

PACIFIC BEACH ECODISTRICT

SAN DIEGO, CA, USA • NOVEMBER, 2017



PACIFIC BEACH ECODISTRICT NEXT TO MISSION BAY AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN

NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

Running 3.1 miles along the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is committed to advancing sustainability by targeting eight performance areas: community/cultural/historical identity, health and well-being, habitat and ecosystem, access and mobility, appropriate development, energy, water, and materials management. Pacific Beach is a place where people come together to set goals, define projects, engage in collaborative efforts, and raise the bar for sustainable practices that are mutually beneficial to residents, businesses, and visitors.

The issues facing this coastal community – high developer driven density, increased demands on public safety and public health services, and challenges posed by climate change, such as sea level rise – have spurred the movement to advance district-scale sustainability. Additionally, Pacific Beach has an increasing nightlife culture which has caused some issues around alcohol, waste, violence, pedestrian safety, and police involvement. To create a safer and cleaner environment, a ballot measure to get alcohol off the beaches passed in 2013. However, this issue divided the business and the residents in the community. To strengthen the Pacific Beach community relationship, beautifulPB, a local nonprofit and the EcoDistrict's organizational backbone, has come in and stood up for the positive aspects of and opportunities in the community and leveraged sustainability as a foundation through which the community can thrive.

SNAPSHOT

PROJECT TYPE: Existing Neighborhood Revitalization

SITE SIZE: Pacific Beach Neighborhood

RESIDENTS: 45,000

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- White: 83.6%
- Hispanic: 10.6%
- Asian: 2.6%
- Black: 1.1%

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Households: 23,817
- Businesses: 1,300

ECONOMY:

- Median income under age 25: \$39,162
- Median income age 25-44: \$62,440
- Median income age 45-64: \$77,310
- Average household income: \$82,492

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

Community identity, placemaking, equitable development, urban agriculture, wetland restoration, renewable energy, water conservation, public safety, complete streets, alternative transportation, sustainable stormwater, ocean protection, open space, community engagement.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Audubon Society
- BeautifulPB
- PB Planning Group
- DiscoverPB
- Pacific Beach Town Council
- PB Community Foundation
- San Diego Unified School District
- City of San Diego
- San Diego Foundation
- San Diego Audubon Society
- San Diego Coastkeeper
- San Diego Green Building Council
- SavePB.org



Community leaders Chris Olson, David McCullough, Matt Winter, and Kristen Victor saw a significant opportunity to create a vision for the PB boardwalk and adjacent public land along the oceanfront. This project, named the PB Parks Project, was undertaken by a group of community volunteers who then founded the non-profit organization, beautifulPB. Over the next couple of years, the scope broadened to become a vision for the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict.

The EcoDistrict process began in 2011 when Pacific Beach and the surrounding communities received a grant from a collaboration with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) San Diego Chapter of the Committee on the Environment. The AIA San Diego Chapter works with communities to advance sustainable design. AIA brought in a sustainable district assessment team (SDAT) from the national AIA to study Pacific Beach and its surrounding communities, specifically its unique problems as a coastal community. Community planning groups and community and city leaders were enthusiastic about partnering with AIA because it aligned with some of the initiatives and opportunities they were working on to make the whole area more sustainable. In June 2011, beautifulPB and AIA co-sponsored a community town hall meeting. Nearly 300 community members and leaders participated in a discussion about what they want to see in the community.

Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer, who at the time was a City of San Diego council member, supported beautifulPB, DiscoverPB, and the City of San Diego to collectively attend the 2014 EcoDistricts Incubator in Portland, OR. In collaboration, members of the Pacific Beach community have led a grassroots action to define issues and develop an EcoDistrict with strategies and solutions. The PB EcoDistrict is the model community in the City of San Diego Climate Action Plan (CAP), supporting other neighborhoods with similar problems and issues by creating a replicable template for guidance and implementation.

ABOUT THE ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED PROGRAM

EcoDistricts Certified is the standard for community development that makes equity and sustainability fundamental to neighborhoods for all. By embracing the standard, neighborhoods commit to becoming the first certified EcoDistricts in the world. EcoDistricts Certified is the result of seven years of research, pilot projects and the best thinking from international experts. It provides a flexible, holistic, and rigorous “how to” framework for organizing and achieving important public policy, sustainability, and investment goals.

Learn more at:

<https://ecodistricts.org/ecodistricts-certified/>



PROJECT GOVERNANCE

The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is a grassroots, community-driven initiative whose principles are actively supported by the City of San Diego. The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict governance structure is made up of 22 community partners and is led by beautifulPB.



BeautifulPB is a group of PB residents, businesses, and property owners working in collaboration with the local community to create a sustainably beautiful Pacific Beach. They are working to implement a number of community projects and programs that will bring the community closer to realizing a PB EcoDistrict.

BeautifulPB collaborated with the local community to define the vision for the PB EcoDistrict with a set of guiding principles, and is now working to implement projects through the support of local community groups and governance. The range of projects and programs that beautifulPB coordinates and supports will evolve over time. BeautifulPB currently oversees and supports the following projects, programs, and goals:

- Management and oversight of PB EcoDistrict
- Create a fiscally sustainable funding mechanism
- Set EcoDistrict performance metrics
- Include and support partner organizations
- Create Quality and Sustainable Fins of Approval program
- Share knowledge and experience for EcoDistrict model replication

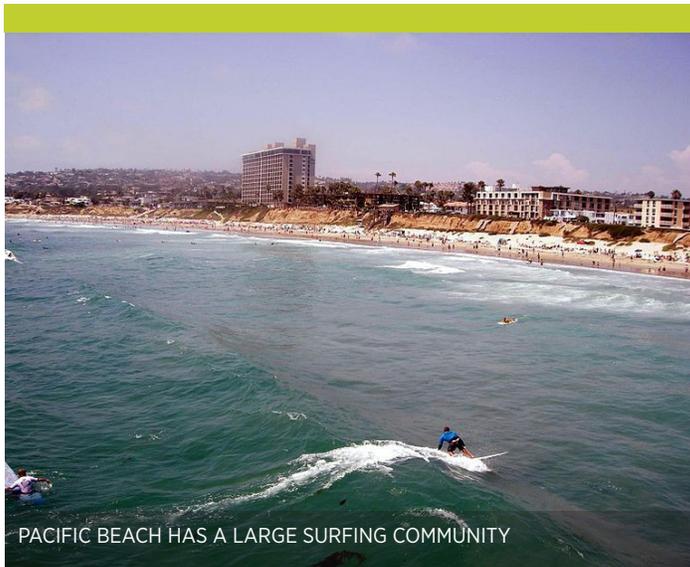
IMPERATIVES

The Imperatives Commitment is the first step in achieving EcoDistricts certification. The Imperatives Commitment is a rigorous public pledge of action towards Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection.



1. EQUITY

Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is defining the Equity Imperative commitments and educational opportunities to discuss and influence equitable development. BeautifulPB has a strong collaborative relationship with the Pacific Beach Planning Group, which oversees development in the area. Working together, these organizations are ensuring that more affordable multi-family housing units are built in the EcoDistrict. The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is committed to supporting the local community's needs.



PACIFIC BEACH HAS A LARGE SURFING COMMUNITY



BEAUTIFULPB AT 2012 ECODISTRICTS INCUBATOR



PACIFIC BEACH PIER AT SUNSET

2. RESILIENCE

In collaboration with the PB Planning Group, beautifulPB created a Project Design Checklist for Pacific Beach EcoDistrict Compatibility. New developments are encouraged to demonstrate support for the community through action in eight performance areas, outlined below, and in turn will receive support from these organizations. Developments seeking deviations from City standards are encouraged to demonstrate increased action in the performance areas. Additionally, the EcoDistrict offers educational forums with the local residents and business community to advance sustainability efforts around reducing CO₂ and capturing urban runoff.



3. CLIMATE PROTECTION

In addition to the efforts Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is making towards reducing its CO₂ levels, the EcoDistrict is defining the Climate Protection Imperative through protection and conservation of the ocean, bay, and wildlife habitats in the community. The EcoDistrict has several community partners, including the Friends of Rose Creek, UCSD, Audubon Society, San Diego Coastkeeper, the Surfrider Foundation, and the De Anza Revitalization Plan, that are advancing ecosystem and habitat protection in the area.



EARLY WINS

By using the EcoDistricts Protocol, the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict has the flexibility to align EcoDistricts' priorities and nomenclature with their own eight performance goal areas, while still being able to use the process, indicators, and the outcomes of the Protocol. More detailed goals and policies will continue to be developed and be defined as the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict evolves. For the time being, Place has been condensed into **Community Identity** and **Equitable Development**. Health + Wellbeing has remained as is. Connectivity has been renamed **Access and Mobility**. Living Infrastructure has been renamed **Habitat and Ecosystem**. Resource Regeneration has been broken out into **Energy, Water, and Materials Management**.



COMMUNITY BRANDING - PB PATHWAYS



PACIFIC BEACH FARMERS MARKET



CROSSWALK MURAL IN PACIFIC BEACH

COMMUNITY IDENTITY: Create cohesive neighborhood identity through the built environment and a culture of community.

beautifulART Program

The beautifulART Program records, preserves, maintains, and promotes public art and creative placemaking within the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict. The program includes murals, sculptures, historical landmarks, and utility box art.

Currently, the EcoDistrict is focusing on pedestrian crosswalk murals to highlight areas of the road with large numbers of pedestrian crossings. These murals aim to create a network of safe neighborhood routes (SEE PB PATHWAYS) for walking, biking, and skateboarding to school and other community destinations. PB Murals are aesthetically pleasing artwork that foster collaboration and strengthen community bonds by bringing local artists, students, and community members together to promote art, health, and safety, and celebrate the neighborhood.

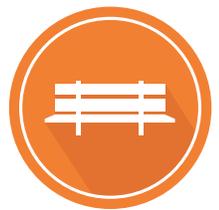
In September 2014, the first pedestrian mural was painted at Pacific Beach Middle School by 120 community volunteers, ranging from students, teachers, parents, and businesses. This particular mural was designed by one of the middle school students. The process of selecting artwork and painting the mural fosters collaboration and strengthens community bonds by providing opportunities for the community to come together to promote health and safety. Murals continue to be a part of the community placemaking and Safe Routes to School planning.

Community-based Branding

As part of the PB Pathways, users are guided by the PB Pathway logo, which features the name and a bicycle image inside a surfboard. PB Pathways implementation began after receiving \$25k from then council member Ed Harris. The visual recognition of placemaking in the community elevated beautifulPB branding within the community with a major demographic group that was difficult to reach.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT: Promote equity and opportunity and ensure fair distribution of benefits and burdens of investment and development.

BeautifulPB has a strong collaborative relationship with the Pacific Beach Planning Group, who oversee development in the area. Working together, the organizations are ensuring that more affordable multi-family housing units are built in the EcoDistrict. The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is committed to supporting the local community's needs.



HEALTH + WELLBEING: Promote human health and community wellbeing.



Urban Agriculture

After 40 years of providing arable land to planters and growers, the original Pacific Beach Community Garden in Crown Point was forced to close its gates at the end of 2015 when the property was sold to an investment company. However, in 2014, beautifulPB and St. Andrew's By-the-Sea collaborated to convert the church's front lawn into a garden space.

There are many apartment and condo dwellers in the EcoDistrict with no access to open land, and this community garden will give them an opportunity to exercise their green thumbs. While the goal is to instill environmentally friendly practices among would-be gardeners, the benefits will be greater than merely bringing home-grown produce straight to the table.

Local community members began construction on the garden in October 2017. BeautifulPB Garden, as the new community garden will be called, will consist of 20 raised wooden bed boxes. Sizes will vary, from 3- by 4-foot boxes to 8 by 8-foot boxes. These plots will be available on a first-come first-served basis, and will cost users \$20 to \$25 a month for water, insurance, mulch, compost, and maintenance of their plots, which will mainly grow vegetables in planters.

ACCESS + MOBILITY: Provide access to clean and affordable transportation options.



PB Pathways

Lined with trees, rain gardens, public art, and urban gardens, PB Pathways is a cornerstone of the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict. PB Pathways provide a network of safe and comfortable neighborhood streets that connect people to the places they want to go without needing to drive a car. PB Pathways is designed for all ages and abilities, and will give priority to bicyclists, skaters, and pedestrians.

The Pathway goes through nearby parks, schools, and the beach. It is helping to reduce car cut-through with non-car centric traffic calming measures to keep cars from speeding through neighborhood streets. In addition, PB Pathways are engineered to utilize sustainable infrastructure by managing stormwater. The City of San Diego has supported funding Phase One of the PB Pathways project. Now in Phases Two and Three, the project is funded through local business, including a collaboration with the Karl Strauss Brewing Company to produce the Pathway Ale, of which proceeds benefit PB Pathways. The project is also being funded through the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict Partners, grants, and through fundraising and donations from the public and nonprofit sectors.

The PB Pathway Ale collaboration has connected the wayfinding signage to local craft beer, benefitting beautifulPB and the PB EcoDistrict fiscally, and elevating their presence in the community.



VOLUNTEERS AT THE GROUNDBREAKING OF PB COMMUNITY GARDEN



PB PATHWAYS ALONG THE BEACH



Bike Friendly Business District

In 2014, Discover Pacific Beach, a nonprofit management organization whose main area of focus is management of the Pacific Beach Business Improvement District and is one of the EcoDistrict's community partners, installed four bike corrals. They branded "bikePB" through a banner program, created bike maps, encouraged bike travel to events, and advocated for bike and pedestrian focused infrastructure within the business corridors.

BeautifulPB and DiscoverPB collaborate annually on the PB Counts, a data-driven collection of non-car centric movement around Pacific Beach with a focus on the main arteries of the business district. Garnet Avenue, the main street in the business district, is home to two of the 15 most dangerous corners within the City of San Diego. VisionZero is a city-wide program to reduce fatalities to zero by 2025.

PB Counts is in its third year of data collection, and provides information specific to the increased walkability score on a very dangerous main street of the EcoDistrict.

HABITAT + ECOSYSTEM: Achieve healthy urban ecosystem that protects and regenerates habitat and ecosystem function

PB Parks

The PB Parks Project, which was the inception of beautifulPB, is a community-inspired vision for the revitalization of prime city-owned land commercial area located along the Pacific Beach waterfront. The ultimate goals for this project include celebrating PB culture by incorporating resources for residents, visitors, and local businesses, increasing accessibility and public open spaces, and improving landscape and integrated sustainability.

The vision for the boardwalk revitalization began as a dream for Chris Olson, local resident and member of the PB Planning Group. He started the conversation about the project and through many community meetings, a consensus for change was developed. A group was formed comprising volunteer professional planners and designers from the local community in order to develop and present ideas gathered from the community meetings. At the time, Mayor Kevin Faulconer was Pacific Beach's D2 council member, and dedicated \$25,000 of his discretionary D2 funds for the matching funds portion of the PB Parks grant submitted by beautifulPB. Mayor Faulconer also voiced his support to the San Diego Regional Planning Agency.



After years of hard work, planning, and persistence, the PB Parks Project has been awarded a \$500,000 grant for a feasibility study in July 2015. This study will include a traffic and parking study which will provide the hard facts as to what can be done in this area. The feasibility study will also include: landscape master plans, a base file survey and civil impacts analysis, code research and analysis, a community sustainability report, and cost estimating. BeautifulPB is involved in the planning process from a discretionary plan, guiding the original vision and goals of the PB Parks Project.

Wetland Restoration

Mission Bay borders the southern edge of the PB EcoDistrict on many sides. Mission Bay was once a 4,500-acre tidal marsh forming an estuary at the mouth of the San Diego River. Though the landscape has changed significantly, parts of Mission Bay are still home to some of San Diego's last standing wild coastline wetlands. This habitat allows the community to connect with nature in an otherwise urban setting, protects the community from climate change impacts, and provides critical habitat for the threatened and endangered animals that call Mission Bay home.

San Diego Audubon, one of PB EcoDistrict's community partners is working to enhance and restore 170 acres of wetlands at the mouth of Rose Creek just south of Pacific Beach Drive through an effort called the Mission Bay Wetlands Initiative. This project will not only provide crucial habitat for wildlife, it will increase ecosystem services offered by the wetland, such as water quality improvements and coastline stabilization in the face of climate change. Perhaps most importantly, it will create a stronger connection between the local community and this amazing natural resource through increased opportunities for education, research, and recreation.

In support of the EcoDistrict's performance areas, San Diego Audubon secured funding for a feasibility study for wetlands restoration in Mission Bay. In May 2014, the California State Coastal Commission provided a \$460,000 grant, plus an additional \$25,000 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

ENERGY: Achieve net zero energy usage annually

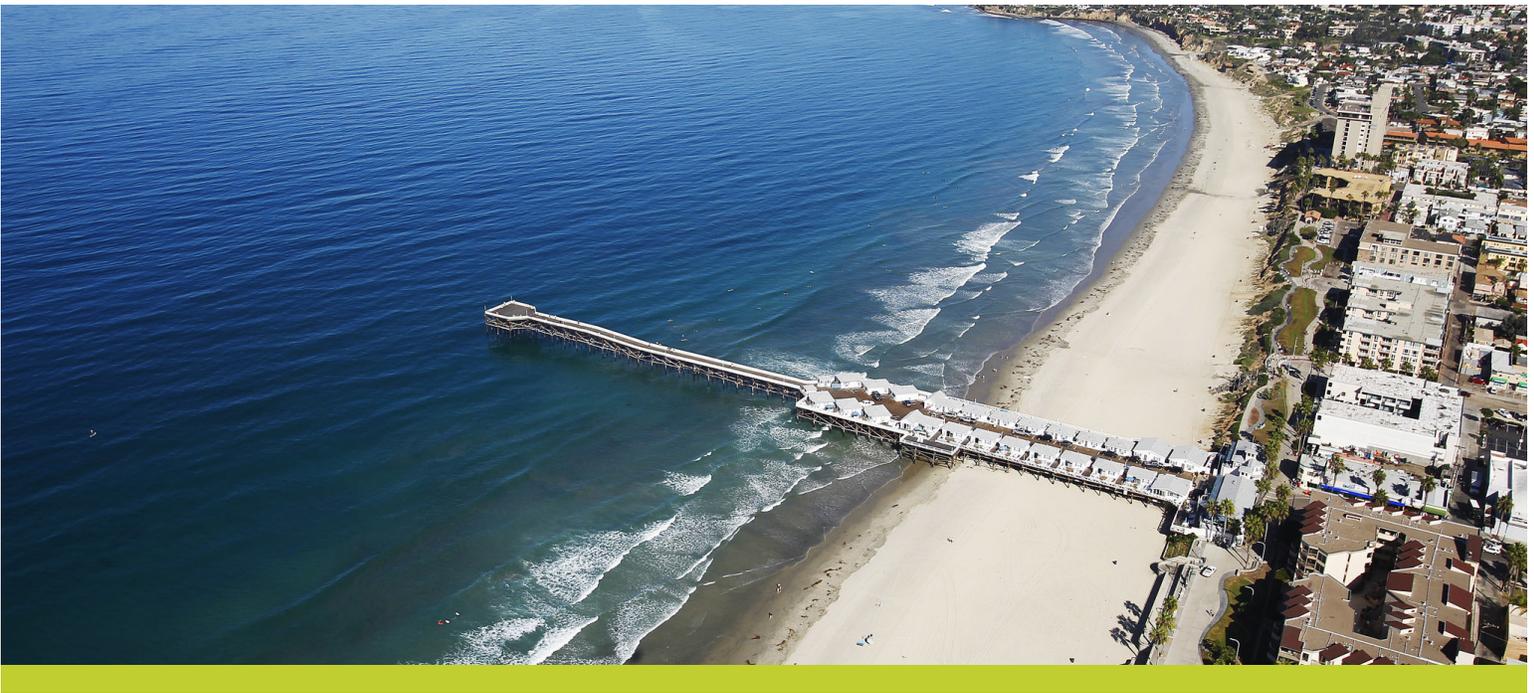
The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict elevated the bar for the Pacific Beach Planning Group, supporting the City of San Diego Climate Action Plan through energy conservation, efficiency and production. The City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan calls for eliminating half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the City and aims for all electricity used in the city to be from renewable sources by 2035. To begin this work, the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict will conduct an energy report.



PACIFIC BEACH BUSINESS DISTRICT



BEACHGOERS IN PACIFIC BEACH



WATER: Meet both human and natural needs through reliable and affordable water management.

As the EcoDistrict is located next to the ocean, future projects and programs will ensure urban runoff is minimized. This will help protect the health of the ocean and beachgoers, as well as conserve water. The PB EcoDistrict currently provides educational “Sustainable Sundays” at the Pacific Beach library to educate community members on the “Why and How of water conservation”. The first series was on rain water harvesting and gray water reuse.

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT : Zero waste and optimized materials and management.

In addition, Sustainable Sundays included a composting and materials reuse segments to encourage the zero waste goal throughout the Pacific Beach EcoDistrict community.

LESSONS LEARNED + CONTINUED CHALLENGES

1. Laying down a foundation for collaboration with the entire community has been one of the EcoDistrict’s biggest successes.
2. Since implementation, maintaining fiscal sustainability has been a major challenge for the EcoDistrict.

NEXT STEPS

1. Create a structure that has the ability to attract funding for the EcoDistrict. (2017-2019)
2. Elevate successes through an educational platform that will influence the neighboring community in San Diego. (2017-2019)
3. Re-engage with community partners to make better connections and foster education. Revisit the Declaration of Collaboration. (2017-2019)
4. In five years, Pacific Beach aims to be a lifestyle of the future, which includes a non-car-centric mobility movement, accessible and affordable housing, health and wellness, aging in place, and environmental sustainability. (2017-2022)

“The Pacific Beach EcoDistrict is building a model through neighborhood collaboration as a pathway to successful community-driven solutions. It is imperative to have a bottom up/top down (neighborhood/city) continuous dialogue on how best to support the EcoDistrict imperatives, formation, roadmap, and performance. Healthy neighborhoods connected together by people, resources, and infrastructure create a vibrant, thriving city for its citizens and guests”

– KRISTEN VICTOR, CO-FOUNDER OF BEAUTIFULPB

ABOUT ECODISTRICTS

EcoDistricts is nonprofit that advances a new standard for community development. Through its programs and certification standard, EcoDistricts helps create equitable, sustainable, and resilient **neighborhoods for all.**