

Green is the New Building Standard In Dallas

DALLAS, Texas, April 15, 2008 (ENS) - The Dallas City Council has passed a new construction requirement to reduce environmental impact, becoming one of the first major American cities to pass comprehensive building standard for both residential and commercial construction.

On April 9, the City Council unanimously adopted a green construction ordinance aimed at reducing energy and water consumption in all new houses and commercial buildings.

"We're at the lead of the major cities in this country. We had industry come in and really embrace it. We crafted it to make sense for everybody," said Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert.

While a Green Building standard for city-owned buildings already exists, requiring those over 10,000 square feet be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED, Silver standards, a standard did not exist for private development.

LEED is a third party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.



The new sustainably built Buzz Condos in Dallas

(Photo credit unknown)

Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 through a consensus based process, LEED serves as a tool for buildings of all types and sizes. LEED certification offers third party validation of a project's green features and verifies that the building is operating the way it was designed to operate.

To develop recommendations for all new private development in Dallas, a Green Building Task Force was created, made up of members of the development sector.

"We support efforts to create a better-built environment and accept the responsibility that every industry, and now every home, must share to help the region reach its air quality goals," said Donny Mack, president of the Home Builders Association of Greater Dallas.

"Like all mandates, there will be a cost to the consumer, and we will continue to work with Mayor Leppert and the City Council to ensure that innovation, efficiency and cost considerations are used when implementing these regulations," said Mack.

The newly enacted ordinance will be implemented in two phases beginning in 2009.

The first phase requires that homebuilders construct their homes to be 15 percent more efficient than the base energy code and meet four out of six high-efficiency water reduction strategies.

Beginning in 2011, Phase 2 will require all homes to be built to either the LEED standard or the Green Built North Texas standard.

They must also include points toward a 20 percent water use reduction and be a minimum of 17.5 percent more efficient than the base energy code or the performance of Energy Star for homes.

For commercial projects, Phase 1 of the new ordinance requires buildings smaller than 50,000 square feet to be 15 percent more efficient than the base energy code and use 20 percent less water than required by the current Dallas Plumbing Code.

All roof surfaces with a slope of 2:12 inches or less must meet the EPA's Energy Star low-slope roof requirements; and meet outdoor lighting restrictions, unless exempted for safety and security reasons.

For commercial projects larger than 50,000 square feet, Phase 1 requires buildings to meet 85 percent of the points required under the appropriate LEED rating system for a certified level, including one point for 20 percent water use reduction, and a minimum two points for 14 percent more efficient than the base energy code.

Phase 2, beginning in 2011, requires all commercial projects to be LEED certifiable under the appropriate LEED rating system, including one point for 20 percent water use reduction, and a minimum three points for 17.5 percent more efficient than the base energy code.

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