

REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council From the City Manager

January 22, 2007

Subject

Update on Climate Change Activities by the City of Redwood City

Recommendation

No action is requested at this time. The purpose of this report is informational only.

Background

For several years, the City of Redwood City has been examining the environmental effects of how it conducts business, and has searched for new methods and technologies in providing our services in a manner that is friendly to the environment. Although the issue of climate change has received more attention in the last couple of years, Redwood City has long been very conscious of the impact our activities can have on the climate and has been a leader in providing services in an environmentally-responsible manner. Examples of such activities in which the City is already involved include:

- ◆ In 2000, the City worked with Noresco to, among other things, retrofit electrical traffic lights at 56 intersections converting them to LED's, change 6,500 fluorescent lamps in City facilities, replace HVAC motors at the main library, replace boiler systems at both pools and purchase solar blankets for the pools. These efforts and others resulted in a four (4) month (May to Sept 2000) reduction of kilowatt hours of 582,112 or 11.3% of our total City usage.
- ◆ Through our aggressive water conservation efforts, we expect that our community will be conserving 815 acre-feet per year by the end of 2009. In addition, we expect to realize an additional 900 acre feet of potable water savings as a result of the implementation of our Recycled Water Project.
- ◆ In partnership with City Trees, we facilitated the planting of approximately 1,800 trees, since 2001.
- ◆ Starting in 2005, fifteen (15) older general sedans have been replaced with Toyota Prius hybrid sedans. Eighty three percent (83%) of all of the City's sedans (excluding police department vehicles) are now hybrid.
- ◆ In 2002, we added three (3) electric vehicles to our fleet.
- ◆ This year, five (5) heavy duty vehicles are scheduled for replacement with new Best Available Control Technology (BACT).
- ◆ In 2006, the City converted to *Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel* which produces less airborne emissions than are produced by conventional diesel engines.
- ◆ The City will test *bio-fuel diesel fuel* when it becomes readily available from suppliers.
- ◆ Through Redwood City's Electronic Newsletter, we have begun to offer tips to the community on how each household can do its part towards improving the environment.
- ◆ We have an employee-managed Alternative Transportation Committee that provides incentives and information encouraging our employees to use mass transit, ride-share, ride bicycles, or walk to work.

- ◆ The City's updated General Plan will incorporate transit-oriented development.
- ◆ The proposed Downtown Precise Plan, which covers most of the area around the Caltrain station, incorporates the basic tenets of transit-oriented development, including more intensive development in the form of multi-story buildings, mixed-use, higher residential densities, and creating a more pedestrian-oriented street environment – all to encourage less use of personal vehicles.
- ◆ Last year, 69 residential units were approved, and 59 of the units are considered "green" housing, which means they meet *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) Green Building Rating System standards. They include the 58 units at the Villa Montgomery residential project and one single-family residence.
- ◆ Although the idea is in the very early stages, and with some difficult financing issues to examine very closely, we are looking at the possibility of solar panels to generate our own energy.

Recently, City staff has started to take a more deliberate approach to the issue of climate change, and so an ad hoc Staff Committee was established to initiate the conversation. We contacted the Sierra Club's local Loma Prieta Chapter to learn more about their Cool Cities Campaign, as it seemed to match our philosophy and our existing actions.

In November of 2006, the Staff Committee met with Rafael Reyes of the Sierra Club as well as Rick Nordensten, PACT graduate and Sierra Club Cool Cities Team Leader for Redwood City. We had a very productive meeting and expect to bring a recommendation to Council for Redwood City to formally sign the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, which focuses on conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, making Redwood City an official "Cool City."


The Staff Committee has participated in several web cast discussions, trainings, and conferences in the last few months in order to better educate ourselves on the topic and perhaps find best practices that we can bring to Redwood City.

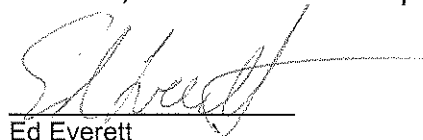
The City can do a great deal in the area of climate change. However, we feel very strongly that we can only be truly successful if we partner with the community in this effort, and the community also does its part. As with other important projects, we will look to our community partners to help us with this effort, including, but not limited to the Sierra Club, Redwood City Cool Families, City Trees, the schools, the faith community, and our recently-established Neighborhood Liaisons.

Given our reductions in staff over the last several years, and understanding of the additional resources this project will require, we are actively seeking grants to fund a three-year staff position to help Redwood City establish the systems necessary to make this project successful not only for today, but as a permanent change in the way we operate and do business in Redwood City.

Fiscal Impact

No funding is being requested at this time, thus there is no impact to the City's budget.


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