



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

15-0910

Agenda Date: 1/29/2016

2016 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

CDD 16-09

TITLE Green Building and Zero Net Energy Requirements

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Community Development Department
Support Department(s): N/A

Sponsor(s):

Board/Commission: Sustainability Commission

History:

1 year ago: N/A

2 years ago: N/A

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What are the key elements of the study?

As proposed by the Sustainability Commission, the purpose of the study is the creation of a new Green Building and Zero Net Energy requirement. The goal of this study is to facilitate the construction of a new generation of commercial and residential buildings; the construction of which:

- have minimal or no negative impact on the environment;
- create healthy environment for its occupants;
- promotes best building performance for the intended use; and
- has positive effects on the community.

Revisions to the green building code and energy code could establish Sunnyvale's leadership position in promoting sustainable and high-performance building design and construction. The technical implications could include more stringent Sunnyvale specific requirements that would accelerate Green Building and Zero Net Energy building construction such as: 1) establishing a new energy "reach code" with phased and increasing requirements for building design to exceed the minimum State energy code requirements; 2) solar-ready infrastructure for new buildings; 3) "laundry-to-landscape ready" infrastructure for residential buildings; 4) water-efficient landscape strategies; and 5) adopting CALGreen Tier 1 and Tier 2 as minimum standards (currently voluntary) for new and remodel projects in lieu of the current Build it Green and LEED incentive requirements.

What precipitated this study?

The Sustainability Commission is concerned that the City has not accelerated more sustainable and green building construction in Sunnyvale and notes that:

- The minimum standard set by the City's current Green Building Program is compliance with the CALGreen mandatory measures, despite the greener measures listed in Tier 1 and Tier 2.
- The Green Building Program's voluntary incentives are based on third party green building certifications via Build It Green and US Green Building Council programs which are different from CALGreen.
- The City has not chosen to enact the more stringent green, efficiency measures included in the CALGreen Tier 1 and Tier 2.

Planned Completion Year: 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost): Major/Moderate

Amount of funding above current budget required: \$0

Funding Source: N/A

Explanation of Cost: While a consultant may not be necessary for staff to complete this study (hence \$0 cost indicated), it would require a considerable amount of staff time to research the possible provisions for increasing green building and net zero energy standards. This study would include public outreach to design professionals, developers, industry experts and other interested parties. Developing an ordinance would also require considerable staff time, including coordination with the City Attorney's Office.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs

Explanation of Cost: Introducing new building requirements may require additional staff time to plan check and inspect. Changing from the current Build It Green and LEED programs in favor of the CALGreen optional codes may also have higher staff costs. Any of these costs can be included in the fees charged for development services.

EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS

Council-approved work plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Sustainability Commission, Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Position: Drop

Explanation: The City has several green building programs in place and will be evaluating the California building codes again in 2016. The State has increasingly stringent green building and energy efficiency requirements, and water use restrictions. Staff recommends that all building related regulations be examined at the same time after the State publishes the minimum codes, and not be reviewed as a separate study issue.

Examples of City and State standards currently in place include:

- In 2004, Sunnyvale adopted a Green Building Policy that encouraged more sustainable and “green” practices for new development and amended the zoning code to provide incentives for green building. In 2008, the City amended the zoning code and adopted the first mandatory minimum green requirements for construction and included incentives for higher levels of Green achievement. The Green Building requirements were updated in 2011 (non-residential), 2012 (residential and public facilities), and 2014 and are based on two programs, LEED and Build-it-Green (residential only).
- The State of California requires all cities to adopt water-efficient landscaping regulations and has new, more stringent, regulations that will become effective in December 2015.
- The adopted Climate Action Plan Workplan calls for construction based climate protection measures to be evaluated in 2016-2017.
- The State of California will publish the next update to the Building Standards Code on July 1, 2016. City staff will review these codes and bring a recommendation to the City Council for adoption in November (to assure second reading can occur at least 30 days prior to January 1, 2017, the date the codes need to be effective). The minimum State Building codes may include mandatory requirements that achieve higher energy efficiency.
- The City Council considered and dropped a similar study issue for 2015 titled: Early Adoption of State Net-Zero Energy Model (CDD 15-13). The staff recommendation was “Achieving the State’s policy goal of zero-net-energy is a multi-faceted issue that involves collaboration of the utility company as well as increased energy code standards. It is premature for Sunnyvale to implement higher energy efficiency standards before the infrastructure and marketplace is available to support the increased standards. When the State adopts increased energy code standards designed to achieve the zero-net-energy goal, Sunnyvale (along with other jurisdictions throughout the State) will be mandated to enforce the standards.”

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