



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 14, 2025

Contact:

Phil Pitchford

Public Information Officer

951-826-5975

ppitchford@riversideca.gov

City of Riverside Included in Prestigious Nationwide Sustainability Effort

Riverside one of only 16 cities in the nation chosen for respected program

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside has been named one of 16 cities nationwide to participate in the 2025 LEED for Cities Cohort, a program led by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the leading authority on green building and the global developer of the LEED green building program.

The program, part of USGBC's Local Government Leadership Program, helps local governments set goals, collect data, and validate performance against sustainability and quality of life metrics using the LEED for Cities rating system. Local governments receive a clear roadmap for achieving sustainability through a comprehensive framework for managing community-wide sustainability efforts.

"Riverside's focus on sustainability and quality of life is now being recognized on the national stage," Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. "We are incredibly fortunate to have such a beautiful and livable city that can be a model for other cities' sustainability efforts."

The City of Riverside is excited to participate in the LEED for Cities cohort. This program aligns with the City's ethos, actions and investment across a comprehensive platform of strategic priority areas:

- transportation and mobility performance, including the launch of the only hydrogen Clean Air Car Share in the world; repaving 20% of the City's streets; establishing a VMT Mitigation Program to facilitate private development, reduce congestion and improve air quality; doubling the 156 miles of existing bike lanes; transitioning the City fleet to zero emission vehicles; launching an all-electric shuttle pilot in partnership with Ohmio and RTA, and creating safer routes for students.
- leadership in the management of green spaces like "Putting the River Back in Riverside" program; planting thousands of trees each year citywide through the Tree Power Program and grant awards; trimming more than 60,000 trees; and record investments in dozens of City parks.

- responsible water management as evidenced by the lowest water rates in the state; improving water quality; reducing water loss; managing urban flooding; and capturing billions of gallons of water during atmospheric rivers with the Seven Oaks Dam water recharge project.
- record investment in energy efficiency and reliability, including establishment of a 69 percent renewable energy portfolio; and climate action and resiliency planning.
- solid waste management and waste performance through Recycle From Home program; partnering with Feeding America to recover millions of pounds of surplus food to support those in need; and building a Waste to Energy project to divert 200,000 tons of organic material from landfills to be used as energy.
- quality of life as evidenced by the launch of the Riverside Blue Zones project; housing affordability programs; and partnering with educational institutions to expand opportunities.
- innovation and economic impact through the City's growing Green Tech Hub which includes businesses like Ohmio (all-electric, autonomous shuttle manufacturer), Voltu (all-electric medium duty truck manufacturer), Hyundai Rotem (hydrogen train manufacturer), and Green Power Motor Company (all-electric bus manufacturer); breaking ground on the first in the U.S. Northside Agriculture Innovation Center with agri-voltaics and solar greenhouses.

The LEED for Cities designation will allow Riverside's existing efforts to be highlighted as best practices and measured against third party verification while identifying ways to further improve.

The LEED for Cities framework helps local governments track performance, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement best practices that deliver near-term benefits and lasting positive impact. USGBC's Local Government Leadership Program is supported through a partnership with Bank of America and has supported nearly 120 U.S. local governments representing 55 million people.

Social, economic, and environmental performance indicators are included, along with standards and strategies that allow for effective benchmarking and communication of progress. Additionally, third-party certification verifies the results, ensuring accountability and credibility.

"Becoming a truly sustainable city is a collective achievement -- one made possible by the dedication of our entire team, our community partners, city staff and every resident who believes in a better future," said Assistant City Manager Rafael Guzman, who also serves as Riverside's first Chief Sustainability Officer. "Together, we're not only protecting our environment, but also improving quality of life, strengthening our economy, enhancing public health, and using our resources more efficiently. These efforts are paving the way for a cleaner, more resilient, and more livable city for generations to come."

Since the program's inception in 2017, resilience and sustainability have become increasingly important factors in every community's success. Using the LEED for Cities rating system, local governments demonstrate their performance against key sustainability and quality-of-life topics such as resilience planning, energy efficiency, stormwater management, and green building policy.

"City governments play a critical role in advancing public and environmental health, resilience, and economic prosperity across their communities," said Peter Templeton, president and CEO of USGBC. "We applaud this cohort for prioritizing these outcomes and committing to meaningful actions on sustainability and community well-being."