



Environmental Services

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TO: Mayor Weitkunat and Council Members

FROM: Greg McMaster, Chair Air Quality Advisory Board
CC: Darin Atteberry, City Manager
Bruce Hendee, Chief Sustainability Officer
Lucinda Smith, Environmental Services Division Director
Melissa Hovey, Sr. Environmental Planner, Air Quality

DATE: April 22, 2013

SUBJECT: Air Quality Emerging Issues for 2013

The Air Quality Advisory Board would like to bring several air quality issues to the attention of the Council that may require Council action or that we recommend Council and staff address in the coming months. The emerging air quality issues to be addressed include:

1. Developing an effective Wildland and Prescribed Fire Air Quality Action Plan for responding to smoke impacts.

Wildland fire forecasts show that the magnitude, duration, and intensity of fire such as was experienced during the High Park Fire last year, are likely to become more frequent. Fort Collins residents are likely to be significantly impacted from wildland fire smoke in the coming years. The city is fortunate to be home to extensive academic, government, and business resources in the fields of atmospheric science and air quality. The City should take steps to be adequately prepared for the next smoke event and take advantage of this technical expertise to develop an effective response plan for air quality impacts from smoke that includes being proactive in communication to its citizens and establishing criteria for informing Council and City Manager decisions during smoke events. We recommend that Council direct staff to work collaboratively both with relevant City departments and external voluntary partners to develop a smoke response plan.

2. Design and implement an Integrated Sustainability Plan and construct a consolidated process to address efficient implementation of the multiple ongoing planning efforts under the umbrella of one plan (e.g., updates to the energy policy, GHG goals, Climate Action Plan update, Green Building Roadmap).

To effectively evaluate and have input on the air quality impacts and effects related to sustainability issues and triple bottom line analyses that establish balance among social, economic, and environmental goals, the AQAB would like to have a coordinated planning process among the several activities related to sustainability with the result being an Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP). The ISP should integrate updates to the energy policy, GHG goals, Climate Action Plan, Green Building Roadmap, and other sustainability initiatives. The AQAB's role is to shine a spotlight on air quality impacts as a basis for change to City goals and plans that will ultimately benefit air quality resulting in a healthier environment for our citizens. We recommend that Council direct staff to collaborate on the myriad of ongoing sustainability and "green" initiatives and consolidate clear directives and goals into one Integrated Sustainability Plan.

Addressing air quality issues including ground level ozone, particulate matter and other climate drivers through comprehensive planning efforts are critical to ensuring healthy air for our citizens.