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Reed: SJ To Become Greenest City In U.S.

Mayor Launches Massive Green Building Program

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SAN JOSE, Calif. -- It has been one year since San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed said he wanted to make the nation's 10th-largest city its greenest.

On Monday, the mayor planned to announce a new green building policy that he said would ensure his goals come true.

Reed said the new building legislation would specifically target residential and commercial development in the city. Reed has said he wants San Jose to be a prototype for all other cities as they transition to a greener way of life.

The City Council is scheduled to vote on the Green Building Policy for private development on Tuesday.

It would create 50 million square feet of new green buildings over the next 14 years, according to the Home Builders Association of Northern California.

The policy will call for new commercial, industrial and residential construction to implement measures to increase energy efficiency, use less water, incorporate recycled water, divert waste from landfills and encourage walking, bicycling and public transportation.

"Green buildings make sense environmentally and fiscally," said Reed. "With energy costs rising and an uncertain future for our state's water supply, it makes sense to build homes, offices, and research and development campuses that conserve resources."

The mayor's office said that industry leaders from the residential, commercial and industrial building and design sectors along with environmental leaders worked with city staff to develop the policy.

"The entire Council has shown great leadership in moving this issue forward," said Councilmember Judy Chirco, who serves on the Transportation and Environment Committee. "Our goal was to create a balanced green building policy that establishes clear and consistent standards and to promote uniform policies throughout the region."

"Throughout San Jose and the Silicon Valley, tenants and residents alike are demanding environment-friendly work places and living spaces," said Reed. "This policy will encourage our development community to make good economic and environmental decisions to facilitate the expectations of our workers and residents."

Under the new policy, housing developments with 10 units or more would need to achieve either 50 points on Build It Green's GreenPoint Rated scale or LEED certification.

High-rise residential buildings (those over 75 feet in height) would need to achieve LEED certification.

For smaller projects, the policy would implement a green building checklist that is educational in nature, designed to familiarize the development community with green building practices, according to the mayor's office.

"The market for new commercial and industrial development is going green," said Tom Horan, AIA, president of The American Institute of Architects Santa Clara Valley Chapter. "San Jose's new policy will make it easier to create green buildings, and we are delighted at the collaborative spirit in which the city developed the policy."

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