



*This is the first in a series of articles spotlighting Development Services programs that improve the quality of life of Elk Grove residents.*

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### **Elk Grove Plans for Green Future** Elk Grove: Working for You

Climate change is an important issue facing Elk Grove today, as it impacts the planet, its people, and the future generations that will call our city home.

Greenhouse gas emissions are quickly becoming a topic of concern for communities across California, including Elk Grove. New state laws have been passed to reduce green house gas emissions.

Working hand-in-hand with a dedicated committee, a team of experts, and the community, the City of Elk Grove is taking proactive steps to become a more environmentally sustainable community and taking a critical look at issues like public health, air quality, and the potential effects of climate change.

The concept of sustainability is a holistic concept that involves more than environmental protection, green building, or the preservation of open space. Sustainability promotes flourishing communities that last into the future, where support systems function efficiently to serve community needs.

Plans are being developed to define short-term and long-term strategies to ensure a safe and healthy future for our city while allowing the city to comply with state mandates.

“Protecting the environment is a high priority for the City of Elk Grove. We’re making plans and taking actions now that will improve the health and well being of Elk Grove’s residents and future generations,” said Mayor Steven Detrick. “I’d like to thank the advisory committee of volunteers who have spent the past year dedicated to both the City and our environment.”

In March of 2010, the City of Elk Grove established a seven-member Sustainability Element and Climate Action Plan Committee tasked with developing a twofold approach to achieving Elk Grove’s goals for sustainability.

Over the past year, the committee has explored topics including climate change, air quality, energy efficiency, community health, and resource stewardship during the development of the Sustainability Element and Climate Action Plan.

The Sustainability Element and Climate Action Plan are two separate but related components of the City's sustainability strategy. Each document, once completed, will contain policies and programs that are designed to help the city meet legal requirements for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The policies and programs will be designed to improve the local conditions here in Elk Grove and to help provide information and resources to the community.

The Sustainability Element will be a component of the City's General Plan and will define overarching goals for balancing social, environmental, and economic goals and ideas to create and maintain a vibrant, healthy city.

The Climate Action Plan outlines specific tools and resources for implementing the goals of the Sustainability Element and looks at four key sectors—energy, waste, transportation and land use—to develop greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

The committee has conducted extensive outreach with the community to identify proposed actions the city could take to achieve sustainability. Examples include electric car charging stations, new tree plantings, use of recycled water for landscape irrigation, expanding commuter travel services, and increasing employment opportunities in Elk Grove.

The draft plans are available on the City's website at [www.eplanning.org](http://www.eplanning.org). The final report and recommendations will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for initial review, pending formal adoption, in spring 2011.

In addition to the Sustainability Element and Climate Action Plan, the City is already addressing climate change with a number of projects and programs designed to improve sustainability in Elk Grove.

- New development projects are now required to undergo specific environmental analysis for climate change as part of the new City-adopted California Building Code.
- The City's Zoning Code requires development projects to provide bicycle parking and other facilities for commuters.
- The City's Trails Master Plan identifies a community-wide trail system and as appropriate, requires development projects to provide land for trail segments and install trail facilities as projects are being built.
- The City's Improvement Standards require streets to be designed to accommodate multiple forms of mobility including vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- The City's Water Conservation Ordinance requires landscaping within development projects to report their water use.
- The City was the first to participate in SMUD's PV Pioneer Program, which resulted in a streamlined building permit process at no cost to the customer for residential photovoltaic panels.

- Public Works is working to reduce energy use by the City's transportation system through improvements to signal timing and installation of LED lighting element in traffic signal and crosswalk lights.
- Elk Grove has continually enhanced the local solid waste system by implementing aggressive and innovative recycling programs.
- The City has actively promoted fuel efficiency for the City's bus fleet by using CNG buses.

The Sustainability Element and the Climate Action Plan, along with the City's existing programs, will further promote the many ways in which Elk Grove is working toward a brighter— and greener— future.

Climate Action Plan Draft:

<http://www.egplanning.org/cap/documents/2011/climate-action-plan-public-draft.pdf>

Sustainability Element Draft:

<http://www.egplanning.org/cap/documents/2011/sustainability-element-public-draft.pdf>

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