



## City of Signal Hill

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2175 Cherry Avenue ♦ Signal Hill, CA 90755-3799

February 3, 2009

### **AGENDA ITEM**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: GARY JONES  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE CITY COMMITTEE**

### **Summary:**

The Council will consider recommendations from the Sustainable City Committee.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Approve Action Plan as described in the report.
2. Authorize the Mayor to sign the U. S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

None anticipated.

### **Background & Analysis:**

In 1983, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environmental Development to address growing concern about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources, and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development. In 1987, this Commission published "Our Common Future," a report dealing with sustainable development, the global nature of environmental problems, and the political change needed to achieve sustainability.

The report articulated what has now become a widely accepted definition of sustainability: *“Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

### **Assembly Bill 32**

In 2006, the State of California embraced the sustainable development ideals expressed in Our Common Future with the adoption of Assembly Bill 32 (“AB 32”) - the Global Warming Solutions Act, a mandate that requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The statute tasks the California Air Resources Board (“CARB”) with monitoring and regulating sources of greenhouse gases. CARB has implemented an advanced set of greenhouse gas emission reduction measures or “early action” measures and recently established the 1990 baseline level of carbon dioxide at 5 million metric tons annually, with measures to be implemented to return emissions to this level no later than 2020. The CARB is preparing an emissions inventory and a Scoping Plan for meeting the requirement of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels. The Scoping Plan is a comprehensive set of measures designed to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions throughout the state. Scoping Plan measures includes actions in areas such as: energy efficiency, transportation, green building, recycling and waste, high speed rail, industrial emissions, agriculture, and land use planning. The CARB has also appointed a Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) to decide numeric greenhouse gas reduction targets for regions.

### **Senate Bill 375**

Implementation of AB 32 requires the adoption of additional legislation, most recently, Senate Bill 375 (“SB 375”) authored by Senator Darrell Steinburg. SB 375 builds on the existing regional transportation planning process to connect the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks to land use policy. This law has received much attention from cities because it attempts to synchronize transportation planning, affordable housing production, and greenhouse gas reduction programs. Developers are interested in SB 375 because it contains certain incentives such as an exemption from CEQA review for Transportation Priority Projects that provide high density affordable housing near transportation centers or corridors. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments have important roles in the implementation of SB 375 including the preparation of a Sustainable Communities Scenario envisioned as the land use plan for achieving the SB 375 objectives.

## **Sustainable City Committee**

On June 10, 2008, the City Council established the Sustainable City Committee ("SCC") and appointed Council Members Forester and Wilson to serve as representatives. On August 12, 2008, the Council appointed one representative each from the Planning, Parks & Recreation, and Civil Service Commissions and alternates, four community representatives, and staff representatives or "Green Team" from the Administration, Finance, Public Works & Engineering, Community Services, and Community Development Departments. The Community Development Department is providing staff support for the SCC. The SCC has met monthly to hear expert speakers and study the origins of sustainable ideals and issues (Attachment A). The SCC is refining its interests to focus in on the matters most relevant to City business and services and is following the sustainable city programs established by Santa Monica, Pasadena, and other cities that made early commitments to become sustainable cities.

## **First Steps - Urban Environmental Accords**

In 2005, the United Nations unveiled the Green Cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords ("Accords"); a set of 21 actions for cities to take as first steps toward addressing urban sustainability and providing a clean, healthy and safe environment for all members of society (Attachment B). During the period 2005-2012, the United Nations recommends cities adopt three Actions annually as policies or laws. At the end of this time, cities will be recognized as Green Star Cities on the basis of actions taken as follows:

19-21 Actions	Four Star City
15-18 Actions	Three Star City
12-17 Actions	Two Star City
8-11 Actions	One Star City

The SCC has explored the appropriateness and feasibility of the City acting upon the 21 Actions during the three remaining years of the program. The SCC concluded that the City is likely to achieve four Actions by 2012 through existing programs and policies, and that by adopting three Actions this year, and one or more in subsequent years, the City may achieve One Star City ranking by 2012. The SCC recommends the following three Actions for fiscal year 2009-2010.

Action 8 - Adopt urban planning principles and practices that advance higher density, mixed use, walkable, bikeable, and disabled-accessible neighborhoods which coordinate land use transportation with open space systems for recreation and ecological restoration.

Action 16 - Every year, identify one product, chemical, or compound that is used within the city that represents the greatest risk to human health and adopt a law and provide incentives to reduce or eliminate its use by the municipal government.

Action 21 - Adopt municipal wastewater management guidelines and reduce the volume of untreated wastewater discharges by ten percent in seven years through the expanded use of recycled water and the implementation of a sustainable urban watershed planning process that includes participants of all affected communities and is based on sound economic, social, and environmental principles.

### **U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement**

Many cities beginning the process of becoming sustainable cities also adopt the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement ("Agreement") a generalized statement of commitment to several sustainable ideals (Attachment C). The Agreement was introduced in 2005 at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual U. S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Chicago. Since then, 902 mayors have signed the Agreement including 127 California mayors. Locally, the Cities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Torrance and Huntington Beach have authorized their mayors to sign the Agreement. The SCC reviewed the Agreement and unanimously recommended that the Council authorize the Mayor to sign. Under the Agreement, participating cities commit to a list of actions briefly summarized here in the following three statements:

- Implement sustainable actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns;
- Urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol -- 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012; and
- Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system.

The SCC reviewed the Agreement and concluded that it should be viewed as an overall general expression of sustainable ideals not a commitment to a specific course of action (Attachment D).

### **Next steps**

The SCC plans to develop a mission statement, and study and recommend policies that implement the three recommended Actions of the Action Plan. In addition, the SCC is interested in preparing a public information program to promote sustainability. As needed, the SCC will meet to evaluate progress, provide direction, recommend new Actions, and consider related sustainable city issues. City staff members who have participated in the SCC Green Team meetings have received considerable introduction to sustainable city ideals and will be more likely to consider the importance of health, environment and sustainability when preparing City budgets, programs and policies. Over time, the City's choices will reveal its commitment to creating a sustainable environment.

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Kenneth C. Farfsing