Comprehensive Plan Update: Energy Goals and Policies

Comments from the Sustainability Advisory Board on 10/15/12

On October 15, CAC member Dorothy Atwood and Senior Planner Beth St. Amand attended the Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) meeting. The SAB reviewed the proposed Energy goals and policies. The SAB provided the following comments for the CAC's consideration, which are highlighted in the text where appropriate:

Item 1: GOAL 1
~~The City shall~~ Eensure ~~the availability of administrative and general government services and shall cCoordinate with efforts of others to provide schools~~ energy ~~and communication~~ services are available to all development.

SAB: Why was communications removed from the above goal? Communication technology such as high bandwidth saves transportation energy by reducing trips through communications infrastructure.
Question for the CAC: *Should communications be added back into the goal, and policy 1? Communications also will be addressed in Public Facilities, but a policy would be appropriate here.*

Item 2: Goal 1, Policy 1
Require energy systems ~~and communication~~ utilities to be available ~~provided~~ to all development.

The SAB suggested the highlighted changes to reflect more updated terminology. They had some concern that the way it was written precluded anyone "going off the grid." Should whether centralized or decentralized be added to the end of the policy?

Question for the CAC: *Based on the comments above and consultation with Development Review staff, consider the following revision: "Ensure the availability of energy and communications systems to all development." Staff suggested the following changes to Policy 3 could address centralized and decentralized energy:*

Item 3: Policy 3
Remove barriers to implementation of **small-scale distributed energy generation, storage, and** ~~new energy~~ ~~distribution~~ **delivery** systems. ~~, as these delivery and storage technologies become available.~~

This option would include a definition of distributed energy:

Distributed energy resources (DER)—also called distributed generation, distributed energy, and distributed power systems—are small, modular, decentralized, grid-connected or off-grid energy systems located in or near the place where energy is used. They are integrated systems that can include effective means of power generation, energy storage, and delivery.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/technologies/derchp_derbasics.html

Question for the CAC: *Consider the above changes to Policy 3.*

Item 4: Goal 2, Policy 3

    a. Implement transportation strategies in the Connected Community policies to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions from light vehicle travel;

What does "light" vehicle travel mean? Response: This is consistent with Metro Climate Smart project. What about delivery fleets and using electric? Response: Taking out "light" would be more broad; this can be a follow-up item.

Question for the CAC: *Should the CompPlan include a definition of this term or remove the term "light" to be more broad? The term "Light vehicles" refers to cars, small trucks, and SUVs.*

Item 5:

What about having energy independence as a goal? That would mean all the energy consumed in the community would also be produced here.

Subsequent discussion focused on what would need to happen to make that happen (onsite energy storage systems, solar, zoning barriers), composting bathrooms, rainwater)
Question for the CAC: *One possibility would be to add this to the second Goal: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption to reduce energy costs and the social, economic, and environmental effects of climate change., and move toward energy independence.*

What about Foothills? *The proposed policy 13 addresses future City buildings.*

Other comments from the SAB; please review:

- Can we minimize carbon dioxide generation? *This is addressed in the second goal.*

- Can we find ways to provide incentives to promote energy efficiency? For example, structuring the cost of a building permit based on energy efficiency? *Policy 10 addresses the overall concept; the Action Plan would implement the actions needed.*

- Do all the policies allow you to go "off the grid" – does it allow it?

- Consider how to address distributed/centralized energy/ gray water? Water = energy.

- Would like to see the environment not pulled out separately (that section) and have it integrated throughout the plan or a goal/policies that state the environment can help us reach our goals (for example, benefits of the urban forest). *Goal 6 specifically calls out those elements, and sustainability has been a primary foundation woven throughout the plan. This can be addressed in the healthy ecosystems section with a goal/policy on the benefits of ecosystem services.*

- Can we include more policies that call out where the natural environment can do the job better. *See response above.*