

## West Hollywood Green Building Program

Category:: Environment  
Planning, Urban Design, Infrastructure



City of West Hollywood  
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## TRANSFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE SUBMITTAL

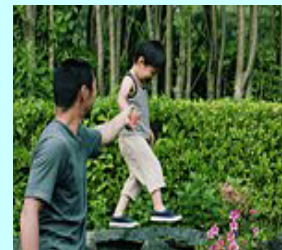
West Hollywood has recently adopted a ground-breaking Green Building Program. Effective October 1, 2007, all new and renovated residential building projects in West Hollywood with three units or more, and all commercial projects will be required to meet extensive green building design and construction standards. Incentives are provided for projects that go above and beyond minimum requirements. The standards will ensure a healthier living environment, reduced ecological impact of new construction, and reduced energy use and costs.

One of the nation's first programs with mandatory requirements instituting green standards for all building sizes and types, West Hollywood's **Green Building Program** will serve as a model for jurisdictions throughout California. A "Sustainable City Coordinator," a new position the city is creating will be responsible for implementation of the program. This means facilitating the greening of all development and building a market niche for sustainable products and services. Greening will bring reduced energy and water demand, healthier living environments and a smaller environmental footprint.

The City took two years to carefully craft an effective green building ordinance, and anticipates successful implementation with the proper leadership and support. With a strong design and interiors industry, West Hollywood is uniquely poised to promote sustainable design, construction and architecture. The City will provide technical expertise and leadership to make these leaps possible. It will require reaching out to residents, businesses, and thousands of daily visitors who look to West Hollywood as a leading force in progressive city planning.

### The West Hollywood Green Building Program addresses a full range of sustainable objectives including:

- waste diversion;
- increased energy efficiency, and reduced water use;
- alternative forms of transportation;
- storm water management;
- future use of solar energy; and
- improved indoor air quality.



The **Green Building Program** is designed to reduce administrative and economic barriers that may have prevented green building in the past. West Hollywood has a commitment to involving its citizens and businesses in all activities. In conjunction with the Green Building Program, the coordinator will facilitate:

- a Green Building Resource Center in City Hall,
- topical brochures on: green design, bath/laundry/kitchen remodels, landscaping, paints and finishes, energy efficiency,
- a directory of local green building suppliers,
- outreach to area businesses to green daily practices,
- contact with the Chamber of Commerce and the JWEST job center.

With the Green Building Program and Resource Center, the City aspires to make its urban infill development patterns more energy efficient and healthy for its citizens. Improving local businesses practices and enhancing the natural environment is also a key focus.

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West Hollywood is one of the densest areas in the Southern California region. The Green Building program will be applied to the development pattern that is urban, infill, and promotes and accepts **responsible density**. A majority of the City of West Hollywood is zoned to allow for residential densities between 30 and 50 units per acre. West Hollywood's land use regulations provide incentives for mixed-use development in its commercial areas. Because of considerable mixed use development and density, West Hollywood is actively working to encourage **rail transit** to come to the area, while cooperating with the regional transportation authority to increase all services.

California will face incredible population growth in the years to come. West Hollywood accepts its fair share of regional growth, and supports in-fill development that provides additional housing opportunities. With a surge of new development applications in recent years, the City continues to work cooperatively with developers and architects. The east side of West Hollywood is currently designated as a Redevelopment Area, also encouraging more growth and infill opportunities. In an environment of active redevelopment in an established urban area, it is essential that smart growth and sustainable development policies be instituted to maintain a healthy economy and environment.

The City will provide technical assistance to businesses, residents, developers and architects, while creating and disseminating outreach materials, hosting events, and developing local market strength in sustainable materials and services. Through incorporation of green building materials, green design and green practices into construction, as well as promoting sustainable building practices in business operations, the development of market strength in sustainable products and services will be achieved.

While the project includes programs, policies and requirements that will support the greening of development and business practices throughout West Hollywood, it will also assist economic development in its **Redevelopment Area**. On the east side of West Hollywood, residents have higher unemployment levels and lower income than other areas; over 51% of the households of the east side of West Hollywood qualify as **low and moderate income**. This area also has a high concentration of persons of Russian Jewish heritage and non-English speakers. To reach this demographic effectively, literature will be translated into **Russian**. The program will encourage economic development in distressed neighborhoods by helping to create a sustainable products and services sector.

Outreach to residents will promote efficiency that leads to lower energy costs and expenditures, and lower income populations stand to benefit the most from utility cost reductions. Finally, efforts to assist commercial developers and businesses create healthier spaces that will contribute to worker efficiency and productivity.

### Alternative Funding Sources and Lack of Resources

A typical source for funding green programs at the local level is a local utility. West Hollywood does not have a local utility from which to generate and draw funds. Therefore any funding of green programs comes from the General Fund and competes with numerous other funding priorities including public safety, social services, affordable housing, public facilities, and others. The City has applied for a \$300,000 grant from the California Pollution Control Financing Authority to help pay for the new Sustainable City Coordinator position which is associated with this program.



### Promotes Sustainable Development Objectives

West Hollywood supports and implements infill development. As a built-out environment that is continually recycling land, every development affected by the City's Green Building Program will be an infill project. The City's Green Building Program includes development incentives for projects that go above and beyond its minimum requirements.

West Hollywood is one of the most densely developed cities in California, with an existing density of approximately **18,000 persons per square mile**. Yet there is strong pressure for replacement development in the residential zones where residual density still exists, and on the commercial boulevards as mixed-use and commercial development. Sustainable development is critical in these areas because of the proximity of structures and uses, where neighbors affect the health of many people. Regionally, infill development makes more efficient use of utilities and roadway infrastructure that are in place in West Hollywood's existing urban environment.

#### Promotes economic development within communities/neighborhoods suffering from high unemployment levels, low-income levels and/or high poverty.

The project would work in concert with West Hollywood's Redevelopment Area on the city's east side. In this area residents have higher unemployment levels and lower income than other areas (over 51% of the households within the Redevelopment Area are low- and moderate-income). This area also has a concentration of persons of Russian Jewish heritage. The Coordinator will reach out to language-isolated businesses and residents in these areas with materials translated to Russian. The program's outreach to businesses will promote and encourage economic development into a sustainable products and services sector. Outreach to residents will promote efficiency that leads to lower energy costs and expenditures, and lower income populations stand to benefit the most from utility cost reductions. Finally, healthier spaces have been shown to contribute to worker efficiency and productivity, positively affecting economic development in an area with low income levels.

**Promotes land use and policies, programs and projects that support alternative transportation options.**

The point system supports alternative transportation options by implementing bicycle parking programs, and priority parking programs for alternative fuel vehicles (hybrids, CNG's, EV's, etc). All development affected by this project promotes alternative transportation because of the density and infrastructure of the city. West Hollywood is an existing urbanized area with a density that supports public transit, which is continually growing. The City actively implements pedestrian and bicycle mobility infrastructure, like the reconstruction of Santa Monica Boulevard with pedestrian crosswalks (incl. mid-block), bulb-outs, and bike lanes. Bus service is provided by the County agency. The City actively lobbies for additional buses and for extension of rail service to the city. Responsible growth will allow for even greater density and help West Hollywood become a model transit-oriented city. The Coordinator will support alternative transportation options by facilitating Green Building Program requirements and incentives for individual developments, and encourage an urban fabric that provides alternative transportation options.

**Ensure a proper mix of business and housing, including affordable housing, in communities and neighborhoods.**

A balance of jobs and housing, especially affordable housing, is critical to sustainability on the city and region level. West Hollywood is based on concept of an "urban village" that has a balance of jobs and housing through land use decisions, zoning and programs. Every development affected by the project continues the balance of businesses and housing. The Green Building Program was designed to address commercial, residential and mixed-use developments equally, to continue this balance and to make all more sustainable. The City has one of the State's few rent stabilization programs, has a strong inclusionary housing requirement, and also funds individual affordable housing projects to ensure a balance of affordability.

**Balances job growth with new housing**

The City of West Hollywood has an existing dense mixed-use fabric that offers a balance of jobs and housing. We continue to promote economic development projects and programs and to encourage the construction of new housing. According to the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) West Hollywood has a jobs/housing ratio of 1.5 which is the most balanced of any city in our sub-region. The Green Building Program applies equally to commercial and residential development and it promotes continued development in these areas, which keeps our balance competitive and healthy.

**Encourages communities centered around civic spaces.**

West Hollywood is small, with no undeveloped area. Yet the City makes an effort to create and maintain usable and attractive civic spaces. There are park master plans in place for the City's two largest parks that will increase green space and civic areas. The City recently completed a redesign of Santa Monica Boulevard to create wide public sidewalks with street trees and landscape areas. Recently, the City approved two development projects that include public pocket parks in residential areas. Furthermore, West Hollywood has some of the most progressive policies for residential development, requiring private open space for each unit, as well as requiring common open space for the building. The Sustainable City Coordinator will help City staff implement the required LEED certification for community

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projects, and will help private developers incorporate sustainable practices into their projects.

### Ensures more efficient, well-planned higher density use of land

West Hollywood regulations ensure that land use is well-planned and high density. The City has one of the highest densities in the region, and has a large portion of high-density residential zoning districts. Standards ensure that development is well-planned with respectful architecture, open space for each unit and reasonable layouts. The project will ensure that this development is additionally more sustainable, healthier and more resource-efficient. Through smooth implementation and outreach the community fabric will improve with good projects.

### Protects environmental resources

The purpose of West Hollywood's Green Building Program is to protect environmental resources. This includes efficient use of existing utilities and transportation infrastructure, reduced energy dependency, promotion of alternative mobility strategies, dense development that reduces green-field conversion, healthier living environments, and rapidly-renewable resources.

### Creates or Assists Employment Opportunities

The Sustainable City Coordinator will aid in the development of outreach programs to local businesses to strengthen their sustainable practices, and market their sustainable products and services, which promotes sustainable development-related job opportunities.

### Improved Economic Infrastructure + Competitiveness

The Green Building Program will improve the infrastructure and quality of life for the community by ensuring more healthful, productive and safer living and working environments. West Hollywood is an attractive place to live and do business. The Coordinator will support and expand these improvements, increasing the area's economic health and competitiveness.

### Relationships with Training Entities + Job Seekers

The Coordinator will build and maintain relationships with the City's local employment services, WHEST. WHEST assists West Hollywood residents in finding work or enhancing their careers. Administered by Jewish Vocational Service (JVS), the program provides a full range of counseling and placement services to employees of West Hollywood businesses and to West Hollywood residents who wish to explore their career options and prepare for the job market.

## **Creative Approaches**

West Hollywood's logo is "The Creative City." In the 20 years since becoming a City, West Hollywood has become known for its progressive policies, projects and programs. This project reflects the commitment in its content and process. Several cities have instituted green building standards for public works projects and many jurisdictions have provided incentives for optional programs. Very few, however, have taken green building to the all inclusive, expansive scale that West Hollywood has.

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The point system allows an infinite number of point combinations, and innovation points for new ideas. The Coordinator will provide the technical expertise to facilitate creative solutions for specific projects. The Coordinator will lead the creation of a green resource center, multiple manuals, and informational brochures, and will be encouraged to take creative approaches in all aspects of these activities. The Coordinator will need to be creative in outreach to the Redevelopment Area, with hotels and restaurants, and with the design industry. There is no off-the-shelf solution to these challenges, and the Coordinator will need to create them in the field. Finally, the Coordinator will help with a green building website to help reach a greater number of people.

Development of the program used unconventional methods to build consensus and support. A "Green Ribbon" committee of architects, designers, landscape architects, and business partners was created. The committee was in charge of identifying the scope of the program, the content of the points, the assignment of value, and the setting of minimum point thresholds. Involvement of this group (instead of development by technicians in City Hall) ensured broad community support for the program. The attached letters of support show the broad base of business and design community support.

The recent adoption of the Green Building Program demonstrates great vision, leadership, and creativity. The City of West Hollywood is not waiting for sustainable change to happen, it is creating it.

### Multiple Jurisdictions

West Hollywood will interface with multiple agencies, businesses, and jurisdictions. There has already been substantial interest from other municipalities in the Green Building program, and the City will continue to share information through conversation, presentations, and conference participation.

## **Expected Outcome and Implementation**

The Sustainable City Coordinator position is made financially feasible by a grant. Because the request is for a position, not a program or project, it is easier to define costs, practicality, and timing. The position is financially feasible and will not have cost overruns because it will have a defined salary range and overhead.

Additionally, the Coordinator position is highly practical. Because West Hollywood's green building ordinance has already been adopted, and its provisions are mandatory, it is certain that more sustainable building will occur. West Hollywood has the physical and human resource facilities to support the position, and now has regulations in place for the Coordinator to implement. The Green Building Program and the Sustainable City Coordinator position have support from the Chamber of Commerce and City leaders.

### Community Support for Outcomes

The Green Building Program was adopted by West Hollywood's Planning Commission and City Council by a unanimous decision. Community representatives came out to speak in favor of the program at all public hearings. An important piece of the two-year program development was a Green Ribbon Committee composed of local businesses, architects, landscape architects, developers, home-owners, and renters. This Committee developed

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and supported the scope, structure and content of the program. Letters of support are attached from:

- Global Green USA
- West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
- Ric Abramson, Architect and member of the Chamber of Commerce
- Edward Levin, Architect and member of the Chamber of Commerce

### **Applicability to Other Communities**

West Hollywood is known for its progressive policies, projects and programs which are observed, discussed, and incorporated by other communities. West Hollywood has adopted one of the nation's first mandatory Green Building Programs. The process for developing the program, the content of the program, and the implementation of the program are all elements that can be applied and transferred to other communities. West Hollywood has been invited to present our program at the 2006 and 2007 Municipal Green Building Conference & Expo, and at the AltBuild Alternative Building Expo. We receive inquiries from other jurisdictions on a weekly basis, asking for copies of our documents and more information.

The City has shown that green building programs can be tailored by a local jurisdiction, can be developed in concert with the local development community, can be broad in scope, and can be mandatory. Our program's success shows other jurisdictions that it is both possible and feasible to develop these sustainable policies.

In short, West Hollywood strives to take responsible, progressive actions, such as protecting and encouraging under-represented ideas and populations. This is what led to its incorporation in the 1980s, to the protection of gay rights and to the establishment of rent control. This is also why West Hollywood has adopted the City's Green Building Ordinance to protect the environment and engage in sustainable development. When green building begins to flourish in West Hollywood, other cities in Los Angeles County, the Southern California region, and the rest of the nation will turn to it to learn to implement resource management and energy conservation.



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**Project Budget**

Category	Description	Other Funding	SCGL Funding	TOTAL
<b>Project Expenditures</b>				
<b>Personnel*</b>	Position Funding, at hourly rate of \$62(with all benefits included)		\$340,000	\$340,000
<b>Contractual</b>	Design and printing of brochures, manuals and other written materials.	\$25,000 (WeHo Green Building Allocation)		
<b>Other Expenditures</b>				
<b>Program Promotion</b>				
<b>Supplies</b>	Computer & Supplies for Coordinator	\$4,000 (WeHo General Fund)		
<b>Travel</b>	Mileage reimbursement for conferences and meetings.	\$1,000 (WeHo General Fund)		\$500
<b>Training + Conferences</b>	Creation of training materials for Green Building Point System.	\$5,000 (WeHo Green Building Allocation)	\$5,000	\$10,000
<b>Telephone/Postage</b>				
<b>Meetings</b>	Room rental, speakers, prep, presentation and hand-out materials.	\$20,000 (WeHo Green Building Allocation)	\$5,000	\$25,000
<b>Other Eligible Costs</b>				
<b>Other Ineligible Costs</b>				
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

\*Breakdown of Personnel Costs is provided in separate table.

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<b>BUDGET FOR SUSTAINABLE CITY COORDINATOR POSITION</b>			
	<b>Annual Cost Breakdown</b>		
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010 (6 months)</b>
<b>Annual Salary/12:</b>	78,697	84,993	44,131
<b>PERS (17%)</b>	15,422	20,905	11,915
<b>Medical, Dental, Vision</b>	23,899	25,811	13,938
<b>Life Insurance (1.2%)</b>	944	1,445	971
<b>Disability (2.3%)</b>	1,810	2,805	1,898
<b>Workers Comp Ins.(1.2%)</b>	944	1,870	1,853
<b>Medicare (1.45%)</b>	1,141	1,232	640
<b>Deferred Compensation</b>	1,050	1,200	600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 123,908</b>	<b>\$ 140,261</b>	<b>\$ 75,946</b>

**Assumptions (Consistent with Local Union Regulations)**

Job Level: Associate Planner, Step 2

Increase to Step 3 at six months.

Increase one Step annually.

Cost of Living Increase of 3% each July 1

PERS: Budget 5% increase each July 1

Medical, Dental, Vision: budget 8% increase each January

Life Insurance: Budget .5% increase each January

Disability: Budget 1% increase each January

Workers Comp: Budget 2% increase each January

Medicare: No increase; flat rate.

Deferred Compensation: Contractually obligated increase in July 2008.

## Project Timeline for Sustainable City Coordinator

The Sustainable City Coordinator will oversee three phases of implementation over a 30 month time span. The timeline is described below:

### Phase 1 (Months 1 to 6): Intensive Ordinance Implementation: Technical Expertise, Education and Outreach

- Educate staff and the public so they can become day-to-day experts.
- Provide technical advice and counseling for individual projects (sustainable design, construction, and materials).
- Intensive outreach to City Departments to ensure smooth implementation.
- Keep Green Building Resource Center updated (ongoing), as well as website, brochures, manuals.
- Meet with Environmental Task Force.

Products: 1. Educational events and consultation for staff, developers, area businesses, and architects.  
2. Updated educational brochures, Green Building Resource Center.  
3. Meetings with staff, businesses, residents, developers.

### Phase 2 (Months 7 to 18): Coalition Building

- Form partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and Redevelopment Area representatives to foster green business practices.
- Develop coalition of business that commit to selling, marketing and using sustainable products.
- Work with Environmental Task Force to expand the scope of sustainable practices addressing transportation policy, economic development, infill opportunities, and waste diversion and recycling.
- Work with Chamber of Commerce and design industry to identify economic growth opportunities in sustainable market sectors.
- Continue technical advice and counseling for projects, as well as update of technical information materials.

Products: 1. Coalition of businesses committed to sustainable practices.  
2. Identification of sustainable economic development opportunities.  
3. Meetings with staff, developers, area businesses.  
4. Updated educational brochures, Green Building Resource Center.

### Phase 3 (Months 19 to 30): Implementing Green Practices

- Implement sustainable practices identified by Environmental Task Force.
- Work with Chamber and businesses to develop a guide to certified green businesses. Help businesses to market their sustainable practices.
- Write history of program development and key steps to share with other California communities.
- Continue outreach and awareness, building on partnerships.
- Develop long-term sustainable policy framework to guide future policy and practice.
- Continue technical advice and counseling for projects, as well as update of technical information materials.

Products: 1. Guide to certified Green Businesses.  
2. Written history of program development  
3. Meetings with staff, developers and areas businesses.

**West Hollywood staff involved in implementation of the Green Building program include:**

Susan Healy Keene, Director of Community Development

Steve Bailey, Building and Safety Manager

John Keho, Planning Manager

Francie Stefan, Senior Planner (Project Manager)

Jan Harmon, Environmental Services Program Manager

Chris Corrao, Assistant Planner

### ***Framework for General Plan Update – Green Building***

In 2003, the City began the process for updating its General Plan by attaining public comments on the relevancy of the General Plan's visions, values and policies. The process included diverse opportunities for community input into the basic visions and guiding principles, involving the participation of over 500 people. The public input process included the following steps:

- **Interviews** with community stakeholders, including representatives from the City's definable neighborhoods, business groups, service organization and agencies, interest groups, and demographic, ethnic, and social groups;
- A **community education forum** to discuss critical challenges and success stories from other cities; and
- **Surveys** distributed at subsequent community workshops.

Survey results from the public outreach showed strong public support for the development of a green building program for the City. Specifically,

- **Seventy-four percent** of participants thought it was appropriate to give incentives, such as increased density and building height, for developments that incorporate green building practices
- **Ninety-one percent** of participants strongly agreed that the City should incorporate green building techniques into its own capital improvement programs and operations in order to minimize the consumption of natural resources and reduce pollution.

The Framework for the General Plan Update also noted that the technical research phase of the General Plan Update was scheduled to happen at a later date, but in the meantime, that staff proposed to develop implementation strategies for green building practices.