

ANALYSIS OF GREEN TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis and Proposed Multi-Year Implementation of Select Green Task Force Recommendations

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Executive Summary: Staff has closely reviewed the recommendations of the Green Task Force, which were generated to encourage Fremont to adopt policies and actions that would improve the sustainability of City operations, improve regional sustainability efforts, and create public awareness so that Fremont residents adopt actions in their own communities. Building upon Council and community input, staff researched each of the Task Force's proposals and provides recommendations herein.

BACKGROUND: On July 22, 2008, the Green Task Force presented twenty recommendations to the Council. The recommendations focused on seven categories, including transportation, land use and community design, economic development, waste reduction and recycling, public outreach and education, storing and offsetting carbon emissions, and energy efficiency and conservation.

As follow-up, staff held a Climate Action Workshop on September 13, 2008 to receive public input and feedback on the Task Force recommendations. The public's feedback combined with staff research and Council input has led to the following staff recommendations regarding the Green Task Force's proposals.

Discussion: Most of the actions proposed by the Green Task Force can be implemented in the next few years. Staff proposes a multi-year plan to address the Green Task Force's recommendations because several proposed actions require significant staff resources, as well as coordination with other agencies and organizations. A summary of the proposed timing for implementing the Green Task Force's recommendations is provided here, with details on each recommendation following this summary.

Current Fiscal Year Initiatives: There are a few recommendations from the Green Task Force that are currently underway, and others that staff suggest be carried out during this current fiscal year. Those recommendations include: 1) Greening the City's vehicle fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create fuel cost savings (Recommendation #1) ; 2) Phase in mandatory green building requirements for new residential construction and incentive-based programs for new non-residential construction(Recommendation #2) ; 3) Develop policies to attract clean and green tech businesses to the City (Recommendation #4); 4) Publicize environmentally friendly changes for residents to consider in making Fremont greener (Recommendation #7) ; 5) Encourage small and minority owned

businesses to be energy efficient (Recommendation #17) ; and 6) Add features to the City’s website that provide information on how to create and maintain a greener environment (Recommendation #10).

In addition, there are some recommendations that are scheduled to take effect on specific dates. There are potential countywide landfill bans on cardboard and yard debris that may go into effect on January 1, 2009 (Recommendation #6). Also, staff is planning for the Annual Earth Day event to be held on April 18, 2009 (Recommendation #7).

Recommended initiatives between FY 2009/10 and 2013/14: Staff suggests that some recommendations be implemented over the next few fiscal years as some components have not been fully developed. Notably, Recommendation #3 calls for City support of transit-oriented development in planning efforts, which staff supports. However, the City’s transit-oriented development policies will be examined as part of the General Plan update, which is underway but will likely not be completed until FY 2009.

Staff also projects that the City will be able to phase in the purchase of 100% post-consumer recycled content paper for use by City staff over the next few fiscal years (Recommendation #11).

Lastly, staff is exploring options for banning plastic bags and styrofoam (Recommendation #12). Next steps will be recommended after meeting with those stakeholders involved in this issue. Meetings are scheduled for mid-November.

Recommended Goal for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions: During the July 22, 2008 Council meeting, the Green Task Force recommended the Council set a goal of achieving 1) a 5% reduction in City and community-generated greenhouse gas emissions by 2012, and 2) a 15% reduction in City and community generated emissions by 2020 from a 2005 baseline. After reviewing this recommendation, staff discovered that several cities within Alameda County are setting a goal of a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 from a 2005 baseline. To be consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and AB 32, staff recommends that Council adopt this regional target for the City. Once the City’s General Plan update is complete, staff will draft and recommend the adoption of a Climate Action Plan that may include modified emissions targets more specific to the City of Fremont.

The complete list of recommendations made by the Green Task Force follows below, with staff recommendations as on each item.

Category	Green Task Force Recommendation
1. Transportation	“Green” the City’s vehicle fleet. As the City replaces municipal vehicles, consider which vehicles could be higher fuel efficiency, hybrids, plug-in hybrids, electric vehicles, or supplied by a transportation rental company like City Car Share.

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<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Staff assessed vehicles due for replacement in this fiscal year and has determined that 37 vehicles will be replaced with greener ones and 14 others will be removed from the fleet, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 68,000 tons of carbon dioxide. Staff will continue to evaluate the City's fleet for opportunities to reduce fuel use, reduce emissions, and use alternative fuels where feasible.
2. Land Use & Community Design	Phase in mandatory green building requirements for new residential construction and incentive-based programs for new non-residential construction.
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Staff recommends that residential Precise Planned Districts include minimum Green Building goals. Initially, the goal would be 50 points on the Build It Green checklist that is in effect during the year of construction. Build It Green is a non-profit organization promoting efficient building practices. Other projects requiring entitlements would be strongly encouraged to meet the 50 point minimum. Staff would evaluate the program periodically to determine if the goals should be revised to change the point standard or to utilize another standard such as LEED. This is an approach that can be accomplished in the short term with existing resources. If past trends continue, the majority of new residential construction could meet Green Building goals under this approach, thus meeting the intent of the Green Task Force. Longer term, the City may want to adopt a mandatory ordinance consistent with state building code adoption procedures and requirements. Staff estimates the cost of developing a mandatory ordinance to be at least \$75,000 in staff time because of a variety of State requirements that apply to mandatory green building ordinances.
3. Land Use & Community Design	Support transit-oriented development in City planning efforts: multi-use development, densification around transit hubs, and pedestrian-friendly community spaces. Encourage increasing non-commute bus use by making bus headways closer to 20 minutes. This would include appointing a Transit Development Manager and providing a cost/benefit analysis of the multiple alternate transportation modalities.

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<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Staff has completed Priority Development Area applications for regional designation of the Central Business District, Irvington, and Centerville for funding of Transit Oriented Development projects. In addition, the General Plan update, which will include transit oriented development policy recommendations, is underway. Given the current economic climate, staff does not recommend a new city staff position. Instead, staff recommends that current practices continue, which include multiple staff across divisions working closely with regional transportation agencies to encourage transit-oriented development and pedestrian-friendly spaces.
4. Economic Development	Develop policies to attract clean and green tech businesses to Fremont.
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Economic Development staff has been actively recruiting and assisting clean and green tech firms. A new informational page on the website is being developed and should be complete in November.
5. Waste Reduction & Recycling	Create a mandatory construction and demolition debris recycling ordinance.
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	The Council has approved this ordinance and this recommendation will go into effect on January 1, 2009.
6. Waste Reduction & Recycling	Implement mandatory non-residential sector recycling ordinance for paper, cardboard, bottles and cans, and yard waste and food waste where the infrastructure is available to collect these materials.
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Countywide landfill bans on cardboard and yard debris may go into effect on January 1, 2009. The Fremont Recycling and Transfer Station is currently installing equipment that will significantly increase the diversion of commercial recycling; such equipment should be operational by the end of November 2009. Staff will evaluate the level of diversion achieved with these two developments, and consider further measures if needed.

Category	Green Task Force Recommendation
<p>7. Public Outreach and Education</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Publicize several environmentally friendly changes residents can make: alternative commuting one day/week (carpooling, vanpooling, mass transit, telecommuting, biking, walking), planting trees, taking advantage of PG&E energy conservation and efficiency rebates, buying regional organic produce, following Build It Green and StopWaste.Org checklists for green building and remodeling, and reducing water use (e.g., sweeping instead of water washing the driveway).</p> <p>Request that the City publicize these ideas through its quarterly newsletter (with a different set of seasonally appropriate ideas), ask the Argus to publish articles, place green tips on its website, promote at the City’s booth at the Festival of the Arts and other festivals, and through National Night Out in August (green is this year’s theme). The City should sponsor Earth Day each year as a primary public out reach endeavor for environmental goals.</p> <p>Economic Development staff and the Southern Alameda County Air Resource Team recently sponsored a “Commute Alternatives Fair” that was attended by businesses from the Cushing Boulevard/Northport Loop Road area to promote commute alternatives.</p> <p>The Environmental Services Division will continue to publicize environmentally friendly practices. Staff is also planning for the Annual Earth Day event for April 18, 2009.</p>
<p>8. Public Outreach and Education</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Cash for Trash - Hold a weekly contest with cash prizes to encourage the residential and non-residential sectors to learn how to recycle and compost properly and positively reinforce correct recycling behavior.</p> <p>The Environmental Services Division has incorporated this concept into its franchise hauler’s Exemplary Customer Program. The credit provided is for three months of free service for five households per month; therefore, is not necessary to hold a weekly contest.</p>
<p>9. Public Outreach and Education</p>	<p>Request quarterly community nominations for the “greenest home” and “greenest business”. Publicize winners in the City of Fremont newsletter and website and ask the winners to give tours of their home or business.</p>

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<p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>The City already supports the Bay Area Green Business program with technical assistance and annual funding. This program motivates businesses to become more “green” by providing free technical assistance and publicity. Each year, the Council recognizes the efforts these businesses have made, and green homes are already recognized at a county level.</p> <p>Fremont had its first home on the Build It Green Home Tour earlier this year.</p> <p>Staff recommends that the City continue to participate in these activities.</p>
<p>10 Public Outreach and Education</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Add three features to the City of Fremont website: 1) a user-friendly carbon footprint calculator for residents and businesses, 2) a tree planting database where residents and organizations can report the number of trees they have recently planted, and 3) a database that residents can log into that allows them to report if they recently adopted mass transit.</p> <p>The City website is now being redesigned. A carbon footprint calculator can easily be included in the new site design. The other suggestions may best be handled through links to other agencies, which also is easy to do.</p>
<p>11 Waste Reduction & Recycling</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>When purchasing paper products, seek to purchase 100% post-consumer recycled content paper for use by City staff.</p> <p>Staff recommends increasing the percentage of recycled paper from 30% to 100% by updating our Administrative Regulation process using a phased approach. Using the current vendor, initial estimates of cost would be about \$10,000 per year. It may be possible to reduce cost impacts by using a different vendor or contracting with a specialty vendor for paper only. An additional option is to require all bids for City services to be submitted on 100 percent recycled paper.</p>
<p>12 Waste Reduction & Recycling</p>	<p>Ban plastic bags and styrofoam food service ware at stores and restaurants in Fremont.</p>

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<p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Staff is exploring two separate processes for banning plastic bags and styrofoam, as the stakeholders are different for each product. Each process will promote voluntary phased participation, and require measured results. Additionally, staff has scheduled two November meetings with various stakeholders and the Chamber of Commerce for plastic bags and styrofoam issues. In addition staff is enforcing the most recent state law that requires stores over a certain size to offer recycling for plastic bags, and to sell reusable bags.</p>
<p>13 Storing & Offsetting Carbon Emissions</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Participate in Pacific Gas and Electric’s (PG&E) ClimateSmart program to buy carbon offsets for City electricity usage.</p> <p>Staff does not support this recommendation at this time. Staff believes the City should invest first in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, greening its fleet, and other measures recommended by the Green Task Force prior to considering participation in the ClimateSmart or other offset programs that would require a new financial commitment.</p>
<p>14 Public Outreach and Education</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Request that the Mayor appoint a volunteer citizen task force to perform public outreach to the residential sector through neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, community events, and other outreach methods.</p> <p>Outreach would encourage alternative transit one day per week; tree planting; use of PG&E rebates; purchase of regional, organic produce; use of green building checklists during building and renovation; and water conservation.</p> <p>Staff recommends the Mayor encourage members of the Green Task Force and other interested community members to continue their outreach on environmental issues. Members of the Green Task Force could be very helpful in supporting existing City outreach on environmental issues. However, staff does not recommend formal appointments to a task force to coordinate volunteer efforts as this would require significant staff resources.</p>
<p>15 Land Use & Community Design</p>	<p>Ask developers of single residence homes as well as large development projects to offer home buyers the option to purchase solar photovoltaic panels or other green energy technologies when they buy a home. The City is strongly encouraged to do competitive bidding with regional solar installation companies to better serve our developers.</p>

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<p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>By adopting the green building requirements described in number two above, the City will be requiring many developers to meet a green building standard. This mechanism will encourage developers to offer solar homes or other green energy technologies as a way to reach the required point total.</p> <p>Staff believes it would be impractical for the City to act as an intermediary for developers to purchase solar panels. Any savings to developers due to bulk purchases are likely to be offset by the costs to the City of administering such a program.</p>
<p>16 Land Use & Community Design</p>	<p>Require that developments in the City incorporate a commitment to maintain Greenhouse Gas Emissions to a 2005 baseline and any emissions beyond this date be offset or mitigated. The mitigation should be targeted toward a long-term Transit Oriented Development plan. Include public input in the plan and ultimately incorporate the plan into the City's General Plan.</p>
<p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Staff believes this is infeasible as no other community has been identified that has adopted such a requirement. The net effect of this requirement would be to constrain development of vacant land, and in the process, impact economic development efforts. Legislation that standardizes mitigation requirements statewide likely will be forthcoming in the next couple of years.</p>
<p>17 Energy Efficiency & Conservation</p> <p><i>Staff Recommendation</i></p>	<p>Encourage small/minority businesses to be energy efficient. Canvass commercial districts and do energy conservation improvements on the spot. Focus on historic districts. Partner with PG&E and the Green Business Program.</p> <p>The City already partners with PG&E for the Alameda County Green Business program. Staff will update our new business brochures and outreach to reflect this opportunity to refer business to PG&E for energy audits. Staff does not believe a new separate program is necessary to support this recommendation. We would like to partner with PG&E and the County to do waste audits simultaneously.</p>
<p>18 Public Outreach and Education</p>	<p>Mayor to continue to take a leadership role in climate change discourse among the non-residential sector, including organizations such as Washington Hospital, Ohlone Community College, Fremont Unified School District, Union Sanitary District, Alameda County Water District, Alameda County Courthouse, Alameda County Public Library, East Bay Regional Park District, Kaiser Hospital, and Palo Alto Medical Clinic.</p>

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<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Staff recommends that a letter be sent from the Mayor encouraging non-residential organizations to take this step.
19 Public Outreach and Education	Develop a policy encouraging every resident to plant native species trees on their property to encourage a net reforestation of the City. Further, if a tree is cut down, the resident, business owner, or property manager should plant a new tree to replace it.
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	<p>The City currently partners with Alameda County Waste Management Authority to encourage creation of sustainable, drought-tolerant gardens that conserve resources and minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The principles of the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Program are presented throughout the year to residents, including five workshops recently held in Fremont during Fall 2008. Additional workshops and walkable garden tours will be held throughout 2009.</p> <p>Additionally, the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance provides clear guidelines for residents to follow when tree removal and replacement is required. Commercial development projects are reviewed by the City's technical staff, and tree and landscaping protocols are followed for each project.</p>
20 Land Use & Community Design	Make City-owned land that is not currently under development or scheduled for development within the next seven years available for use as community gardens. Further, the City should assist in setting up local organic produce cooperatives, farmer's markets, and produce exchanges. This would include providing information to residents about commercial enterprises that deliver local organic produce to residences or businesses. The City should also consider converting some City landscaping to edible landscaping where feasible. Edible landscaping replaces plants that are strictly ornamental with plants that produce food.

Category**Green Task Force Recommendation***Staff**Recommendation*

In the past, the Redevelopment Agency provided seed money for both the Irvington and Centerville Farmers Market to get up and running. Both markets have conditional use permits. Staff remains concerned about potential operational and maintenance costs associated with community gardens. Typically, community gardens require a fair amount of oversight and management, which extends beyond our current maintenance partnerships. In addition, gardens would require water and irrigation systems which would present a cost impact to the City. Staff has researched other Bay Area cities and found that it is common for citizens to pay plot charges to mitigate some of the costs to cities. However, staff would need to analyze which City-owned parcels might be suitable for this purpose and develop a program budget should the Council wish to pursue these programs.

Fiscal Impact: Given the variety of recommendations, the fiscal impact varies depending upon the number of recommendations implemented. Some recommendations, if implemented, would have little to no impact, while others would require significant funding.

ENCLOSURE: None.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Accept proposed multi-year implementation of specified Green Task Force recommendations as proposed by staff.
2. Adopt the regional target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the City 25% by 2020 from a 2005 baseline.