

City of Alexandria

Green Building Policy



Green Building Benefits

Green buildings bring environmental and economic benefits to present and future generations of the citizens of this City and the region. Even in a developed city with significant historic character, "green" buildings are favored over buildings that are not green.

Policy Statement and Outreach Approach

The City will continue to lead by example through its own public buildings, establish a policy for new private buildings and will make efforts to educate the public, especially the building and development community, about the benefits of green buildings. The City will also take a leadership role to mandate sustainable design for all public buildings. The City will not be adopting a new code to mandate its Green Building Policy. That approach is not legally authorized. Nor is it necessarily desirable.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

The LEED rating system will typically be the green building guide and rating system used as a standard for development in the City because it has become the industry preference, especially for commercial construction.

Development Standard

Public and private development that requires a Development Site Plan (DSP) or Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) should achieve the following green building standard:

- *Non-Residential*: LEED Silver.
- *Residential*: LEED Certified, LEED for Homes, or ANSUICC-700 2008 National Green
- *Mixed use*: Each component should follow the applicable rating standard
- *Coordinated Development Districts*: Approvals for CDD areas yet to be developed will incorporate these standards

In each case, applicable ENERGY STAR systems should be incorporated.

Equivalency Acceptable

The above standards provide a performance goal for development. However, to the extent that equivalent rating systems are available and their standards can be demonstrated to be equivalent to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning, they are also acceptable.

Third Party Certification

Certification of compliance with green building standards will be provided by independent and accredited third party professionals retained by the applicant and approved in advance by the Director of Planning and Zoning. The City will require the applicant to achieve the green standard approved in its development application within two years of issuance of a certificate of occupancy.





Flexibility

The above standards are applicable to all development subject to a site plan or DSUP. The types and scale of developments within each category vary greatly, however, and certain building types (for example, medical, hotel, industry, affordable housing, historic buildings, churches, redevelopment of small retail or restaurant establishments, and renovations or small additions to existing buildings) may require a more flexible approach. The Director of Planning and Zoning will consider whether special circumstances in the size, scale, location or use of the building justify an exemption or alternative method of compliance with City policy on a case by case basis and will strive to establish consistent criteria and thresholds for such alternatives based on experience with this policy.

Phased Approach

While it is important to establish this policy and implement its critical elements immediately, there are also elements of the green building program that will take longer and will look to the evolving green building industry, and those elements should be implemented over time. Examples of future work include establishing best practices for retrofitting existing buildings including historic buildings, the development of incentives for applicants who reach the highest levels of environmental achievement; incorporation of a sustainable sites, or holistic, approach; and the calculation of financial benefits to the public from development of green buildings.

Innovation Encouraged

Building owners and developers are encouraged to innovate and achieve higher green building performance than the minimum set in this policy.

City Environmental Priorities

In assessing compliance with the above standards, including as a matter of equivalency and of flexibility, priority elements in the project's design and construction are those which:

- Enhance energy efficiency
- Increase water conservation and reduce stormwater runoff, and
- Reduce overall carbon footprint

Education and Outreach

This key element of the City's approach to green buildings requires a partnership with the community, especially the building and development industry, as it and the City continue their effort to educate themselves and others about the benefits of and best ways to achieve green buildings. Together, they should track successes in City projects, changes in national and regional approaches to green buildings, advances in technology, and economic savings on individual projects as well as for public infrastructure systems. They should also provide web based information, hold forums on green buildings, and generally communicate the added benefits of higher rated green buildings to the community. The City will work collaboratively with environmental organizations and the building industry to recognize, award and publicize green building efforts in the City.

Monitoring Progress

All building projects in the City should be monitored to report the effectiveness of this policy to the Planning Commission and City Council on an annual basis.