2013 Council Study Issue

ESD 13-05 Ecodistrict Feasibility and Incentives

Lead Department Environmental Services

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

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

An Ecodistrict is a neighborhood or district with a broad commitment to accelerate neighborhood-scale sustainability. Ecodistricts commit to achieving ambitious sustainability performance goals, guiding district investments and community action, and tracking the results over time. The aim of an Ecodistrict is to integrate objectives of sustainable development and planning and reduce the ecological footprint of a project.

This study issue would determine the feasibility of the Ecodistrict concept in Sunnyvale. The study would also identify and make recommendations for incentives the City can offer developers to implement strategies for enhancing neighborhood sustainability, such as energy and water management systems, green streets, and resource conservation, similar to how the City provides FAR incentives for LEED.

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

General Plan
Policy CC-1.4
Support measures which enhance the identity of special districts and residential neighborhoods to create more variety in the physical environment. (Previously Community Design Policy A.3)

Policy CC-1.4a
Encourage diversity and develop programs to emphasize the unique features of special districts

Policy CC-3.1
Place a priority on quality architecture and site design which will enhance the image of Sunnyvale and create a vital and attractive environment for businesses, residents and visitors, and be reasonably balanced with the need for economic development to assure Sunnyvale's economic prosperity (Previously Community Design Policy C.1)

Policy CC-3.2
Ensure site design is compatible with the natural and surrounding built environment. (Previously Community Design Policy C.2)

Policy LT-1.11
Protect regional environmental resources through local land use practices. (Previously LUTE Policy R1.11)

Policy LT -2.1
Recognize that the City is composed of residential, industrial and commercial neighborhoods, each with its own individual character; and allow change consistent with reinforcing positive neighborhood values. (Previously LUTE Policy C1.1)

3. **Origin of issue**

Council Member(s) Martin-Milius/Griffith

4. **Staff effort required to conduct study** Major

Briefly explain the level of staff effort required
This study would require significant staff time to complete. The Ecodistrict concept is a fairly new and emerging concept with limited examples of implementation. Due to staff expertise and workload, it is anticipated that a consultant would be necessary to complete this study.

5. **Multiple Year Project?** Yes **Planned Completion Year**

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?	Board of Building Code Appeals, Heritage Preservation Commission, 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 50000

Explanation
This study would in all likelihood require the services of an outside consultant. Depending on the scope of the study, it is anticipated that the cost to identify the feasiblity for Sunnyvale and level of incentives necessary for a developer to implement an Ecodistrict would be in the ballpark of $50,000. Funding would likely be from the General Fund.

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? Yes

Explanation
Capital and operating costs could vary considerably. It is likely that options will be identified as a result of this study that will require additional, substantial funding, as well as operating costs in future years to implement the Ecodistrict concept. The implementation costs would be incurred through staff time to develop guidelines for the Ecodistrict strategy and unknown capital and operating costs associated with ongoing implementation and support if the City is an active participant in the strategy. The impact of this study would be realized in potential greenhouse gas reductions as a result of the sustainability measures implemented. This study would support measures identified in the Climate Action Plan, General Plan and Land Use and Tranpsortation Element. Costs associated with the implementation of this study issue would also be based on the incentives identified. Costs may be monetary or in the form of deviations from current development requirements, depending on the outcome of the study.

9. **Staff Recommendation**

Staff Recommendation Defer

If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain
Staff recommends deferring this study issue pending the outcome of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE). The impact of implementing the CAP and LUTE is not clear. Staff believes it would be prudent to take up this study issue after their implementation when staff has the ability to more fully evaluate their impact on staff time and resources.

Reviewed by		Approved by	
10-15-12		10-16-12	
Department Director	**Date**	**City Manager**	**Date**