



Sustainable Green Building Policy

Purpose

The Board of Supervisors is committed to environmental, economic, and social stewardship through sustainable building practices for County facilities and buildings. The implementation of this Sustainable Green Building policy is expected to yield cost savings to County taxpayers through reduced operating costs, to provide a healthy work environment for County employees and visitors to County facilities and buildings, to contribute to the realization of the Board of Supervisors' stated goal of protecting, conserving, and enhancing the region's environmental resources, and to help establish a community standard of sustainable building for San Mateo County.

Organization Affected

All County Departments

Definitions

Sustainable Building

Sustainable building practices integrate building materials and methods that promote environmental quality, economic vitality, and social benefit through the design, construction and operation of the built environment. Sustainable building practices merge sound, environmentally responsible practices into one discipline that looks at the environmental, economic and social effects of a building or built project as a whole. Sustainable building design encompasses the following broad topics: efficient management of energy and water resources, management of material resources and waste, protection of health and indoor environmental quality, reinforcement of natural systems, and the integration of the design approach.

Life Cycle Cost Analysis

Life cycle cost analysis is an inclusive approach to costing a program, facility, or group of facilities that encompasses planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance over the useful life of facility or group of facilities as well as any decommissioning or disassembly costs. Life cycle cost analysis looks at the net present value of design options as investments. The goal is to achieve the highest, most cost effective environmental performance possible over the life of the project.

LEED Rating System

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven green building rating system developed by the US Green Building Council. It is based on existing, proven technology and evaluates environmental performance from a “whole building” perspective. LEED is a certifying system designed for rating building projects, such as new and existing commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential buildings. Generally, LEED addresses six main categories: Location and Transportation, Materials and Resources, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Sustainable Sites, and Indoor Environmental Quality. There are four rating levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors to finance, plan, design, construct, manage, renovate, maintain, and decommission its facilities and buildings to be sustainable. The US Green Building Council’s LEED rating system and Reference Guide shall be the design and measurement tools used to determine what constitutes sustainable building under this policy. This policy applies to new construction and additions to existing buildings and facilities whenever the gross occupied area of the new construction is over 5,000 square feet.

Design and project management teams for buildings and facilities meeting the criteria of this policy are required to achieve certification at the highest practicable LEED rating level. In achieving its rating each such building or facility shall comply with all applicable LEED protocols, including being registered with the US Green Building Council at the beginning of a project and applying for LEED certification at its completion.

Design and project management teams for new structures of less than 5,000 square feet and all renovations or retrofits are required to apply sustainable building practices, build to LEED standards, and to apply for LEED certification if practicable.

The County will carry out this policy by assuring that County personnel who administer projects are fully understanding of green building principles and will direct the selected design teams to maintain and employ these principles through every phase. Criteria for choosing designers, architects, construction managers and consulting teams shall include demonstrated knowledge of green building practices in their specific fields, and as applicable, expertise with life cycle cost analysis and LEED ratings.

Procedures and Responsibilities

The Office of Sustainability shall work with County departments to coordinate any educational and technical resources that support and promote sustainable design and construction of County facilities. The Office of Sustainability shall be responsible for annually evaluating and reporting to the Board of Supervisors on the implementation of this policy.

All new construction or additions of at least 5,000 square feet shall be evaluated for compliance with this policy and said evaluation will be reported to the Board of Supervisors.

Budgeting and Financing

The appropriation for all capital construction subject to this policy after date of adoption shall include funding to meet the requirements of this policy. Budget planning and life cycle cost analysis to achieve the highest rating is encouraged.

Training

The County strongly encourages all capital project managers who are managing or likely to manage projects within the purview of this policy to become LEED Accredited Professionals in order to become more familiar with the LEED certification process and green building practices. These efforts will be coordinated through the Office of Sustainability.