



Policy Type: Board

Category: Sustainability

Policy Name: Sustainability - Board Policy 8.1

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8.1 SUSTAINABILITY

The County of Santa Clara is committed to working towards building a livable, equitable and resilient community by reducing climate pollution, adapting to a changing global climate, enhancing natural resources and the environment, fostering a prosperous and just regional economy, and meeting the needs of current and future generations to ensure all people have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential.

Whole-Systems Approach and Equity

The County applies a whole systems approach that addresses the core elements of sustainability (economy, environment, and equity) to fulfill the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The County is committed to addressing disparities caused by a long history of systemic discrimination to improve outcomes for all, and will build the infrastructure to apply an equity framework across its programs, services, and policies to address inequities and its root causes, including but not limited to those caused by systemic racism.

The County's sustainability mission is achieved through public policy, programs, and advocacy to support and promote actions across four priority areas:



- **Climate Protection and Defense**
The County works to combat climate change by accelerating approaches to become carbon neutral through transportation and commutes strategies, fossil-fuel free energy systems and buildings, smart growth, zero waste solutions, low carbon agriculture and ecology practices, and improving preparedness and capacity of all community members to adapt and persist through natural disasters, shocks, and stressors.
- **Natural Resources and the Environment**
The County strives to maintain a healthy environment; provide access to parks, open spaces, clean air and water; enhance and protect natural habitats and working lands to provide environmental, economic, and health benefits for all community members and businesses and promote stewardship and responsible resource management.
- **Community Health and Well-Being**
The County strives to improve the overall health and well-being of County employees and residents by reducing differences in health outcomes among population groups; working to ensure all are supported in getting their basic needs of housing, healthcare, food, and education met, and enhancing civic participation, leadership, and engagement of all.
- **Prosperous and Just Economy**
The County seeks to build financial security and prosperity for all through education, workforce training, and living wage job opportunities; a diversified and green economy through local hiring and small and minority business support; and procurement, investments and partnerships that advance sustainability and empower sustainability practitioners.



Providing Balance

The interrelationships among the four priority areas are more important than any one area. The County will pursue a thoughtful, balanced approach when interests compete and the commitment of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors to a sustainable future shall be reflected in public policy, programs, and services. Four cross-cutting approaches will drive how the actions will be implemented to integrate sustainability as a core function within County operations, coordinate sustainability efforts, enhance partnerships, and empower collective action and transformation to build a sustainable government agency and community:

- Commitment to Equity: Strive to eliminate disparities and environmental injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities based on income, race/ethnicity, age, ability, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and help ensure that there is equitable distribution of benefits and burdens across all communities.
- Collaborative: Collaborate with all internal and external partners including nonprofits, community-based organizations, and community leaders to implement shared sustainability goals and develop solutions to build vibrant and thriving communities.
- Creative Approaches: Encourage innovation, creative thinking, piloting new tools and technologies, and developing state-of-the-art solutions and unique financing mechanisms to become a leader in the sustainability realm.
- Change Agents: Empower County employees and community members to be mindful sustainability practitioners who



continually strive toward sustainability goals and actions within both their workplace and their communities.

Related Policies

- None.

Related Forms and Information

- None.

History

Date	Changes Made
6/22/2021	Policy Section Amended. View legislative file.
2/11/2014	Policy Uploaded. (Kyle Larson)
4/27/2010	Policy Adopted. View legislative file.