

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: March 15, 2010

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: City of Albany Climate Action Plan and Initial Study /Mitigated Negative Declaration

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council:

1. Approve by Resolution the City of Albany Climate Action Plan Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration
2. Approve by Resolution the City of Albany final draft Climate Action Plan
3. Direct staff to return to Council with a draft implementation schedule and potential funding mechanism(s).

BACKGROUND

The City Council held a study session on January 4, 2010, and a public hearing on January 19, 2010 to review the draft Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP is the result of a two-year community planning process, intended to identify measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% below 2004 levels by the year 2020. During the January 19, 2010 review of the draft CAP, City Council directed the Sustainability Committee to work in coordination along with the consultant team to prepare the final CAP. The Sustainability Committee and the Planning and Zoning were also directed to review the final draft CAP and recommend approval by the City Council.

DISCUSSION

Based on direction from City Council, the Sustainability Committee worked directly with the consultant team to develop the final draft CAP. The Sustainability Committee provided direction to the consultant team including:

- Organization, clarification and streamlining of measures,
- Additional quantification of measures,
- Addition of a measure to research potential parking management strategies,
- Addition of text to the introductory section to further define the global climate change issue, and clarification of the inventory section

The Sustainability Committee reviewed the final draft CAP on February 17, 2010, recommending City Council approval of the final draft CAP, along with minor edits to the final document (attached).

On March 9, 2010, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend that the City Council approved the mitigated negative declaration and the Climate Action Plan. The Commission acknowledged that there are areas of the document that could be further refined, but noted the importance of moving forward promptly. In their action, the Commission recommends that the mitigations contained in the mitigated negative declaration be modified to incorporate performance measures. Refinements to the mitigation measures will be prepared in consultation with the consultant and presented at the Council meeting.

ANALYSIS

The City has taken the initiative to develop a comprehensive CAP to identify workable solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strive towards a greener Albany. Adoption of the final draft CAP enables the City to continue to serve as leader regarding environmental issues, and take action at the local level to combat the global issue of climate change.

The final draft CAP is intended to provide guidance and serve as a working document to manage climate change. There are a total of 40 action measures within the CAP, representing a significant work load as the majority of these will be new projects, each requiring an individual development and implementation process. Customization, and any concerns regarding details of a proposed measure can be further addressed during development of the particular measure. Participation by outside agencies, committees/commissions, local interest groups, and the general public will also be sought throughout the implementation process.

It is envisioned that implementation of the CAP measures will be conducted over the next several years, and prioritized by a number of factors. Due to consultant budget constraints, detailed refinement of the implementation timeline contained in the document was not feasible. As an alternative, staff will prepare a schedule for implementation that reflects staff capacity and budget capacity, as well as options for funding mechanisms to assist in implementation of the plan.

It should be noted that prioritization may fluctuate at times given the growing opportunities related to climate change management. Implementation prioritization will likely include but not be limited to the availability of funding (grants, loans, budget), availability of partnerships (regional programs, multiple jurisdiction projects, etc.), staff capacity, project readiness, and ease of implementation.

Staff will be responsible for monitoring implementation and quantifying actual greenhouse gas reductions achieved. Given the dynamic nature of climate change science, quantification methodology will likely become increasingly more accurate and readily available in next several years. As identified within the CAP, the document will be reviewed every three years to provide an opportunity for updates and to ensure the CAP accurately reflects the interests of the community to achieve greenhouse gas emissions

reductions. The CAP will also be included as part of the City's General Plan during the upcoming General Plan update process.

Per the State's Climate Change Scoping Plan, it is recommended that local governments reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 15% below current levels. The measures included in the CAP will enable the city to achieve a reduction of approximately 19% (15,660 MT CO₂e). To reach the City Council goal of a 25%, an additional reduction of approximately 4,000 MT CO₂e will be necessary. Community stewardship will play a significant role in the further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, local organizations have already taken the initiative to develop public outreach campaigns regarding climate change to help inform the community. Staff will also seek additional opportunities in an effort to work towards further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Implementation of the measures within the CAP will provide for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving local conditions within the City such as enhanced walk/bike-ability, cleaner air, and a greener urban environment. An environmental review was conducted to determine potential negative environmental impacts resulting from the CAP. As a result of this review, a mitigated negative declaration has been developed, and is included as an attachment to this staff report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As previously reported, implementation of the CAP will require a significant amount of funding and staffing. Grants and partnership opportunities will be sought out to help support implementation. Additional staffing will likely be necessary to fully implement and monitor the CAP. There currently are no City funds available for additional staffing without budget cuts to other City operations. Staff will return with options for funding mechanism(s) to augment available resources for implementation.

Attachments

1. January 4, 2010 & January 19, 2010 Climate Action Plan Staff Reports
2. Resolution No. 2010-09
3. Resolution No. 2010-10
4. City of Albany Climate Action Plan Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
5. City of Albany final draft Climate Action Plan
6. February 17, 2010 Sustainability Committee proposed edits to the final draft Climate Action Plan
7. Written Public Comments received re. final draft CAP/IS-MND
8. Environmental Impact Mitigation Monitoring Program