

TOWN OF ORO VALLEY

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: October 16, 2012

TO: PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

FROM: Bayer Vella, LEED AP, AICP, Conservation & Sustainability Manager

SUBJECT: Public Hearing: A Major General Plan Amendment to add a new Energy Element and associated updates to the Strategic Implementation Plan. The proposal includes goals and policies that address a broad range of energy-related issues. OV1112-03.

SUMMARY

The proposed major General Plan Amendment entails adding an Energy element to the current General Plan. The draft Energy element provides a roadmap to address a broad range of energy-related issues. The following is a list of key topics addressed:

- Recognition of economic development opportunities
- Collaborative planning with energy providers and surrounding jurisdictions
- Energy efficiency objectives and programs
- Promotion of renewable energy
- Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

All General Plan elements include goals and policies to guide community decision-making. There are currently thirteen elements in the General Plan ranging from Land Use, Economic Development, Arts & Culture, to Environmental Planning. An Energy Element, if approved, will be the fourteenth.

BACKGROUND

Amendment Request

This project was initiated via the Fy 10-12 Planning & Zoning Division Workplan. More recently, the Town Council affirmed project need on 4/4/12.

By adopting a General Plan energy element, the Town will be catching up to regional partners that have already made this step. Marana, Sahuarita, City of Tucson, and Pima County have General Plan Energy Elements in place. A regional focus on energy issues will best insure tangible results.

The Town's draft Energy element is structured in the same manner as others in the current General Plan. Key policy issues are identified under the headings of *Economy, Awareness, Education, Delivery Infrastructure, and Community Resiliency*. Issues are addressed with six goals and corresponding policies. Furthermore, a new section of the Strategic Implementation Plan has been developed to help insure that energy policies result in action.

State law mandates establishment of an Energy element for communities over 50,000 persons. The Town, however, is exempt due to a lower population. Nonetheless, the draft element is designed to meet state requirements – and carry forward into the next General Plan Update cycle.

The goals and policies include a heavy emphasis on increasing awareness and educational opportunities to promote energy planning and conservation. The tangible benefits include opportunities for financial savings, economic development, reduced air pollution, timely infrastructure planning and emergency preparedness.

TOWN OF ORO VALLEY

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Page 2 of 4

Because the entire General Plan will be reconsidered by 2016, this work effort will be absorbed into the bigger update. Town projects listed in the draft Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) will have a ten year time horizon for completion. The SIP elements will be accomplished without use of consultants and additional staff.

General Plan Amendment Process

This proposal meets the criteria for a major "text" amendment as defined in the Town's zoning code. The process requires community involvement opportunities, two public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission, and one public hearing before Town Council.

The first draft was compiled after evaluating similar plans in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. A total of five drafts were vetted over the course of six meetings with an ad hoc Energy Policy Committee (EPC). The EPC was assembled by staff to garner community and technical input. The ten person committee includes residents, facility managers from key employers (Ventana, OV Hospital, and Amphitheater School District), Tucson Electric Power and SW Gas representatives, Planning & Zoning Commission members, and emergency response staff. Please see Attachment III for a complete list of participants.

Additional community involvement opportunities were provided by:

- Community Workshop at the Oro Valley Library
- Community Workshop at Sun City Vistoso Center
- Presentation to the Sun City Vistoso HOA Board
- Presentation to the Rancho Vistoso HOA Board
- Review meetings with Southern Arizona Homebuilder Association & Metropolitan Pima Alliance representatives

The Planning and Zoning Commission will consider the final draft and public testimony. At their second public hearing, the Commission will vote to provide a formal recommendation. Town Council will deliberate in a similar manner - and render a final determination.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Staff's analysis of the proposal is based on the following:

I. SECTION 22.2.D.3 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT CRITERIA

The Oro Valley Zoning Code states that *"the disposition of the General Plan amendment proposed shall be based on consistence with the vision, goals, and policies of the General Plan, with special emphasis on the following criteria"*:

1. *The proposed change is necessary because conditions in the community have changed to the extent that the plan requires amendment or modification.*
 - The development of a new General Plan energy element was initiated via the adopted Fy 10-12 Planning & Zoning Division Workplan. The necessity of the amendment was reaffirmed by Town Council on April 4, 2012.
 - There has been a significant change in the community and regional awareness of energy costs (financial and environmental), market importance of green branding, volatility of energy prices, and desirability of domestic energy independence.
 - There is a new awareness of energy infrastructure issues in specific areas of Town.
 - The importance of emergency preparedness has been heightened by power disruption events.

TOWN OF ORO VALLEY

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Page 3 of 4

2. *The proposed change is sustainable by contributing to the socio-economic betterment of the community, while achieving community and environmental compatibility.*
 - Promotion of renewable energy contributes to Arizona's national ranking as #2 in the number of jobs related to the solar industry.
 - The Arizona solar industry employs more people than all of SRP or 3.5X Tucson Electric Power.
 - The Town can better prepare for growth by insuring adequacy of energy infrastructure
 - On average, a homeowner can decrease energy use by 25% through simple measures. Town participation in education efforts with the utilities is an economic service.
 - Improving access to renewable energy helps define Oro Valley as a progressive community.
 - The environmental benefits of energy conservation include reduced air pollution, lower impacts associated with resource extraction and stewardship relative to greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Emergency preparedness helps insure care for vulnerable populations.

3. *The proposed change reflects market demand which leads to viability and general community acceptance.*
 - Market demand is reflected in the actions of homebuilders. The Southern Arizona Homebuilders Association supports increased energy efficiency requirements in the 2012 version of the building code.
 - Demand is also represented by significant renewable and/or energy efficiency investments by organizations in Oro Valley:

Kohl's, Wal-Mart, Ventana Roche, Best Buy, Oro Valley Hospital, Sanofi Adventis, Kevin Howard Architecture, Amphitheater School District and the Town of Oro Valley.

4. *The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole, or a portion of the community without an acceptable means of mitigating these impacts through the subsequent zoning and development processes.*
 - The amendment betters the community without adverse impact. Please see criterion #2.
 - Specific actions derived from goals and policies will be translated into plans, zoning, or existing departmental programs. Mitigation, as needed, will be addressed in specific proposals.

II. GENERAL PLAN VISION, GOALS AND POLICY CONFORMANCE

The community vision in the General is as follows:

To be a well planned community that uses its resources to balance the needs of today against the potential impacts to future generations. Oro Valley's lifestyle is defined by the highest standard of environmental integrity, education, infrastructure, services, and public safety. It is a community of people working together to create the Town's future with a government that is responsive to residents and ensures the long-term financial stability of the Town.

Energy is clearly a natural resource issue. The following proposed polices help "balance the needs of today against the potential impacts to future generations".

- *To promote use of renewable energy.*
- *To further energy savings through gains in efficiency and conservation.*
- *To develop and implement educational and collaborative outreach opportunities.*

The proposed energy element address the need for the "highest standard of environmental integrity, education, infrastructure, services, and public safety." Relevant goals proposed include:

TOWN OF ORO VALLEY

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Page 4 of 4

- *To develop and implement educational and collaborative outreach opportunities.*
- *To enhance cooperative working relationships with energy and utility providers.*
- *To increase community resiliency by preparing for shortages or outages of critical energy resources and potential vulnerabilities.*

Provisions in the proposed draft relate to the final statement in the Vision. “ *It is a community of people working together to create the Town’s future with a government that is responsive to residents and ensures the long-term financial stability of the Town*”.

- *To provide leadership by implementing model energy efficiency, water conservation, alternative fuel and solar projects in all municipal facilities and operations.* The Town continues to develop cost saving measures that are a model to the region, state and nation.

III. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

This project has been noticed in accordance with Town procedures.

Community Workshops: The majority of questions were oriented toward specific measures to improve home energy efficiency and solar opportunities. Participants appreciated the education opportunity. Two mentioned a desire for homes to be constructed to easily accomodate potential solar applications.

HOA Board Meetings: Concerns about aesthetics of pole mounted solar panels were expressed. Board members requested participation in future projects to update the zoning regulations.

Local Business: A business owner related a strong desire to review zoning codes to elimiate barriers to energy conservation. Specifically, the requirement to use earth tone roof paint is a concern.

Builders Associations: SAHBA and MPA requested flexibility in achieving energy conservation goals. They have requested participation in future projects to implement proposed goals and polcies.

RECOMMENDATION & SUGGESTED MOTION

Two Planning & Zoning Commission public hearings are required by the Zoning Code. Therefore, no recommendation will be made at this meeting. Motions will be included in the November 5, 2012, report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed General Plan Energy Element
2. Proposed updates to the Strategic Implementation Plan
3. Energy Policy Committee Members