



Perris studies green approach to development

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PERRIS - Developers may have to think green before coming to Perris.

Following the lead taken by the cities of Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park in Northern California, Perris planning commissioners are considering an amendment to the general plan that would encourage new developments to be more environmentally friendly to meet Perris' conservation goals.

The proposed amendment is still being reviewed but commissioners praised the concepts presented in a draft at their meeting last month.

"I think this is great. It can't happen sooner. I think it will put Perris on the map," said Judy Haughney, commission chairwoman.

Commissioner Dwayne Hammond liked the idea but was interested in how it would impact developers.

"They've got to have some type of incentives," he said.

In the draft amendment, some incentives could include density bonuses, faster permitting and possible tax deductions for developers who meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED building standards.

"We're looking at the big picture," said Brad Eckhardt, Perris city planning manager at the Planning Commission meeting. "It's a very holistic, cohesive approach at everything."

In return, developers would be encouraged to design projects incorporating conservation tactics, such as using indigenous or drought-resistant plantings, water-conserving appliances and energy-efficient lighting.

Other Inland cities have implemented some conservation measures.

Riverside has a voluntary incentive-based program for builders whose projects meet the criteria of energy efficiency, water and wood

conservation, waste reduction and indoor air quality.

Moreno Valley has encouraged drought-resistant landscaping on some construction projects. Two years ago, it approved a landscaping ordinance that required developers to use water-conservation measures in their projects. Some tactics include the use of reclaimed water and drip or bubble-type sprinklers.

Perris' proposed amendment is set to return to the Planning Commission this month.

Staff writers Dan Lee and Doug Haberman contributed to this report.