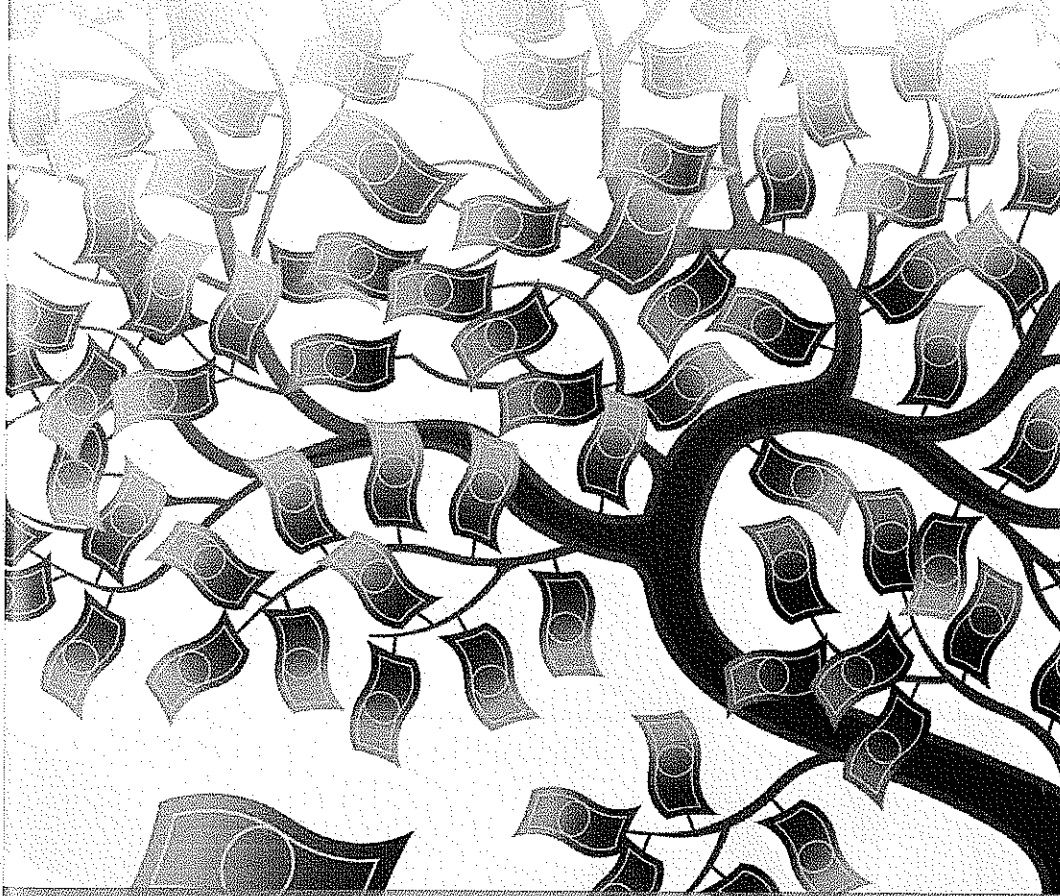




ECONOMIC DEVELOPER BULLETIN

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HERE'S *the* MONEY!



**ACCESS TOOLS & STIMULUS
\$ FOR RECOVERY**

HILTON LONG BEACH

APRIL 22, 2010

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CITY OF TAFT EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY

by Robert T. Gorson

BACKGROUND:

Sustainability has many definitions depending upon the author and his intended audience. For the City of Taft, we have defined Sustainability as aligning our built environment and socioeconomic activities with the natural systems that support life.

Sustainability is the term we use to show how Taft will balance the various interests and needs of our existing and future residents and maintain or enhance our quality of life. The City of Taft's "Vision for the Future" reflects our core community values and identifies the guiding principles to guide our growth.

In adopting our General Plan, the City of Taft is making a clear and definitive statement that good planning is crucial to the City's success. Our General Plan Guiding Principles include:

- Conserve agricultural and natural resources
- Create a vibrant, healthy and active downtown
- Incorporate green and sustainable principles through the General Plan
- Encourage growth in existing developed areas with limited new growth in undeveloped areas of the Planning Area
- Promote attractive residential and aesthetically appealing commercial development
- Create a positive business environment for new and existing businesses to locate and expand
- Provide mobility, housing and job options for all residents of Taft
- Diversify the local economy while remaining a leader in energy production and maintaining a strong petroleum-based industry

CURRENT STATUS:

More and more communities are embracing sustainability and not just because they are trying to save the planet or do the right thing. Communities across the country are improving their financial well-being as a result of reducing their consumption of energy and water, or as Mayor Mary Hamman-Roland of Apple Valley, Minn. put it, "Green keeps the green in your pocket."

Some of the leading innovative communities are also finding that sustainability initiatives not only "save" money through energy and water conservation strategies but that sustainability measures can be economic engines. For example, Palo Alto, California has worked hard to embrace sustainability and has found that their image as a "Green City" has attracted business. Some green projects have created many new high-wage jobs. Phoenix, AZ is becoming known as friendly to solar energy providers.

In Kern County, CA the Tehachapi Wind Resource Area will generate \$45 million a year in new taxes and create hundreds of high-paying jobs when it reaches 4,600 MW by 2030. Also, the \$ 2 Billion Hydrogen Energy project in nearby Buttonwillow will generate 250 MW of Clean Energy, 1,500 construction jobs, 100 new operating jobs and several million dollars in annual tax revenues. In short, Kern County is not only the oil capital of California but is also encouraging alternative energy projects that will create significant new revenue streams.

The City of Taft has embraced Sustainability and we are benchmarking to Kern County and other innovative cities like Apple Valley, Minn, Palo Alto, CA and Phoenix, AZ that are turning green initiatives into economic engines.

We are analyzing municipal solar generation proposals that will not only save the City of Taft on our electric utility bill but will also create jobs and assist in showcasing our community as a "Clean Energy" city. We are also encouraging alternative energy and/or renewable fuel providers to consider Taft as a great place to start or expand their business. We already have one alternative fuel (diesel biofuel) company in Taft and another is about to sign a lease agreement. We have a 100 MW Solar Thermal Project and also have several PV solar farms from 20 MW to 200 MW that are locating within our proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI). Our solar initiatives are expected to provide clean energy for the region, reduce or eliminate the City's energy bill and create hundreds of high-wage "Green" jobs. Taft College will offer real-life laboratory experiences to interested students that want to enter the alternative energy or renewable fuel industries.

The City of Taft is on a path to become a national model in regard to sustainable development. Consider the following facts:

- 246 Square Mile Planning Area with a projected population of 68,018 with 86% of the ultimate population within the existing SOI and 91% of the Planning Area is planned for non-urban uses and will remain Agriculture, Natural Resources and Open Space!
- Taft has a popular 1-mile Rails-to-Trail but can you imagine a 58-mile Trail Network that traverses through a 120-square mile "Green" zone that is protected and preserved by the Williamson Act, Habitat Conservation Plan or other land use conservation plans?
- We are planning our first Historic Preservation effort with a ribbon cutting and dedication on March 17, 2010. The Pioneer Mercantile Building was constructed in 1926 and will be the temporary studio for the artist that will create the largest bronze artwork in the State. We expect the Oilfield Workers Monument to be a "Major Landmark" and create a destination for anyone interested in fine art and the beginning of a cultural renaissance in Taft! We also expect several other historic structures to be "retrofitted green" with the adaptive reuse in a mixture of land uses that will create a special sense of place in the Downtown area.
- We have also applied for grant funding to create 5th Street Plaza and other "Green" public gathering places (including a small amphitheater) that will accommodate multiple programmed events at the same time or one or two large events. We hope to have a portion of the public improvements completed in time for the Oildorado celebration on October 14 – 24, 2010 and the city's 100-year anniversary on November 7, 2010!
- Taft was the First ClimateSmart City in Kern County and by joining PG&E's program; Taft neutralizes more than 1 million pounds of carbon dioxide each year (which is equivalent of saving 1,100 barrels of oil). All of our facilities are "carbon neutral" and we believe that Taft may be the "greenest" city in Kern County and one of the greenest in the State in a few years!
- Taft will implement Green Building Policies that comply with the letter and intent of AB 32 and SB 375 including City-led energy audits, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and San Joaquin Valley Air Control District efforts to improve air quality.
- Taft will create and implement water conservation policies and programs and recycling programs and opportunities. For example, Taft already recycles 71% of our municipal waste and we will not stop until we reach "Zero Waste".



- Our wastewater effluent is recycled in a farming operation governed by an MOU. The farm lowers our operating costs, creates a green environment and provides a small revenue stream.
- Taft is implementing other sustainable development practices that promote a healthy lifestyle and improve the overall quality of life of all community stakeholders!

SUMMARY:

We sincerely believe that Taft is a charming, unique community and a wonderful place to work, worship, raise a family and/or retire. New residents are attracted to our city for good reasons – a strong and expanding job market with plans to diversify the local economy by creating 6,000 new jobs, a very SAFE community with zero tolerance for graffiti, drugs or gang activity, a central downtown business district complete with historic structures that are being renovated for new business opportunities, excellent school system, active Parks and Recreation District, and other major amenities like The Fort, Oil Museum, Veterans Memorial Park and Honolulu Hills.

Taft is also fortunate to have a community college (Taft College) that is recognized for its innovation in the classroom, new ways of teaching by using technology, nationally recognized programs, exciting new facilities and a Master Plan and funding for a modern and sustainable campus. As Taft Mayor Dave Noerr likes to say "Taft College is a shining example of the future of Taft as a unique and innovative place that has embraced sustainability!" ♦