

## SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes a person or group committed to maintaining a sustainable and healthy place to live, work, and play in Cupertino. The City's Climate Action Plan defines strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable actions. For more information, visit [www.cupertino.org/sustainability](http://www.cupertino.org/sustainability).

To nominate a Sustainability Champion, please answer the following questions:

### 1. What did the nominee do?

In 2016 twelve cities, including the City of Cupertino, formed Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE), a community choice energy joint powers authority, to bulk purchase clean electricity on behalf of their customers. SVCE now serves 96% of Cupertino's residential and commercial customers, supplying clean electricity from wind, solar, and hydro resources. SVCE's mission is to empower residents, business, and industries in its jurisdiction to switch from using dirty fuels to clean electricity in homes, buildings, and transportation. SVCE led a regional effort to develop model building electrification reach codes and supported its member cities with technical assistance and funding to support bringing the reach codes to City Council for consideration. With the support of SVCE, Cupertino staff and the Sustainability Commission worked to propose reach code policy for Cupertino. As a result, Cupertino City Council recently adopted one of the most progressive electric reach codes in the Bay Area. Last year, SVCE began offering rebates to our residents to install heat pump water heaters (cleaner and more efficient alternative to natural gas powered water heaters). SVCE is an annual sponsor of the City's Earth & Arbor Day Festival, and a member and sponsor of the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce.

### 2. How is the action innovative, exceptional, exemplary, or inspirational?

- **Carbon-free electricity for businesses and residents:** SVCE was the first community choice energy entity in California to offer carbon-free electricity as its base product. It also offers a 100% renewable electricity option to customers for a small premium.
- **New heat pump water heater rebate:** SVCE's heat pump water heater pilot program is overcoming barriers for residents to install heat pump water heaters. One of the innovations SVCE added was to offer panel upgrade rebates alongside the heat pump rebates. Panel upgrades can be expensive and have been a well-known barrier to adopting heat pump water heaters in older homes; the addition of this feature to the program has been a key ingredient to the pilot's initial success.
- **Deep decarbonization and innovation:** SVCE supports City staff with technical assistance, greenhouse gas emissions accounting, research and analysis, and grant opportunities to expand our sustainability program offerings and enhance current services. SVCE works with its member cities to co-create innovative programs to reach for deeper decarbonization and achieve further reductions in fuel-based emissions.
- **Inspiring all-electric living:** SVCE offers information and resources for residents to electrify their homes on its website (<http://www.svcleanenergy.org/electrify>) and highlights best practices in all-electric design through its All-Electric Showcase Award program ([svcleanenergy.org/all-electric-award](http://svcleanenergy.org/all-electric-award)).

### 3. What was the current and/or future impact on the community/environment (include quantitative impacts if possible)?

SVCE's impact on our greenhouse gas emissions for Cupertino, and for our greater Silicon Valley community, has been significant. To date, across its portfolio SVCE has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 19.8% (compared to 2015 baseline) and realized \$50 million in savings for its customers.

Impacts from SVCE in 2019 for the City of Cupertino include:

- 22,600 households and businesses received clean electricity from carbon-free sources
- \$1,638,000 in electricity savings
- \$52,800 cash payments to customers for generating surplus solar energy
- 100% of City of Cupertino municipal electricity accounts sourced from renewable wind and solar

- 98% reduction in electric utility-related emissions, equivalent to 29 million pounds of avoided greenhouse gas emissions

The future impact of Cupertino's reach codes will result in most new construction in Cupertino to be all-electric, powered by carbon-free electricity. Building all-electric will avoid greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas for the lifetime of these new buildings moving forward. In addition, the all-electric buildings will support the market for electric-powered appliances, such as heat pump water heaters. The reach code will also demonstrate the City of Cupertino's leadership in climate action.

In the near future, SVCE has plans to support installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The SVCE Board of Directors has approved \$8 million for new electric vehicle charging stations to be deployed in its service area. Increasing EV charging stations will encourage residents and workers in Cupertino to consider switching to an electric vehicle; as EV adoption accelerates, emissions from vehicles will decrease in our community.