

2012 Council Study Issue

CDD 12-01 Requiring solar panel installation as part of re-roofing projects

Lead Department Community Development

History **1 year ago** None **2 years ago** None

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 legal issues

The doubling of cost for a re-roof could put the home improvement project out of reach for many homeowners. While this mandatory requirement could achieve significant energy conservation, it is likely to generate considerable public debate. Another strategy would be to focus efforts at promoting or providing incentives for homeowners to voluntarily elect to install solar panels. Existing programs are in place through the County, PG&E and other programs that offer financial incentives for energy audits and energy conservation measures. While these programs do not exclusively fund photovoltaic systems, it is an eligible expense for many programs. Homeowners may also find that less costly alternatives are available for reducing electrical and gas energy use or other options are more within their budget.

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. The legal issues associated with imposing this requirement on permits for new roofs or for reroofing would need to be explored.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing 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

Board or Commission Planning Commission

4. Staff effort required to conduct study Minor

Briefly explain the level of staff effort required

Background research of other cities' approach and legal issues; public outreach to the general public, solar businesses, property owners, and advocacy groups; preparation of reports; and, public hearings.

5. Multiple Year Project? No **Planned Completion Year** 2012

6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?

Does Council need to approve a work plan? No

Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission? Yes

If so, which? Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission

Is a Council Study Session anticipated? No

7. Briefly explain if a budget modification will be required to study this issue

Amount of budget modification required

Explanation

8. Briefly explain potential costs of implementing study results, note estimated capital and operating costs, as well as estimated revenue/savings, include dollar amounts

Are there costs of implementation? No

Explanation

9. Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation Drop

If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain

This requirement will 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.

Reviewed by



Department Director

10/19/11
Date

Approved by



City Manager

10/25/11
Date