

MEETING DATE: 4/5/2017

CASE NO.

APPLICANT: City of Cathedral City

LOCATION: Citywide

REQUEST: A recommendation to the City Council that the Council adopt the Cathedral City Sustainability Plan.

STAFF PLANNER:

Robert Rodriguez, Planning Manager

Deanna Pressgrove, Environmental Conservation Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL OF AN EXEMPTION TO CEQA based on the finding that the project qualifies as Categorically Exempt under Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT the Cathedral City Sustainability Plan.

BACKGROUND:

In 2015, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) awarded a Sustainability Planning Grant to the City of Cathedral City. The SCAG Sustainability Planning Grants Program provides direct technical assistance to SCAG member jurisdictions to complete planning and policy efforts that enable implementation of the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). As part of this grant, the City of Cathedral City and SCAG awarded a \$45,567 contract with a consultant, Raimi + Associates, to develop a Sustainability Plan for Cathedral City.

The objectives for developing the Cathedral City Sustainability Plan were:

- to build on the City's ongoing efforts and innovation in sustainability
- to add a health and equity framework to existing policies
- to create a Plan that can become a day-to-day tool for City staff
- to engage community leaders in meaningful dialogue on the community's vision for sustainability

The Sustainability Plan will support the City's ongoing efforts to use resources more efficiently. Cathedral City has demonstrated tremendous leadership in innovative efforts to improve environmental sustainability through its General Plan, Climate Action Plan, Energy Plan, Green for Life Program, and numerous other programs and has been the recipient of many awards for its energy efficiency and sustainability efforts.

ANALYSIS:

The Sustainability Plan is divided into the following topic areas:

1. Built Environment
2. Energy Systems
3. Water Resources
4. Waste Diversion and Recycling
5. Economic Equity
6. Climate Adaptation and Urban Resilience
7. Mobility
8. Health

The Sustainability Plan is intended to serve as a tool that supports the City in its continuous effort to serve as an effective leader in sustainability by creating a policy framework that organizes and supports existing and new programs. The Sustainability Plan also positions the City to remain at the forefront of sustainability by broadening sustainability to include new topics like climate adaptation, health and equity.

In preparation for developing the Sustainability Plan, an extensive review of existing City policies, programs, and practices was done. Additionally, in-depth stakeholder interviews were conducted to understand the community's vision for sustainability and identify priorities and emerging issues. Education and vulnerable populations emerged as key community priorities and these themes are addressed throughout the Plan's main topics.

The Sustainability Plan is a tool that provides a comprehensive framework for the City's ongoing sustainability efforts. It also provides new policies and programs to ensure the City remains at the forefront of sustainability. The Plan is intended to be a living document, to be used and updated as new opportunities arise to achieve sustainability goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Categorical Exemption under Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308 of the State CEQA Guidelines; that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (the general rule) and actions by regulatory agencies for the protection of the environment are exempt.

NOTE: The city of Cathedral City Planning Department is custodian of the documents or other material, which constitutes the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:

This project and the environmental determination were noticed in accordance with the City Municipal Code and CEQA.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Sustainability Plan

Attachment 2: Public Hearing Notice