



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager's Office



DATE: October 31, 2014
BOARD MEETING DATE: November 18, 2014
SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: N/A
VOTE REQUIRED: Majority

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jim Eggemeyer, Director of the Office of Sustainability

SUBJECT: Resolution Adopting the County of San Mateo Sustainable Green Building Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution adopting the County of San Mateo Sustainable Green Building Policy

BACKGROUND:

In 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Sustainable Building Policy, after convening a subcommittee of two Board members and County staff, encouraging the design and construction of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified County facilities and buildings to the extent practicable. This policy aimed to reduce operating costs, protect our natural resources, and establish a standard for sustainable building in San Mateo County.

On February 26, 2008, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 04411, amending the San Mateo County building regulations to establish a Green Building Program for the unincorporated County, recognizing the importance of conserving our region's natural resources and improving the health and well-being of County residents and visitors. This program required that all new buildings and major remodels constructed within the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County be LEED certified. If the building was a single, two family, or low rise multi-family dwelling, it could alternatively meet this requirement by achieving 50 GreenPoints or higher on the appropriate GreenPoint Rated Checklist (by Build It Green).

In 2010, the State of California adopted the new Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11 (also known as CALGreen), which requires that all buildings constructed in California comply with certain sustainable building standards. On December 10, 2013, your Board adopted Ordinance No.04678, rescinding the previously established Green Building Program for the County, and adopting the State's CALGreen Building Codes as a functional equivalent.

DISCUSSION:

CALGreen is the first statewide mandatory green building code in the country. The new code creates minimum environmental standards for residential and commercial buildings, and “raises the bar” for sustainable design and construction. Similar to CALGreen, LEED also addresses strategies that reduce waste, increase water and energy efficiency, and improve environmental quality in buildings and facilities. LEED certification, however, is more stringent than CALGreen, which results in higher energy and water savings, lower operational costs, and greater reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. LEED certification also demonstrates that the building has met the highest green building standards in the industry.

The Office of Sustainability has reviewed the Board’s previous 2001 policy and recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a new Sustainable Green Building Policy that reaffirms the County’s commitment to sustainable building practices by requiring that all new County facilities and buildings continue to be LEED certified. LEED certification requires sustainable design that exceeds the requirements under CALGreen. LEED also incentivizes creativity and rewards innovation in green building design and construction.

A Sustainable Green Building Policy has many benefits for the County. It produces cost savings for both the construction and maintenance of the buildings, creates a healthier work environment for employees and visitors, and solidifies the County’s commitment towards environmental stewardship and conservation of its natural resources.

An updated Sustainable Green Building Policy also aligns with the County’s Climate Action Plan for Government Operations and its goal to reduce municipal greenhouse gas emissions. Given that building and facilities are responsible for the majority of emissions from County operations (52% in 2010), reaffirming this policy will continue to increase building efficiency and thereby mitigate the County’s contribution to global climate change. Additionally, the State of California has adopted ambitious mandates for Zero Net Energy residential buildings by 2020 and Zero Net Energy commercial buildings by 2030, which will require all new buildings constructed to produce as much energy as they consume. The updated Sustainable Green Building Policy (see Attachment A) would also allow the County to progress towards this State mandated goal of Zero Net Energy buildings.

The adoption of this resolution and a Sustainable Green Building Policy will not, itself, have a fiscal impact on the County, there may be additional upfront costs for design and construction of LEED certified buildings. These costs are generally associated with technologies and equipment which are more expensive but significantly increase the efficiency of the building. While these initial costs may be higher, the energy and water savings often result in a much lower life cycle cost for the building. Additionally, LEED certified buildings contribute to health and well-being of building occupants.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved this Resolution as to form.

By requiring that all new County buildings be LEED certified, the County also strengthens its commitment to conserve and protect its natural resources. The adoption

of this policy contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision outcome of a Collaborative Community by reinforcing the County's leadership in the region with regard to sustainability, increasing the fiscal responsibility of the County's operations, and identifying solutions to mitigate future impacts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for adopting this resolution.

ATTACHMENT:

A: Sustainable Green Building Policy