



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: May 25, 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

In June 2001 a group of interested citizens (including residents, business leaders, environmentalists and energy industry experts) was convened to provide input and direction on matters related to the energy crisis. This Energy Advisory Group (EAG) drafted the City's Energy Plan (Attachment 1), which was adopted by City Council on December 3, 2002. At that time, the Council also established the Pleasanton Energy Committee (PEC), which included the core members of the EAG, and which was given a two year charter and directed to develop a General Plan Energy Element to serve as the policy document for Pleasanton's energy strategy.

The PEC met approximately 1-2 times a month between January 2003 and December 2004 to draft, discuss and agree on goals, policies and programs for a Draft Energy Element. On April 28, 2004, the Planning Commission reviewed a list of ideas the PEC wished to include in the Energy Element. At that time, the Planning Commission directed the PEC to continue working on the Energy Element to more fully develop these ideas into policy-type statements. The PEC has adhered to this direction in that the draft Energy Element before the Planning Commission consists of proposed goals, policies, and programs for various energy topics. As directed by the City Council in 2002, the PEC's two-year charter ended in December of 2004. However, many of the members continue to meet on an ad hoc basis as the Energy Advisory Group (EAG) to advise the City Council on energy issues.

II. PROPOSAL

The Draft Energy Element (Attachment 2) consists of introductory and background text which outlines the issues being addressed in the element and describes the various components of energy production, followed by goals, policies and programs which address various aspects of the energy issue such as: reducing demand, increasing supply, financial impacts, reliable power,

City facilities and equipment, local control, land use planning, alliances, and energy related to transportation. The overarching objective of the Draft Energy Element is to guide Pleasanton towards a sustainable energy future. The following is a brief overview of each section:

- **Reducing Demand:** In this section policies and programs emphasize the role that should be played by the City, the need for education, and the need for incentives and additional programs and regulations (Green Building and others) to reduce energy demand.
- **Increasing Supply:** This section includes policies and programs to promote renewable energy and other sustainable energy sources, through various demonstration projects and programs.
- **Financial Impacts:** This section focuses on the financial impacts of energy including energy rates, the energy cost component of City programs, and the cost of energy for business.
- **Reliable Power:** This section consists of one policy and one program directed at meeting peak energy needs and assuring reliable power.
- **City Facilities and Equipment:** This section addresses the City’s role as energy user and as a model for energy conservation.
- **Local Control:** Policies and programs in this section focus on local control of energy decisions including Community Choice Aggregation, developing photovoltaic power, and Municipal Utility options.
- **Land Use Planning:** This section includes a policy and several programs related to evaluating the energy costs of certain land use decisions, extending the City’s Green Building Ordinance to include multifamily residential development, and locating a transit oriented development near Valley Avenue and Stanley Boulevard.
- **Alliances:** Policies and programs in this section promote regional energy alliances and address the visual impact of energy transmission and production facilities.
- **Transportation:** A goal, policies and programs focus on reducing traffic related to schools, coordinating transit and transportation agencies, reducing the imbalance of housing and jobs, promoting walking and bicycling, providing more local serving shopping opportunities and reducing fuel consumption in the City.

The Draft Element includes few new mandates in terms of additional regulations or costs imposed. One potential additional cost is the call for the City to establish an energy manager position (Program 1.1). Policy 3 calls for new regulations, guidelines or incentives to reduce demand for electricity and natural gas, and Policy 15.3 recommends the Green Building Ordinance also cover multifamily residential development. However, most policies and programs call for “researching”, “encouraging”, “promoting” or “creating incentives” for energy conservation or renewable energy use.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT ELEMENT

Staff has reviewed the Draft Energy Element and has some editing recommendations based on the level of detail appropriate in a General Plan, the organization of the Energy Element, and the recommendation to locate some policies and programs in other elements of the General Plan. These recommendations are included in Attachment 3, and in summary they include:

- A reorganization to include a new heading, “City Leadership in Energy Sustainability”, covering Policy 1 and its programs, Program 3.6, and Policy 13 and its programs.
- In Program 6.2, staff is recommending “encouraging the use of..” rather than “adopting..” the Alameda County Waste Management Authority’s guidelines, because of the legal implications of adopting the guidelines as part of the General Plan.
- Staff is recommending a consolidation of several of the programs under Policy 7. Making the language more general would allow the City more leeway in creating demonstration projects where opportunities arise.
- Program 8.3 would be more appropriate in the Noise Element
- Staff is recommending that Policy 15 and associated programs be considered as part of the Land Use Element of the General Plan and that the policies and programs be amended depending on the land use recommendations of Planning Commission and the City Council.
- A new heading “Design of Energy Facilities” is recommended for Policy 17 and its associated programs.
- Staff is recommending most of the section on transportation energy be moved to the Circulation Element.

These suggested amendments are not intended to change the substance or objectives of the Energy Element.

COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ELEMENT:

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 City of Pleasanton Economic Vitality Committee will be reviewing the Draft Element on May 19, 2005, and staff will provide an oral report to the Planning Commission on this meeting.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider the Draft Energy Element (Attachment 2); provide direction to staff for any amendments prior to City Council review. Staff has provided some recommendations for amendments (Attachment 3) to the organization and level of detail in the Draft Energy Element for Planning Commission consideration.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Energy Plan, adopted December 3, 2002
2. Draft Energy Element as prepared by the Energy Committee
3. Staff recommended amendments to the Energy Goals, Policies and Programs section of the Energy Committee's Draft Energy Element.

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