

2013 Council Study Issue

CDD 13-09 Sustainability Rating System**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?**

This study issue was recommended by the Sustainability Commission. The goal of the study would be to look at creating a new sustainability rating, based on metrics, or for projects (public or private) or policies where there are multiple options or alternatives with the goal to assist in decision making.

The City has adopted a Green Building program, with requirements in the zoning code and adopted by resolution by Council. The City also uses the State-mandated CalGreen code to building construction. In addition, there are local and State mandated requirements for stormwater, air quality and other impacts to the environment. There are currently numerous rating systems used to evaluate various aspects and levels of sustainability criteria. Examples of these systems include:

- Build It Green
- LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
- BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method)
- CASBEE (Comprehensive Assessment System for Building Environmental Efficiency)GBTool
- Green Globes™ U.S.

Each system has its pros and cons. The majority of rating systems utilized, including the systems identified here, focus on buildings and development projects and would not be applicable for evaluating policies unrelated to building. Additionally, there are high levels of variation between the systems for the same 'grade' or 'rating' than might be expected. For example, BREEAM Excellent, LEED Platinum, and a 6-Star Green Star office buildings are not equivalent in terms of sustainability features or environmental impact. This study could identify the most appropriate rating system based on the desired criteria in use by other local governments or develop a unique rating system for Sunnyvale.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?**Policy 1.1.7 Environmental Quality Regulations**

POLICY PURPOSE: The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended, ("CEQA") requires cities and other units of local government to adopt objectives, reports, criteria and procedures for the evaluation of projects and the preparation of environmental impact.

Policy 1.1.9 Sustainable Development and Green Buildings

POLICY PURPOSE: This policy is designed to encourage sustainable development throughout the City of Sunnyvale, to provide education and information to the community, and to serve as an acknowledgement by the City Council of the importance of sustainable development concepts and practices.

3. Origin of issue**Board or Commission** Sustainability Commission**4. Staff effort required to conduct study** Major**Briefly explain the level of staff effort required**

This study would require significant staff effort. It would require the identification of the variables

and metrics to be included in the rating system, a reliable methodology for determining the rating value for each variable and a program for implementation and evaluation of the rating system. It is anticipated that in order to complete this study an outside consultant would be necessary due to current staffing constraints. Staff spent well over 200 hours preparing the initial Green Building Ordinance, which includes the LEED and Build It Green Rating systems.

5. Multiple Year Project? Yes Planned Completion Year 2014

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? Yes

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

Amount of budget modification required 100000

Explanation

This study would require the services of an outside consultant. Depending on the scope of the study, it is anticipated that the cost to create a rating system could be in the area of \$100,000.

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

Direct costs for the implementation of this study may result based on the how the the rating system is applied. Costs may be incurred, if staff time is required to validate or verify sustainability ratings, through plan reviews or site visits. If used strictly as a decision making tool additional costs may be limited to periodically updating the rating system based on new science, methodologies and evolving information.

9. Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation Drop

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

Staff recommends dropping this study issue. The usefulness of this system would be limited in scope because private projects have constraints limiting their options, including a fixed location and requirements beyond what has already been evaluated. In addition, the time and cost involved in developing a sustainability rating is of concern. The City already utilizes rating systems CalGreen, Build It Green and LEED as part of its Green Building Program. While there are limits to these programs, they are widely accepted and utilized by industry and local governments.

Reviewed by [Signature] Approved by [Signature]
Date 11/7/12 Date 11/7/12
Department Director City Manager