

CLIMATE-SMART CITIES

Creating low-carbon, climate-smart cities in California that connect, cool, absorb, and protect with the use of natural infrastructure such as green alleys, parks, schoolyards, urban gardens, and riverways.

Creative Placemaking

- Community driven design and development encourages local stewardship, innovation, and cultural relevance.
- Creative Placemaking honors and supports existing communities, building connections and a sense of ownership between neighbors.¹¹

Connect

- Safe green alleys and streets connect people to amenities and to each other, encouraging biking and walking and reducing vehicle miles traveled.¹²
- Cars account for 78% of total transportation emissions, and California cities have far fewer bicycle and pedestrian commuters than the national average.⁵
- A 50% shift to walking or riding a bike on short and medium trips in the Bay Area would reduce carbon emissions, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes by an estimated 14%.⁵

Health & Safety

- Restoring natural areas and community spaces improves air quality, creates local food options, increases outdoor recreation and fitness, reduces crime, and decreases illegal dumping and pollution.¹²

Protect

- Waterfront green infrastructure protects cities from sea-level rise, coastal and river flooding, while special "infiltration" trenches absorb and clean stormwater and reduce urban runoff.¹⁰
- Green infrastructure at the inland edge of cities increases resilience against rising risks from wildfire and mudslides.¹⁰

Cool

- By absorbing greenhouse gases and providing shade, drought-tolerant plants and trees lower temperatures and reduce energy demand and costs.¹
- Light-colored cool roofs, pavement, and walls reduce the urban heat island effect and cool the air, encouraging outdoor recreation and active transportation.²
- Energy used to keep homes and buildings cool increases by 5-10% due to heat islands.³
- A comprehensive "cool-community" strategy could reduce emissions by 4 million metric tons of CO₂ a year.⁴

Absorb

- Permeable paving and dry wells absorb rainfall to lessen stormwater runoff pollution while recharging groundwater supplies, eliminating flooding, and reducing water management emissions and costs.⁷
- The carbon emissions from transporting and managing California's water supply is equivalent to that of 7.1 million passenger vehicles.⁹
- The City of Los Angeles could meet 30-45% of its water demand by implementing a climate-smart green infrastructure plan.⁸

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PUBLIC FUNDING AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC CLIMATE-SMART GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS IN CALIFORNIA:

Multiple Benefits

- California Natural Resources Agency, Urban Greening Program
- Strategic Growth Council, Transformational Climate Communities Program

Cool

- California Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program
- CALFIRE, Urban and Community Forestry Program

Connect

- Caltrans, Active Transportation Program
- Strategic Growth Council, Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities
- US Department of Transportation, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Program
- National Park Service, Stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund

Absorb

- State Water Resources Control Board, Proposition 1 Stormwater Grant Program
- Department of Water Resources, Integrated Regional Water Management Proposition 1 Program
- California Coastal Conservancy, Climate Ready Program
- California Coastal Conservancy, Proposition 1 Grant Program

Protect

- California Ocean Protection Council, Proposition 1 Grant Program

Creative Placemaking

- California Arts Council
- National Endowment for the Arts, Art Works and Our Town

Health and Safety

- CalRecycle, Illegal Disposal Site Abatement Grant Program

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