

SPOTLIGHT ON ORANGE COUNTY – City of Aliso Viejo



The City of Aliso Viejo Planning Department in 2011 will continue to be involved with several very interesting projects. We are especially excited that our City has taken a proactive position on addressing climate change through our "Green City Initiative." The Initiative is dedicated to creating a more sustainable, livable Aliso Viejo as much as it is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions within our City. The Green City Initiative also is our City's response to State legislative requirements including 2010 CEQA revisions. Furthermore, the Green City Initiative also is intended to enhance Aliso Viejo's ability to promote a healthy economic environment for residents and businesses in the City.

We feel an enhanced "green" residential and business environment will attract and retain additional investment money and business income to our City. The Green City Plan will establish goals, policies and implementation actions related to energy conservation, water conservation, vehicle management, transportation, air quality, recycling, land use and adaptation to climate change, and will include requirements for a greenhouse gas emissions reduction monitoring program. After Council approval of the Green City Plan, staff will begin a comprehensive General Plan Update that will include incorporation of the Green City Plan as an additional General Plan Element in the General Plan. In that the Green City Plan is intended to be dynamic and responsive to new technologies and community needs, the Green City Plan/Green City Element will be updated regularly.

At City Council's direction, Planning Department Staff is leading the Green City Initiative process and will be producing the resultant Green City Plan for Council action by the end of 2011. Our City formed a Working Group to proceed with the Initiative and the ensuing Green City Plan, and a Green City Work Team to investigate and recommend ways the City can implement additional green, conservation and sustainable components into all Aliso Viejo municipal facilities.



In recognition of community support and involvement being integral to the success of the Green City Initiative, the City Council directed staff to conduct a series of public workshops focused on the Initiative to encourage dialog about the Initiative. The workshops will be conducted throughout 2011. Staff additionally created a "Green City Initiative" Website accessed through a link on the City of Aliso Viejo Website: cityofaliso Viejo.com) that posts a variety of information related to the Initiative including status updates, information for residents and businesses about green products, financial incentives available for installing green appliances and upgrades, invites public questions and comments, and reports about the progress of further "greening" municipal facilities. Together with a new Facebook page, the Website will provide additional important venues for public participation in the Green City Initiative process. Furthermore, the City will be establishing a "Green Award Program" by which the City will recognize individuals and businesses on the Green City Initiative Website who take steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions footprint.



The Planning Department will be involved in several other interesting projects related to the General Plan Update. Staff will be preparing an Economic Development Element as part of the comprehensive General Plan Update. This Element in part will be defined and will assist in defining the Green City Element as well as informing potential changes to the General Plan Land Use Element. In addition, Staff will be preparing an Art In Public Places Program as part of the planned General Plan Update. The City has begun to consider art "works" in much new development. Staff will be recommending standards related to media, theme, size and other components of art available visually to the community.

Development proceeds in Aliso Viejo. Shea Homes continues to build out its Glenwood and Vantis communities. A portion of the



Vantis community has the Vantis City Walk project, which is the only vertical mixed use project presently in the City. Several new restaurants opened in Aliso Viejo in 2010, including Beach Pit Barbeque, Panera Bread, and Bagels and Brew. We also anticipate a new Chick-Fil-A and The Habit restaurants to open in the first half of 2011. Soka University continued to build out its campus and will open its beautiful new 1,000 seat performing arts center (which has a "green roof") this spring.



Interested in writing an article for the next Orange County Planner newsletter? The next newsletter article deadline is Friday, July 1, 2011 for the Summer edition.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Articles must be no longer than 2,000 words. Short articles are welcome. All pieces should include the title, author's name, and a short bio of the author.
- Do not indent paragraphs or format tables or text with the space bar. Tables may be submitted separately as a Microsoft Excel file. Tables created in Microsoft Word are also acceptable.
- Please appropriately and accurately reference your sources. If you include photos from the Internet please site the source and, if possible, obtain written consent to use the image.
- Photos, illustrations, and artwork are welcome. Please submit graphics files separately as high quality jpeg images. Do not embed images in Word documents.

SUBMITTAL PROCESS

- If we decide to use your article, we will let you know exactly which issue it will be in.
- We reserve the right to edit.
- The Orange Section of California APA is unable to compensate writers monetarily.
- Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word files to wilkinsonje@pbworld.com. Please contact Jessica Wilkinson with any questions or for more information.