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10 East Lansing Adopts Groundbreaking Green Building Policy



EAST LANSING, Mich. —At its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 21, East Lansing City Council adopted an innovative, new Green Building Policy, which ultimately will lead to more environmentally friendly public and private development within East Lansing’s city limits in the future.

In regards to public development, the new policy requires the attainment of LEED silver certification for future municipal construction that is more than 5,000 square feet and requires LEED or other low impact design practices be applied to renovations on municipal facilities to the greatest extent practicable.

In regards to private development, the new policy requires the attainment of LEED certification for new private construction of any single building which receives municipal incentives of up to 15 percent of the total project cost and requires the attainment of LEED certification for private building renovations that receive municipal incentives. New private development projects that receive more than 15 percent of the total project budget in municipal incentives will be required to meet the following standards under the new policy:

Projects with one building are required to attain silver level certification under the LEED New Construction and Major Renovations (LEED-NC) rating system or ICC-700 (the National Green Building Standard) certification at the silver level.

Projects with multiple buildings are required to attain either silver certification under the LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) rating system and at least one point under the Green Infrastructure & Building Credit 1, or a minimum of LEED-NC silver certification or ICC-700 silver certification for each individual building in the project.

In addition to the above requirements, the new Green Building Policy also encourages all new private developments in the City to incorporate LEED or similar green building practices, such as ENERGY STAR certification, and low impact design elements to the maximum extent practicable.

The new Green Building Policy is the result of months of hard work by City of East Lansing staff and the East Lansing Commission on the Environment.

“It is our hope that this new, groundbreaking policy will serve as a future working model for other municipalities in the state and across the country seeking more environmentally friendly development in their respective communities,” said East Lansing Councilmember Nathan Triplett. “Our nation’s buildings currently account for 72 percent of all electricity consumption and 30 percent of all waste in the United States. Green buildings utilize off-the-shelf technology and construction methods to reduce energy and water usage, improve building durability and reduce operational costs. Additionally, new research indicates that green buildings create healthier workplaces and living environments.”

LEED certified buildings use 32 percent less electricity, 26 percent less natural gas and 36 percent less total energy than conventionally constructed buildings and the efficiency improvements required under LEED lower lifetime building operating costs by 20 percent. While the cost of LEED certification ranges from 0-2 percent of total construction cost, the reduction in operating costs is ten times the initial investment on a percentage basis.

“There is a case to be made, both from an environmental and business standpoint, in regards to LEED certified buildings,” said East Lansing Environmental Specialist David Smith. “The numerous benefits of a sustainable building far overshadow the small premium developers will pay up front for LEED certification.”

“This is a great first step for our community, but it is certainly not the last step East Lansing will make in its efforts to pursue a greener, more sustainable community,” Councilmember Triplett said.

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The City of East Lansing's Green Building Policy will take effect April 30, 2009.

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Bethany Lumbert
Wednesday, May 27, 2009 3:07 PM

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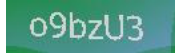
Great policy! I am excited for it to be implemented. I would like to note that the Green Building Policy on AM Lansing link does not work.

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The [City of East Lansing](#) council has approved a new Green Building Policy. This innovative policy will ultimately lead to an increase in environmentally friendly public and private development within East Lansing's city limits in the future.

"This policy makes East Lansing the first community in Michigan to condition our economic development incentives on [LEED certification](#)," says East Lansing councilmember, Nathan Triplett. "We are leading the way in the promotion of sustainable building practices. The policy will make our city a hub for green development in a market where consumers are increasingly looking for green options."

Along with LEED certification requirements that differ for public and private development, the new Green Building Policy also encourages all new private developments in the City to incorporate LEED or similar green building practices, such as [ENERGY Star certification](#), and low impact design elements.

"In addition to a strong environmental case for this new policy, there is a rock solid business case. LEED certified buildings typically cost zero to two percent more to build, but result in a 20 percent energy costs savings over the life of the structure," says Triplett. "In other words, on a percentage basis, the return on investment is ten times the initial cost. Green buildings help reduce carbon emissions, water usage, electricity usage and lower utility costs for consumers."

Source: Nathan Triplett, City of East Lansing

Suban Nur Cooley, interim development news editor, can be reached [here](#).