

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

Agenda date: April 12, 2011
Prepared by: JB

ITEM/ 6a

SUBJECT: Revisions to Green Building Standards of Compliance and Checklists

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Provide recommendations to the City Council on adoption of revision to Green Building Standards of Compliance and Checklists.

BACKGROUND

In December 2006, following a Planning and Zoning Commission recommendation, the City Council adopted three new ordinances related to sustainable development in the City, including: "Green Building and Bay Friendly Landscaping," "Construction and Demolition Debris," and "Water Reuse" Ordinances. Implementation of the program began July 2007.

One of the key elements to the program is that all projects that require design review are required to meet a green point threshold as a part of the approval. The details of the program are contained in the Standards of Compliance. Attached are the current standards approved in 2007 (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

To a large extent, staff has observed that applicants have embraced the City's green building standards and new construction has been more sustainable as a result of the program. Pre-application submittal meetings coupled with information about the green points checklist from stopwaste.org have enabled applicants to easily achieve the required 50 points for residential additions, and construction of new single-family homes.

One of the crucial elements to the success of the City's program has been linking our program to the design review process, both because the City has greater authority to impose local standards than in the building permit stage, and because it encourages applicants to incorporate green building principles relatively early in the design process. This also allows the Commission to review a project's green building initiatives at the time of project approval.

Since the City's adoption of the green building program, materials, techniques and training resources available to designers, contractors, and property owners have improved tremendously. As a result, it is appropriate to consider raising that bar and improving the sustainable performance of the program. In addition, organizations that support green building programs have updated their checklists.

Staff has arranged for consultants funded by a PG&E technical program to attend the Commission meeting, to discuss recent innovations in energy efficiency codes and guidelines.

Update of Checklists

The City's single-family and multi-family residential checklists are modeled off the green points checklists created by Build It Green. The City's checklists are essentially the Build It Green's with additional local incentives added at the end. Staff recommends that the City use the remodel checklist for all residential projects to avoid confusion and to streamline the review process. Therefore, the only proposed changes are in the "City of Albany Incentives" (Section O.)

No changes have been made to Build It Green's multi-family checklist. The Bay Friendly landscaping program has detailed checklist, and staff recommends that it be used as applicable for all future design review applications.

The City's uses US Green Building Council's LEED checklists for commercial projects. There are two checklists, "new construction" and "commercial interiors" that are used, depending on the scope of the project. The LEED checklists are included in Attachment 3.

For educational facilities, such as St. Mary's, the Collaborative for High Performance Schools has created a green building program checklist. Although primarily oriented to public schools, staff believes that is a useful reference for private education facilities as well, and recommends that it be incorporated into the Standards of Compliance.

California Green Building Standards Code

The 2010 California Building Code became effective in January, and included a new California Green Building Standards Code ("CalGreen"). The CalGreen Code applies to new construction only. CalGreen incorporates a series of mandatory measures and additional voluntary "Tiers." Organizations such as Stopwaste.org and AIA are recommending that rather than adopt the Voluntary measures, municipalities should continue to rely on checklists produced by such as Stopwaste, LEED, etc.

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

The Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006 (AB 1881) mandated that the City adopt an ordinance to improve the efficiency of water use in new and existing urban irrigated landscapes in California. The ordinance is applicable to both private projects

and public projects with a landscape area greater than 2,500 square feet. The applicant is required to complete a water-use worksheet, which in turn the City is required to plan check and inspect. The City also is required to audit 20% of the previously installed landscaping. The City has adopted the required standards, but has not yet processing an application large enough to trigger the provisions of the new standards.

Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program

Beginning in December 2011, pursuant to state and Federal regulations, all projects that affect 5,000 square feet of impervious surface will be required to incorporate stormwater management practices such as rainwater harvesting and reuse, infiltration, evapotranspiration, or filtering stormwater through vegetation and soils before discharging to the storm drain system. Staff regularly participates in a County-wide committee that is reviewing the new standards.

Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance

The City's Climate Action Plan includes development and implementation of a Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (RECO) - BE-2.3. RECO would involve a particular "trigger" (point of sale, remodel of a particular size, or other), and require that particular energy efficiency upgrades (a combination of prescriptive and/or comprehensive) be conducted.

To date staff has been conducting research RECO development in other cities within the County, in particular the City of Berkeley and the City of Hayward. The City of Berkeley has had RECO in place for several years, and are also in process of updating their existing RECO. The City of Hayward, with the technical assistance provided by Mike Gable of Gabel Associates, was pursuing development of a RECO, including establishment of particular criteria for triggers as well as prescriptive and comprehensive measures. Recently Hayward decided to work in collaboration with a regional approach to a standardized RECO template that could be utilized throughout the County.

To that end, Stopwaste.Org has agreed to assume the leading role in developing a regional RECO template. The process would involve creation of a working group of city staff within the County and technical consultants to determine the most functional and effective RECO model. The various trigger events would also be analyzed, along with potential obstacles associated with the triggers. There will also be a focus on how to minimize the administrative burden that a RECO could impose on city staff. Stopwaste.Org has applied for grant funding through the PG&E Innovator Pilot Program. Award announcements are expected during the month of April 2011. Given these developments, staff is inclined to also work in coordination with Stopwaste.Org to develop a regional RECO model that can then be customized for the City of Albany. Further, the City is confident that Stopwaste.Org has the capabilities to develop a comprehensive model ordinance given that they have previously taken the lead on a number of successful model ordinance programs in the past including bay

friendly landscaping, green building, construction and demolition debris recycling, all of which the City has utilized to develop an aggressive “greening” program for Albany.

Attachments

1. 2007 Standards of Compliance
2. Updated Checklists