



# WEST PALM BEACH

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **‘OFF THE CHARTS’ QUALITY OF LIFE SCORES EARN WEST PALM BEACH NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY – AGAIN!**

#### ***CITY HONORED FOR ITS HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, STRONG ECONOMY & ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS TO COMMUNITY WELL-BEING***

West Palm Beach, FL – The average American city has only 12 acres of open park space for every 1,000 residents. West Palm Beach has **129 acres!**

Some cities are trying to cut twenty percent of their energy use over a decade. This year, the City of West Palm Beach announced it had done it in **half the time!**

It’s these, and other quality of life measures that just earned the City of West Palm Beach a 4-STAR rating from the STAR Community Rating System (STAR). STAR is the nation’s leading program for evaluating local sustainability, encompassing social, economic and environmental performance measures.

What are some of the other reasons STAR has declared the City of West Palm Beach one of only five Florida cities, and one of only 56 in the nation to earn STAR certification:

- The City reduced energy use by 9.8% from 2008-2013 in energy intense infrastructure such as water facilities, streetlights, and water delivery.
- The economy of West Palm Beach has experienced growth. Over 2,200 new businesses were established from 2011-2013, annual sales are steadily increasing, and unemployment has dropped.
- The City earned over 95% of the available points in the community cohesion and historical preservation categories.



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- The City saw a 31% increase in vendors at local farmers markets from 2013-2015, and a 3.1% increase in children that are food secure from 2009-2013.
- Four out of every five households are within a ½ mile walk to a public park.
- West Palm Beach adopted the Climate and Resiliency Policy, which requires all internal decisions consider the latest climate change research.

“I am very proud of the work done by the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, not only to earn this recognition, but their efforts every day to improve our city and our community. It’s our responsibility to be leaders in the fight to improve the environment, save energy, and make sure every decision takes into account the effect on our planet,” said West Palm Beach Mayor Jeri Muoio.

Communities pursuing STAR certification accumulate points for their achievements, which then are used to determine their rating. There are three STAR certification levels: 3-STAR (200-399 points), 4-STAR (400-599 points), and 5-STAR (600+ points). West Palm Beach received a final score of 470.8 points, qualifying for the Certified 4-STAR Community Rating for national sustainability excellence.

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