

**Green Building Program Update**  
**Community Working Group Meeting #4 Notes**  
**December 11, 2018**

Meeting Minutes

- Walker Wells of Raimi and Associates along with City staff started the meeting by reorienting the group to what the working groups had identified as priority areas for the update, Planning Commission and City Council feedback on progress, and what staff had accomplished since the last meeting:

*Priorities*

- o Energy
- o Water management
- o Solid waste management
- o Open space, green space, and public realm
- o Administration and implementation
- o Program metrics
- o Education and awareness

*Planning Commission and City Council Feedback*

- o Supportive of preliminary framework: CALGreen + local amendments
- o Focus on green space, local characteristics, water management, daylighting, sustainable roof elements
  - Courtyard building designs fostering vegetated space, daylighting, ventilation
- o Cost/benefit of green building alternatives – inform opportunities and incentives
- o Parking reduction as an incentive for increased green space
- o Strengthen administration and verification processes

*Progress since last working group meeting*

- o Held internal working sessions to chart path forward
  - o Reviewed multiple sections of the California Building Code and West Hollywood Municipal Code in detail
  - o Consulted extensively with external and City SMEs on existing and new green building topic areas
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- City staff discussed the new program framework as building blocks of sustainability starting with CALGreen as the baseline and adding WeHo specific mandatory provisions and WeHo specific voluntary measures on top of it to build greener buildings
  - The new green building program will categorically align with the CALGreen building code

## Green Building Recommendations & Discussion

### **1. Site Planning and Design**

- **Recommended additions to CALGreen: EV Charging Readiness, Flexibility in Development Standards for Open Space and Green Space, Sustainable Roof Treatments** (see presentation for full description)
- Chose 30,000 sf. as the threshold for sustainable roof treatments beyond cool roof to stay consistent with the size of projects requiring regulatory review
  - i. Suggest that this measure apply to smaller projects as well – threshold between 5,000-10,000 sf. capture majority of development
  - ii. Suggest that rather than a percentage of roof space per treatment the requirement is performance-based, a percentage of energy demand
  - iii. As written now, developers will pursue the easiest path and do the smallest percent roof coverage and/or cheapest option – cost/benefit analysis needed for each treatment
- Green roofs provide the most benefit if they are a sizeable square footage
  - i. Require maintenance, irrigation and upkeep – raises other questions including water demand/future drought, need to be part of a professionally managed building
  - ii. Benefits include: vegetation, evapotranspiration, habitat, cooling, stormwater management, aesthetics
- Goal of this update is to increase green space throughout the City – consider requiring replacement of vegetation removed by development
  - i. Preservation of mature trees – what incentive is valuable to make it feasible for private development
  - ii. Staff has flagged this topic for further study and perhaps incorporation into the City's Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Lot coverage approach – require only 80% lot coverage, 20% native soil
  - i. Density has been increasing in the City with the use of affordable housing bonuses and before the 90% density rule was repealed
  - ii. Need flexibility in development standards and design to allow for native soil
- Courtyard buildings could achieve the desired native soil and have been flagged by staff for further study and perhaps consideration by the new Urban Design Studio
- Private open space?
  - i. Lifestyle space and green space (with native soil) rather than common/private/open space
  - ii. Reframe as requiring a certain amount of open space per unit with a max. amount of non-permeable surface – developers can allocate as they see fit
- Passive design strategies are currently missing and need to be codified in order to be realized
  - i. Suggest requiring min of 2-3 exposures per unit with operable windows, light wells (large projects), menu of choices
  - ii. Staff has noted this for further study and will try to incorporate into this update

## 2. Energy Efficiency

- **Recommended additions to CALGreen: Energy Benchmarking Readiness, All-Electric/Battery Storage Readiness** (see presentation for full description)

## 3. Water Efficiency

- **Recommended additions to CALGreen: MWEL, Water Conserving Plumbing Fixtures, Water Submetering** (see presentation for full description)
- Agree with requiring submetering but don't include outdoor submetering for landscapes less than 500 sf. – too small
  - i. Minimum common space requirement is already 500 sf.
- Support higher efficiency fixtures as long as the market provides a choice in products with accepted specs

## 4. Materials Conservation, Environmental Quality, Other

- **Recommended additions to CALGreen: Organics Collection Readiness, Construction Air Quality Plan, Green Public Buildings** (see presentation for full description)
- Continue to work with Athens Services to develop three-stream waste collection guidelines for West Hollywood
  - i. Suggest expand Athens' use of MRF rather than source separate
- Trash chutes complicate organics collection and storage – can't use, so "equally accessible and easy to use" is problematic but having space for them is OK
  - i. Alternative solutions: organics bin near chutes on all floors
  - ii. On-site or community compost stations
  - iii. Applicability differences between small buildings and large buildings based on collection system
  - iv. Infrastructure readiness vs. behavior modification and education
- MERV 6 filters are not necessary during construction/ when building is being prepared for occupancy – not enough benefit to require exceeding CALGreen standard
- Suggest public buildings strive for LEED Gold rather than Silver

## 5. Voluntary Measures & Incentives

- **Voluntary measures to qualify for incentives: Third-Party Rating System, Near Net Zero Energy Buildings, Greywater Reuse Systems** (see presentation for full description)
- **Incentives for high-performing projects: Parking Reduction, FAR, Additional Unit**
- Developers won't pursue mandatory measure unless they do significantly better than break-even due to the increased implications on time and effort
- Value of LEED?
  - i. A project built to the current CALGreen code performs as if it were designed to be LEED Silver
  - ii. Main benefit of LEED is the rigorous verification process that projects must undergo, which ensures that the building is constructed as designed and includes the specified green features

1. City is not able to replicate this type of robust inspection due to limited resources and experience
  - Incentives are important to encourage developers to spend money on sustainable upgrades
  - Agree that greywater is important and an exciting prospect for development but need City assistance to navigate the regulatory environment
    - i. Build a coalition of City staff and developers to advocate for an easier pathway of approval from LAC Dept. of Public Health
    - ii. Staff has flagged as a topic needing additional consideration and research into the approval process and current barriers
  - Include voluntary measures as a list of the community benefits negotiated as part of development agreements
  - Parking reduction is attractive but a question of project scale
  - What other incentives are valuable enough to encourage these voluntary measures?

#### **6. Administration, Implementation & Verification**

- Suggest hiring a green field inspector to verify projects and plans are consistent and green measures are installed correctly
- Train all plan checkers and inspectors more fully in green measures
- Incorporate all green measures on permits and verification checklists

#### Other Considerations

- Staff identified related topics needing further study including: tree preservation and protection during construction, green alleys, urban design strategies/building typologies
  - Additions from the Working Group:
    - i. Greywater barriers
    - ii. Codifying passive design strategies
- When will the new program go into effect? Not until early summer and will be revised every 3 years in conjunction with the CA Building Code cycle
- Still want to incorporate recognition of green development projects as part of education and awareness campaign

#### Next Steps

- Distribute a Working Group survey on green building collateral
- Incorporate Working Group feedback into code language
- Refine process for administration and implementation
- Final Working Group meeting – End of January
- Present final program to Planning Commission and City Council – Early Spring
  - o Suggest a handout for governing bodies that clearly denotes what of the original program is now part of CALGreen, what of the original program is still included as a WeHo provision, additional WeHo provisions and voluntary measures, any original program measures that have been omitted