Green Building in Evanston

Known to some as ‘The Green City,’ Evanston has long valued its natural resources, environmental protection, and responsible ecological practices. The City’s Strategic Plan, adopted in [year], aims to make Evanston the most livable city in America. In this spirit, Evanston pledged a reduction of its greenhouse gas emissions when it signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2006, and charted a course for meeting this pledge by creating and adopting, in 2008, the Evanston Climate Action Plan (ECAP).

The adoption in 2009 of Evanston’s Green Building Ordinance (Ordinance 124-O-09) supports the ECAP’s goals of increased energy efficiency in buildings and facilities, and reflects the City’s ongoing commitment to constant improvement of sustainable practices in the natural and built environment.

Evanston’s Green Building Ordinance requires certain construction and renovation projects to comply with “green” building standards. This pamphlet provides information regarding the applicability and requirements of the Green Building Ordinance and answers commonly asked questions related to the Ordinance, the LEED rating system, and green building.

EVANSTON’S GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE

The Green Building Ordinance relates to two main types of commercial construction – New Construction and Additions, and Interior Renovations. Some helpful definitions and the code requirements are provided below.

Definitions
- **Commercial** refers to all uses as defined and included in the scope of the International Building Code as adopted by the City. You can find these at [insert reference].
- **Interior renovations** refers to interior alteration, including remodeling, rehabilitation, or work otherwise contained mainly within the interior of a structure; this shall not include work for the sole purpose of improving a building’s system, such as HVAC, electrical, or plumbing.
- **Addition** refers only to a portion added to an existing building.

Requirements

New Construction and Additions
- The Ordinance applies to new construction and additions 10,000 sq. ft. or greater to City-owned or fully or partly City-financed buildings, and new construction and additions 10,000 sq. ft. or greater to all commercial and multi-family buildings.
- These building types shall employ the version of the LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations (“LEED-NC”) in effect 180 days prior to the date of application for a building permit, and shall achieve a LEED Silver Rating or higher.

Interior Renovations
- **Interior renovations** of all City-owned or City-financed facilities, all commercial buildings, and all multi-family buildings must either employ the version of the LEED for Commercial Interiors (“LEED-CI”) in effect 180 days prior to the date of application for a building permit and achieve Silver Rating higher of LEED certification;
  OR
- Employ the version of the City of Evanston Sustainable Building Requirements for Interior Renovations (“ESBRIR”), available at the Building Department. Projects using the ESBRIR to comply with the ordinance shall employ no fewer than:
  1. 3 measures from the ESBRIR for projects less than 5,000 sq. ft.;
2. 5 measures from the ESBRIR for projects 5,000 sq. ft. to 20,000 sq. ft.; Or 
3. 7 measures from the ESBRIR for projects greater than 20,000 sq. ft.

THE LEED RATING SYSTEM

What is LEED?

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green
Building Council (www.usgbc.org), an independent, non-profit organization that promotes sustainability through green
building. LEED was first developed in 1998, and is regularly revised to keep pace with the changing challenges and
opportunities associated with developing, building, and operating green buildings.

The LEED system evaluates buildings in key areas such as sustainable site development, water conservation, energy
efficiency, materials selection, and indoor air quality. Points earned by satisfying requirements in these areas lead to
Certified, Gold, Silver or Platinum status.

What other cities or states have green building ordinances?

Hundreds of local governmental bodies and a growing number of state governments – and countless cities outside the
U.S. - have adopted some form of LEED standards as part of their construction guidelines. In the Midwest,
Northwestern University, the City of Chicago, Normal, IL, and St. Louis, MO are examples of cities and institutions that
have incorporated LEED standards as part of building requirements.

GREEN BUILDING

What are ‘green’ buildings?

Buildings – their design, construction, operation, and demolition – are responsible for 70% of the electricity we use and
the waste we generate. Green buildings economize resources, use materials wisely, and employ new techniques for
conserving energy and water.

What are the benefits of green buildings?

Green buildings have been shown to result in occupants’ or owners’ savings in energy and building system costs. Green
buildings also provide gains by providing a healthier, more efficient workplace, increasing productivity, reducing
operating expenses, and saving money in utility costs.

Is green building more expensive?

Studies suggest that while construction costs, at present, may increase slightly (up to 2%), expected energy savings (as
much as 17.5%/year) offer net gains or savings for green buildings. Mainly this results from savings in energy and
operating costs; there are also long-term health benefits and savings from using green, non-toxic materials. These costs
are expected to drop over time as green building practices are widely adopted.

Does green building affect how a building looks?

No. A green building can look as traditional as a colonial-style house, as ordinary as a shopping plaza, or as modern as a
museum or airport.
What distinguishes green buildings are design strategies that optimize energy systems, use sustainable materials, recycle construction waste, conserve water use and accommodate sustainable practices like bicycling and car-pooling. More and more, ‘green’ buildings will be mainstream.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

On the US Green Building Council, visit www.usgbc.org
On the LEED Rating System, visit www.gbc.org
On the City Of Evanston’s sustainability initiatives, visit www.cityofevanston.org/green