



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

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INITIATIVES AND INCENTIVES TO CREATE STRATEGICALLY PLANNED COMMUNITIES AND A VITAL LOCAL ECONOMY

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA – On September 6, 2011 the Department of Planning and Building will present a report to the Board of Supervisors that highlights various economic initiatives and incentive programs administered by the Department. Some of the initiatives and incentives the Department will be highlighting include fee deferral and waiver programs, contractor training programs, green energy incentives, and launching a Business Assistance Team pilot project aimed at facilitating timely processing of strategic growth projects that generate quality jobs. Jason Giffen, Director of Planning and Building noted, “Creating strategically planned communities and a vital economy are complimentary goals and the Department will continue to promote both.”

Beginning in December 2007, a chain of economic events took place that ultimately led to what is now known as the “Great Recession.” As a consequence, lending markets tightened, the housing market crashed, unemployment increased and most household incomes were unable to keep pace with previous spending habits and expenses. On a local level, we saw these changed market conditions impact local businesses’ and residents’ bottom line. Within the Department, lower consumer and housing market confidence translated into fewer land use application and building permit submittals, which have still not recovered.

Given these changed market conditions, the Board of Supervisors directed the Department to reexamine its economic goals and priorities and take tangible steps to support local economic recovery. The Department’s efforts focused on the Building, Design and Construction; Green Energy; Knowledge & Innovation; Specialized Manufacturing; and Uniquely SLO business clusters that were identified in the San Luis Obispo County Clusters of Opportunity Economic Strategy prepared by the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC).

Mr. Giffen noted, “Internally, we focused on doing more with less, while externally we focused developing a range of incentives and initiatives targeted at supporting local economic recovery, with a goal of helping existing businesses recover and encouraging future investment in our County’s high growth business clusters.”

Next Tuesday, the Department will also present a draft work program and request that the Board authorize staff to complete an update to the Economic Element of the County’s General Plan.