

City of New Rochelle
Department of Development

MEMORANDUM

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Thru: CHARLES B. STROME, III, City Manager

From: CRAIG KING, Commissioner of Development

Date: September 25, 2008

Subject: **GREEN BUILDING PROGRAM**

The New Rochelle Green Building Steering Committee, composed of staff from the Buildings Department, Department of Development and Law Department, met extensively over the last four months in order to craft an action strategy for a Green Building program in New Rochelle. This group also included state officials familiar with Green Building legislation and the Development Commissioner from Greenburg who has initiated Green legislation in that community.

This Committee has determined that a combination of legislative and administrative actions, as outlined below, would be more effective in achieving the City's sustainable land use and development goals than a mandated, third-party rating system such as LEED. These actions include education and outreach, changes to the development review process, zoning amendments, mandated energy-star standards, and stricter enforcement of the New York State Energy Code.

This balanced approach could be accomplished with current staff resources. Advantages include aiding residents, businesses and developers in the transition to "going green" and encouraging applicant choice and control in the development process, which would mitigate potential resistance from the construction industry.

I. Legislative Actions

The City should enact standards more restrictive than the NYS Energy Code. The following recommendations would have the greatest impact on increasing energy efficiency and equate to or exceed the base level of LEED in terms of effectiveness:

- A. Amendments to the Zoning Code & Permitting Procedures

1. Mandate that new one or two family dwellings or multi-family dwellings of three stories or less comply with New York State Energy Star Labeled Home guidelines (would require City Council approval).
 2. Require additional steps in the Planning Board review process.
 - Require all Planning Board applicants to attend a NYSERDA-sponsored educational session to inform them of energy-saving measures and applicable programs. (This would address multi-family, office, and commercial development).
 - Require contact or a pre-application meeting with the Sustainability Coordinator.
 - Require Sustainability Coordinator presence at Peer Architectural Review meetings.
- B. Municipal Code Changes for New Construction and Additions (would require City Council approval)
1. Require optimal building siting and orientation.
 2. Require better insulation by increasing “U values” for windows, “R values” for wall cavity insulation and tighter fenestration to reduce infiltration.
 3. Require that 50% of drywell drainage systems consist of water-conserving cisterns.
 4. Consolidate all environmentally significant zoning and building code regulations into one Green Ordinance that would provide a single legislative reference point for all existing green building and provide a placeholder for any future legislation if necessary.

II. Administrative Actions

- A. Require building/development site deconstruction and materials recycling.
- B. Incorporate “LEED equivalent” language in MOU’s for all major projects (would require City Council approval).
- C. Utilize SEQR Process and Planning Board resolution conditions to insist on green building mitigation measures.
 - Require project and EIS review by Sustainability Coordinator.
- D. Continue to work with the Westchester Inter-municipal Green Building Committee.
 1. Create a Green Building Book (similar to Best Management Practices guidelines for storm water and soil conservation regulations) for adoption by participating

Westchester

2. Pursue 2009 Local Government Efficiency Grant Program for this shared municipal service incentive.
- As addendums to this Green Building Book, there would be all relevant green building legislation in the participating communities.

III. Sustainability Coordinator and NYSERDA Roles

Together, the Sustainability Coordinator and NYSERDA Westchester Energy Smart Communities Program Regional Coordinator will serve to coordinate, communicate and oversee these green building initiatives. The role of the Sustainability Coordinator will be to refine and implement these recommendations, measure results, and monitor the impacts and costs, both positive and negative.

IV. Schedule

After discussion with City Council, staff anticipates the submittal of draft legislation for agreed-upon items referenced above in November.