



CITY of CALABASAS

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

TO: Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Michael Klein, Community Development Director, AICP
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FILE NO.: N/A

SUBJECT: Green Building Code Discussion

APPLICANT: City of Calabasas

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff on potential revisions to CMC Chapter 17.34 (Green Development Standards)

BACKGROUND:

With the understanding that the construction, demolition, and operation of buildings consume large amounts of energy, water, and raw materials, and contribute significantly to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, on January 7, 2004, the City adopted Ordinance 2003-185, the City's Green Development Standards (CMC Chapter 17.34). The Green Development Standards require that all private non-residential development over 500 sq. ft. meet the equivalent of the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System Version 2.0 requirements for either a "Certified" rating for structures ranging between 500 sq. ft. to 5,000 sq. ft., or a "Silver" Rating for new structures above 5,000 sq. ft. The ordinance does not require projects to formally submit to the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) for a review and rating award, but rather, an applicant has the option to either submit for the formal review, or request that staff conduct the compliance review. The ordinance has been applied to a number of projects since 2004.

In summary, LEED is a rating system developed by USGBC, which is a private, non-profit group (of development professionals), to encourage incorporation of sustainable components and practices into the construction and operation of new buildings (and major building renovations), and provides a process to review and evaluate how sustainable a building is by the number of points it ultimately earns. The system includes prerequisites,

which are required, and points which are elective. A rating is awarded based on the number of points a project has earned, and points are earned by providing documentation to demonstrate that points related to sustainability component areas have been met through metrics, or through the provision of certain identified systems or features. In LEED V.2, there are 7 prerequisites, and the minimum number of points to be awarded a rating is 26, which is the minimum to achieve a “Certified” rating. Higher ratings include Silver, Gold, and Platinum. LEED also has credits to address the health and comfort of staff which has been proven to relate directly to staff productivity. More recent versions of the LEED rating system include a greater number of credit categories, more possible credits, and higher point thresholds to earn ratings. Some examples of credits that can be earned are provision of dedicated clean air vehicle charging facilities and/or dedicated parking, providing energy savings above an identified baseline, use of building materials made from recycled products, and flushing out airborne contaminants prior to building occupation just to name a few.

Subsequently, in 2011, the State’s Building Standards Commission established the California Green Building Code (CalGreen). CalGreen works a little differently than the LEED rating system. CalGreen consists of mandatory measures separated into either residential or non-residential categories. CalGreen further includes voluntary measures that local jurisdictions can adopt as they choose, known as Tier 1 and Tier 2 measures. Mandatory measures are required for every qualifying project, while Tier 1 and Tier 2 measures would only be required if a local jurisdiction formally adopted them. At this point, the City has adopted CalGreen’s mandatory measures. While it is tricky to compare CalGreen to LEED due to how each respective system is applied, how compliance is confirmed, and given the use of (in some cases) different metrics, there is synergy with sustainable component areas such as planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material and resource conservation and environmental quality. The other main difference is that CalGreen is not flexible, meaning you cannot pick and choose which measures you would like a building to meet; rather, a building must meet all defined mandatory measures.

DISCUSSION:

As mentioned above, the City’s Green Development Standards were adopted in 2004. At the time, while the State’s Building Code did include very stringent standards for energy use in buildings, it did not yet have a comprehensive set of codes to address other State sustainability and conservation goals. In that respect, Calabasas’ adoption of Green Development Standards using the USGBC’s LEED rating system was very forward thinking.

However, over time, the State passed numerous bills including AB 32 and SB 32 (GHG reduction targets), addressing California’s Climate and sustainability goals, and to help achieve these goals, in 2008, a voluntary pilot version of CalGreen was released, which the City of Calabasas adopted and implemented as a trial. Subsequently, in 2011, the State

implemented CalGreen as mandatory standards. Ever since, the City has been implementing a semi-redundant set of standards for non-residential development. Since LEED V.2 does not have a rating system that applies to residential development, currently, only CalGreen applies to residential development in Calabasas. USGBC now has newer rating systems that address residential development including single-family homes and multi-family homes. However, there is currently no LEED rating system specifically designed for a mixed-use project, while CalGreen has mandatory standards that apply to each mixed-use arrangement based on occupancy type.

Also, in the time between 2004 and the present, USGBC has adopted newer versions of the LEED rating system for building design and construction (LEED BC+D), the most recent being Version 5, adopted January 1, 2024. Because CalGreen is now a requirement, and LEED has newer versions, and versions that address different occupancy types (i.e. Residential), situations (i.e. Interior Design and Construction, Cities and Communities), and functions (i.e. Building Operations and Maintenance), it is beneficial for the City to re-evaluate how it wants to apply green development standards moving forward. To that end, the City Council has asked that the Planning Commission provide feedback on how to move forward. For instance, some options could include:

- 1) Eliminating application of LEED altogether (since CalGreen addresses both commercial and residential development)
- 2) Amending CMC Chapter 17.34 to apply more current versions of the LEED rating system for non-residential development
- 3) Other ideas?