

Memorandum

To: City of Sunnyvale Planning Commission Members

From: Andrew Miner, Principal Planner 

Date: April 25, 2011

Re: Tentative Proposed Study Issue Papers for 2012

At recent Planning Commission hearings, two members of the Commission suggested topics for new study issues for 2012. They are attached to this memo.

Encl: Potential Study Issues for 2012:

- Philanthropy policy- naming City projects by private businesses
- Requiring solar panel installation as part of re-roofing projects

Planning Commission Potential Study Issue for 2012

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?

In April 2008, the City Council adopted a resolution for a Responsible Service Contractor Code of Conduct that encourages Sunnyvale businesses to offer fair wages and benefits for service contract employees and to openly cooperate with these workers on labor issues. During the Council discussion, it was suggested that the City might explore sponsoring a recognition program for Sunnyvale companies that demonstrate "socially responsible" actions and practices. This program would highlight and applaud companies that engage in admirable business or other activities that contribute to the betterment of the entire community. The program could encourage companies to be cognizant of their responsibility to the local community, and possibly encourage other companies to implement socially responsible practices that would benefit Sunnyvale residents and its workforce.

There may be some challenges/drawbacks associated with implementing a this program.

The challenges:

1. Define what constitutes a "socially responsible" business;
2. Identify and discuss the benefits and challenges/drawbacks associated with a recognition program for this purpose;
3. Establish criteria for selecting businesses for recognition;
4. Suggest a process for nominating and selecting businesses for recognition, including consideration of an awards committee consisting of City and business industry representatives;
5. Explore partnership and sponsorship opportunities with the business community;
6. Consider possible events where the awards could be presented; and
7. Identify the budget impacts of the options.

A study issue was sponsored by Councilmember Lee and co-sponsored by Councilmember Spitaleri and Councilmember Howe to study the feasibility of developing such a recognition program. It was suggested that the city might pattern this program after its current program for recognizing companies that demonstrate environmentally sustainable business practices. The study issue will include soliciting input from the community and business organizations on all of the above items.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or City Policy?

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUB-ELEMENT

Policy B.6 Encourage citizen contributions and business volunteerism, involvement and philanthropy to support community programs and activities.

Action B.6c. Publicly recognize business community involvement, contributions and achievements.

3. **Origin of issue.** Commissioner Dohadwala

4. **Would this be a multiple year project?** No.

5. **Potential estimated costs associated with study?** Minor (under \$10,000)

6. **Other.** This study issue would not be reviewed by the Planning Commission, since it is not under their purview.

Planning Commission Potential Study Issue for 2012

Title: *Requiring solar panel installation as part of re-roofing projects*

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?

The value of adding solar panels to homes for electric and heating purposes is well known, and there are many State and local programs in place to defer or reduce the cost in order to reduce dependence on non-renewable resources. This study would consider requiring residential roofing and re-roofing projects to include solar panel installation as well.

The potential to add solar panels throughout Sunnyvale could be substantial through a program such as this, though the costs would be significant. The estimated cost to re-roof a 1,500 square foot single-story home is approximately \$9,000- \$12,000, while the installation of solar panels is estimated at \$15,000 or more. Although there is a cost advantage to install solar panels while re-roofing a home, the solar panels would result in a significant increase in the price of a re-roofing if it was required as part of that work.

The doubling of cost for a re-roof could put the home improvement project out of reach for many homeowners. Also, it may be better to tie the requirement for solar panels to projects that are more elective, rather than one as vital to the integrity of the home as a roof.

The study could include looking at other types of improvements that can require the installation of solar panels. It could also be expanded to include non-residential projects.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or City Policy?

COMMUNITY VISION - CITYWIDE GOALS

III. Environmental Sustainability: To promote environmental sustainability and remediation in the planning and development of the city, in the design and operation of public and private buildings, in the transportation system, in the use of potable water, and in the recycling of waste.

COUNCIL POLICY – 1.1.9 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN BUILDINGS

It is the policy of the City to encourage new and remodeled development within the City to incorporate sustainable design principles in the following disciplines:

- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality

Goal C: Minimize the impact of governmental constraints on the maintenance, improvement and development of housing.

3. **Origin of issue.** Commissioner Hendricks
4. **Would this be a multiple year project?** No.
5. **Potential estimated costs associated with study?** Minor (under 100 hours)
6. **Consultant costs expected?** No.
7. **Other.**
8. **Staff comment.** It seems this requirement could place a tremendous burden on the community because it could double the cost of re-roofing a home, which could be an important issue for the structural integrity of the home. In addition, there may be future policy and ordinance requirements stemming from the Climate Action Plan which could cover this issue.