

EPC input on Docket Item #11 - EAP

Praveen Kathpal <praveen@kathpal.com>

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To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Ann Horowitz <ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov>; Nathan Macek <natemacek@hotmail.com>; Stephen Koenig <swkoenig@icloud.com>; brendan owens <owens.brendan.m@gmail.com>; Ellen Eggerton <Ellen.Eggerton@alexandriava.gov>; Khoa Tran <KhoaDinh.Tran@alexandriava.gov>; Karl Moritz <Karl.Moritz@alexandriava.gov>; Stephanie Free <Stephanie.Free@alexandriava.gov>; mmcmahonpc@gmail.com <mmcmahonpc@gmail.com>; kapsisje@gmail.com <kapsisje@gmail.com>

Chairman Macek and Members of the Planning Commission:

Thank you for your consideration of the Environmental Action Plan Phase 2 update at tonight's meeting. The Environmental Policy Commission recommends two substantive changes and two timing-related changes to the staff proposal, as described in the below proposed motion.

Proposed motion

Move to approve the Environmental Action Plan Short, Mid and Long-term actions for Land Use, Open Space and Green Building proposed in the staff memo with the following modifications:

- **1. Reinstate the 2009 EAP goal for carbon neutral new construction by 2030.**
 - NEW LONG-TERM ACTION: By FY2029, establish the legislative, code, education, project support, incentives and verification infrastructure required to ensure that all new construction is carbon neutral by FY2030.
- **2. Prioritize the creation of a city staff position to coordinate green building activity in the City.**
 - NEW SHORT-TERM ACTION: By FY2021, establish a new green building staff position in the Department of Planning and Zoning to work with the development community and property owners to support the implementation of the Green Building Policy.
- **3. Modify the implementation date of Action 3.1.8 to FY2021, moving it to the short-term period.**
 - REVISED ACTION 3.1.8: By FY2021, Evaluate regulatory incentives linked to specific green building performance measures for new private development:
 - Establishing a City-wide Green Zoning Overlay (e.g., incentivizing renewable energy generation through additional building height or allowing floor area exclusions to accommodate passive design elements).
 - The feasibility of permitting bonus building height and density (once affordable housing bonuses are first exhausted) for applying green building practices above those outlined in the new Green Building Policy.
- **4. Modify the implementation date of Action 3.1.11 to FY2024.**
 - REVISED ACTION 3.1.11: By FY2024, complete a study of feasibility and methods to achieve net zero energy in existing building renovations, including the ability to achieve LEED Zero for LEED certified buildings or other applicable net-zero certifications.

Rationale for above

1. Adding new goal for carbon neutral new construction by 2030

EPC recognizes the challenge in setting a long-term goal associated with carbon neutral buildings. The issues staff raises are certainly things to be considered but the EAP sets up aspirations for the city and these challenges need to be addressed head on. A clear signal can be sent that the city will prioritize buildings that respond to the urgency of the climate crisis is necessary.

2. Creation of a Green Building focused city staff position

The likelihood of success around many of the short and mid-term actions proposed will be significantly improved if staffing resources are adequate to provide support, guidance and visibility to the opportunities green building provides.

3 and 4. Accelerating the establishment of zoning, density and permitting incentives for green buildings

Creating incentives that motivate private development to commit to higher levels of green building performance is an underutilized mechanism to accelerate market activity. Staff's proposal to create these incentives is welcome but EPC believes this action should occur sooner.

Thank you for your consideration,

Praveen Kathpal
Chair
Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission

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Praveen H. Kathpal
praveen@kathpal.com
+1 202 384 9657

June 25, 2019

DOCKET : No. 11 / Environmental Action Plan Phase 2 / **Green Building** Chapter

SUBJECT : Proposed Modifications to the Proposed EAP Text on pages 26-29 of the Staff Report

FROM : Stephen Koenig

KEY : Current Staff Report Text **Proposed Modification** *Discussion of the Item*

1. Add Mid-Term Action:

By FY 2029, fulfill the legislative, regulatory, administrative, and outreach requirements necessary to ensure that all new construction is carbon neutral by FY 2030.

This fundamentally significant action in the 2030 EAP remains critical for the 2040 EAP.

2. Add Short-Term Action:

By FY 2021, establish a dedicated green building staff position in the Department of Planning and Zoning to work with the development community and property owners to support the implementation of the Green Building Policy.

This is a recommendation of both the GBPTF and the EPC.

3. Change Mid-Term to Short-Term Action:

3.1.8: By **FY 2021**, evaluate regulatory incentives linked to specific green building performance measures for new private development:

- Establishing a City-wide Green Zoning Overlay (e.g., incentivizing renewable energy generation through additional building height or allowing floor area exclusions to accommodate passive design elements).
- The feasibility of permitting bonus building height and density (once affordable housing bonuses are first exhausted) for applying green building practices above those outlined in the new Green Building Policy.

These issues are under active consideration now. Their evaluation should be completed, and any subsequent action should be taken, before 2029 (staff proposed date).

4. Change Mid-Term to Short-Term Action:

3.1.11: By **FY 2024**, complete a study of feasibility and methods to achieve net zero energy in existing building renovations, including the ability to achieve LEED Zero for LEED certified buildings or other applicable net-zero certifications.

50% GHG reduction by 2030 won't be achievable if we don't figure out how to generate energy on existing buildings until 2029 (staff proposed date).

In FY 2024 this action could follow on directly from other existing buildings incentives being established in FY 2023 (3.1.6).