



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** COUNTY MANAGER: OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

**File #:** 16-789

Board Meeting Date: 12/5/2017

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Jim Eggemeyer, Director, Office of Sustainability  
Deborah Bazan, Director, Project Development Unit  
Jim Porter, Director, Department of Public Works

**Subject:** Resolution Adopting the Municipal Green Building Policy

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution approving the County of San Mateo Municipal Green Building Policy.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted its first Sustainable Building Policy: the policy encouraged the design and construction of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certified County buildings to the extent practicable. The policy aimed to reduce operating costs, protect natural resources, and establish a standard for sustainable County buildings. In 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted a revised Sustainable Green Building Policy that reaffirmed the County's commitment to sustainable building practices by continuing to require all new County buildings to be LEED® certified. In 2016, the County completed its first LEED® Gold certified building, the Maple Street Correctional Center.

The State of California has adopted ambitious regulations for green building and energy efficiency applicable for both private and public development. In 2010, the State adopted the new Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11 (also known as CALGreen), which requires all buildings comply with specific sustainable building standards. CALGreen was the first statewide green building code in the United States. The State has also adopted ambitious mandates for Zero Net Energy (ZNE) buildings; in short, ZNE buildings produce as much renewable energy as they consume. The State set a goal that all new residential buildings be ZNE by 2020 and new commercial buildings be ZNE by 2030.

As part of the County's approved five-year Capital Improvement Plan, your Board approved construction of new buildings including County Office Building 3, Government Center Parking Structure, and Cordilleras Mental Health Facility. The Board also approved the upgrade or renovation of existing buildings including the Old Maguire Jail and the Human Services Agency's Daly City office.

The number of planned municipal projects represents a rare opportunity for the County to further advance the County's sustainability goals and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through construction and building standards. In order to identify an innovative and achievable approach, the Office of Sustainability gathered input from Board members and convened a working group with staff from the following County departments: Project Development Unit, Department of Public Works, Parks Department, Planning & Building Department, Budget, Policy & Performance Unit, and Board Aides. Staff also contracted with a consultant team comprised of green building, energy engineering, and renewable energy industry experts that provided guidance on the update of the policy.

### **DISCUSSION:**

After a comprehensive review of previous policies and existing regulations and through a collaborative team effort, the Office of Sustainability proposes a Municipal Green Building Policy that applies to the new construction of County buildings over 10,000 square feet and requires three components, as financially feasible. Those components are:

- (1) **LEED® Certification:** The Municipal Green Building Policy continues to uphold LEED® Certification because the LEED® rating system is an industry-recognized green building standard that addresses six main categories: Location and Transport, Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. The working group believes there is no better certification or functionally equivalent process.
- (2) **Energy Efficiency:** The policy establishes energy efficiency goals that require energy use reduction and energy-efficient design strategies in order to reduce the County's new building's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- (3) **Zero Net Energy:** The policy mandates County buildings achieve ZNE, as financially feasible. By offsetting the County's energy consumption on-site, the County invests in renewable energy that has positive public health and long-term financial benefits. Local renewable energy helps the County reduce the demand for fossil fuels and alleviate associated health impacts. Furthermore, through an initial investment in renewable energy (such as solar panels), the County will see long term financial benefits from buildings that sustain their own energy consumption.

In addition, the policy establishes the Municipal Green Building Steering Committee, chaired by the Office of Sustainability and including representatives from County departments that participated in the policy working group. The goal of the committee is to oversee the implementation of the policy and assist in the advancement of sustainable performance of County buildings. The policy establishes procedures and responsibilities detailing the necessary steps for implementation. Responsibilities are defined for key departments to ensure accountability and collaboration.

The County contracted with a consultant team to conduct high-level analysis to help develop these new County goals. Their recommendation was to include a concise financial feasibility assessment which enables the ambitious ZNE goal to be set while ensuring sound, understandable financial results. They also recommended specific efficiency goals be set within the broader LEED® framework.

The Office of Sustainability recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the Municipal Green

Building Policy. The County has the opportunity to lead by example with upcoming municipal building projects, to be environmentally and economically sustainable through energy conservation, and to showcase innovative, sustainable, and ZNE building strategies.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

Approval of the resolution contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of an Environmentally Conscious Community. By requiring that all new County buildings be LEED® certified, energy efficient, and be ZNE, the County 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:**

LEED® certified buildings contribute to environmental sustainability and improve the productivity, health, and well-being of building occupants. They also result in energy and water savings. The Municipal Green Building Policy specifically emphasizes and defines energy efficiency as a priority to ensure that direct operating savings are achieved. The financial feasibility criteria will ensure that the County receives a positive financial benefit from energy efficiency as well as renewable energy generation.

Compared to California Building Code (Title 24 Part 6), the minimum efficiency requirement in this Policy (achieving 50% of LEED Energy and Atmosphere points) is expected to typically provide better energy efficiency, by 0-10%. Sites vary widely, however, and achieving site ZNE will often require efficiency beyond this minimum requirement.

The LEED® process for new construction is consistent with best practices for achieving ZNE as well. Both LEED® and ZNE apply an integrated design process that, compared to traditional design, increases upfront participation of all stakeholders and design contributors. For projects that implement LEED® and ZNE into the design process from the beginning, the additional project cost impact of these requirements is often relatively small, less than 4%, compared to projects built to county and state building codes.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Municipal Green Building Policy