



C I T Y O F
RENO

Memorandum

DATE: February 27, 2025
TO: Mayor and Council
THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager
FROM: Suzanne Groneman, Sustainability & Utility Relations Manager
DEPT: City Manager's Office
SUBJECT: Sustainability & Climate Action Plan 2024 Annual Report

In July 2019, the Reno City Council unanimously adopted the City of Reno Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (Plan). There are nine priorities under the Plan ranging from advancing clean energy, to protecting our urban forests, to ensuring access to healthy food. This is the fourth update since the adoption of the Plan.

Highlights include:

- **Solar in the City of Reno:** In 2024, City facilities generated 1.6 million kilowatt-hours of energy.
- **Benchmarking Data:** 51% of privately-owned buildings reported, totaling over 51 million square feet.
- **Awards:** The City received two awards, one from Clearly Energy and a first-place Mayor's Climate Protection Award.
- **Reno-Sparks Heat Campaign:** 149 volunteers came together to map morning, mid-day, and evening heat in Reno. Between 3-4pm, Reno is the hottest in the eastern and northeastern regions.
- **USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Grant:** The City kicked off the planting project along Airway Drive as part of a \$500,000 grant for tree planting.
- **Public Safety Center:** The City opened the new Public Safety Center which features sustainable design elements including solar and battery storage.
- **Accomplishments:** This report highlights 38 actions implemented under the Plan since its passage in 2019.



Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

2024 Annual Report



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2024

SUMMARY

In 2019, the City of Reno's first [Sustainability and Climate Action Plan](#) was approved which set numerous targets and goals for our city to achieve. This plan covers various goals including increasing city-wide energy and water efficiency, reducing waste, and increasing our tree canopy.

This report will outline our current operational impact, including facility solar generation, 2024 benchmarking status and data highlights, as well as projects that we were awarded in 2024 that will help advance our sustainability efforts.

By integrating sustainable practices, cities can reduce environmental harm, lower energy costs, and improve public health, ensuring long-term benefits for all. Sustainable initiatives, such as renewable energy programs, efficient public transportation, and green infrastructure, create economic opportunities and strengthen local resilience.



SOLAR IN THE CITY OF RENO

In 2024, City of Reno facilities generated **1.6 million kilowatt-hours** of energy, making up nearly **32%** of the annual energy usage for the same sites. Below, Figure 1 depicts the 2024 energy generation from solar at each of the City of Reno’s facilities. Next year, the new Public Safety Center will be added to the list of solar-generating facilities.

City facility solar arrays:

- Parking Gallery
- Miguel Ribera Park
- Corp Yard
- Fire Station #3
- Fire Station #10
- Fire Station #11
- Neil Road Community Health Alliance
- Neil Road Boys and Girls Club and
- Sewer Lift Station
- Stead Waste Water Treatment Plant

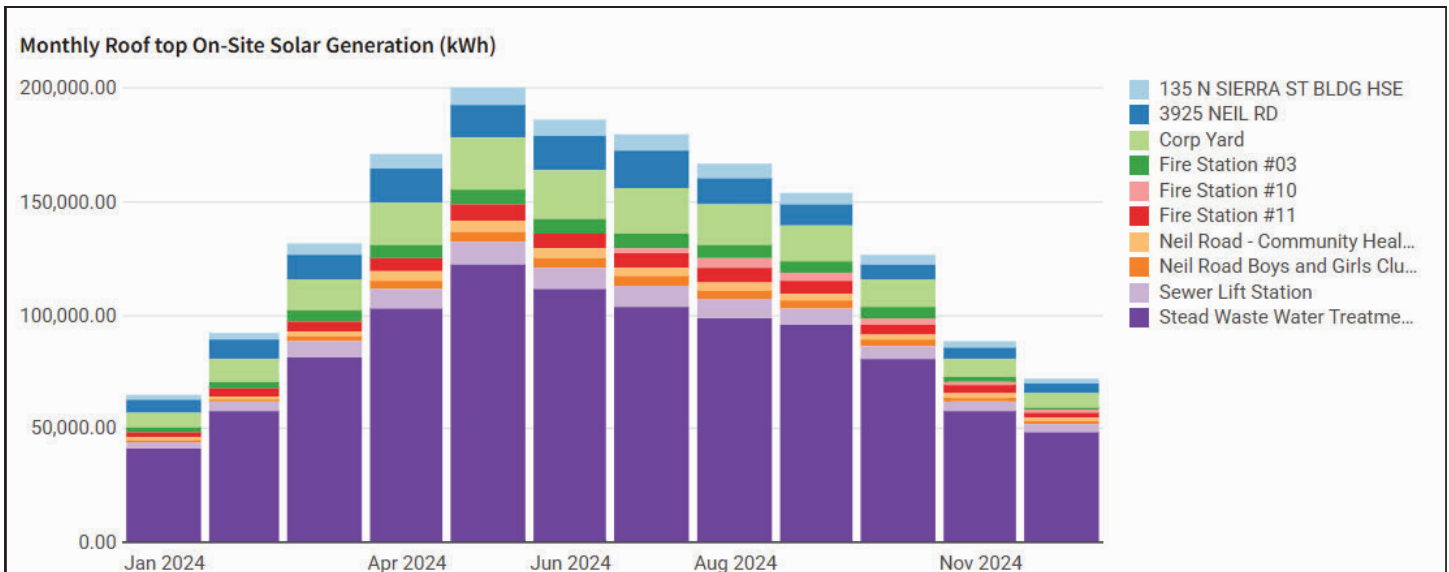


Figure 1. Bar chart displaying the 2024 energy generation in kWh from solar arrays located at City of Reno facilities. The chart breaks down the generation by facility each month. The Stead Waste Water Treatment Plant makes up the largest portion of the City of Reno’s solar energy generation.



2023

BENCHMARKING DATA

The City of Reno collects energy and water data from large commercial buildings in Reno in accordance with RMC 14.30. Each year, properties report information such as property type, energy and water usage, and building emissions.

The graph below (Figure 2) shows the median EUI, or Energy Use Intensity, for property types in Reno vs. for the United States. Reno is more efficient than the United States average for Multi-Family Housing, Retail, and Super Markets.

51%
Compliance

51,678,896
Square Feet Reported

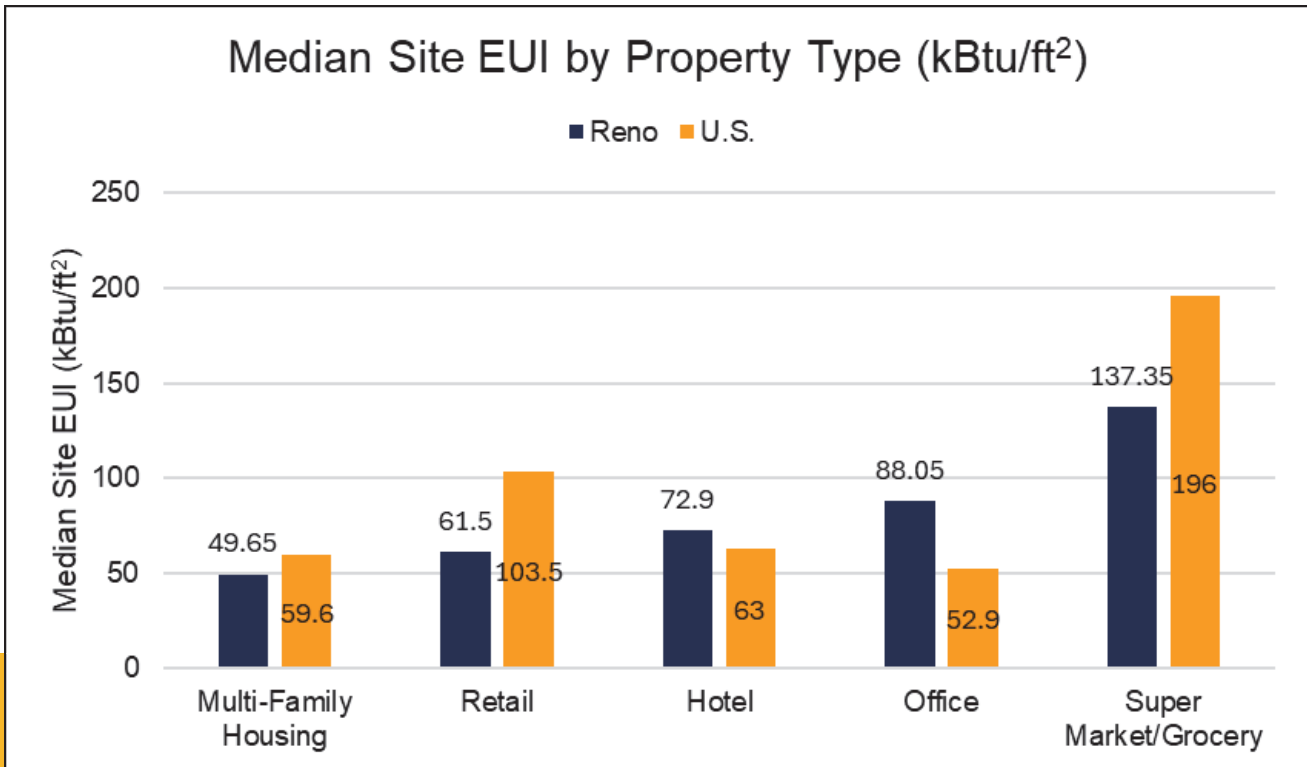


Figure 2. Bar chart comparing the median site EUI by property type for the City of Reno and the United States. The City of Reno is depicted in dark blue and the United States in gold.

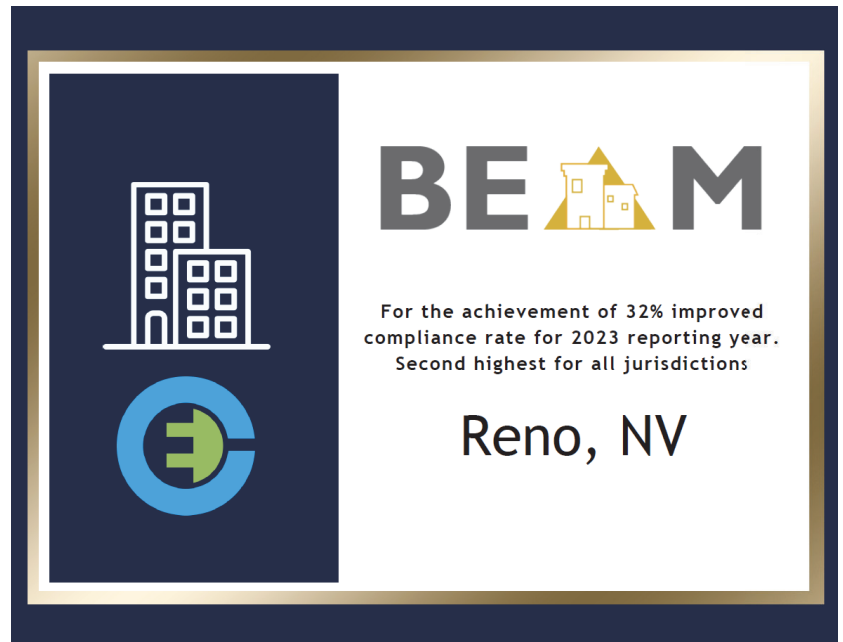
In the 2022 reporting year, 19% of buildings were compliant with the ordinance, meaning that 81% of covered properties did not share energy and water data with the City or file for an exemption. Non-compliant properties are first sent a notice and are later fined if non-compliance continues. This year, compliance reached 51% through various efforts. A webinar was held for property owners on the basics of reporting, reminder emails were sent to properties, and the Energy and Water Efficiency Program website was updated frequently with other training materials and energy efficiency opportunities.

Awards

2023 Reporting Year

BEAM AWARD

In 2024, Clearly Energy awarded the City of Reno as the second highest jurisdiction using BEAM to increase energy and water benchmarking compliance rates in the 2023 reporting year. The City of Reno's compliance increased 32% from the 2022 to the 2023 reporting year due to increased education around the program. An increase in program staff and resource availability also streamlined data monitoring and outreach to participants.



2024

CONFERENCE OF MAYOR'S CLIMATE PROTECTION AWARD - 1ST PLACE FOR LARGE CITIES

The City of Reno won the [Large City 1st place Climate Protection Award](#) from the Conference of Mayors in 2024. The City of Reno won first place for our Community-Based Solar partnership with NV Energy. Solar panels located on top of covered parking at the Moana Springs Recreational Complex are managed by NV Energy and can be sold back to residents at a discounted rate. Read more about the [Community-Based Solar Project here](#).

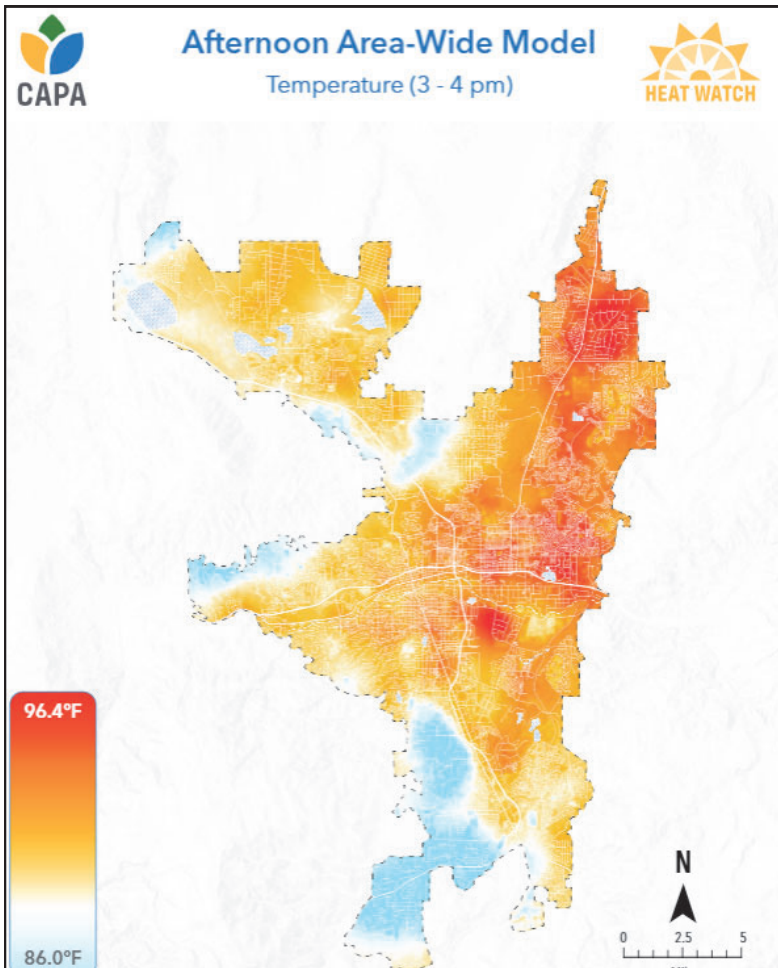
2024 SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

RENO-SPARKS HEAT CAMPAIGN

In 2024 the City of Reno partnered with the Desert Research Institute, the University of Nevada, Reno, Washoe County, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Citizens Climate Lobby and several other organizations within our region to host the Reno-Sparks Heat Campaign. Funded by CAPA Strategies, National Integrated Heat Health Information Systems (NIHHIS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the goal of Heat Watch is to collect live temperature data at several points throughout the day during the peak of summer in jurisdictions across the country. Data from the Reno-Sparks Heat Campaign was analyzed and transformed into heat maps showing the warmest and coolest areas of our region.

This campaign was made possible by the help of 149 volunteers who either organized the campaign or drove around different sections of Reno, Sparks, and unincorporated Washoe County to collect heat data.





The map to the left shows the afternoon temperature model created by CAPA Strategies using the data collected by volunteers during the Reno-Sparks Heat Campaign. This map shows that in the afternoon (3pm-4pm) Reno is hottest in the eastern and north eastern regions of the City. Read the Desert Research Institute’s [press release](#) containing the full campaign summary report and an interactive map.

Figure 3. A heat map of the Reno-Sparks region depicting the hottest areas in red and the coolest areas in blue during the afternoon (3pm-4pm).

USDA FOREST SERVICE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT

In 2023, the City of Reno was awarded \$500,000 by the USDA Forest Service under the Urban and Community Forestry Grant to plant over 150 trees along Airway Dr. This is a five year grant and in 2024 staff met nearly all of our first year deliverables, as outlined in our project narrative. These deliverables included making greenhouse improvements to start growing trees at our nursery. The picture on the right shows the City of Reno’s Urban Forester, Matt Basile, explaining the root structure of a baby tree to our project manager.



PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER



In 2024, the City of Reno opened the new Public Safety Center located at 911 Kuenzli Dr. The Public Safety Center includes energy efficient features, rooftop solar panels, and several spaces for fleet and public electric vehicle charging stations. Relocating the police department to this building also helped to reduce construction and demolition waste, as the City renovated an existing building (the old Reno-Gazette Journal headquarters) to include these sustainable features. In fact, over 20,000 lbs. of carpet was removed and recycled.

The Public Safety Center was designed to accommodate the City's growing population and police force. It is equipped with numerous offices for staff and additional room for citizens to seek support and resources. The center also has an ample amount of public parking spaces available.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From 2019 through today, the City has implemented, or is on track to implement, many of the goals, programs, and other actions under the [Sustainability and Climate Action Plan](#). High level accomplishments are outlined in this section.

Priority	Implementation Status
1.1	According to a study in partnership with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), the City met its water reduction goal of 20% in 2019.
1.2	Annually, the City benchmarks and reports the energy use of City properties under RMC 14.30.
1.3	After 13 months of energy data, the City will seek an Energy Star certification at the Public Safety Center.
1.5	In an analysis in 2024 showed the City will meet its 28% goal of reducing emissions from fleet vehicles.
1.6	Public EV charging is installed at City Hall, Moana Springs Community Aquatic and Fitness Center, and the Public Safety Center.
1.9	City policy #303, effective February 23, 2022, requires environmentally preferable purchasing.
1.10	The City follows the Truckee Meadows Structural Controls Design and Low Impact Development Manual. RMC 18.04.806 includes water conservation standards that limit the use of turf, limit spray irrigation, and require low water consumptive plantings.
1.11	Reno’s Tree Equity Score is 84/100, which means there is a moderate to good fair distribution of tree canopy.
1.12	Staff maintains a relationship with OTR to implement its goals including reporting channels through Clean and Safe, City walks, River Rangers, ARPA funding to the Truckee River Plan, and public restrooms along the river.
1.13	A Value of Resilience of Solar + Storage study was completed at the PSC in 2020, and subsequently, solar and storage were added to the site.

Priority	Implementation Status
2.1	According to a study by the City and UNR in 2020, the City met 50% of its peak load from renewable energy, including city-owned streetlights. Subsequently, the report was accepted for publication by the North American Power Symposium.
2.2	Approximately 60% of utility-owned streetlights have been converted to LED, and nearly all city-owned streetlights are LED. An updated inventory is in process.
2.3	Between 2019 and 2023, Nevada’s renewable energy generation increased from 20% to 39%, representing an increase of 95%.
2.4	<p>In 2022, the City achieved a SolSmart Silver designation and established a solar permitting checklist to streamline the process. In 2024, Staff amended the fee structure for solar permitting cost determination to reduce the cost. Also in 2024, the City partnered under Solar for All, a \$156 million statewide initiative to expand solar. RMC 18.04.706 allows for a 5% parking reduction when solar panels are installed, either in the parking lot or on the site/building. Parking requirements may be reduced by 5% when solar parking structures are installed in the parking lot or solar panels are installed on the site and/or building.</p> <p>Staff advocated for the battery storage incentive program offered by NV Energy.</p> <p>Staff is a participant in the Transportation Electrification Plan process with NV Energy and the Public Utilities Commission, which includes several programs for expanding public EV charging. This advocacy work is continuous.</p>
3.1	In 2019, under the City Energy Project, the City hired a consultant to review processes and create a streamlined process for increasing energy code compliance.
3.2	Staff dedicated budget to technical assistance for building owners and the program continues to take pledges through the Nevada Green Business Program and the Energy and Water Efficiency Program. ReEnergize Reno is continuous.
3.3	The benchmarking program was passed in 2019 (RMC 14.30)
3.4	Staff participates in several committees and advisory boards to expand communications and offers free or inexpensive training on an on-going basis.
3.6	Implemented in 2020 under ReEnergize Reno.

Priority	Implementation Status
4.1	The City hired an Activation Coordinator, continues to install and plan for micro-mobility infrastructure, and has approved vibrant developments in downtown and midtown.
4.2	To address infill development, the Zoning Code includes a Density Bonus incentive (18.04.1504) for small units and a Density Bonus incentive (18.04.5103) for affordable units. This is intended to allow additional units to be built in certain zoning districts that encourage density (multi-family and mixed-use zoning districts). The Zoning Code also allows for no parking requirements in the downtown area, to encourage walkability and better use of land.
4.3	Staff participated in TMRPA's 2019 Regional Strategy for Housing Affordability.
4.6	In 2022, the City entered into an exclusive franchise agreement with Bird and performed a micro-mobility pilot study, and subsequent infrastructure continues to be installed.
5.2	Since 2019, Reno has experienced an increase in recycling subscriptions. The single-family recycling rate is 98.4%, the multi-family/mobile home park recycling rate is 87.9%, and the commercial recycling rate is 26.9% (recycling in the commercial sector is not required).
5.6	The City and Washoe County established the Illegal Dumping Task Force and launched the neighborhood cleanup program.
5.7	Amendments to the Solid Waste Franchise were adopted in 2020, which includes new sections for an Ombudsman and increased marketing efforts.
6.1	Urban Forestry uses Tree Keeper which utilizes current inventory and other infrastructure to plan priority areas for planting.
6.2	the City expanded the subsidized tree giveaway and received notable donations from NV Energy (\$25,000), Kinder Morgan (\$20,000), and others. Staff maintains a partnership with Nevada Plants to increase planting activities.
6.4	Updated internal policy regarding preservation and tree care until Title 8 can be formally updated. A tree protection and preservation ordinance was not approved.
6.6	An update to the recommended tree list was done in 2021. A new update is in process.

Priority	Implementation Status
7.1	The City updated its code to include requirements for healthy food options in downtown Reno. As part of this effort, Staff worked with those businesses to ensure food assistance benefits would be accepted in the establishments.
7.2	In 2023, Staff analyzed local food deserts data to be used for planning and other purposes, and ensured local code does not prohibit the development.
8.1	The Clean & Safe Team was established. Staff maintains a partnership with TMWA regarding conservation and water management. In 2022, under LEED for Cities, Staff performed an Ecosystem Assessment in which it received maximum points in this category.
8.3	Under ReEnergize Reno, Staff provided free training for low-impact development. See also 1.10.
8.4	The One Water Nevada project is continuous.
8.5	In 2019 and 2020, the City held a Green Building Awards to recognize leadership in green building. After the funding ended for this program, Staff utilizes its blog, aroundthearch, and social media to recognize leadership in sustainable building practices.
9.1	In 2021, Staff convened a working group to assess the viability of a regional climate resilience plan. The group created a framework. Ultimately, regional climate resilience was incorporated into the Washoe County Hazard Mitigation Plan update.
9.2	See 9.1. The Reno Fire Department maintains an ongoing fuels mitigation communication program. Staff also advised during the 2023 Legislative Session which led to the addition of resilience projects in legislation.