

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 11/27/06		Item Number: <u>A-2</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Formation of a Sustainable Community Plan.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Catherine A. Vargas / Community Development		Phone Number: (310) 253 6411	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Public Notification: Master Notification List (11/22/06).			
Department Approval: Susan Evans (11/16/06)		City Manager Approval: Jerry Fulwood (11/22/2006)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (11/22/2006)			
<u>RECOMMENDATION</u> 1. Staff recommends City Council direct Staff to initiate the formation of a Sustainable Community Plan ("SCP") that will be adopted prior to commencement of the General Plan Update. 2. Staff recommends appointment of a City Council subcommittee to participate in the formation of the Culver City Sustainable Community Plan. 3. Staff recommends City Council authorize Staff to submit an application to the American Institute of Architects for the annual Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT) grant application. <u>BACKGROUND</u> The General Plan Update, which is scheduled to begin in 2007, will be a multi-year effort to develop a plan that communicates the City's strategic thinking, philosophies, and vision for the future. A General Plan is a long-term plan that lays out the goals and objectives for a city's physical, social, and economic development. Culver City's General Plan includes nine Elements or special focus studies, seven of which are mandated by state law. Optional Elements have been approved to better reflect the City's evolving population, redevelopment patterns, the community's goals and needs. As evidenced by their adoption dates, the majority of the General Plan elements are ten to thirty years old.			

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The date on which each Element was originally adopted is as follows:

- Circulation: September 24, 1996
- Conservation: March 26, 1973
- Housing: July 9, 2001
- Land Use: September 24, 1996
- Noise: September 24, 1996
- Open Space: September 24, 1996
- Public Safety August 25, 1975
- Recreation: February 26, 1968 (Optional Element)
- Seismic Safety: May13, 1974 (Optional Element)

For each of the Elements mentioned above, goals, objectives and policies will be established that balance quality of life with the economic support necessary to sustain that quality of life. Many cities are now adopting additional optional Elements, such as Air Quality, Water, Capital Improvements / Public Facilities, Information Technology and Energy.

Because the General Plan Update process includes extensive outreach, formation of advisory committees to develop policies and goals, analysis of current conditions and practices, Staff is recommending that the City Council adopt a **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan** that will guide and inform the General Plan Update.

DISCUSSION

The **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan** will encompass as its key premise the prevailing definition of sustainability first given in the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987)

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The concept of sustainability will guide City policy and underline the long-term impact of policy choices. Environmental quality and economic health are mutually dependent and a healthy environment is crucial for the long-term prosperity of the City and its residents. Community awareness, responsibility, involvement and education are the key elements of successful programs/policies. Affirming Culver City's commitment to sustainability prior to the General Plan Update will ensure that the City's most important planning document is in line with our community values, sustainable concepts and shared goals.

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Community Visioning and Strategic Plan

In addition to the General Plan a planning tool that cities use is the visioning process. It specifically highlights a community's values. These values, in turn, shape specific actions that city staff, residents, and other community stakeholders can initiate to bring the city in line with the community's vision.

In 1999, the Culver City Community Visioning and Strategic Plan (CCCVSP) was initiated and began a process to look at the community's values and goals. The City as a whole undertook an extensive effort to create the CCCVSP. With over three thousand participants, Council and Staff were able to identify the community's vision. Since the publication of this document several goals established during the visioning process have been met and or exceeded.

Sustainable Community Plan Structure

Taking the outline of the CCCVSP document, the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan** would include internal and city wide goals in five major areas:

- (1) Resource Conservation,
- (2) Environmental and Public Health Protection,
- (3) Solid Waste Diversion and Recycling,
- (4) Open Space and Land Use,
- (5) Community Education and Civic Participation

Within each Goal Area there are specific goals, which are the core of the community's vision. For each goal, specific indicators that can measure progress toward meeting the goals would need to be established. For example, in the goal area of Resource Conservation, an indicator might be mitigation measures during the operational phases of a development that would address resource consumption, air quality impacts, stormwater issues, dust control, and transit amenities.

In reviewing the progress made since the completion of the CCCVSP, Staff recognizes the need to update and expand the CCCVSP's goals and indicators in order to provide a complete picture and to close the loop in education and communicating the needs of all involved. Some of the baselines that were identified with the CCCVSP can be used as a starting point for the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan**.

A core team of Staff have come together to move forward and build on Culver City's current successful sustainable practices, as well as to better address the challenges ahead involved in making Culver City a sustainable city. Because of the comprehensive nature of this process and its use as a foundation upon which to

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build an update of the City's General Plan, this core team will involve members of many (if not all) of the City's Departments.

To construct a sustainable city, one that meets the needs of its residents while reversing trends of increased pollution and minimizing our ecological footprint, it is necessary to divide the plan into manageable sections, develop specific strategies and begin action in meeting goals established. A spreadsheet is included as an attachment that helps to identify the CCCVSP's concepts and programs, current city programs and proposed work plans.

Though the CCCVSP identified Culver City's vision, implementing it is a substantial undertaking. The financial and human resources which are available to the city are limited. The evaluation of a program's cost effectiveness should be based on a complete analysis of the associated costs and benefits, including environmental and social costs and benefits. Many of the goals identified in the visioning process could save the City money in the long term, as sustainable practices generally reduce resource consumption.

In recognition of the need to expand and develop a working model, Staff is requesting Council to consider appointing a facilitator to provide knowledge and guidance for the development of the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan**. This will allow the current interdepartmental team to continue working towards their departments' work plans as well as continue the effort to create **Culver City's Sustainable Community Plan** preceding the General Plan Update, scheduled to begin in 2007.

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Role of Facilitator

- Assist with cost analysis and documenting the benefits for the community going forward with a Sustainable Community Plan.
- Bring City Staff to a common understanding of the update process purpose, intended products (principles, goals, and targets), roles of participants and overall work plans and timeline. Develop a common understanding of the concepts of community sustainability and indicator systems.
- Review City wide work plans completed, work plans in progress and proposed work plans that would be enhanced by establishing indicators and targets.
- Identify the range of community activities and involvement necessary to complete the loop in education and communication to the city.

Based on the previously mentioned facts, Staff recommends that the City Council direct Staff to continue investigating alternative cooperative opportunities to see the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan** to fruition. As such, staff recommends Appointment of a subcommittee consisting of two (2) Council members to participate in the formation of the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan**.

Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

In anticipation of the General Plan Update and desire to make Culver City a Sustainable City, Staff is requesting authorization to submit an application to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program. The SDAT program is a community assistance program that focuses on the principles of sustainability. The SDAT Program brings teams of volunteer professionals (such as architects, urban designers, planners, hydrologists, preservationists, economists, attorneys, and others) to work with community decision-makers and stakeholders to help them develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT Program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and helps communities plan the first steps of implementation.

If chosen for the SDAT Program, Culver City would be visited by a team of outside professionals assembled by the AIA who would objectively analyze Culver City's current level of sustainability and make broad recommendations for future steps, many of which would presumably be included in the Sustainable Community Plan and General Plan Update. The SDAT process includes a preliminary visit by the main facilitator, followed by an intensive three day visit from the team, and resulting finally in a 40-45 page final report. The 2007 SDAT process is estimated to cost \$30,000, with the AIA contributing up to \$25,000. Culver City would be expected to

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contribute a monetary match of \$5,000, in-kind contributions, and any costs above the AIA contribution.

The approximate timeline for the SDAT Program would be one year, in line with what is anticipated to be the commencement of the General Plan Update. Culver City would be informed of its acceptance into the program in early January 2007. The AIA plans to award eight to ten SDATs nationwide in 2007. If chosen, the team would tentatively arrive in Culver City in March.

As mentioned, it is hoped the City will be successful in its application to SDAT. However, should the application not be approved, completion of this important process would not receive the support from the AIA program and an alternative method to complete the project would need to be identified. As a result, staff would reconsider the situation and return to the City Council with a recommendation.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

If chosen for the SDAT Program, Culver City would be expected to contribute a monetary match of \$5,000, in-kind contributions, and any costs above the AIA contribution. These funds would be allocated from the Agency Administration account #59190100.514190 "Other Special Departmental Supplies."

ATTACHMENTS

1. Spreadsheet of completed, current and proposed work plan actions
2. AIA SDAT program press release

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Direct Staff to commence the formation of a **Sustainable Community Plan** that will be adopted prior to the General Plan Update.
2. Appoint a subcommittee consisting of two (2) Council members to participate in the formation of the **Culver City Sustainable Community Plan**.
3. Authorize Staff to submit an application to the American Institute of Architects for the annual Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT) grant application.