

# Additional/Revised Information

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	1
<b>Meeting Date</b>	September 23, 2013
<b>Prepared By</b>	Daryl Braithwaite Public Works Director
<b>Approved By</b>	Brian T. Kenner City Manager

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Presentation by The Brendle Group
<b>Background</b>	Attached are questions and comments on the draft Sustainable Energy Action Plan report provided by the Committee on the Environment.
<b>Policy</b>	
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	
<b>Attachments</b>	Comments on Draft Sustainable Energy Action Plan (September 22, 2013)
<b>Recommendation</b>	Council to receive presentation and provide input to the Brendle Group regarding implementation strategy.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

## **MEMORANDUM**

From: Takoma Park Committee on the Environment  
To: Takoma Park City Council  
CC: Brendle Group  
Re: Comments on Draft Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the City of Takoma Park  
Date: Sept 22, 2013

### **Major Conclusions**

The Takoma Park Committee on the Environment greatly appreciates this opportunity to provide these preliminary comments based on a review of the Draft Sustainable Energy Action Plan at our regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 16.

Overall, the Committee recommends that Brendle use the remaining time under its contract to develop an implementation plan for a “tiered” energy efficiency program focused on residential buildings that links into a single, step-by-step plan several elements that are now disaggregated in Table 2 of the Action Plan.. The committee includes voices who believe that multi-family apartments should be the initial focus of this effort; others argue that single family efficiency program could adapt proven models and get off to a faster start whereas a multi-family energy efficiency program should follow as a “second wave” in recognition of the more complex ownership, tenancy, financial, and engineering characteristics of the sector. Still, another committee member pointed out that apartments or condos that have their own meters are similar to single family houses and, so, might be included in the first wave of a residential program.

On the whole, we believe that Brendle is on the path to delivering a quality report that provides a solid foundation for Council decision-making. Others, would, however, encourage Brendle to use its final report to document their methodology and calculations, in particular providing justification for its estimates of the penetration rates of different strategies.

### **Comments and Suggestions on Implementation**

Overall, COE members favored focusing Brendle’s remaining time on developing an implementation plan to support efficiency measures in a single building sub-market, most likely residential. A residential program could, for instance, combine into a coherent sequence several elements that are treated as analytically distinct in Table 2.

First, the COE believes the City must hire a sustainability coordinator and that this individual should serve as a Sustainability Coach. (In general, we urge Brendle to combine these two positions into a single job in the final report to minimize confusion)

Elements of several priority actions, such as information about signing up for green power, can be incorporated into a residential program. A sequence could start with direct installation of low-cost energy saving measures, ensuring that “direct install” doesn’t just reap the low-hanging fruit, but provides a starting point for engagement with residents and deeper savings.

In general, committee members believe that Brendle and the Council should use “doability” as their overall guide in designing program to implement the report’s recommendations. One COE member noted that the STEP UP program implemented in nearby University Park provides a proven model developed locally to achieve broad community participation in residential efficiency programs and that the program might be adopted here. Another committee member pointed out that any such program would have to be

tailored for Takoma Park residents who rent their homes since renters account for half the City's residents. In considering renters (including both single family and multi-family buildings) in its implementation plan, Brendle should also consider how to reach tenants in sub-metered units in apartment buildings, who, in theory, have an incentive to reduce their energy bills.

On the topic of doability, one committee member pointed out that any efficiency work would leverage state and utility incentives, increasing participation in and utilization of those programs. One committee member urged the City be cautious about helping PEPCO and state efficiency programs by giving them marketing support.

Another Committee member noted that the draft plan is focused on systems, not on people. He urged that we recognize and make progress to embrace our diverse cultural communities by, for instance, providing educational materials in Spanish or Amharic.

Members agree the report could do more to explain the criteria that were used to put strategies in the high priority vs. lower priority bins. For example, COE was interested in why purchasing of renewable energy was in the lower priority bin when it has such high potential GHG reductions. We suggest this potentially be moved up to the high priority bin. While the cost per unit of GHG reduction might seem high, implementation is relatively easy and fast, and, so, might actually have a greater impact than measures that seem to have a better cost/benefit ratio. Going further, one member observed that prioritizing strategies simply by votes at one community meeting seems to ignore other important criteria.

Another member observed that some of the distinctions between strategies are not clear. For instance, the report doesn't explain why Table 2 distinguishes between residential efficiency and direct install when direct install can contribute to residential or business energy efficiency. Other members pointed out that the narrative or a set of flow charts could highlight when disparate strategies listed in Table 2 could be linked into larger packages or groups of actions, creating one or more coherent programs. Last, one committee member observed that the report does not disclose the assumptions or studies that underlie the estimates of penetration rates or GHG reductions. Providing source materials would allow citizens to better understand the report's recommendations and priorities.

The report also might provide recommendations on Council action. For instance, The Council could require multi-family building owners to disclose energy use to prospective tenants.

## **QUESTIONS:**

The Committee offered these questions for Brendle to consider:

- Why were "other suggested actions" from the public forum were not included in charts or documented for evaluation?

- Why are the coordinator and coach separately listed? All the suggested programs need a coaching/coordinator role. So perhaps the final report should combine coordinator and coach into one item, as other high priority strategies all seem to rely on the combined functions.

- Many of the numbers in the strategies table do not intuitively make sense. For example, why are ghg emissions reductions listed with the energy coach? (Is it double counting with other programs? How is that number estimated?) What actions would be done by the coach that wouldn't be part of the other strategies? It seems like any reductions achieved by the coach would be indirect. Additionally, why is the solar strategy relatively so much cheaper than the purchasing renewable energy strategy? Also for residential tiered program, participation rate and private costs seem to be focused only on top tier (ex \$17,000/house).

- More than one member thought Brendle should do more to explain its methodology, in particular its rationale for the penetration rates it provided. Otherwise, the numbers in the report might seem “soft”.

- Further, the priority rankings out to be better explained. While emissions reductions or cost efficiency seemed to have been used as a guide to put one strategy in one bucket or another, we didn’t get a clear understanding as to why these choices were made.

- Some Committee members were disappointed that no Transportation recommendation rose into a top 5 priority. Because of the high public transit participation, we recognize it might be hard to get additional reductions from transportation. Further, while some initiatives (such as Capital Bike Share) might generate few GHG reductions, doesn’t it offer other values - such as community involvement and visibility? Further, if private individuals are willing to incur the cost of a bike share, why does it matter from the City’s standpoint that the cost per GHG reduction is relatively high? In this case, the City would simply use its authority to make publicly available an option that Citizens want. COE members wonder whether Brendle considered the full range of transportation options, including increased sidewalks, bikelanes, or carpooling.