



Climate-Smart Community Profile: Chula Vista, CA



Chula Vista is located on the California Coast just 7 miles north of the Mexican border. With a population of over 240,000, this tourist destination is the second largest city in San Diego County and one of the region's economic and cultural hubs. The city is built on the flatlands between the San Diego Bay and the foothills of the San Ysidrio Mountains, and enjoys a Mediterranean climate. Chula Vista is bordered with coastal resources to the west and over 6,000 acres of open space preserves to the east.

Cities and towns across the United States are beginning preparations to cope with and respond to the impacts of climate change, a process known as climate change adaptation. Chula Vista is using a variety of nature-based approaches to protect people and property that also confer adaptation value for wildlife and habitat areas. Chula Vista is particularly concerned with preparations for **water shortages, habitat connectivity issues, coastal flooding, erosion, insufficient energy production to meet demands, and wetland destruction.**

Climate Planning Activities

- Early 1990s: the City implemented programs and policies addressing issues such as greenhouse gas emission inventories, free business and energy evaluations, energy efficiency and conservation, alternative transportation, etc.
- Officially adopted a **CO2 Reduction Plan** in 2000, and current efforts are led by the **Climate Change Working Group** (CCWG) composed of residents, businesses and community organization representatives.
- Published an **Implementation Plan** in May 2011 to pursue 11 specific climate adaptation goals: cool paving, shade trees, cool roofs, local water supply and reuse, storm water pollution prevention and reuse, education and wildfires, extreme heat plans, open space management, wetlands preservation, sea level rise & land development codes, and green economy.
- 2011-2012: Participated in the preparation of a **Sea Level Rise Adaptation Study for San Diego Bay**, identifying measures to evaluate and manage risks from sea level rise and other climate change impacts.



Implementation of Adaptation Activities



Wetlands Preservation (2011 Implementation Plan)

- City plans to acquire upland and transitional habitat (includes removal of invasive species) to accommodate shift in wetlands coverage.
- Beneficial for wildlife (habitat preservation/restoration) and humans (restores natural stormwater barriers, buffers against sea-level rise).
- Timeline: preliminary research nearly finished, specific action plan for wetland management due to be finalized in December 2012.

Open Space Management (2011 Implementation Plan)

- City expects increased demands on open space from stressed local species and new species displaced to the area by climate change.
- Conducting biological studies to determine specific species impacts, plans to adjust open space usage, and seeking to minimize water use in open spaces.
- Timeline: surveys and re-planning of space usage ongoing, water usage project to be phased in over 8-year period.



Storm Water Pollution Prevention (2011 Implementation Plan)



- Climate change is likely to alter regional precipitation patterns, leading to potential flooding, erosion, and increased runoff-based pollution
- City plans to reduce waste in landscaping and construction, focus on low-impact development, and reuse stormwater for irrigation purposes
- Timeline: strategies being phased in over two years to allow code updates to pass City Council. The updated **Storm Water Manual** implementing a number of these strategies was finalized in January 2011

What's helping Chula Vista?

- Committed City staff and Council
- All-inclusive planning process with all stakeholders present
- Public experts aiding in educational outreach
- Well publicized process
- Local commitment from businesses and private citizens

What's holding Chula Vista back?

- Approximately 50% of funds have been secured. Additional funding is needed to implement short-term measures, as well as ongoing implementation
- Lack of regional collaboration with neighboring cities (aside from sea-level rise study) and open space managers



For more information, please contact: