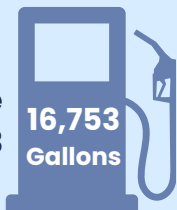
CITY VEHICLE FLEET GAS CONSUMPTION

GAS



↓ 8%
Decrease from 2023

DIESEL



↑ 4%
Increase from 2023

The City reduced municipal gas consumption through the addition of new EVs and lower vehicle miles traveled. The City transitioned its diesel fleet to renewable diesel, a nonpetroleum fuel made from food waste and agricultural byproducts. This switch is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the City's diesel fleet by approximately 65%.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION MASTER PLAN



135 survey responses

In 2024, La Mesa began developing an Electric Vehicle Charging Station Master Plan to expand access to EV infrastructure citywide. The plan will identify priority locations for charging stations, address equity and accessibility, and support a connective network. The City is prioritizing community input through surveys, tabling events, and working groups.





TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & VISION ZERO

732

**LA MESA WALKS
PARTICIPANTS**

**22%
increase from 2023**

La Mesa has been a Vision Zero City since 2018, aiming to eliminate traffic fatalities and increase safety and accessibility for all road users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. The City has received transportation-related grants to help redesign streets to make it safer to bike and walk.



Segment 1 of the La Mesa Boulevard Complete Streets Plan, covering 4th Street to Jackson Dr. and University Ave. from Spring St. to Memorial Dr., was accepted by City Council on April 23, 2024. This plan provides a road map to secure funding, obtain environmental approvals, and continue community outreach on active transportation.



The City was awarded a \$400,000 Sustainable Communities Grant to develop the La Mesa Boulevard Complete Streets Plan, Segment 2. In 2024, City Staff gathered additional input from the community and presented findings to Staff and commissions.

61

**MILES OF BIKEWAYS
IN LA MESA**

**0%
increase from 2023**

In April 2024, the City completed construction of a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) at the intersection of El Cajon Blvd. and Jesse Ave. to address a gap in pedestrian crosswalks and provide a safe place for pedestrians to cross the street.



270

**MILES OF SIDEWALKS
IN LA MESA**

**0%
increase from 2023**

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION PARTNERSHIP

In 2024, The City of La Mesa launched a free bicycle education series in collaboration with San Diego County Bicycle Coalition. The series includes ten in-person and virtual classes to teach residents about rules of the road, traffic laws, bike maintenance, bike and helmet fitting, electric bikes (e-bikes), skills drills, lane positioning, commuting to work, biking to school, and more.

10

FREE EVENTS

**350%
increase from 2023**



139

PARTICIPANTS

**289%
increase from 2023**





SOLID WASTE

RECYCLING COMPLIANCE

In compliance with SB 1383 (Mandatory Organics Recycling) and AB 341 (Mandatory Recycling), all single-family homes, multi-family residences, and commercial businesses have recycling and organics recycling services.

TOTAL CITYWIDE DIVERSION RATE

26.9%



WASTE COLLECTED BY EDCO

52,927 tons



SCHOOL ORGANICS AND RECYCLING IMPLEMENTATION

The City partnered with I Love A Clean San Diego to implement organics and recycling programs at local schools. Through comprehensive trainings, customized implementation plans, and hands-on support, the program equipped schools with the infrastructure and knowledge needed to meet state recycling requirements and foster long-term environmental stewardship.



7,408

Students Trained



10

Schools

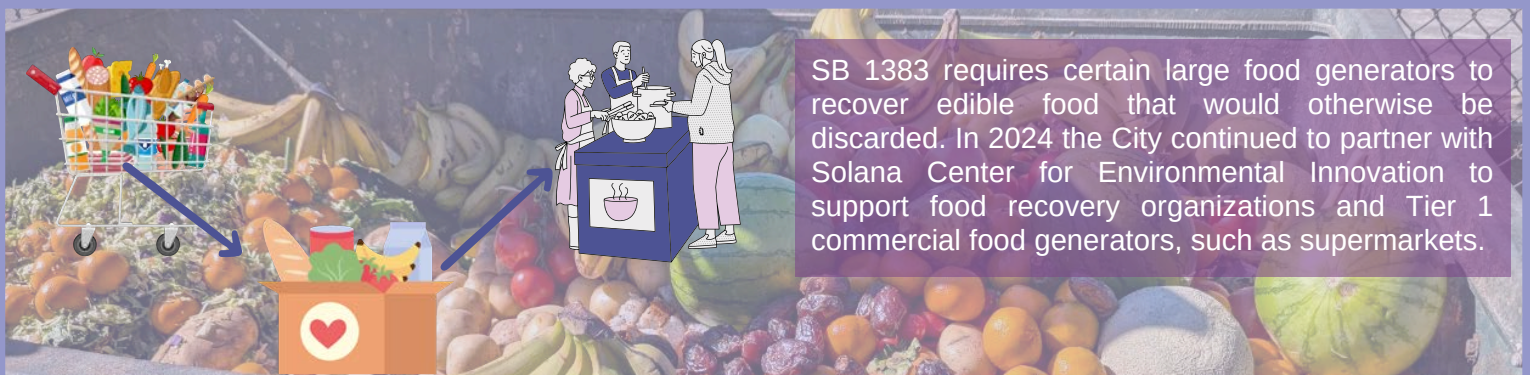


467

School Staff Trained



EDIBLE FOOD RECOVERY AND PROCUREMENT



SB 1383 requires certain large food generators to recover edible food that would otherwise be discarded. In 2024 the City continued to partner with Solana Center for Environmental Innovation to support food recovery organizations and Tier 1 commercial food generators, such as supermarkets.



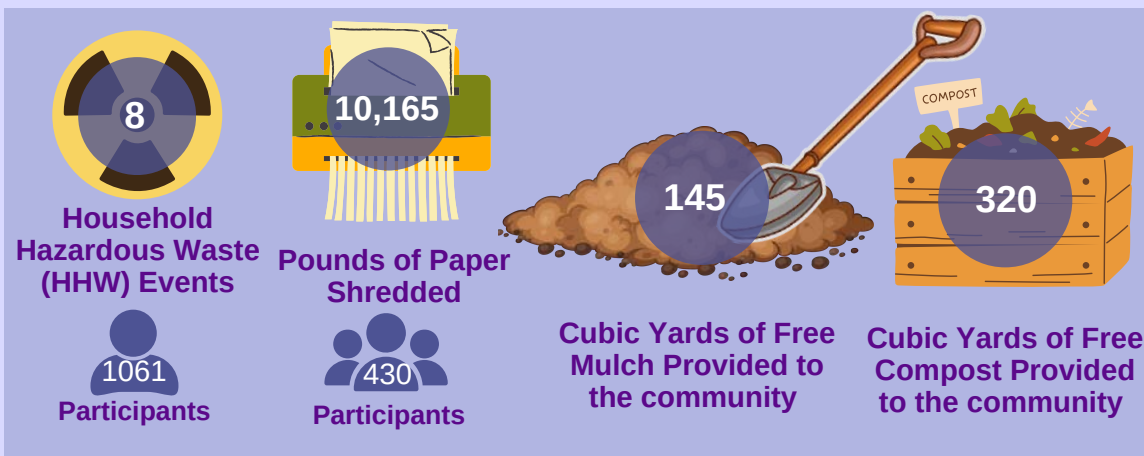
SOLID WASTE

LITTER FREE LA MESA CLEANUP SERIES

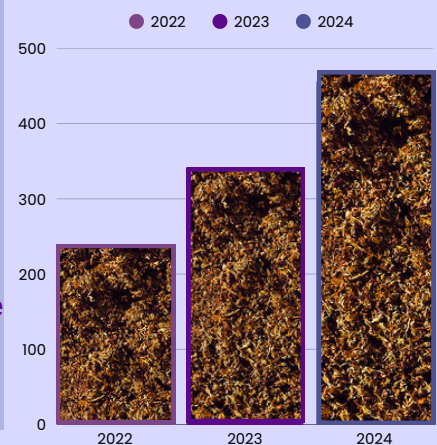
In partnership with I Love A Clean San Diego, the City continued its volunteer-driven Litter Free La Mesa Clean-Up Series to reduce litter and protect waterways. In 2024, the City began the process to hire a Community Cleanup Coordinator to lead and grow the program.



SOLID WASTE EVENTS



MULCH/COMPOST PROVIDED TO COMMUNITY IN CUBIC YARDS



NEW COMMUNITY WASTE REDUCTION EVENTS





GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

LA MESA'S URBAN TREE CANOPY



La Mesa has been a Tree City USA for 44 years. With support from a 2019 CAL Fire Grant, the City conducted inventories, planted trees, and engaged the community. Efforts to expand and maintain the City's urban forest are ongoing through the recommendations in the La Mesa Urban Forest Management Plan approved in 2022.



PARTNERSHIP WITH TREE SAN DIEGO



The City of La Mesa partners with Tree San Diego to educate the community about the value of the urban tree canopy through outreach events and tree planting demos. Tree San Diego planted its 10,000th tree in La Mesa, highlighting the strength of the partnership and the City's commitment to climate resilience and expanding green spaces.



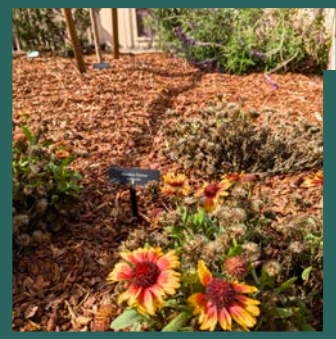
TREE CITY USA AWARD

The City received its 44th designation as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, recognizing the efforts by City staff to maintain the existing urban tree canopy throughout La Mesa.





GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



City Hall



WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN

Completed in 2024, the La Mesa City Hall Water Conservation Garden showcases drought-tolerant and pollinator plants. Informative signage throughout the garden helps visitors identify species and learn about sustainable landscaping practices. The space serves as an educational resource for water-wise gardening in the community.

PUBLIC WORKS PARKS DIVISION



La Mesa's Public Works Department maintains the Water Conservation Garden at City Hall along with all 14 city parks, playing a vital role in preserving the City's green infrastructure.



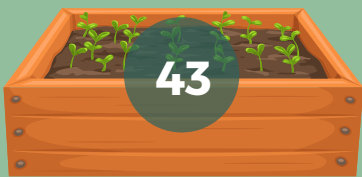
LA MESA PARK AND RECREATION FOUNDATION



The City partners with the La Mesa Park & Recreation Foundation on events like Park Appreciation Day and Earth Day to engage community members with La Mesa's green infrastructure.



COMMUNITY GARDEN



43

Garden Beds



100

Garden Participants



80

Volunteers



10

Workshops



150

Workshop
Participants

RENOVATIONS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

Collier Park reopened to the public in 2024 following major renovations. The updated park features low-water and native plants, stormwater bioswales, a nature-themed play area and new trees throughout the parking lot, creating a more sustainable and inviting community space.





WATER

WATER CONSERVATION

City Facilities used

gallons of water

62,213,404

67

Water device rebates were given to residents through Helix Water District

4

La Mesa residents participated in in-home water use evaluations by Helix Water District

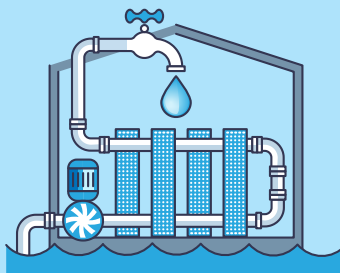
La Mesa Residents used on average

91.9

gallons of water a day per person

PURE WATER PROJECT

In 2024, Phase 1 of the Pure Water Program advanced with 12 projects to convert recycled wastewater into 30 million gallons per day of purified water, reducing the City's reliance on imported water. Construction of pipelines, pump stations, and treatment facilities was a key focus.



GRASS TURF REPLACEMENT

5,778

sq ft of turf replaced with less water intensive landscaping



CITY FACILITY UPGRADES

In 2024, the City made water-saving upgrades in its facilities, including City Hall. These improvements highlight La Mesa's commitment to conservation through features like mulch, rainwater collection, permeable pavement, drip irrigation, and drought tolerant landscaping.

City Hall Water Conservation Garden

Rainwater collection

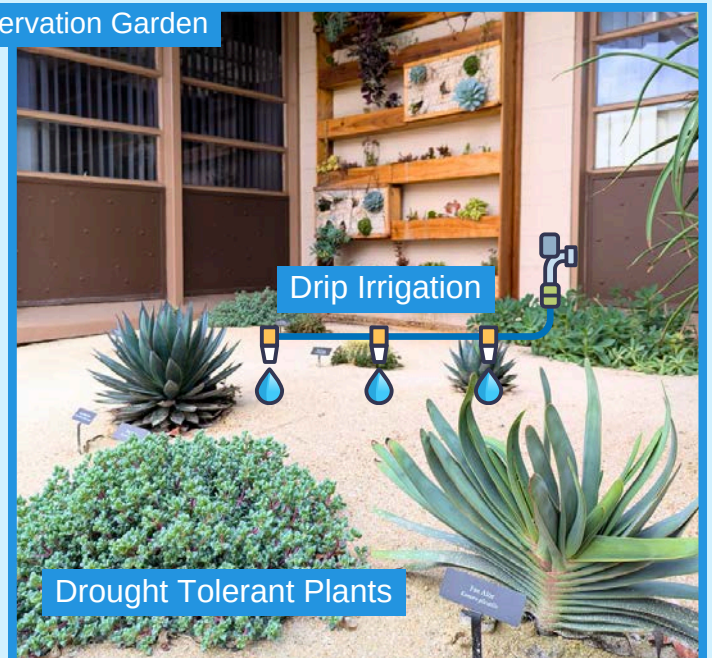
Mulch

Permeable Pavement



Drip Irrigation

Drought Tolerant Plants

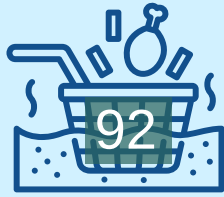


WATER

STORMWATER



Inspections for
stormwater compliance



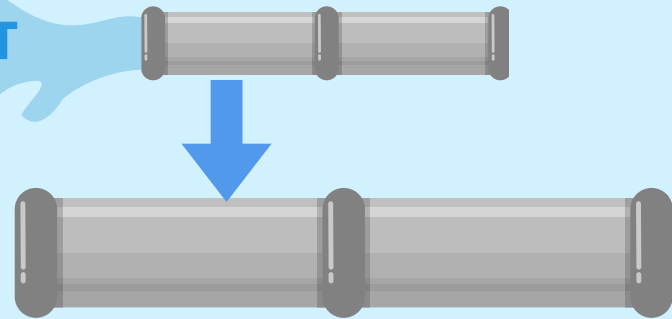
FOG checks of
restaurants



The City of La Mesa conducts regular inspections of restaurants to ensure proper management of fats, oils, and grease (FOG) and compliance with stormwater regulations. These efforts help prevent pollution from entering the storm drain system and protect local waterways.

STORM DRAIN PIPE ENHANCEMENT

Following the January 2024 heavy rainfall event, the City launched a project to widen storm drain pipes to improve flood resilience and protect the community from future storm events.



BIOSWALES

The City installs bioswales in street medians as part of its efforts to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality. These vegetated, landscaped features help slow and capture rainwater, filter out pollutants like oil and debris, and allow water to soak into the ground, recharging local groundwater supplies and supporting cleaner waterways.

Benefits of Bioswales



EVENTS AND EDUCATION





EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Community engagement is the cornerstone of La Mesa's Climate Action Plan, and the City is continually exploring new and meaningful ways to connect with and learn from the community, both online and in person.

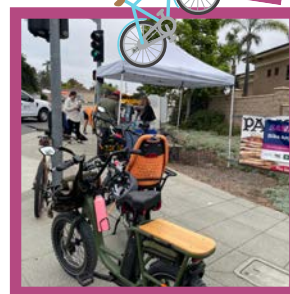
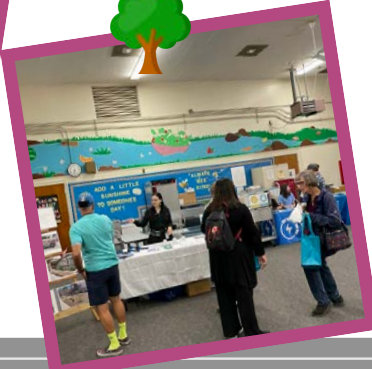
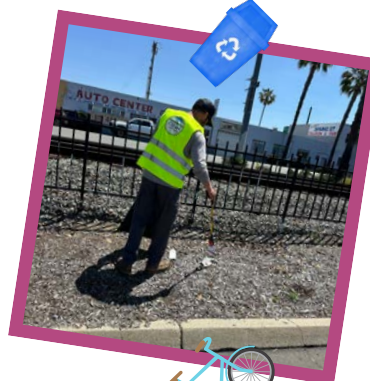
THE CAP TEAM HOSTED...

5,049
PARTICIPANTS

AT

50
EVENTS

COMMUNITY EVENTS



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Working with Helix Charter
High School Volunteers



Youth Advisory Commission
Presentations

As part of the Climate Emergency Resolution, the City expanded youth outreach through school partnerships, workshops, and support for organics recycling, while also engaging the La Mesa Youth Advisory Commission. The CAP team also advised student-led sustainability projects at Helix Charter High School.

CAP SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

108,302

Accounts Reached

117

Total Social Media Posts



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The CAP is a collaborative effort that spans across all City departments. The City continues to engage staff through interactive events and trainings to integrate CAP measures into all projects and programs, supporting the goals of the Climate Emergency Resolution.



Encouraging Reusables at Events



Proper Waste Sorting at Events



9

Newsletters Sent Out

THE LA MESA GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK

Launched in August 2022, the La Mesa Green Business Network promotes eco-friendly practices through a free local certification program in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council California USGBC-CA. All participating businesses gain access to sustainability resources, events, a monthly newsletter, and networking opportunities.

2024 MILESTONES



Certified Green Businesses were recognized at a City Council meeting with a presentation honoring their commitment to sustainability and environmental leadership in La Mesa.



The City led by example by achieving Green Business Certification for City Hall and celebrated with a green ribbon-cutting event, joined by other certified green businesses in La Mesa

31

Members of the La Mesa Green Business Network

8

Certified Green Businesses



The La Mesa Library



Four Fin Creative



Homes With MY Realty



The Dental House



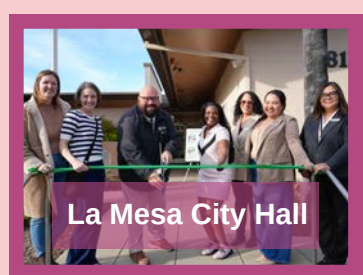
Kai's Refills



Scisters Salon & Apothecary



Helix Soap Co



La Mesa City Hall

CIVICSPARK AND COLLEGE CORPS FELLOWS

The City of La Mesa continued its involvement in the CivicSpark program, welcoming its fourth cohort of two new fellows in September 2024 following the completion of the previous cohort in July. Additionally, the City brought on its third cohort of College Corps Fellows from the University of San Diego, with two new fellows starting in September to support further CAP initiatives.



CivicSpark '24- '25



College Corps '23-'24

CivicSpark '23- '24



Fellow Projects Include:

CAP Annual Report



Bicycle Education Events



Youth Outreach



La Mesa Earth Day Kids Zone

Tree Planting Projects



La Mesa Green Business Network



Climate Action Plan Update

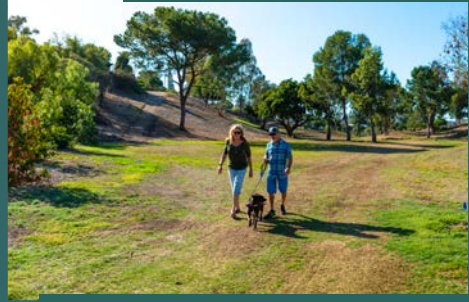


Electric Vehicle Charging Station Master Plan



Transportation Demand Management





The City of La Mesa is committed to addressing climate change and fostering a sustainable and resilient community for generations to come.

envirosvcs@cityoflamesa.us

LA MESA