

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

Agenda Date: September 8, 2009

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Feasibility Study for Wind Energy at the Albany Bulb

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council refer to the Sustainability Committee:

- 1) exploration of funding possibilities to conduct a wind energy feasibility study at the Albany Bulb, and;
- 2) coordinate with the Waterfront Committee regarding the concept of a wind energy at the Albany Bulb

BACKGROUND

Based on City Council Resolution #07-46, it is the charge of the Sustainability Committee to pursue innovative programs to promote environmental sustainability. As such the Sustainability Committee has conducted research regarding the concept of developing wind energy at the Albany Bulb. The area provides what appears to be a fairly steady wind, which may accommodate generation of wind energy. In an effort to further pursue this concept, the Committee recently submitted a letter to the City Council requesting analysis of the potential for wind power development along the Albany Bulb.

DISCUSSION

As identified in the Sustainability Committee's letter to Council, there are a number of potential gains related to pursuit of wind energy at the Albany Bulb including both economic and environmental. However, significant research and technical analysis is required to determine whether it would indeed prove feasible to develop wind energy at the Bulb. A qualified consultant would be required to conduct this research given that City staff capacity to manage this project is limited, and staff does not have the expertise necessary to explore the technical issues that may arise related to wind energy.

Items requiring technical study include but are not limited to:

- Quality/quantity of wind
- View issues
- Impact on wetlands
- Impact on recreational uses

- Impact on migratory birds and other wildlife, including habitat
- Stability issues related to site foundation (former landfill)
- Delivery of electricity
- Financing

ANALYSIS

In addition to the technical issues listed above, there are a number of logistical issues that require further consideration. For example, both the Sustainability Committee and Waterfront Committee will need to work in coordination to determine whether the two groups agree that this is a preferred use for the Albany Bulb. According to the City's Zoning Map, the area is included within the category of "Bulb" (WF District) permitted uses within this category include:

- Commercial recreation; Bulb and sports-related commercial sales and services; restaurant/bars; commercial parking lots; marinas and boat launching ramps and related uses; parks, golf courses, open space areas and other recreational facilities; and public utility and public service structures and installations.

Additionally, future ownership of the Bulb needs to be considered, as historically the intent of the City was to transfer the property to State Parks to be included as part of the Eastshore State Park. If it is determined that the City's preference is to continue pursuit of transferring the Bulb property to the State Park, an easement or other agreement should be considered to retain acreage for potential development of wind energy pending the outcome of a feasibility study.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Development of wind energy within the City could potentially offset the demand on traditional energy sources by utilizing a renewable source of energy, and help the City reach its goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% below 2004 levels by the year 2020. Additionally, pursuit of wind energy at the Bulb could further demonstrate the City's commitment to "green" Albany, and serve to identify the City as a leader in developing local sources of renewable energy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

City funding for this project is not available at this time. Grant funding or other sources of outside funding would be required to retain a qualified consultant to conduct a feasibility study. Through volunteer effort by its members, the Sustainability Committee would be tasked with seeking funding from grant sources and/or potential partnerships.

Attachments

Sustainability Committee July 20, 2009 letter to City Council request to analyze the potential for wind energy power at the Albany Bulb