



## CITY OF DUNWOODY

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Sustainability Commission

Date: March 22, 2010

Subject: **Green Building Policy**

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### ITEM DESCRIPTION

The Sustainability Commission recommends the City of Dunwoody adopt a Green Building Policy.

### BACKGROUND

As part of their pursuit of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities certification, the Sustainability Commission has been researching green building policies. The Sustainability Commission and staff have reviewed green building policies from surrounding jurisdictions including City of Alpharetta, City of Decatur, City of Doraville, City of Chamblee, City of Conyers, Athens Clarke County, and DeKalb County.

The attached policy has been drafted to meet the requirements of three ARC Green Communities measures: Measure 1 Government LEED Policy, Measure 3 Government Energy Star/EarthCraft Policy, and Measure 4 Government Energy Star/LEED Renovation Policy.

In overview, the policy would require that all buildings, over 5,000 square feet, built by the City of Dunwoody to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction (LEED-NC) certified. Buildings less than 5,000 square feet are encouraged to be LEED-NC certified but if that certification is not feasible, buildings must be certified using Energy Star or EarthCraft Light Commercial standards.

A Green Building Policy would provide several benefits for Dunwoody. Properly designed, constructed, and operated green buildings can have significant health, economic, and environmental benefits. This occurs through decreased energy use, improved ventilation and lighting, a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, and enhanced community education.

This policy would affect all future City facilities. As this does not amend any current ordinance, but functions as an operating policy, this policy would be read and voted on by Mayor and Council.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Sustainability Commission recommends adopting the attached Green Building Policy for the City of Dunwoody.



# CITY OF DUNWOODY

## *GREEN BUILDINGS*

### Article

Version 2010.03.08



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## GREEN BUILDINGS POLICY

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the City of Dunwoody to plan, design, construct, manage, renovate, and maintain its facilities and buildings in a sustainable manner. Green buildings are designed to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment. Green buildings accomplish these goals in three main areas, first, by efficiently using energy, water, and other resources; second, by protecting occupant health and improving employee productivity; and third, by reducing waste, pollution and environment degradation.

Several different certification programs and benchmarks exist to rate the sustainability of a building. One such standard is the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. Additionally the Environmental Protection Agency and United States Department of Energy's EnergyStar and EarthCraft Light Commercial programs include guidelines for buildings that are not LEED certified.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all new buildings constructed by the City of Dunwoody shall be designed and measured using these programs. The LEED, EnergyStar, and EarthCraft programs will be used to determine what constitutes sustainable building under this policy.

### II. Definitions

When used in this policy, the following words, terms and phrases, and their derivations, shall be the meaning ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning,

- A. AGENT means an official contracted or subcontracted person who is authorized to act on behalf of the City of Dunwoody and represent their interests.
- B. CITY DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY means the Director of Sustainability or other employee or agent as designated in writing by the City Manager.
- C. EMPLOYEE means an individual drawing a salary or wage from the City whether on a full-time, part-time, or contractual third-party basis. The term shall encompass all members of the Governing Authority without regard to whether or not such individual is compensated.
- D. ENERGY STAR means a joint program of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Energy which aims to protect the



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environment through energy efficient products and practices. ENERGY STAR is also an energy performance rating system. The EPA also recognizes top performing buildings with the ENERGY STAR designation.

- E. GOVERNING AUTHORITY means the City entity responsible for the contract.
- F. LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (LEED) means a regulatory system for construction that establishes several levels of environmental achievement from a Certified rating to a Platinum rating.
- G. OFFICIAL means any elected or appointed person who holds office or serves in a position of public capacity.
- H. UNITED STATES GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL (USGBC) means an entity that promulgates the LEED Rating System

**III. Scope**

This policy applies to both new construction and renovations.

A. New Construction

1. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council shall be used as guidance for a design and a measuring tool to ensure that new construction and renovations are designed sustainably and according to national standards.
2. Facilities and buildings over 5,000 gross square feet of occupied space or one million dollars total project cost shall be certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction (LEED-NC) certification standards. The specified certification can be one of four certification levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum. Ideally, new construction should achieve the LEED-NC Silver rating or higher, when feasible.
3. Facilities and buildings under 5,000 gross square feet of occupied space or less than one million dollars total project cost are encouraged to be designated LEED-NC Certified. However, if LEED-NC certification is not feasible, per the exceptions in



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Section IV, smaller buildings must be certified using Energy Star or EarthCraft Light Commercial standards.

B. Renovations

1. Renovations are defined as a project that includes construction activity that make substantial changes to at least one entire room in the building and requires the isolation of the work site from the regular building occupants for the duration of the work. Renovations can affect no more than 50% of the total building floor area, or affect over 50% of the regular building occupants. Work that exceeds these limits must be considered new construction. Renovations that affect less than 5% of the floor area are considered minor and are exempt from this policy.

2. All renovations must follow the LEED Guidelines for Existing Buildings. If LEED Existing Building certification is not feasible, per the exceptions in Section IV, renovations must be certified using Energy Star or EarthCraft Light Commercial standards.

**IV. Exceptions**

The City of Dunwoody's practice to incorporate green building techniques, methods, and materials is not always practicable. The following project situations are exceptions to the Green Building Policy.

- A. Historically designated buildings with design considerations which limit the inclusion of green materials or building techniques.
- B. Projects for which achieving LEED certification would increase costs by 20% or more such that the project is no longer financially feasible. Some projects may be burdened with other extraordinary upfront costs that act as a financial barrier to development, for example, development on Brownfield sites, development on sites without infrastructure, or historic preservation projects.
- C. No practical green alternative exists for the proposed improvement.

**V. Responsibility**

- A. Director of Sustainability

The City Council may appoint the City Manager, or said agent appointed by the City Manager, to serve as the Director of Sustainability for the City, or the Council may contract with an



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independent third party to serve as the Director of Sustainability (per City Charter, Section 3.02).

DUTIES: The Director of Sustainability shall have the following duties and powers in regards to the Green Buildings Policy:

1. Work with all department heads to make certain that employees are aware and educated about this Green Buildings Policy.
2. Work with Chief Building Official to ensure that the Green Buildings Policy is practiced in all City building projects.
3. Work with all department heads to make certain that this practice is monitored.