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San Jose officials see bright future in clean technology

Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal - by [Timothy Roberts](#)

San Jose companies could create 25,000 new jobs in the field of solar energy and other green technology over the next 15 years, according to San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed's green vision for the city.

Reed planned to release his plan Oct. 5, concluding a week of events related to promoting environmental sustainability.

"We are becoming the clean tech capital of the world, and the city government has a role to play," Reed says. "It is the private sector that creates the jobs, but part of the mayor's job is encourage the people who make the decision about where to create jobs to choose San Jose and Silicon Valley."

Reed's 10-point plan goes on to call for a cut in per capita energy use by half, to get the entire city on clean renewable sources for energy, build or retrofit 50 million square feet of green building space. He also would use all of the waste going to the landfill to generate energy, recycle all 100 million gallons of water a day that the city consumes and put all of the city's cars and trucks on alternative fuels.

Under the Reed plan, the city would adopt a General Plan that encourages sustainable development and contains measurable standards to show if the city is living up to it.

The city would plant 100,000 more trees, replace street lights with low-energy lighting and create 100 miles of interconnected trails to be used commuting.

Reed plans to take the plan to the city council on Oct. 30 and will ask the council to establish them as goals for the city.

There is no price tag attached to the proposal, but Senior Policy Advisor Jeff Janssen says that the goals "are achievable and focus on economic development."

Much of the plan is aimed at encouraging private developers to take action.

Reed has opposed mandates to force compliance with green goals. Speaking to the Silicon Valley Leadership Group's annual Projections conference Sept. 26, he said that mandates should be used sparingly.

Government has "to get out of the way," Reed said, adding, "because government isn't always the smartest about what to do."

The plan would benefit business, according to Reed, who pointed to the plan to cut per capita energy use and to generate energy from clean, renewable sources.

"It would mean we wouldn't have to worry about blackouts and brownouts," he said. "That's an important factor when deciding where to locate a business."

San Jose could provide 100,000 of the 1 million solar rooftops in California called for by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, says press secretary Michelle McGurk.

The creation of the new green tech jobs jibes with plans by a consortium of solar companies called

Solartech, which is trying to spur the solar industry in the valley.

"Our vision is to make this the solar industry hub of the United States," says Justin Bradley, director of energy programs at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.

It also underscores the need for job training so that those 25,000 jobs can be filled locally, he says.

The idea for the initiative came from U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-Campbell, in a conversation with Reed this spring. Reed, newly elected, was in Washington to meet with the local delegation.

"If you need to do something bold, there is a lot of interest in Washington and the state in green technology," Reed recalls the congressman saying. Honda also said that federal funding could also be expected -- a welcome suggestion to a cash-strapped city.

"We don't have a lot of extra money," Reed says. "We want to demonstrate how to do this without a lot of money."

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