



Monterey County

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: 21-181

March 09, 2021

Introduced: 2/25/2021

Current Status: Draft

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

Consider recommendations from the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee to:

- a) Adopt the 2021-2022 Sustainability Program;
- b) Adopt policies governing the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee;
- c) Receive a presentation from the Sustainability Program on the annual plan; and
- d) Provide direction to staff

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors consider recommendations from the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee to:

- a) Adopt the 2021-2022 Sustainability Program;
- b) Adopt policies governing the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee;
- c) Receive a presentation from the Sustainability Program on the annual plan; and
- d) Provide direction to staff.

SUMMARY:

On January 28, 2021, the Sustainability Program presented the 2021-2022 Sustainability Program Plan and Alternative Energy and Environment Committee (AEE) Bylaws to the AEE Committee. The Committee directed staff to bring the program plan before the Board of Supervisors for its approval and adoption. The 2021 Program Plan documents Sustainability Program principles and areas of focus for the coming year, describing staff time required and allotted to each project area. The Program efforts are divided into 3 main categories, Programmatic areas, Completion and Implementation of the Community Climate Action Plan, and Updates and Implementation of the Municipal Climate Action Plan.

DISCUSSION:

As the Program has been operating for about one year, staff requires guidance from the Board of Supervisors on the program's framework and activities. Since its launch in early 2020, the Program has mainly focused on bringing the County funding sources and cost avoidance opportunities, identifying the County's major Sustainability issues, and engaging with stakeholders to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with climate action in Monterey County.

The Sustainability Program's accomplishments to date include:

- Obtaining grant funding for a 2030 Community Climate Action Plan, created a stakeholder engagement plan, and launched a communication strategy for the Plan, including a Climate Action Youth Council with the Monterey County Office of Education.
- Completion of the Tariff Rate Optimization Study, which will help the County save money on energy costs due to recent changes in electricity rate structures.
- Initiation of the Net Zero pilot project energy audit and execution of the Program Services Agreement to launch the audit and development of Energy Readiness Reports through our Energy Watch vendor.
- Initiation of a fleet electrification study for the County, which staff will present to AEE in Spring of 2021.
- Development of a resiliency and adaptation partnership with federal agencies including NOAA, EPA, USGS, and FEMA and integration of climate change language into the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Updates to the Telework policy and procedures, in conjunction with HR, to open telecommuting to more employees and reducing emissions from employee commutes by more than 15% in 2020.
- Creation of a Sustainability Ambassadors Program, which now has 14 members brainstorming ideas to change County culture to support sustainability.
- Launch of an informational campaign to Build Back Better from Wildfires linking energy efficiency and insulation to home hardening and reductions in structural ignitability.
- Development of an annual process for the Sustainability Program Plan, the creation of principles for the Program, and draft by-laws for the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee.

2021/2022 Sustainability Program Plan: The Sustainability Program has created a draft Program Plan for 2021-2022 that lays out the program's priority areas and the anticipated staff time required for each activity. The program's main focus in 2021/22 will be to work on the Climate Action Plan, with time also set aside to implement the Municipal Climate Action Plan and programmatic activity such as grant applications and staffing the AEE Committee.

The following is an outline of the proposed program areas by category:

MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Updates to the 2013 Municipal Climate Action Plan
- Fleet Electrification Plan
- Net Zero Pilot Project
- Building Energy Benchmarking
- Employee Commute and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Zero Waste and Green Purchasing Initiative

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Climate Action Plan project management
- Climate Action Plan stakeholder engagement
- Climate Action Plan drafting
- SB1383 Coordination and Implementation
- Carbon Farm Planning
- Civic Spark Fellowship
- Decarbonization of built environment

PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITY

- Staff and Run AEE Committee
- Writing and managing grants
- Regional Representation of County with agencies, educational institutions, businesses and associations, and nonprofits
- Multijurisdictional Climate Action Council
- Sustainability Ambassadors
- Budgeting and administration for program

To complete the plan, staff plans to apply for 2 Civic Spark Fellows to assist with implementation of the Climate Action Plans and stakeholder engagement with an equity panel. Funding for one Civic Spark fellow for 11 months is \$28,500. One Civic Spark Fellow may be funded out of the SALC-P grant that the County received. Using Fellows to assist with the Climate Action Plan is a cost-effective way to manage the extra workflow associated with writing such a plan while maintaining strong control over plan content and stakeholder engagement. Funding for a fellow will be included as part of a budget augmentation request this fiscal year.

Policies Governing the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee: To clearly define the purpose and operating practices of the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee, staff has drafted by-laws and has presented them to the Committee. Those policies provide that the Committee's roles are to provide direction and guidance to the Sustainability Program and to ensure that the County meets its contributions to the greenhouse gas reduction goals of the state as defined by AB 32 the Global Warming Solutions Act and any subsequent updates to that legislation.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

PWFP, HCD, Environmental Health

FINANCING:

Financing is needed to execute a Climate Action Plan and the program has been awarded a portion of those funds through the Department of Conservation's grant program. The program will be making a budget augmentation request for the remainder of the funds in an amount expected to be approximately \$75,000. The program will also be requesting operational funding in this year's budget cycle. When the Sustainability Program was created funding was allocated for one staff member, but no funding was allocated to run the program. In year one, the program has received grant funding in

the amount of \$175,000 and has identified \$476,000 in avoided costs for the County, with \$386,000 of which will be avoided annually moving forward with program implementation. The program plans to continue to identify avoided costs for the County in the coming years by completing energy benchmarking studies on our facilities to improve efficiency and reduce emissions while also capitalizing on grants, incentives and rebates. Currently any rebates, incentives and avoided costs do not accrue to the program or a specific fund, although it requires funds and project management staff from facilities to complete projects and implement energy savings measures. It is advised that the County consider setting up an Energy Savings and Sustainability fund or budget unit to set aside continued funding for these projects and programs.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The Climate Action Plan is required by the County General Plan. The Plan will provide strategies to support the County's environmental, social, and economic well-being through comprehensive planning and stakeholder engagement and will serve as a basis for forthcoming activities out of the Sustainability Program.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

Prepared by: Ashley Paulsworth, Sustainability Program Manager, x 5344

Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer, Ext. 5145

Attachments:

- Staff Report
- Sustainability Program Plan 2021
- AEE Bylaws and Policies