



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 19, 2016

To: Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Mark Houdashelt, AQAB Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark L. Houdashelt".

CC: Air Quality Advisory Board
Darin Atteberry, City Manager

Re: **AQAB Recommendations Regarding the Downtown Plan (scheduled for first reading on February 21, 2017)**

The Air Quality Advisory Board (AQAB) has reviewed the portions of the proposed Downtown Plan that relate to air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the Board recommends that City Council adopt the Downtown Plan with the following considerations:

- Keep the strong mid-term action on radon (Mid-Term Action Item 72) worded as it is: "Require radon testing and mitigation for new development, redevelopment, and remodels." During a presentation to the AQAB, City staff indicated that this action may be made less stringent. The Board does not support any effort to water down this initiative.
- The Transportation Air Quality Impacts Guidance Manual (TAQIGM) should be an immediate action item (depending on how quickly the City can initiate its implementation), not a Mid-Term 2019-2026 action (currently Mid-Term Action Item 74).
- The AQAB believes that the package of proposed action items is too weak to achieve the 2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals. Downtown should be leading the way on the achievement of the CAP goals, so GHG-reducing measures need to be made more aggressive and some may need to be made mandatory rather than voluntary. Although City Staff expects another iteration of the Downtown Plan prior to 2030, the last Downtown Plan was developed in 1989, so this version must be required to be consistent with achievement of the 2030 goals of the Climate Action Plan. For example, the City has had numerous recent opportunities to undertake innovative approaches to land use, energy efficiency and net-zero energy buildings in the Downtown area (e.g., new hotel, apartments on old Perkins site, upcoming developments at lots on College Avenue and Mulberry Street), but nothing along these lines appears to be required of the respective developers. By way of comparison, we note that the City of Santa Monica, California adopted an ordinance in November 2016 requiring all new single-family homes built within City limits to be "zero-net energy," and several other California cities require new construction to install solar panels.
- For both this Plan and other City efforts, the AQAB is concerned that City Staff have expressed a reluctance to develop concrete, long-term action plans because they "don't

know what the future holds" or "technological developments can't be predicted." Such reasoning should not be used as an excuse to ignore long-term planning because a goal without an action plan is unlikely to be met. Long-term plans can continually evolve, but the lack of a plan ensures failure, and the AQAB finds this emphasis on short-term thinking worrisome. Planning needs to be proactive, not reactive.

With the above considerations in mind, AQAB Board members would also like to suggest that the following options be considered for inclusion in the Downtown Plan:

- Implement paid parking in the downtown area with the revenue used to increase transit service and/or reduce transit costs to downtown.
- Remove or reduce parking downtown and make bike-sharing, car-sharing and a downtown shuttle (with stops at the parking garages) the primary transportation modes in downtown., and provide services such as satellite parking with shuttle service to downtown, and a facility where large delivery trucks would off-load goods to smaller trucks for downtown deliveries.
- Since use of parking by downtown employees is a concern, offer alternatives other than free on street parking (e.g., free parking in garage for employees).
- Place an electric vehicle car-sharing program in the parking garage for the new downtown hotel.
- Incentivize downtown businesses to provide discounts for customers and employees that park in the parking garages.
- Incentivize alternatives to the use of fossil fuel burning appliances (e.g., space heating, water heating, residential cooking, etc.).
- All new buildings should be required to: (1) be solar compatible or have green roofs, and (2) be net-zero energy.