

**CITY OF ALBANY  
PLANNING AND ZONING AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: 11/10/09  
Prepared by: JB

**ITEM/**        6e

**SUBJECT:**    **Climate Action Plan.**

**SITE:**        **City-wide**

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**Recommendation**

For discussion only.

**Background**

The emergence of an awareness of the threat of global warming represents one of the most significant new elements in land use planning in California. Community concern and a series of legislative initiatives beginning in 2006 are adding a substantial new dimension to land use policy and project review in California. Over the next several years, the statewide implementation of the legislative mandate is expected to lead to closer integration of land use, transportation, and housing policies and programs. Furthermore, the goal of reduction of creation of green house gases (GHG) is becoming a new metric for policymakers to use in the evaluation of individual development proposals.

In June 2006, the City of Albany committed to becoming a member of ICLEI-Local Government for Sustainability (ICLEI) and participating in the Alameda County Climate Protection Project (ACPP). The project was launched by ICLEI in partnership with the Alameda County Waste Management Authority & Recycling Board (StopWaste.Org) and the Alameda County Conference of Mayors. In committing to the project, the City embarked on an ongoing, coordinated effort to reduce the emissions that cause global warming, improve air quality, reduce waste, cut energy use and save money. Toward that end, ICLEI and StopWaste.Org assisted the City to conduct a baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, set a community-wide emissions reduction target.

California communities are using climate action plans (CAP) as the organizing documents to bring together analysis and policies to meet community GHG reduction goals. Thanks to a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the international planning consulting firm EDAW (as a result of a recent corporate merger, now known as AECOM) was retained jointly by the cities of Albany and Piedmont to prepare Climate Action Plans (CAP) for each community.

In tandem with local actions, various state agencies are implementing policies that are critical to California's overall success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, at the state level, truck and auto emissions standards are being modified. At the regional level, regional targets for

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the location of the development housing and employment centers will over time help reduce vehicle miles traveled.

The Sustainability Committee was established by the City Council with a mission to advise the City Council on policies, programs, and issues promoting environmental sustainability in the City of Albany. The Sustainability Committee met during the past year in a series of meetings to provide direction to the consultants. The Sustainability Committee reviewed a draft earlier in 2009. The current draft being reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission was prepared by the consultant based on feedback by the Sustainability Committee. P&Z review is being sought in order to gain a broader land use policy perspective on the analysis and policy recommendations.

### Discussion

In summary, the policies contained in the draft report would reduce the creation of green house gases in the following general categories:

- “Complete Streets” – Identify and implement capital improvement projects to facilitate pedestrian and bike safety & access on City streets.
- Land use policies – Update the city’s land use regulations to promote commercial development that is mixed-use, neighborhood-serving, transit-oriented, etc.
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program – Establish an Albany Transportation Management Authority to support local employer TDM efforts. As a part of transportation programs, policies also would seek to improve public transit services and school bus services.
- Parking – Establish a commercial parking fee to discourage driving and a residential parking permit system for residential areas adjacent to commercial districts.
- Building Energy Efficiency – Adopt a Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance and Commercial Energy Conservation Ordinance mandating energy efficiency upgrades at the time of sale. In addition, provide financing and/or financial incentives to property owners for energy efficiency upgrades.
- Building Code Upgrades – Adopt various energy efficiency and water conservation standards.
- Urban Forestry and Urban Agriculture – Expand and enhance urban forestry and urban agriculture programs.
- Waste Reduction – Establish ordinances and programs to achieve a zero waste reduction target.
- City Operations – Implement a paperless office, install LED streetlights, use an energy-efficient fleet, conduct energy audits and purchase renewable energy.

Staff proposes that the Planning and Zoning Commission focus a substantial amount of its two November meetings to the review and discussion of the draft CAP. Following the Commission’s review, a City Council study session is tentatively planned for January 4, 2010. Ultimately, the Commission will be asked to make a formal recommendation to the City Council on the adoption of the plan.

The consultant will be attending the November 24th Commission meeting. As an overall structure to the discussion, staff would suggest that the Commission work through Chapters I and II in

detail at the November 10 meeting. In addition, if there are particular questions about Chapter III that you wish the consultant to be prepared to answer at the November 24th meeting, a preview of those questions would be helpful.

### **Priorities for Implementation**

In the current draft of the CAP, the consultant has incorporated a timeline for implementation of the various policies. Neither the Sustainability Committee nor has staff reviewed this timeline in detail. Given the dynamic nature of climate change analyses and regulations, staff suggests that phasing of CAP policies should be set by the Council in a separate document. Priorities could be set, and adjusted over time if necessary, based on a policy's contribution to GHG reduction and in concert with City budget capacity and policymaking process.

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

As part of their scope of services, EDAW is in the process of preparing an initial study pursuant to the requirements of the CEQA. In order for the CAP to function as a formal policy document for the City, the City Council must certify that an appropriate CEQA document been prepared.