

Tempe Transportation and Sustainability Department

Receives LEED Gold Certification for Sustainability and Resilience Achievements

In April 2024, the City of Tempe announced that it has achieved LEED Gold certification, an international symbol of excellence recognized by the U.S. Green Building Council ([USGBC](#)). With its venerable record as a sustainability leader, Tempe is the only city in Arizona to achieve LEED Gold certification, and one of only five LEED-certified communities statewide.

Tempe is part of a growing group to be certified using the LEED for Cities & Communities rating system. [LEED](#), or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, was created by the USGBC and is the world's most widely used green building rating system.

Expanding on the LEED for buildings rating system, LEED for Cities and Communities helps local leaders measure and manage progress in community conditions, in pursuit of a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable future. Through the certification program, cities and communities create and operationalize responsible, sustainable, and specific plans for natural systems, energy, water, waste, transportation, and many other factors that contribute to quality of life.

Tempe earned 61 out of 110 total possible points to reach the Gold Level, scoring highest in the following categories:

Resilience Planning: 4 out of 4 points

This measure's intent is to strengthen the resilience of communities to climate change risks, natural and man-made hazards, and extreme events. Tempe earned points for conducting a vulnerability and capacity assessment, and for developing a resilience plan for the city.

Transportation Performance: 6 out of 6 points

This measure's intent is to promote non-motorized transportation, encourage use of public transit and reduce pollution from the transportation sector. Tempe earned points by measuring the daily Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) per capita for all passenger vehicles within the city. The fewer per capita vehicle miles traveled, the higher the points earned.

Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions Performance: 12 out of 14 points

This measure's intent is to support energy management and move towards a zero energy and emissions city. Tempe earned points by measuring the annual energy consumption and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions for the city. The lower the energy use, the higher the points earned.

Renewable Energy: 4 out of 6 points

This measure's intent is to reduce the environmental and economic harms associated with fossil fuel energy and reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by increasing self-supply of renewable energy and the use of grid-source, renewable energy technologies. Tempe earned points by having 12% of total electricity and thermal energy consumption of the city met by renewables.



Quality of Life Performance: 5 out of 6 points

This measure's intent is to track and measure metrics related to elevating the living standards of all people. Tempe earned points by measuring education, equitability (median gross rent as a % of household income and Gini coefficient), prosperity (median household income and unemployment rate), and health and safety (median air quality index, air quality days unhealthy for sensitive groups and violent crime).

Trend Improvements: 4 out of 4 points

This measure's intent is to demonstrate an improvement over time in key metrics pertaining to a person's quality of life. Tempe earned points by ranking above the threshold for a population with a high school degree, graduation rate, number of small businesses, and unemployment rate.

Innovation: 5 out of 6 points

This measure's intent is to encourage cities to achieve exceptional or innovative performance. Tempe earned points for the Community Resilience Hub project, the Cool Kids, Cool Places, Cool Future program, community outreach and engagement in climate justice decision-making, the Indigenous Design Collaborative, and energy equity and climate justice engagement.

The Tempe Transportation and Sustainability Department ensures a safe and sustainable community for those who live, work, and visit Tempe through comprehensive planning and management of the City's capital improvement program, rights-of-way, and multi-modal transportation system. They are dedicated to growing a sustainable city alongside community stakeholders to be resilient for our future. Tempe is taking action to reduce emissions and cultivate resilience by focusing on the guiding principles of fiscal responsibility, enterprise, equity, engagement, and effectiveness.

Tempe Transportation and Sustainability Department Team Members include: Eric Iwersen, Evelyn Brumfield, Andrea Escobar, Brianne Fisher, Carissa Fowler, Madeline Mercer, Dawn Ratcliffe, Gabriel Sheppard, Helene Tack.

For more information about the SMILE Program, contact the Strategic Management and Innovation Office at strategic_management_innovation@tempe.gov or Kimberly Sotelo at (480) 350-2913.