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Energy Commission Recommendations on the Police and Courts Building

The Ann Arbor City Council has a rare opportunity to make an important statement on conserving energy in buildings. The Police and Courts building project will be one (and probably the largest) of only a small number of new municipal buildings to be constructed by the City over the next 15 years.

The Ann Arbor Energy Commission firmly believes that all new buildings constructed with City of Ann Arbor funding should meet or exceed the goals stated in the Green Energy Challenge previously passed by City Council.

The Energy Commission also believes that the City of Ann Arbor should require that all new City-funded buildings meet or exceed the Architecture 2030 standards, approved by the American Institute of Architects and the US Conference of Mayors.

In light of the above, the Energy Commission hereby challenges City Council to ensure that all new city facilities be constructed to meet or exceed the Architecture 2030 standards, including the new Police and Courts building (at the 2010 standard), for which the Commission also strongly recommends the following:

- 1) That a ground source heat pump be considered as a primary element of the heating and air conditioning system in this building, unless proven inefficient as a result of geothermal tests on the site. This system offers the best means of controlling operating costs for this structure and minimizing fossil fuel and energy consumption. Cost escalations of natural gas in recent years make it such a riskier and less certain choice for heating this building. It will allow the building to be conditioned with green energy (electricity from a renewable source) purchased by the City when it becomes available. It will also eliminate most of the mechanical equipment from the rooftop, allowing for potential daylighting in the upper court chambers and a more extensive green roof.

- 2) That the building be designed to meet the Green Energy Challenge goal such that 30% of its energy is provided by renewable sources, with as much of it generated on-site as possible. The suggested heat pump, green roof, and other efforts taken in the design phase should be directed toward this goal, along with the overall City plan to purchase renewable energy for all of the City of Ann Arbor's buildings.

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