



MEMORANDUM

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

TO: Mayor and Members of the Town Council
FROM: Leslie A. Lambert, Planning Manager
DATE: May 5, 2004
RE: San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Checklist

At the March 31st special meeting of the Town Council, Planning Commission and ASCC, staff was requested to reagentize for discussion the San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Checklist. In addition to the checklist, council requested staff investigate what if any incentive programs other jurisdictions offered and to provide suggested incentives for discussion.

Staff recommends that the Town utilize the checklist as provided in the San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Guidelines. This allows for conformity within each jurisdiction throughout the County, which was the specific goal of working collaboratively on this project.

The guidelines and the checklist were organized to roughly follow the course of a typical construction project, starting with site work and moving through foundation work to interior finishing. Both the guideline booklet and the RecycleWorks web site follow the checklist as provided.

The Countywide Green Building Committee is meeting on May 18th to consider next steps, how the cities and other members of the community want to be involved in the next steps of a countywide green building effort, what kind of outreach might be appropriate, what training is needed, what assistance might be useful to jurisdictions trying to implement a program (beyond handing out the guides) and an update on what is happening regionally on green building.

The guideline booklet is now available at the counter for the public to assist in design stages of proposed projects. At this time, staff would like to begin the use of the checklist and monitor for a one-year time period to see how the community is responding to the green building program. Staff will report back to the Council on actions taken by the Countywide Green Building Committee as we move through the next steps of the program use.

At that time, if desired, the Town can provide an addendum to attach to the guidelines and checklist that can be focused more closely with Portola Valley needs and desires.

Currently, the Town offers an incentive to property owners in order to promote sustainability, by encouraging the use of solar energy and the installation of photovoltaic solar systems specifically, through a flat-rate inspection fee of fifty dollars.

Staff has begun researching green building programs in other jurisdictions relative to incentive programs. Many cities have adopted the CEEP Program (Community Energy Efficiency Program), which offers benefits such as expedited plan check and/or reduced processing fees, to developers who exceed Title 24 by at least 15%. Following are some examples of Green Programs currently enacted.

- The City of San Jose Green Building and Energy Building Program directly relates to commercial construction and only encourages its use in residential construction. The City does not offer any incentive programs, but does sponsor workshops and waives some costs associated with solar construction.
- The City of Boulder, Colorado, mandates green building features in part of all residential new construction and remodeling projects greater than 500 square feet. The program “requires” building permit applicants to earn ‘points’ by selecting optional measures in order to receive a building permit.
- Santa Barbara County has an incentive program that gives “fast track” permit approvals to projects judged to have superior environmental performance. A voluntary panel of local specialists in several environmental fields related to construction provides timely design review and award appropriate projects expedited approval.
- The City of Scottsdale, Arizona provides a package of incentives to participating builders, which includes priority plan review (qualified projects receive building permits in one half the usual time), promotional package and media coverage, certified independent green inspections, training and workshops, and homeowner manuals.

Even if we do not seek as active a role as some of the examples given, there are plenty of opportunities for us to offer in terms of education and support. The integrated design and systems-thinking approach required for the construction of homes can be fostered by the Building and Planning Department in their interactions with homeowners and builders as well as offering open-mindedness toward alternative technologies and building systems.

Approved: 
Angela Howard, Town Administrator

Attachment: San Mateo Countywide Sustainable Buildings Checklist