

# Local Governments, Social Equity, and Sustainable Communities

ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

## CASE STUDY SERIES



ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY  
**in Hayward County,**  
**California**



**ICMA**

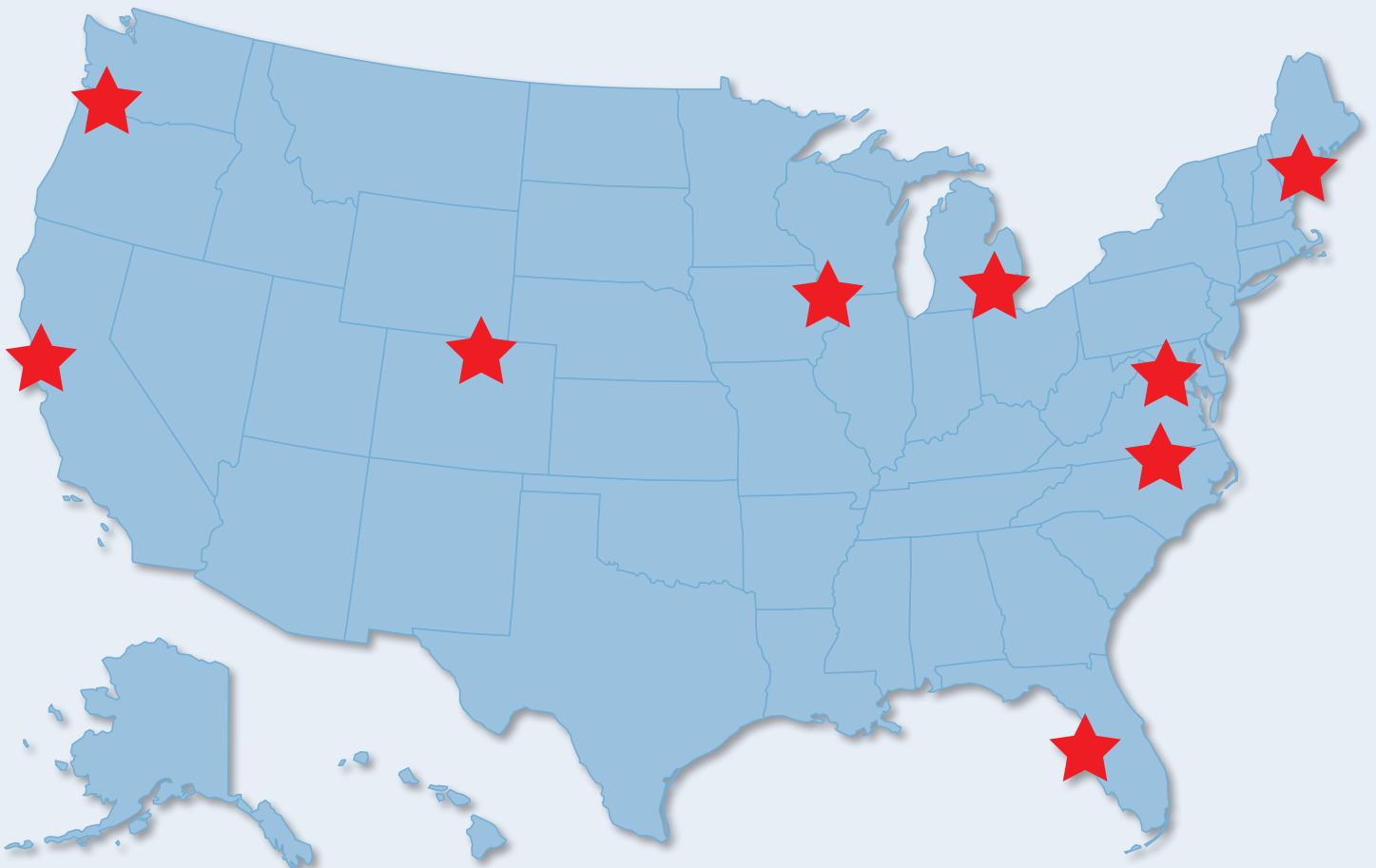
# ABOUT THIS PROJECT: ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

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This research was conducted by ICMA and Arizona State University to identify and describe current activities, leading practices, and achievements of sustainable communities created through a comprehensive, integrated approach supported by inclusive engagement. Based on results of the ICMA Sustainability Survey in 2010, a follow-up survey was sent to 300 local governments whose original responses showed high levels of sustainability activity. Using results from the follow-up survey and primary and secondary research on leading social sustainability practices around the United States, nine communities whose responses indicated high levels of social equity-related activity were selected for case studies. Case study communities include the following:\*

- Washtenaw County, MI (Pop. 344,791) and Ann Arbor, MI (Pop. 113,934)
- Dubuque, IA (Pop. 57,637)
- Hayward, CA (Pop. 144,186)
- Manatee County, FL (Pop. 322,833)
- Lewiston, ME (Pop. 36,592)
- Durham, NC (Pop. 228,330)
- Arlington, VA (Pop. 207,627)
- Clark County, WA (425,363)
- Fort Collins, CO (Pop. 143,986)

Each case study details findings from individual communities that provide insight into how they have been able to promote social equity and achieve greater social sustainability through their policies, programs, and other activities. Data was collected primarily through face-to-face interviews and secondary sources.



\*Populations based on 2010 Census base.

# **Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability: Case Study Series**

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*Advancing Social Equity in Hayward, California*  
By Tanya Watt, Arizona State University

## **In this Report**

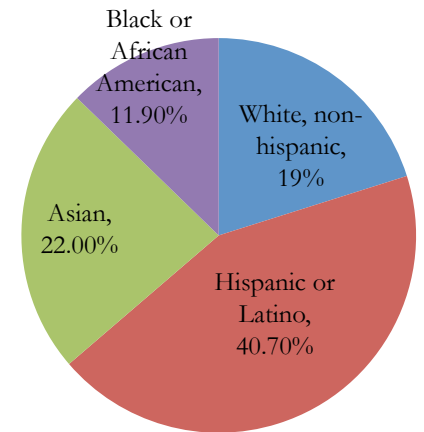
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## Community Profile

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- **Form of Government:** Council-Manager
- **County Commission:** Five councilors, including chair and vice-chair selected by board
- **Demographic Information (2012):**
  - **Total Population:** 149,392
  - **Poverty Rate:** 13.5%
- **Sustainability Plans and Strategies:** Climate Action Plan (adopted in 2009)
- **Number of Sustainability Staff:** 11 staff positions in the Environmental Services Division



Population by Race (2010)

### Findings in Brief

- **FINDING 1** – Integrated, regional approaches to sustainability issues, such as transportation co-located with affordable housing, can help to address sustainability concerns in heavily populated urban areas.
- **FINDING 2** – Collaborative approaches to sustainability and social equity issues can help each partner best leverage its resources to benefit community members.
- **FINDING 3** – While states have a strong role to play in establishing mandates and providing a legal framework in support of them, particularly as regards environmental sustainability, local-level discretion in how goals are to be accomplished would be helpful. State-level regulations provide consistent expectations across local governments, but it would help if more consideration were given to the role of local governments in the implementation dimension of policies.
- **FINDING 4** – The library is an important, perhaps underexamined, partner in social equity.

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## **History of Sustainability and Social Equity in Hayward, California**

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Located less than 30 minutes south of Oakland, California, Hayward is a diverse community in a state that is famous for taking a strong position in favor of environmental regulations to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The city is uniquely situated where a significant portion of its land is less than 20 feet above sea level. Council Member Al Mendall, current chair of the city’s sustainability committee, noted that a disproportionate number of poor residents live in areas that are most likely to be affected by a rise in sea level—a concern that became a major motivation for his position on the importance of sustainability; he sees taking care of the environment as a way of helping those in most need in the community. For several years, Hayward has articulated the priorities of “Safe, Green, and Clean” as an organizing theme by which a number of green initiatives have been pursued, including LED streetlights, renovations and retrofits of city facilities, and solar photovoltaic panels installed on the local animal shelter and used to generate more than \$50,000 of energy used by city buildings each year.

Hayward is the third most racially diverse city in California. Its undocumented immigrant population is high, and Assistant City Manager Kelly McAdoo noted that at times this can significantly affect the city’s ability to ensure that all residents have access to the services the city provides, especially given that this population is understandably resistant to interacting with government. The census records the city’s Hispanic population at over 40 percent. The Asian population is 22 percent, and the African-American population is 11.9 percent, and the white population is 34.2 percent. Fifty-eight percent of the households speak a language other than English.

Education attainment is also a concern in the city. Only 23.4 percent of the population has earned a bachelor’s degree (compared to 30.5 percent of the state’s population), and about 20 percent of the adult population has not earned a high school diploma.

Yet despite this diversity, there is an interesting inclusive culture that seems to permeate the city. One way the city visually expresses this inclusivity is found just outside of city hall. City hall is a gorgeous new building. It appeared that many homeless individuals were enjoying the grassy area in front of the building as well as the city library, directly across the street. A large, free public parking structure is also directly across the street from city hall. It appeared that some individuals who were living out of their vehicles had taken up residence in remote corners of the parking structure; even portable toilets were available within the structure. Rather than ignoring or disbanding the homeless population, as some local governments have done, Hayward seemed to take a more inclusive approach.

There is also clear economic diversity in Hayward, as reflected in the mix of physical development downtown. The state gave some revitalization money to the city, and a number of buildings had been beautifully renovated; however, when the funding was not renewed, comprehensive revitalization plans were put on hold. As a result, buildings in clear need of repair are only a block away from an area of major revitalization that includes shopping, restaurants, and a new

supermarket. Only a few blocks away from the historic district of beautiful homes are neighborhoods that show signs of physical decline.

Housing in Hayward is more affordable than it is in many other Bay Area cities; census data show the median value of a home in Hayward to be about \$100,000 less than in Oakland and \$400,000 less than in San Francisco. In addition, Hayward requires new developments to provide below-market-rate units, and the rate is tied to the market at the time of development. Not surprisingly, then, the homeownership rate in Hayward (53.5 percent) is far above that in Oakland and in San Francisco (41.0 percent and 36.9 percent, respectively). There is a general sense that the affordability of homes in the area makes Hayward appealing not only to a diverse population but also to families, and this sense is reflected in the fact that 24.5 percent of the population is under 18 years old (as opposed to 21.3 percent in Oakland and 13.4 percent in San Francisco). But while housing is affordable, the housing stock in the city is also aging. Sean Reinhart, director of Library and Community Services, manages a number of programs that provide assistance to homeowners seeking to rehabilitate their properties.

Given its affordable housing and location in a major metropolitan area, Hayward has evolved as a suburban community, and many people commute from Hayward to San Francisco. The city has two BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) stations and an Amtrak station, but BART in particular was developed to bring people to San Francisco rather than to outlying communities, so Hayward's general reliance on freeways to connect it to other communities has made it very car-dependent. Moreover as public transportation in Hayward is not easily accessible from housing and job locations, it is not necessarily Hayward-centric: however, the city is working to change this.

The city is reworking its General Plan, with anticipated completion in June 2014. The general planning process has included extensive outreach, with multiple in-person meetings and an online component for community feedback. Meetings are continuing through spring 2014. Hayward's Climate Action Plan, which was completed in 2009 with the help of a consultant group, will be fully incorporated into the new General Plan.

Within the last few years, in part as a response to the economic downturn, the city underwent a major internal reorganization. As part of this reorganization, Sean Reinhart expanded his responsibilities and became director of Library and Community Services. This position creatively connects two dimensions of the city to further its objectives toward social equity. In addition to being responsible for social services, Community Development Block Grants, and the city's housing rehabilitation program for disabled and seniors, this position connects with the diverse community through such services as library-based, volunteer-run literacy and language assistance programs. Reinhart seeks to expand the city library facilities, possibly locating them within local schools so that they can be available to community residents and students at the same time. Combining these two functions may provide a broadened perspective of how to best meet the needs of vulnerable members of the community. Because this reorganization is fairly new, it is difficult to evaluate the efficacy of the combined department; however, there are a number of benefits that may emerge from

the merger. Reinhart sees an opportunity for the local government to provide community members with the necessary tools and resources to proactively address their needs.

Also as part of the city's reorganization, in March 2013, it appointed a full-time environmental services manager who is responsible for sustainability and has dedicated funding from the city. This is a testament to the city's increasingly robust commitment to sustainability. As part of the Public Works Department, the Environmental Services Division has added energy efficiency and climate action to its existing foci of solid waste, recycling, and water conservation. Its primary focus, however, is GHG reduction. Erik Pearson, the environmental services manager, hopes to engage low- and moderate-income residents to ensure that everyone in the community benefits from its sustainability efforts.

Although Hayward is undertaking a number of beneficial sustainability activities, particularly with regard to the environment, the city is not currently integrated under a holistic environment-equity-economy framework that encourages different departments to collaborate extensively in order to achieve its sustainability objectives. Prior to the city's reorganization, environmental sustainability had been a function of the Planning Division, but the environmental dimension of the division's work coincides much more with Public Works, where the division is currently located. Community development, in which equity activities are undertaken through grants and social services, is completely separate from the other departments. Thus, even though the community is engaged in numerous important sustainability activities, these activities are not as coordinated as they might be.

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## **Findings**

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### **FINDING 1 – Integrated, regional approaches to sustainability issues, such as transportation co-located with affordable housing, can help to address sustainability concerns in heavily populated urban areas.**

Through Senate Bill 375, California's Sustainable Communities legislation, the state requires regional coordination for transportation funding. The legislation seeks to tie land use and transportation planning together. While internally, Hayward is viewed as a destination unto itself, public transportation planning has always treated the city as a point from which people depart rather than as a final destination. The city is advocating for a different perspective in future planning activities. It is seeking to have public transportation nodes co-located with affordable housing clusters and major industrial sites to facilitate easier access to transportation for low- and moderate-income residents and the employees of some of the city's major employers.

Regional coordination can become particularly important in major metropolitan areas, where a city's jurisdictional boundaries do not necessarily align with the needs of community members or with broad environmental, economic, and social equity concerns. It can also be very helpful in addressing common problems. For example, plastic bags were banned in Alameda County, and this level of regional development and policy enforcement can ease any political burden on local governments that would be associated with something potentially unpopular in the short term.

**FINDING 2 – Collaborative approaches to sustainability and social equity issues can help each partner best leverage its resources to benefit community members.**

Nonprofits, private sector businesses, and local governments all have a stake in improving communities. Especially as nonprofit and local government budgets shrink, community partnerships can help address serious social concerns. For example, the Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN), a partnership of residents, local schools, colleges, government agencies, businesses, and nonprofits, is a place-based initiative led by California State University East Bay and funded by a \$25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. By teaming up with these various stakeholders, the city can leverage its resources to address social problems and improve education, employment, safety, and health outcomes for the specified area. Although HPN targets a specific neighborhood rather than the entire city, it seeks to inculcate values that will likely spill over into adjacent neighborhoods and benefit the community at large.

**FINDING 3 – While states have a strong role to play in establishing mandates and providing a legal framework in support of them, particularly as regards environmental sustainability, local-level discretion in how goals are to be accomplished would be helpful. State-level regulations provide consistent expectations across local governments, but it would help if more consideration were given to the role of local governments in the implementation dimension of policies.**

While California has a strong reputation for leadership in legislating for GHG emission reduction among states, local employees expressed a desire for more predictability and long-term consistency, more consideration of the implications of implementation, and more flexibility in how goals are achieved.

**FINDING 4 – The library is an important, perhaps underexamined, partner in social equity.**

Libraries provide access to technology, literacy programs, and community-tailored content. In Hayward, the city library is an important locus of social equity activity, particularly as some social service organizations cut their budgets. The library connects committed volunteers to those in need of assistance with literacy and language skills. This assistance is particularly important as nonprofits lose funding and can no longer fund programs to address these areas.

With access to healthy food an important part of community sustainability, the Hayward Library also has an innovative seed-lending program, coordinating donations from nonprofit and private community partners to make seeds available at no charge to all community members. The library hosts expert mentors who teach residents how to plant and cultivate seeds and then, when the plants are mature, how to harvest seeds to share with others through the library. Community members can learn how to grow their own food even if they live in a small or cramped space. This is an innovative and cost-effective way to increase access to health food for all community members.



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## **Challenges and Future Plans**

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Because some of Hayward’s projects are so new, it is difficult to evaluate their efficacy. For example, combining the position of library services and community services director holds a number of exciting possibilities regarding social equity–focused projects, but the position is currently only two years old. Naming an environmental services manager position that is responsible for environmental sustainability initiatives clarifies the city’s continuing commitment to sustainability, but the position is less than a year old. The green building ordinance, which encourages environmentally friendly development, is an important step but seems underused.

Important components of the 2009 Climate Action Plan have been incorporated into the draft 2014 general plan, and Hayward’s city council has affirmed its commitment to “Safe, Green, and Clean” as the city’s major organizing sustainability theme. On January 21, 2014, the council elaborated on the importance of safety to this vision, noting a desire to reduce the city’s crime rate and for residents to feel safer. The council also encouraged departments to develop measurable objectives based on this holistic articulation of priorities. City departments have been encouraged to consider the implications of their decisions and planning processes through the “Safe, Green, and Clean” lens for many years, and it is anticipated that the 2014 planning process will afford the city an opportunity to expand the scope of this organizing theme to include more projects both internally and in the city overall. The city will continue to be one to watch as its plans play out over time.

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## **List of Study Participants**

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The author of this report conducted interviews with four individuals familiar with social equity–related issues in Hayward during a site visit on September 13, 2013. The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their contributions:

- Kelly McAdoo, assistant city manager, City of Hayward
- Erik Pearson, environmental services manager, City of Hayward
- Sean Reinhart, director of Library and Community Services, City of Hayward
- Al Mendall, council member, City of Hayward

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## **Further Resources**

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- Hayward’s Climate Action Plan (2009) can be found at [http://www.hayward-ca.gov/GREEN-HAYWARD/CLIMATE-ACTION-PLAN/pdfs/2009/CAP\\_Final/Hayward\\_CAP\\_FINAL\\_11-6-09%20-%20full%20document.pdf](http://www.hayward-ca.gov/GREEN-HAYWARD/CLIMATE-ACTION-PLAN/pdfs/2009/CAP_Final/Hayward_CAP_FINAL_11-6-09%20-%20full%20document.pdf).
- More about the Hayward Promise Neighborhood can be found at <http://www.haywardpromise.org/>.
- More about the seed-lending library can be found at <http://user.govoutreach.com/hayward/faq.php?cid=26546>.
- Information on California’s Sustainable Communities Act (SB 375) can be found at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375.htm>.



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