



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: June 22, 2005
Item 6.a.

SUBJECT: General Plan Update – Draft Energy Element

PURPOSE: Review and consider the Draft Energy Element; provide direction to staff for any amendments prior to City Council review

I. BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission previously reviewed the Draft Energy Element on May 25, 2005 (the Staff Report minus attachments is included as Attachment 1). At that time, the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Draft Element and made suggestions for amendments. The Planning Commission also had several questions regarding specific programs and proposals included in the Element. This report summarizes the Planning Commission's discussion and includes an amended Version 3 Draft Energy Element reflecting the Planning Commission's comments (Attachment 2).

II. PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW AND TEXT REVISIONS

At the May 25, 2005 meeting, staff presented to the Planning Commission the Draft Energy Element as drafted by the Energy Committee (Attachment 3) and a version edited by staff (Attachment 4). (The original goal, policy and program numbers have been retained in order to facilitate reference to the Planning Commission minutes of May 25, 2005. They will be renumbered in the Draft Element sent to the City Council.) The Planning Commission took as its starting point the staff edited version and recommended several changes to that. In summary these included:

- Editing the "Purpose" section to make the language less "flowery" and to clearly state why Pleasanton is addressing the energy issue. The Planning Commission also commented on the definition of sustainability. The definition used is widely accepted; however, staff will provide some alternative definitions at the Planning Commission meeting for the Commission's consideration if needed.

- Eliminating Policy 1 and Programs 1.1 and 1.2 because future City Council may have different priorities and because the Commission believes that staffing recommendations should not be a part of the General Plan.
- Eliminating references to specific energy technologies because of the likelihood that new, currently unknown technologies may emerge and current technologies may become obsolete (for example eliminating reference to “hybrid” vehicles in Policy 13.4).
- Eliminating most references to new regulations, while supporting education, incentives, and guidelines that encourage energy conservation and the use of renewable energy (for example, eliminating “regulations” in Policy 3 and Program 3.3 and 3.5 and changing Program 3.4 to address education). Program 15.3, which would revise the Green Building ordinance to include residential development, was retained.
- Rewording Program 7.8 and 7.9. The Planning Commission had questions about the cost of the measures encouraged in these programs and the specificity of the technology. In response, staff has eliminated Program 7.8 and is recommending Program 7.9 be rewritten and applied to new construction.
- Rewriting or eliminating confusing language. Policy 9 related to affordable electric and natural gas rates has been rewritten. Policy 11 was eliminated because the issue it was trying to address was not clear.
- Eliminating programs related to the implementation of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). The revised Draft Element retains the idea of studying the feasibility of CCA, but leaves the development of programs related to its implementation until after a decision is made to proceed.

III. COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ELEMENT:

The previous staff reported noted that the Draft Energy Element was reviewed by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee on April 21, 2005. The Committee recognized the efforts of the Energy Committee, was supportive of the Draft Energy Element, and noted that the policies encouraged cooperation on these issues rather than mandates. There was also a comment regarding the need to carry on the work of the Energy Committee in some form. It was noted by Juanita Haugen, Chamber member and PUSD Board President, that schools are doing their part with the Go Green initiative, but that school bussing is unlikely to be instituted given the costs. The need to look for more ways to encourage walking and biking to school, and to make it safe, was noted.

The Draft Element was also reviewed by a subcommittee of the City of Pleasanton Economic Vitality Committee on May 19, 2005. In summary, the subcommittee’s comments included: a suggestion to organize the document by stakeholder (for example by City, residents and business); making power service reliability and the quality of power high priorities; a concern that even measures that “encourage” rather than “require” can still add time to the approval process; a concern with program 3.5 related to energy upgrades at time of sale (removed from Version 3 of the Draft Energy Element); and the need for a City staff person to educate the public on energy issues and to help applicants through the process.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider Version 3 of the Draft Energy Element (Attachment 2); provide direction to staff for any amendments prior to City Council review.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Planning Commission Staff Report and excerpts of the minutes of, May 25, 2005
2. Version 3 Draft Energy Element reflecting Planning Commission discussion of May 25, 2005 and staff edits.
3. Version 1 Draft Energy Element as drafted by the Energy Committee
4. Version 2 Draft Energy Element as drafted by the Energy Committee and edited by staff

Staff Planner: Janice Stern/Principal Planner/925.931.5606/jstern@ci.pleasanton.ca.us

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