

POLICIES FOR CONSIDERATION BY NEW BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Green Building Task Force

I. Financing and Incentives

- a. **Green Investment Fund:** The City could establish a Green Investment Fund to incrementally fund energy performance improvements in new buildings. This could take the form of either a grant or a low income loan program, and would be used to encourage innovative measures such renewable energy systems, neighborhood scale solutions, “Zero Energy Capable” building demonstration projects, or innovative whole building improvements that are outside of the scope of existing utility incentive programs.
- b. **Feebate:** A carbon or green building feebate could create an incentive/penalty program tied to either prescriptive or performance efficiency requirements, such that those falling below the minimum would pay the fee, the fee would be waived for those just meeting the threshold, and owners choosing to exceed the minimum requirements would be eligible for a rebate.
- c. **Density Bonus:** This policy option would consider expanding the scope of the existing downtown density bonus program, which currently allows projects that meet defined criteria such as LEED Silver certification to build to greater heights and densities. Under this alternative the density bonus would be applied more generally throughout the City, and specific energy performance thresholds would be added for participation in the program.
- d. **“Priority Green” Permitting System:** DPD could create a dedicated team of permit examiners, with expertise in and an understanding of the issues involved in sustainable design and construction, to prioritize the permitting of projects that meet a threshold for sustainability and energy performance. In addition, Priority Green permitting could provide a special compliance pathway to facilitate the rapid approval of innovative energy and water efficiency measures that would otherwise face time consuming and expensive permitting challenges under Seattle’s existing codes. This program is currently underway as a pilot, but under this proposal would be expanded, with a greater emphasis on energy efficiency opportunities.

II. Mandates

- a. **Mandatory Green Building Performance Standards:** The City currently requires that all new City of Seattle buildings larger 5,000 square feet achieve a LEED Silver level of certification. The City could enact an ordinance whereby all new construction, in both the public and private sector, is required to achieve a performance level based on a higher third party standard such as LEED Gold or Built Green 4-Star.
- b. **Energy Code Updates:** Although the City of Seattle has what is commonly regarded as an excellent energy code, energy codes in other jurisdictions, particularly in Europe, have defined performance based energy intensity targets that are more stringent than those achieved with our existing energy code. This analysis would consider the implementation of a performance based energy code (with an alternative prescriptive path) with embedded energy intensity or GHG

generation targets. This option would also assess the implications of using post occupancy energy audits for verification of actual energy performance in new construction.

- c. **Building Code Updates:** While energy codes define requirements for systems with direct energy impacts, such as HVAC, lighting, and the building envelope, other aspects of a project such as site development, water use efficiency, indoor environmental quality, the use of renewable energy resources, and the building's impact on the atmosphere, materials and resources can have significant indirect impacts. This option would consider the adoption of a comprehensive building code based on ASHRAE Standard 189 to identify and capture potential energy savings potential in all aspects of a building's design, construction and operations.