

# Community Sustainability and Resiliency Workshop Report

## City of Goleta, CA

June 4, 2018



On June 4, 2018 Goleta residents and stakeholders from the local government, regional non-profits, and the private sector came together for a half-day workshop to explore the City's 3-STAR rating. The workshop was based on the City's recent certification under the STAR Community Rating System, the nation's leading program for evaluating local sustainability. STAR helps communities evaluate their strengths and weaknesses across seven areas: the built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education, arts and community; health and safety; and natural systems. STAR Communities, a nonprofit organization, provides support as cities and counties benchmark progress, and a robust third-party verification process ensures accountability.

The workshop was designed to inform and educate participants on the interconnected nature of sustainability and resiliency. Participants analyzed gaps identified through certification and developed a list of consensus-based priority actions to create a more sustainable and resilient Goleta. Participants went through prioritized actions and strategies in the STAR rating system and then weighed the relative impact and effort of each to determine which were appropriate and feasible priorities for the community.



Cindy Moore, Goleta's Sustainability Coordinator, led the City's data collection effort with the assistance of other city staff, community partners, state agencies, local and regional governments, and private sector employers. In November 2017, STAR Communities awarded the City of Goleta a Certified 3-STAR Community Rating for sustainability leadership, based on a number of factors including increased recycling, economic growth, accessibility of public parks, and an active and healthy community.

At the same time that Goleta was wrapping up its STAR certification process, a series of natural disasters swept over the region. Wildfires spread across Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and a subsequent debris flow following a major storm highlighted an energy grid vulnerability that brought resilience to the forefront of the community's attention. To address this vulnerability, in December of 2017 the Goleta City Council adopted a goal to achieve 100% renewable electricity community-wide by 2030, to help reduce dependency on remote energy generation sources and creating a more resilient community.

## Workshop Overview

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Aaron Lande and David Abell from STAR Communities led a half-day workshop for over 30 participants representing local governments, community groups, private sector partners, residents, and other key stakeholders. The workshop had the following goals:

- Provide participants with an update on the current status of sustainability in Goleta and give a national context to their STAR certification
- Support local goals, such as the 100% renewable energy initiative
- Explore gaps identified through certification
- Develop a consensus-based list of future actions for the community
- Understand and prioritize next steps for stakeholders

The workshop started with a welcome from Councilmember Kyle Richards, a member of the City Council Energy/Green Issues Standing Committee, who explained the importance of the STAR certification for the City's sustainability and resilience efforts. Ms. Moore then thanked participants for their participation in the STAR data gathering process and attendance at the workshop.

The workshop activities were designed to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on the STAR certification performance, explore strengths and weaknesses, and identify future opportunities for improvement. The first activity focused on contextualizing Goleta's STAR certification and allowing participants to engage with the types of performance metrics included in STAR and react to the scores that Goleta received through verification. The activity also prompted participants to discuss the interconnectedness of sustainability.

Participants evaluated gap actions from ten priority STAR objectives chosen to be important to resiliency. Gap actions are those that were denied during verification or were not submitted by the city due to lack of data or tracking mechanism. Finally, participants created a strategic action plan for implementation of prioritized actions. Participants rotated through the priority objectives, reviewing the gap actions and evaluating their relative impact on the community and associated costs.



## Activity #1: Aligning Goleta's priorities with a national sustainability framework

STAR staff provided an overview of the STAR Community Rating System, its history and development, and details on how different communities are using the rating system to improve local sustainability. STAR staff also provided an explanation of the evaluation measures and framework to provide participants that were not involved in the data collection process with a high level understanding of how certification and scoring works.

Communities pursuing STAR certification accumulate points by demonstrating their achievements across seven goal areas. Each community chooses which measures to report on from a menu of over five hundred quantitative outcome and qualitative action measures. This allows local governments to report on the measures that are most important and relevant to their communities. STAR Communities performs a rigorous third party verification of each application to ensure conformity with national standards and best practices before certifying a community.

There are three STAR certification levels: 3-STAR Community (250-449 points), 4-STAR Community (450-6499 points), and 5-STAR Community (650+ points). In November 2017, Goleta received a Certified 3-STAR Community Rating by earning 279.6 points under Version 2.0 of the Rating System. Goleta became the 64<sup>th</sup> certified STAR Community in the country and joined El Cerrito and Riverside as the only other certified STAR communities in California.

While the STAR Community Rating System represents a set of nationally recognized best practices and indicators for communities of all sizes and locations, the final scoring depends upon accurate local self-reporting. Additionally, the rating system is a menu. Communities choose which measures to report; not all measures will be equally applicable for all communities. Thus, a community's final score may not completely reflect all of the work within a thematic goal area or a low score could reflect that a goal area is not a local priority. This context was provided to set the tone for discussion.



*Workshop participants Stephanie Cadena and David Cutaia select the STAR objectives they consider priorities for Goleta.*

After reviewing and discussing Goleta's STAR results, participants were asked to consider what they see as the top three STAR objectives for the City in regards to becoming a more resilient community. Each participant was provided three dots to place on the STAR framework (see photo above). Clear trends arose around the following STAR objectives: Greening the Energy Supply, Energy Efficiency, Civic Engagement, and Green Infrastructure. Following this exercise, workshop facilitators swapped the Public Parkland objective for the Green Infrastructure objective in response to the participants 'rankings.' After this activity STAR staff revealed the ten priority objectives that would be analyzed for the afternoon's activities.



## Ten STAR objectives were selected for in-depth review during the workshop:

STAR Objective	Purpose and Intent
BE-7: Transportation Choices	Promote diverse transportation modes, including walking, biking, and public transit, that are safe, low-cost, and reduce vehicle miles traveled
CE-1: Climate Adaptation	Strengthen the resilience of communities to climate change impacts on built, natural, economic, health, and social systems
CE-2: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation	Achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions throughout the community
CE-3: Greening the Energy Supply	Transition the local energy supply for both transportation and non-mobile sources toward the use of renewable, less carbon-intensive, and less toxic alternatives
EJ-2: Green Market Development	Increase overall market demand for products and services that protect the environment
EAC-2: Community Cohesion	Promote socially cohesive neighborhoods where residents are connected, have a sense of place, and feel committed to their community
EE-1: Civic Engagement	Facilitate inclusive civic engagement through the empowerment of all community members to participate in local decision-making
HS-6: Hazard Mitigation	Reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from hazard events through an on-going process that occurs before, during, and after disasters
NS-1: Green Infrastructure	Design and maintain a network of green infrastructure features that integrate with the built environment to conserve ecosystem functions and provide associated benefits to human populations
NS-5: Water in the Environment	Protect and restore the biological, chemical, and hydrological integrity of water in the natural environment

### Activity #2: Analyzing gaps in priority sustainability areas

For the second activity, the ten priority objectives were divided up among the five tables in the room, with the gap measures—STAR action measures that were not submitted by Goleta—from two objectives placed on each table. Participants at each table were asked to review the lists of gap measures and consider the following questions:

- Were the gap measures a result of true deficiency or poor measurement (e.g. a lack of data or improper yardstick)?
- Which actions are suitable for Goleta to pursue?
- What is the impact versus effort of the gap action?



After reflecting on these questions, participants used sticky notes to place the actions into a matrix that depicted the gap measure's projected impact and effort (see graphic above). Groups at each table had fifteen minutes to discuss the measures from the two objectives at their table and place them on the matrix, deciding where the measures fit in the four categories below.

After fifteen minutes, participants rotated tables, reviewed the two objectives at the next table, and added their priorities to the matrix. The exercise lasted for five rounds, with participants visiting all five tables to provide input on gap actions. This process allowed participants to view the gap actions for all ten priority objectives and analyze their importance for Goleta.

At the final table after prioritizing actions, participants then used a scoring rubric to rank the top actions for each objective:

- High Impact-Low Effort = 4 points
- High Impact-High Effort = 3 points
- Low Impact-Low Effort = 2 points
- Low Impact-High Effort = 1 point

The sum of points each action received provided a ranking for each action.



*Workshop participants Kendyl Churchman, Joanne Plummer, Kori Nielsen, and Bill Shelor discuss actions.*



## Activity #2 Prioritization Results

The table below displays the ten highest scoring actions. See the workshop appendix for the full results

Goal Area	Objective	Objective Name	Action	Priority Score	Description	Action Type
EE	I	Civic Engagement	2	20	Adopt a policy to encourage diversity in local government appointments to advisory boards and commissions that includes requirements for tracking and reporting composition by gender, race and ethnicity	Policy and Code Adjustment
EE	I	Civic Engagement	3	20	Adopt inclusive public engagement guidelines for local government agencies and departments	Policy and Code Adjustment
BE	7	Transportation Choices	4	20	Conduct early development reviews of subdivisions and other developments that includes an analysis of destinations within ½ mile of project borders and multi-modal access routes	Practice Improvement
BE	7	Transportation Choices	2	19	Adopt a complete streets policy that addresses all users, applies to all projects with limited exceptions, and includes specific next steps for implementation	Policy and Code Adjustment
EE	I	Civic Engagement	5	18	Partner with business, civic, nonprofit, and neighborhood organizations to increase and promote community engagement in local decision-making	Partnerships and Collaboration
EE	I	Civic Engagement	7	18	Establish regular, ongoing opportunities for elected officials and/or senior government staff to meet with residents to answer questions and listen to concerns	Programs and Services
NS	I	Green Infrastructure	4	18	Include evaluation of green infrastructure potential during early site reviews of proposed developments and subdivisions	Policy and Code Adjustment
EE	I	Civic Engagement	6	17	Provide training on the adopted public engagement guidelines to local government agencies and departments	Practice Improvement
EAC	2	Community Cohesion	1	17	Conduct a survey or evaluation to demonstrate existing levels of social capital and community cohesion throughout the community	Inventory, Assessment, or Survey
NS	I	Green Infrastructure	5	17	Partner with key community groups and other stakeholders to ensure that green infrastructure practices are used in appropriate settings	Partnerships and Collaboration



### Activity #3: Strategic Action Planning

The purpose of this activity was to determine the timeframe, stakeholder roles, and process for implementing the STAR prioritized actions from the previous exercise. Participants were assigned to tables with objectives with which they have expertise. Participants reviewed the top two to three scoring actions for each objective and filled out a spreadsheet with the following questions.

- Who is the primary actor or group responsible for this action?
- Who else in the community should be involved and how? (get buy-in, provide input, partnerships)
- What resources are needed to ensure success? (money, people, time, data, materials)
- What is a reasonable time frame for achieving this action? (12, 36, 48 months)
- What steps or milestones are required to make this action happen?
- What are the biggest obstacles?
- How will we measure success in this action?

Detailed responses for the Activities 3 are recorded in a separate spreadsheet that is attached.

### Conclusion

In the coming months, city staff will analyze the priority actions developed by the community and determine how best to integrate them into departmental plans and processes. As the City of Goleta moves forward developing a path towards 100% renewable energy and a more resilient future, the groundwork of the STAR certification and workshop will help to inform decisions and continue to track progress.

