

PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING February 28, 2008

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ITEM VII-A: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE A DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

REQUEST

Request that the Planning Commission forward a Recommendation to the City Council for Approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment to address Global Climate Change and the City's efforts to support sustainability.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

A. Forward a recommendation to the City Council for Approval of the General Plan Amendment.

BACKGROUND

The reasons for initiating the general plan amendment are in response to: 1) recent legislation; 2) ongoing litigation against local jurisdictions that have not addressed climate change in general plans or California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents; and 3) the City's desire to take a proactive role in reducing green house gas emissions at the location level. This is furthered by the goals of the City's Green Team, and the Mayor, to formalize the sustainable efforts of the City.

Legislation and Litigation

Passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006) formally commits the state to reduce green house gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 has been a foundation for lawsuits against local jurisdictions for failing to address climate change in general plans, or in CEQA analyses. Amending the City's general plan would help insulate the City's General Plan, and future CEQA documents from similar litigation.

City Goals for Sustainability & GHG Reductions

The General Plan amendment was a component of the City's Green Team work efforts, and accomplishes the goal of documenting existing sustainable programs and practices already underway in the City. The Green Team is comprised of City staff from various departments, and was established by the City Council in January 2007 with the charge of developing ways to reduce carbon emissions and support sustainability. The Green Team is accomplishing these goals via establishing:

- Inventory of existing sustainable initiatives underway at the City.
- Best Practices: Research new initiatives that will increase efficiency and protect the environment.
- Emissions Inventory: Inventory emissions from City operations and reduce emissions as part of the California Climate Action Registry and AB 32.
- Marketing: Attract clean technology businesses and bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the City.

Climate Change and Associated Impacts

There is now a general consensus in the scientific community that climate change is occurring, and that human activities are playing a significant role in intensifying global warming. The potential effects of climate change are extensive, and have been well publicized. Although actions taken on a local level cannot resolve this global issue, the City of Roseville is taking a proactive role to implement policies that address energy and resource conservation, and support compact community design. These policies help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, counteract global warming, and protect residents from the potential adverse effects of global warming.

Global climate change is defined as the progressive gradual rise of the Earth's average surface temperature thought to be caused in part by increased concentrations of green house gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. The change in the average weather of the earth can be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. It is exacerbated by greenhouse gases, which trap heat in the atmosphere (thus the "greenhouse" effect). Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, and are emitted by both natural processes and human activities.

The projected effects of climate change cover a broad spectrum of impact areas:

Human health:

- Exposure to air pollution
- Exposure to infectious diseases due to changing ecosystems and climate
- Weather-related mortality (flooding)

Water Resources:

- Changing rainfall and snow pack issues
- Hydrology change in rivers and Delta
- Increasing sea level

Biological Resources:

Changing habitat and species distribution

Relationship to CEQA

As a lead agency under CEQA, the City of Roseville is required to ensure that potentially significant environmental effects of discretionary projects are fully disclosed, analyzed, and mitigated to the extent feasible. Although actions taken on a local level cannot resolve this global issue, the City of Roseville is already implementing policies that address energy and resource conservation. Specifically, policies have been identified that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, counteract global warming, or protect residents from the potential adverse effects of global warming. At the local level, the goals, policies and implementation measures in Roseville's General Plan constitute an incremental step, in coordination with efforts on a larger scale, from state to international efforts, which will contribute to counteracting the effects of global climate change, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Summary of General Plan Amendment

The proposed amendment (Attachment 1) reflects existing City policies and programs that serve to either reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or assist in protecting residents from the potential adverse effects of climate change (a complete list of these policies is provided as Exhibit 1 to this staff report). Specifically, text changes include:

- In the Air Quality Element:
 - text identifying the City's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
 - a discussion of the causes and effects of Climate Change and Greenhouse gases;
 - reference to the other General Plan Elements that include sustainable policies, or policies that mitigate the potential effects of global climate change (e.g., water conservation, flood protection);
 - amendment of the title of the Air Quality element to "Air Quality and Climate Change."
- In the Land Use, Circulation, Public Utilities, Parks and Recreation, and Open Space Elements identifying existing policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions; for example:
 - the ability to apply pedestrian overlay districts,
 - the City's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS),
 - policies for energy-efficiency and renewable energy,
 - water conservation, maximizing the use of recycled water, and
 - solid waste source reduction and recycling.
- Icons ((a)): have been added throughout the General Plan to identify policies that reduce green house gas emissions or support sustainability.

Commission Review and Recommendations

The proposed amendments were reviewed by the Transportation Commission on January 15, the Public Utilities Commission on January 22, and the Parks and Recreation Commission on February 4, 2008. These Commissions focused their review on the sections of the General Plan related to their jurisdiction of review. No changes were proposed, and all Commissions forwarded recommendations of approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment to the Planning Commission, for the Planning Commission's subsequent consideration and recommendation to the City Council. Minutes from the commission meetings are attached to this report as Exhibit 2.

FISCAL IMPACT

No new policies or programs are proposed as part of the General Plan Amendment. There is no cost associated with the proposed General Plan Amendment.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The proposed amendment does not substantially change the General Plan, but is proposed as a technical amendment to identify policies and programs currently in place or in the planning stages that will help reduce green house gas emissions, or otherwise mitigate impacts associated with global climate change.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

An initial study/negative declaration has been prepared to comply with CEQA, and was available for public review from January 28 through February 18, 2008. No comments have been received as of the date of this report. The negative declaration will be brought before the City Council for consideration in March 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

A. Forward a recommendation to the City Council for Approval of the General Plan Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS

1. General Plan Amendment

EXHIBITS

- 1. Current General Plan Policies That Support GHG Reduction And/Or Sustainability
- 2. Meeting Minutes from Transportation, Public Utilities, and Parks and Recreation Commissions