

## City of St. Louis Park Green Building Policy

The City of St. Louis Park has long been a faithful steward of its natural resources and has a considerable history of environmental consciousness. Through the years, city officials have worked diligently to create 52 parks, 35 miles of trails, the 160-acre Westwood Hills Nature Center, plant thousands of trees, promote native landscaping and shoreline restoration, improve water quality, manage wildlife, partner with area schools on environmental education, along with a host of other initiatives.

One of the Strategic Directions listed within *Vision St. Louis Park* is that the city “is committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship. We will increase environmental consciousness and responsibility in all areas of city business.” This “stewardship” applies not only to natural landscape elements but to the built environment as well. As a fully developed suburb, the city encourages redevelopment opportunities that enhance the community’s economic and social vitality as well as complements its natural surroundings.

Projects that incorporate “green” or “sustainable” development practices positively impact the environment. Sustainable development is defined as “development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people depend. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable buildings incorporate numerous strategies that result in improved energy efficiencies, reduced water usage as well as increased employee productivity. Sustainable site design promotes natural settings and results in improved storm water management and reduced water usage. Together these efficiencies result in cost savings which are beneficial for both the private and public sectors. To these ends, the city will actively encourage the design and development of sustainable buildings and sites. In addition, the city will pursue policies and practices that advance sustainability using techniques that produce significant measurable results and true return on investment.

In the United States, buildings account for approximately:

- ◆ 72% of total electricity consumption
- ◆ 39% of total primary energy use
- ◆ 38% of all carbon dioxide emissions
- ◆ 170 million tons of construction and demolition waste
- ◆ 14% of total potable water consumption, or 15 trillion gallons per year  
(source: US Green Building Council)

In St. Louis Park, emissions from buildings make up 58% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

The built environment has a substantial impact on the natural environment, human health, and the economy. By adopting green building strategies, cities can maximize both economic and environmental performance. Potential benefits of green building include:

### **Economic benefits**

- ◆ Reduce operating costs
- ◆ Create, expand, and shape markets for green products and services
- ◆ Improve occupant productivity
- ◆ Optimize life-cycle economic performance
- ◆ Reduce municipal infrastructure costs

### **Environmental benefits**

- ◆ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- ◆ Reduce solid waste
- ◆ Enhance and protect biodiversity and ecosystems
- ◆ Improve air and water quality
- ◆ Conserve water and restore natural resources

### **Social benefits**

- ◆ Enhance occupant comfort and health
- ◆ Minimize strain on local infrastructure
- ◆ Improve site and building aesthetics
- ◆ Improve overall quality of life
- ◆ Demonstrate environmental stewardship

In sum, the goal of this Green Building Policy is to promote buildings that are energy efficient, economical to operate, environmentally responsible, healthy places to live and work to further enhance the quality of life in St. Louis Park and reach the community's Climate Action Plan goals.

### **Applicability**

The following building construction projects receiving or using city financial assistance are required to comply with this Policy:

1. Municipal, commercial, hotel, industrial, and mixed-use
  - a. All new municipal buildings or additions (designed for ongoing occupancy) 15,000 square feet or greater (gross) and renovations 50,000 square feet or greater (gross).
  - b. All new commercial, industrial, hotel, and mixed-use construction projects, additions (designed for ongoing occupancy) 15,000 square feet or greater (gross) and renovations 50,000 square feet or greater (gross) receiving \$200,000 or more in city financial assistance\*.
2. Residential
  - a. All new and renovated multifamily residential buildings receiving \$200,000 or more in city financial assistance.
  - b. All new and renovated detached single family home projects receiving \$10,000 or more in city financial assistance.

\*City financial assistance is defined as funds derived from the following sources:

City of St. Louis Park  
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)  
Housing Improvement Area Loans  
Housing Rehabilitation Fund  
Reinvestment Assistance Program  
Revenue Bonds (private activity bonds are negotiable)  
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) & Tax Abatement  
Housing Authority (HA) Funds  
Land Writedowns

### **Assistance to developers and property owners**

To guide developers and property owners through the development process, the city will offer the services of staff and experts with in-depth sustainable design experience without charge. These resources will be made available to answer questions, provide clarifications, make suggestions, coordinate with area utility company energy efficiency programs, and assist with specific issues related to meeting Policy requirements.

### **Green building review**

The most significant benefits of sustainable buildings and site design are obtained when project design and construction teams take an integrated approach at a project's outset. Therefore, projects subject to this Policy shall undergo a Green Building Review at the pre-design or early schematic design stage. Such a review requires one or more coordination meetings with staff and consultants to review Policy requirements and to ensure that a building's proposed design and equipment are appropriate and integrated together so as to meet energy savings targets.

### **Energy savings and water conservation targets for municipal, commercial, hotel, industrial & mixed-use buildings**

Municipal, commercial, industrial, hotel, and mixed-use buildings covered by the Green Building Policy must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Use LEED or B3 Guidelines as a design tool and submit a checklist of credits likely to be achieved prior to final TIF, planning and/or permit application. (These tools provide the framework for assessing proposed building performance and meeting sustainability goals. They also provide a common language and standard of measurement among all team players, provide for clear goal setting and tracking, and inform the city what energy strategies are to be employed in the project.)
2. Submit an energy model and predicted EUI (energy use intensity) for the project. This can be completed through participation in an energy efficiency program offered through area utilities (depending on program funding and eligibility requirements). Such programs provide customized energy modeling which predicts energy usage, suggests potential energy savings strategies and estimates energy-cost savings. This process ensures that the building owner is informed as to what energy-cost savings options exist so as to fully evaluate the life cycle costs of various building components. This Policy requires projects to meet the MN Sustainable Building 2030 Energy Standard (SB 2030). The conditions for meeting the "Energy Standards" are subject to the "Cost Effectiveness" Protocol of SB 2030.
3. Conduct building commissioning per LEED or B3 Guidelines to ensure that newly installed operating systems are functioning at their maximum capacity and according to their design efficiencies.
4. Reduce potable water use in building by at least 30% below EPA Policy Act 1992 to conserve water and water-related costs.
5. Reduce water use for landscaping by at least 50% less than a traditionally irrigated site using typical water consumption for underground irrigation system standards.

6. Recycle at least 75% of actual solid waste of construction materials, excluding demolition waste, or such materials must be otherwise diverted from landfills or incineration.
7. Improve indoor environmental quality by implementing five or more of the following developer selected strategies:
  - a. outdoor air delivery monitoring
  - b. construction Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) management plan
  - c. low-emitting materials (adhesives, sealants, paints, coatings, carpeting, and composite woods)
  - d. indoor chemical & pollutant source control
  - e. controllability of systems (lighting and thermal comfort)
  - f. thermal comfort (design and verification)
  - g. daylight 75% of spaces
  - h. views for 90% of spaces
8. Implement current Best Management Practices for handling stormwater on-site to meet current city and local watershed management organization requirements. The use of roofs and tanks for management and treatment is encouraged. The collection and reuse of stormwater for irrigation is also encouraged. Stormwater management and treatment should be designed to allow for ongoing maintenance and operation as well as efficiency and aesthetic appearance.
9. Comply with Article VIII. Efficient Building Benchmarking ordinance of the city code regardless of total building square footage. Tracking whole building energy and water use will help monitor the results from the measures taken above as well as incentivize property owners to seek additional energy efficiencies.
10. Obtain a written cost estimate for achieving “green” certification by at least one third party sustainable building program so as to enable building owners to more fully determine the cost/benefit of such certification.

### **Energy savings and water conservation targets for residential buildings**

The range of single family and multifamily renovations and new construction varies significantly as do the funding sources for projects. The desire is that principles of green building: integrated design process; energy efficiency and water conservation measures; resource efficiency - materials that are beneficial to the environment; indoor environmental quality; and sustainable operations and maintenance be incorporated in residential projects where practical.

Residential projects receiving city assistance are subject to the Green Building Policy and are required to meet the following:

### **Multifamily new construction/renovation**

1. New Construction and/or renovation of multifamily buildings are required to participate in one of the multifamily design assistance programs offered through area utilities. Maintenance rehab projects will be reviewed to determine if the design assistance programs are applicable to the scope of work. Such programs provide developers with customized design assistance on how to increase the energy efficiency of their proposed buildings.

2. Affordable housing projects and/or housing rehabilitation projects that leverage city funds with MN Housing and its funding partners are required to comply with MN Green Communities standards which are reviewed by MN Housing.
3. Multifamily buildings with individually metered units must include in the tenant lease authorization for the release of utility bills to the landlord to facilitate building energy use reporting requirements.
4. Obtain a written cost estimate for achieving “green” certification by at least one third party sustainable building program so as to enable building owners to more fully determine the cost/benefit of such certification.
5. New construction and/or renovation of multifamily buildings are required to comply with Article VIII. Efficient Building Benchmarking ordinance of the city code regardless of total building square footage. Tracking whole building energy and water use will help monitor the results from the measures taken above as well as incentivize property owners to seek additional energy efficiencies.

### **Single family renovations**

1. Owners of single family homes undergoing renovation that receive city financial assistance are required to have an audit conducted by a utility company or independent approved Home Energy Rating System (HERS) auditor. An audit conducted within the past five years will be accepted. Utility sponsored audits are available for a nominal fee and provide residents information to conserve energy.
2. Income-qualified homeowners undergoing home improvements using city funds will be directed to the local Department of Energy Low-Income Weatherization Provider which provides “no cost” audits. The audit must be scheduled before the work proceeds and conducted as soon as possible by the local Department of Energy Low-Income Weatherization Provider. In emergencies, the work at these homes may proceed before the audit is conducted.

### **Coordination with city financial assistance programs**

In order to coordinate this Policy with the city’s financial assistance programs:

Additional points will be awarded to projects that meet any of the following within the EDA’s Tax Increment Finance and Redevelopment Assistance criteria:

1. United States Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating systems (New Construction or Core and Shell) – Silver level or higher (3 pts), Certified (2 pts) or
2. State of Minnesota B3 Guidelines (3 pts)

Preference will be given to projects that meet any of the following within the city’s Housing Improvement Programs:

1. Minnesota Green Communities - Compliant or
2. Minnesota GreenStar – Silver, Certified or
3. LEED for Homes (H) – Silver, Certified

**Green building certification**

Many redevelopment projects lend themselves to green certification by independent third parties and the city strongly encourages the projects it completes and financially supports to pursue such certification to verify that the buildings meet the highest green building and performance measures.

The city recognizes, in certain cases, that the cost of obtaining the actual certificate may not provide an adequate return on investment. Redevelopment projects, by their very nature, often have their own unique set of circumstances. Therefore, the city will encourage certification or third party review but will be flexible in requiring it. This measured approach is designed to be both environmentally proactive and economically practical.

**Community outreach**

In order to further the goal of this Policy, the city will also implement community outreach efforts to further educate the public as to the benefits of green building practices, techniques, and resources. Such efforts will utilize the city's existing staff and promotional resources. Specific audiences to be targeted will be single family homeowners, neighborhood organizations, and multifamily housing owners as well as businesses and private developers.

All projects subject to this Policy, and which incorporate green improvements as a result, will be highly encouraged to showcase those projects upon completion so that others may benefit from lessons learned and be encouraged to make similar sustainable improvements.

**Other provisions**

The requirements of this Policy may be waived, in whole or in part, by the EDA and/or city council after consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of a waiver, and upon demonstration by the developer of a compelling public purpose. Applicable portions of this Policy are contingent upon availability of related energy savings and design programs at participating utility companies. This Policy may be amended or discontinued without prior notice.

Adopted by the St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority and the City of St. Louis Park February 16, 2010. Updated September 16, 2014. Updated July 14, 2020.