

# *City of Brisbane*

## *Agenda Report*

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Open Space and Ecology Committee, via Clay Holstine, City Manager

**DATE:** Meeting of March 1, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Consider Open Space and Ecology Committee report and comments on C/CAG San Mateo County Energy Strategy Report and recommendations for a Brisbane Energy Strategy.

**CITY COUNCIL GOALS:**

8. To develop plans and pursue opportunities to protect natural resources.
10. To promote intergovernmental opportunities that enhances services and/or reduces cost of operations and services to city residents
15. To encourage community involvement and participation.

**PURPOSE:** Respond to the C/CAG San Mateo County Energy Strategy report, and review potential measures to reduce energy and water use in Brisbane.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Consider the Open Space and Ecology Committee's proposed Brisbane Energy Strategy, and direct the Committee to further study the feasibility of implementing energy and water conservation policies and programs.
2. Direct staff to transmit comments to C/CAG's Utilities and Sustainability Task Force regarding the San Mateo County Energy Strategy report.

**BACKGROUND:**

In March 2009, the City Council discussed the C/CAG San Mateo County Energy Strategy report and adopted Resolution No. 2009-12 agreeing to review its proposed strategies and to work collaboratively with other cities and the County as appropriate. While the City supports the initiative, there is concern among the Council and staff about duplication of efforts, given the City's participation in related projects, including the Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network Climate Protection Task Force; Countywide Residential Energy Action Program(REAP); and BAWSCA (Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency) water conservation implementation plan.

Brisbane's small size and limited resources require focusing on the most cost-effective, feasible energy and water savings measures that are suitable and relevant for Brisbane, and reflect the priorities and values of the community. To assist in the City's response to the C/CAG Energy Strategy Report, the City Council referred the document to the Open Space and Ecology Committee for its review and recommendations.

To begin its analysis, the Committee invited Kim Springer, County Resource Conservation Programs Manager, to discuss the Energy Strategy report in more detail and to answer questions from Committee members. Mr. Springer indicated that C/CAG Utilities & Sustainability Task Force and County staff consider the Energy Strategy an ongoing project, and he encouraged feedback and comments on the report.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Committee has studied the San Mateo County Energy Strategy report and organized its initial response in two parts:

- 1) The Committee's recommendations to the City Council on energy, water and greenhouse gas emissions-related issues in Brisbane are attached as Exhibit A. Please note the bulleted list of potential measures and policies on page 4 of the report.

- 2) The Committee's comments and suggestions for C/CAG and County staff regarding the San Mateo County Energy Strategy report are attached as Exhibit B.

## Next Steps

The Open Space and Ecology Committee requests that the City Council consider the measures and policies discussed in the Brisbane Energy Strategy report (Exhibit A, page 4), provide feedback and direction, and authorize the Committee to further study and make recommendations on these and related items. The Committee could then return to the City Council with more detailed recommendations, including budgetary and staff resources necessary to develop and implement the proposed energy and water conservation programs.

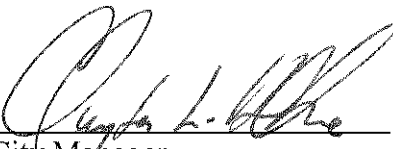
Further, the Committee recommends that the City Council transmit the attached comments on the San Mateo County Energy Strategy report to C/CAG's Utilities and Sustainability Task Force. (Exhibit B)

## **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING ISSUES:**

None at this time.

## **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

Reductions in energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions from the City's municipal operations.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A: Open Space and Ecology Committee report and recommendations for developing a Brisbane Energy Strategy.

Exhibit B: Comments to C/CAG Utilities and Sustainability Task Force regarding San Mateo County Energy Strategy Report.

## Exhibit A

### Brisbane Energy Strategy

#### Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), comprised of the world's leading climate scientists, report that human-caused global climate change poses severe threats to all aspects of life, with environmental, economic, and social consequences for the global community. While atmospheric greenhouse gas accumulations will increase earth's average global temperature at an unprecedented pace, the micro climate impacts are and will continue to be highly variable. Some places may, in fact, experience colder weather, while others, such as the polar areas, are warming at a higher and faster rate than the global average.

While climate change is a global problem influenced by a range of complex factors, it is also a local problem with impacts projected for California, the Bay Area, and Brisbane. These include rising sea and San Francisco Bay levels, water and food supply shortages, increases in wildfires, more air pollution and extreme weather events, and species loss. Such impacts can be anticipated, and to some extent averted or mitigated with appropriate local and global actions. However, as the recent global summit in Copenhagen demonstrated, getting effective global cooperation will not be easy. The absence of effective global and national policy makes responsible local action even more important.

California has adopted a variety of legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, mandates that statewide emissions levels be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. The long-term statewide target is to reduce emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050. Senate Bill 375 links climate policy with transportation, housing, and land use planning by promoting sustainable communities and smart growth. Though there are no explicit penalties in this legislation for failing to plan in a sustainable way, it is clear that state and regional grants, such as those from MTC and ABAG, will be conditioned on sustainable land use planning. One example of that incentive approach is the creation of PDAs (Priority Development Areas). Senate Bill 97 requires CEQA guidelines to address greenhouse gas emissions associated with projects subject to environmental review and the California Attorney General's office has already issued many comments to counties and cities concerning the implementation of these additional CEQA guidelines. The State Air Resources Board is responsible for developing the metric for the assessment of emissions.

In addition to state efforts, local governments play a key role in confronting the causes and consequences of climate change. While Brisbane alone cannot solve these problems, the City can exert influence in many areas that are subject to its control, as well as partner with other jurisdictions in countywide and regional initiatives.

### Brisbane Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

A greenhouse gas emissions inventory of Brisbane's local government operations was recently completed. This 2005 baseline inventory was carried out by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, in partnership with the Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network Climate Protection Task Force that includes 27 local governments in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz Counties. The City's \$13,000 cost for the inventory study was funded by a grant from C/CAG.

The inventory identifies the amount and source of emissions associated with municipal operations, such as buildings and facilities, vehicle fleet, and public lighting. The total greenhouse gas emissions accounted for in the inventory amounts to 1,256 metric tons. This figure is a baseline from which to measure progress toward the City's emission reduction goals.

Since emissions that result from municipal facilities and operations will likely account for only a small fraction of Brisbane's total community-wide greenhouse gases, the next step in the process is a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory. A community-wide inventory for Brisbane is currently being prepared by San Mateo County as part of a county-wide emissions inventory that is being funded by a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Once Brisbane has obtained a complete inventory of greenhouse gas emissions for all activities within its jurisdiction, it will have a quantitative basis for establishing emissions forecasts, reduction targets, and timetables. An emissions reduction target represents a percentage by which the community aims to decrease emissions, below the baseline, by a selected future year.

Determining a reduction target that is both aggressive and achievable given Brisbane's particular circumstances, resources, and aspirations would involve policy, operational and financial decisions by the City Council. This analysis and discussion is part of the process of developing a Climate Action Plan.

### Climate Action Plans

A Climate Action Plan is a comprehensive guiding document that analyzes a community's greenhouse gas emissions inventory, establishes emission reduction targets, and outlines a course of action for achieving energy reduction goals. A number of cities in the Bay Area, including San Carlos, Burlingame, Menlo Park, and Pacifica in San Mateo County, have developed or are in the process of developing Climate Action Plans. There is no "one size fits all" plan for local governments; each jurisdiction is different, and each local Climate Action Plan becomes a customized roadmap to reducing emissions.

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network is currently working with ICLEI to develop a strategy and proposal for a cooperative effort to develop Climate Action Plans with its

member cities. As with the greenhouse gas emissions inventories, a group process for developing Climate Action Plans can generate economies of scale for ICLEI that allow it to carry out the work at a substantially lower cost than would be charged to a single agency.

The Committee suggests that the City continue to work with Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network to develop a cooperative approach to Climate Action Plans utilizing the expertise and resources of ICLEI. This effort may catalyze further grant funding from C/CAG or the Bay Area Air Quality Management District which would help to offset the potential expense of creating a Climate Action Plan for Brisbane, should the City Council decide to undertake such an effort.

The Open Space and Ecology Committee recognizes that the development of a comprehensive Climate Action Plan would be a substantial undertaking that could involve significant staff and financial resources and considerable community input. Because of the time, resources, and uncertainty involved in developing a Climate Action Plan, the Committee recommends that the City not proceed with the development of a comprehensive Climate Action Plan at this time. However, the City should continue to seek out and take advantage of more immediate opportunities to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in Brisbane. In order to achieve that objective, the Open Space and Ecology Committee recommends the development of a Brisbane Energy Strategy as described below.

### Brisbane Energy Strategy

The Brisbane Energy Strategy should have a positive effect in reducing emissions in the near-term without initially requiring large investments of time, financial, or technical resources. Since the threat of climate change calls for immediate action, the Committee recommends identifying and prioritizing the “low hanging fruit” that can be implemented readily.

#### A. Existing Measures & Policies

Brisbane is already undertaking a number of initiatives that demonstrate its leadership and commitment to energy conservation and environmental sustainability. Some examples include adopting a green building ordinance, expecting that the Baylands development will provide renewable energy for its own needs as well as the broader community, implementing water conservation rules and policies, installing a solar thermal system at the pool, improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, upgrading energy and water efficiency in municipal facilities, and switching to compact fluorescent and LED lighting.

Brisbane’s Energy Strategy would build on such existing efforts to further reduce the community’s ecological footprint.

## B. Potential Measures & Policies

The elements of the Brisbane Energy Strategy could include, but are not limited to, the following measures for consideration by the City Council:

- Educate the public about resources available (audits, rebates, grants, etc.) for energy efficiency and renewables; conduct outreach and education about behavioral changes and consumer choices that reduce energy consumption
- Participate in proposed San Mateo County residential energy audit program and support expanding the Countywide program to include businesses
- Participate in financing programs for energy efficiency, retrofits, and solar installations in collaboration with other cities and/or San Mateo County
- Explore joining the Green Business Certification program
- Promote energy and water audits for Brisbane businesses
- Review and update Brisbane's Green Building Ordinance as appropriate
- Promote or require light colored roofs that reflect and emit sunlight and heat
- Ensure that sustainability is stressed and integrated throughout the General Plan
- Identify and implement sustainable practices for City departments to the extent permitted by existing resources
- Develop rainwater harvesting and grey water programs
- Explore ways to require sellers of property to disclose building energy/water use data to prospective purchasers
- Encourage the County of San Mateo and C/CAG to promote energy and water conservation policies and programs
- Seek additional way to reduce emissions from vehicles including exploring ways to limit truck idling in Crocker Industrial Park
- Decrease methane emissions through reducing the waste stream.  
Landfills are a significant source of methane emissions, a greenhouse gas up to 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its capacity to trap heat. Methane is generated in landfills as organic wastes decompose under anaerobic conditions. Composting is an effective tool for reducing methane emissions by diverting organic materials, such as yard trimmings and food scraps, from landfill disposal.

## Exhibit B

### City of Brisbane Responses and Recommendations to C/CAG San Mateo County Energy Strategy Report (For delivery to C/CAG Utilities and Sustainability Task Force)

The City of Brisbane commends the initiative of the C/CAG Utilities and Sustainability Task Force for its efforts in preparing the *San Mateo County Energy Strategy 2012*. The report contains valuable recommendations for residents, businesses and governments regarding not only the preparations for complying with AB 32 and the transition to a low-carbon economy, but also in the effort to reduce the pressure on strained water resources. Brisbane commends the report's recognition that energy and water issues are closely interconnected, and that collaboration between local jurisdictions is crucial to successfully resolving these challenges.

In an effort to better understand the Report, one of the City Council's citizen advisory committees (the Open Space and Ecology Committee) invited Kim Springer of the County's Recycleworks Agency to one of its meetings. Mr. Springer encouraged the City to provide feedback on the report. Therefore, the City of Brisbane offers the following observations:

The report could be strengthened and clarified in a variety of ways:

- Goals and targets described in the report are unclear and not ambitious enough; targets lack timelines; linkages to current state of climate science and legislation are insufficient. Goals should be stated in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of AB 32, not in terms of reduced energy purchases from PG&E.
- Lack of emphasis on energy efficiencies and behavioral changes that are essential preparations and prerequisites for the transition to renewables; focus should be on shrinking carbon footprint; reducing aggregate energy demand
- Water goal is too weak. Goal should be reduced consumption especially in high-use districts; those using less water per-capita should not be penalized for their prior conservation efforts
- Insufficient attention to "greening" existing businesses. The Green Business Certification program is a positive step in this direction and San Mateo County cities should seek measures to expand participation of businesses.
- "Leadership from the Top" is an unfortunate wording for a valuable objective, namely cooperative programs initiated by governments with businesses and community organizations.

Recommendations:

- Promote collaboration between cities and county, especially for programs that involve pooling resources;



- Offer universal energy/water audits; mandatory for large users.
- Provide funding assistance for energy and water upgrades by residents and businesses. Methods include installment loans paid along with property taxes, low-interest loans, revolving funds, etc. Take advantage of AB811.
- Discuss policy priorities and sequencing to provide policymakers clearer guidance. Reduce demand through efficiency and conservation as well as deploying renewables.
- Reorient public and policymaker thinking about energy and water challenges; specify the extent of those challenges by grounding the report in the current scientific imperative to stabilize climate and reduce emissions sharply from a business-as-usual scenario within set timeframes.
- Coordinate these strategies with transportation conservation programs and policies in view of the increased importance of transportation as a source of energy demand and carbon emissions.