



Department Source: Sustainability

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: March 7, 2022

Re: REPORT – Staff Response to Request for Prohibition of Natural Gas Use in New Municipal Buildings

Executive Summary

Below for Council review is the Office of Sustainability and Department of Public Works' response to the Climate and Environment Commission's request to prohibit the use of natural gas in new municipal facilities.

Discussion

The Climate and Environment Commission (CEC) presented Council with a request regarding the use of natural gas at new municipal facilities at the February 21, 2022 regular Council meeting. Following discussion at this meeting the Council asked for staff to review and respond to the CEC's request.

The energy and emission reduction goals of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) are ambitious. Fossil fuel usage and our priorities for municipal building design will undoubtedly need to be changed. In order for the City of Columbia to meet them both as an organization and a community we will need to identify and maximize near and long-term opportunities. The approach laid out by the CAAP actions first improves energy use visibility, through benchmarking, reporting and labeling; and next develops building performance standards that result in decreasing energy and emissions intensities over time.

The CAAP Good Stewards Buildings team is currently working to implement the newly approved Municipal Buildings Benchmarking Policy. This activity improves the City of Columbia's ability to monitor energy use trends in buildings; compares our building types with national and regional metrics and informs a strategic approach to facility improvements.

Developing Municipal Building Performance Standards (BPS) is the next important step the CAAP Good Stewards team will be undertaking. BPS establishes targets for buildings' resource use or greenhouse gas emissions over a long-term time frame with intermediate reporting and compliance periods. The Municipal BPS will be developed to ensure CAAP energy and emission goals are met and provide a framework to present cost and benefit assessments.

The intent and design of the CAAP is to provide opportunities for the City of Columbia to lead by example. In this instance: developing standards and processes that pay careful and deliberate attention to economic, technological, equity and environmental factors in order to meet our energy use and emission reduction goals.



Therefore, it is the preference of the Office of Sustainability and the Public Works Department, which is responsible for the facility maintenance of the bulk of the City's facilities, that energy use choices continue to be made on a project by project basis until such time the as the CAAP Good Stewards team has implemented the BPS. Since all new municipal building projects require Council review and approval, Staff welcomes the task of providing Council with the cost, payback, use, feasibility, etc. of the energy choice proposed as part of that process. The process of designing Fire Station #11, which will go out to bid soon, included CAAP goals as part of its design parameters and proposes the construction of a ground source heat pump.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A

Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Organizational Excellence,

Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Environmental Management, Tertiary

Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
02/07/2022	REP10-22 CEC Request to Council to prohibit use of Natural Gas in new municipal facilities.

Suggested Council Action

Permit facility energy use choices to continue to be made on a case-by-case basis until Building Performance Standards are implemented.