

## Buildings and Products

City Center dwells in a large brick structure, originally serving as a home for single Jewish women, which was designed by Julia Morgan in 1927. It is the hub of San Francisco Zen Center.

The buildings on our campus are historic and we are committed to their preservation. Any renovations include the use of ecologically clean materials and methods. Cleaning supplies and laundry detergent are biodegradable. All asbestos has been removed from the buildings.

## Philosophy and Vision

The aim of Zen practice is to develop awareness and the capacity to realize the interconnected nature of all beings and activity. Many of the traditional forms emphasize restraint, moderation and simplicity in lifestyle. Zen philosophy offers an alternative way of seeing the world, as a whole where each part is essential.

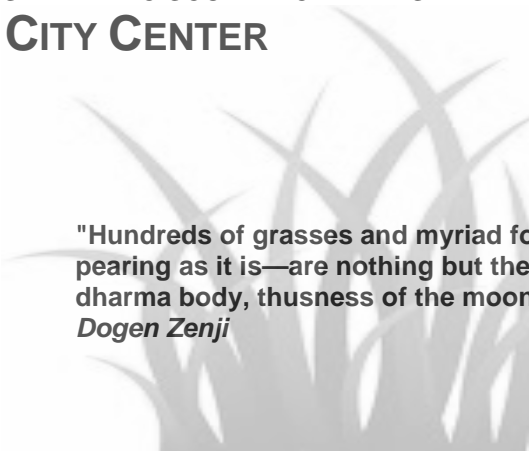
It is our hope that Zen Center's environmental awareness will continue to deepen. We welcome your suggestions and contributions towards making this center a living model of environmental health.

*May all beings be happy and healthy, free from suffering and in harmony with the world that sustains us.*

Revised document 4.2013.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE

at the  
**SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER'S  
CITY CENTER**



"Hundreds of grasses and myriad forms—each appearing as it is—are nothing but the Buddha's true dharma body, thusness of the moon in water."

*Dogen Zenji*

THE BUSY CORNER OF PAGE AND LAGUNA STREET, once a valley of sand dunes and desert grasses, is now home to an urban Zen community, affectionately referred to as City Center. Although not immersed in the natural world, like its sister temples, Green Gulch Farm and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, City Center maintains a commitment to stay connected to the environment and environmental issues.

The gardens within our building, on the roof, and in our side yards are home to orchids, wisteria, Japanese maples, black bamboo all organically cultivated. Trees in front of our building were planted in conjunction with Friends of the Urban Forest. The rooftop planters provide flowers for our altars. The main courtyard includes blueberries, lemons, pears, apples, as well as seasonal blooms. Hives on the rooftop provide a sanctuary for honey bees which pollinate our gardens and give us a source of local honey. Sidewalk gardens on our adjacent streets allow more pervious water absorption and a greater green space in the neighborhood.

Founded in 1969 by Suzuki Roshi and his students, City Center serves as an oasis of calm in San Francisco. By providing this place of peace it is our hope that those who live here and visit us will be able to pause long enough to hear the birds that populate our neighborhood, contemplate the origins of the food we eat, and feel our deep connection to the natural world and to all sentient beings.

## **Food**

One of the primary ways we interact with nature is through food. As a Buddhist temple, City Center encourages the practice of compassion, recognizing the suffering of all forms of life. This belief has encouraged a vegetarian diet based on organic foods. Currently, all produce is purchased from organic farms. Green Gulch Farm supplies delicious lettuce, greens, broccoli, potatoes and herbs. Grains are also primarily organic. Realizing the impact of pesticides on lands, plants, animals and farm workers, Zen Center maintains a strong commitment to buy organic and local.

## **Waste Management**

All kitchen and garden waste is sent to Green Gulch Farm for composting. We fully participate in the San Francisco recycling programs. Toilet paper, napkins and paper towels are purchased from recycled paper sources. Additionally, an effort is made to minimize use of plastic products.

## **Water**

Water consumption is minimized with the use of low flow toilets and showers. In the kitchen water usage is carefully monitored. Timed irrigation systems, a solar-powered water fountain, and mulch decrease water usage in the garden.

## **Energy and Transportation**

The new heating system is designed with two heating zones which accommodate a 10 degree temperature difference between the North and South sides of the building. On the roof there are 132 solar panels along with a large inverter and other ancillary equipment. The electricity generated is fed back into the power company's grid, significantly reducing our electrical usage.

Often residents use bicycles as a primary mode of transportation. A bike corral and bike stands provide support for bike commuting. City Center also maintains a communal car for work tasks. Carpooling is encouraged for trips to Green Gulch and Tassajara.

## **Sound**

Walking into the building one immediately notices a calm silence pervades. By encouraging a silent environment, City Center reduces noise pollution within the building. In meditation practice, practitioners are often encouraged not to push away the city's noise, but rather to relax within it and allow it to pass through.