

## Sunshine Gardens Apartments

### Multifamily Case Study – Santa Clara County



The entrance to Sunshine Gardens Apartments in Mountain View, CA

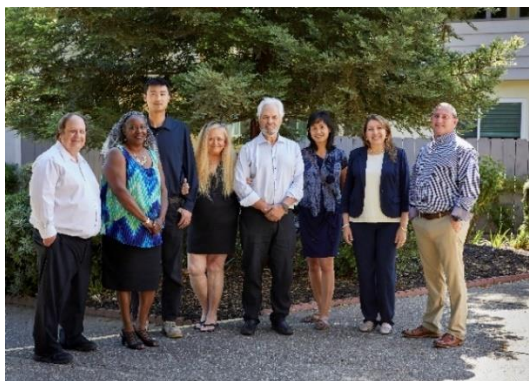
**How a 1960's apartment complex in Mountain View got creative by layering multiple local programs to modernize the property, help the environment, and improve residents' quality of life.**

When California enacted its COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders in March 2020 and residents were stuck spending more time at home than ever, many families struggled to keep up with rising energy and water costs at a time when disposable incomes were down. To make things worse, tenants of multifamily properties were often confronted with health and comfort issues caused by old and inefficient building systems in their homes.

Not so for the residents of **Sunshine Gardens Apartments**, a 44-unit vintage complex in Mountain View that in early 2020 completed a project to cut energy bills in half, significantly lower indoor temperatures during the summer, improve indoor air quality, and reduce ambient noise levels. The project was the culmination of several years of work by the **BT Properties** Management Team, headed by Property Manager Deborah Vasquez. Together they were able to pull together a variety of resources and funding to install a comprehensive scope of measures to save energy, water, and waste.

PROPERTY PROFILE	
<b>Location</b>	132-150 W Dana St Mountain View, CA 94041
<b>Property Manager</b>	BT Properties
<b># of Units</b>	44
<b># of Buildings</b>	10
<b>Sq ft</b>	58,041
<b>Year Built</b>	1962

**Continue reading to learn how Sunshine Gardens did it:**



The BT Properties Management Team

*“It’s a win-win-win: residents have lower energy bills and improved comfort; management saves money on common area utility costs; and the environment and broader community benefit from less pollution.”*

- Deborah Vasquez, Property Manager

The process of “greening” Sunshine Gardens began in 2016 when BT Properties decided to refinance the mortgage with a **Fannie Mae Green Financing loan**, which included a lower interest rate along with stringent requirements to upgrade the property to be more environmentally friendly. As Deborah and the team explored their options for going green, she saw a flyer for the **Santa Clara County Green Business Program**, a free program that put her in touch with a sustainability expert who helped to evaluate and advise the property on a range of issues related to energy, waste, pollution prevention, water, transportation, and community. After charting a path forward and getting connected with the resources listed below, Sunshine Gardens became recognized as the first Green Business Certified apartment complex in Santa Clara County!

Around the same time, Deborah learned about the **Bay Area Multifamily Building Enhancements (BAMBE) program** through a newspaper advertisement. The BAMBE program offers no-cost energy consulting and rebates of \$750 per unit to help multifamily property owners upgrade their buildings to use energy and water more efficiently and lower both common area and in-unit utility bills. She applied online and was then connected with Sebastian Cohn with the **Association for Energy Affordability (AEA)**, who conducted a detailed energy audit of the property and advised the management team on what upgrades could make the biggest impact in terms of energy savings and tenant comfort.

Deborah was very impressed with the entire process, noting that “Sebastian was able to think big picture and provide a scope that fit our management’s requirements, while also being able to dive into the nitty gritty of individual measures.” After AEA helped the management team identify a qualified contractor, the property ultimately installed insulation in the attic, upgraded all exterior lighting to LEDs, and upgraded the pool pump to a more efficient **ENERGY STAR** model, all of which was made financially feasible with a \$33,000 rebate through the BAMBE program.



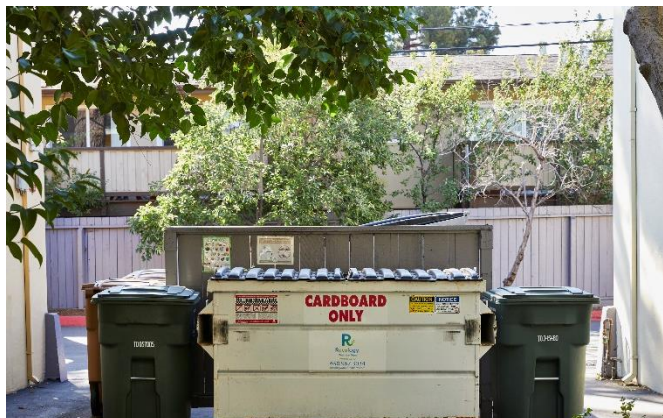
A renovated kitchen with LED lighting, low flow water fixture, and an induction cooktop

UPGRADE-AT-A-GLANCE (BAMBE Measures Only)	
<b>Energy Savings</b>	12.1% property-wide energy savings
<b>Rebate Amount</b>	\$33,000
<b>Primary Contractor</b>	<b>Building Efficiency</b>
<b>Measures Included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attic insulation</li> <li>• Low-flow showerheads</li> <li>• Low-flow toilets</li> <li>• In-unit and common area hard-wired lighting fixtures</li> <li>• Variable speed pool pump</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More comfortable summer temperatures</li> <li>• Lower energy bills</li> <li>• Reduced water consumption</li> <li>• Brighter outdoor lighting helps residents feel safer at night</li> </ul>

## Bay Area Multifamily Building Enhancements Rebates & Free Consulting for Energy Savings

In addition to these two programs, Sunshine Gardens utilized resources and funding from the following programs:

- **Recology South Bay** – Provided additional recycling and organics containers along with resident education to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
- **Valley Water** – Installed water-efficient faucet aerators and toilets and provided resources for drought-friendly landscaping.
- **PG&E Energy Savings Assistance Program** – Installed weather stripping and efficient lighting in the units of 9 low-income residents.
- **PG&E rebates** – Provided additional funding for energy efficient water condensing furnaces, rooftop solar booster systems, and exterior wall insulation.



*Landfill waste was reduced from 24 cubic yards to 15 cubic yards with recycling and composting bins with Recology South Bay*

Despite all of their progress so far, Deborah and BT Properties are still not done. They are now working with **Silicon Valley Clean Energy** to install EV charging stations and are receiving further technical assistance from AEA to explore fully electrifying in-unit HVAC and water heating through BAMBE's **Clean Heating Pathway**. Leveraging so many different programs was no small task, but several years after starting the process, Sunshine Gardens is now a more modern apartment complex, with a smaller environmental footprint and a higher quality of life for its residents. According to Deborah, "It's a win-win-win: residents have lower energy bills and improved comfort; management saves money on common area utility costs; and the environment and broader community benefit from less pollution."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, Sunshine Gardens residents can at least rest assured knowing that they have a few less things to worry about and a property manager that is on their side.

Interested property owners can learn more and get started by visiting [www.bayren.org/multifamily](http://www.bayren.org/multifamily) or calling (855) 213-2838.



*Sunshine Gardens serves diverse residents and many families*



*The new rooftop solar water heaters deliver hot water faster and improves the efficiency of the existing gas water heaters*