



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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Contact: Libby Hudson, Long Range Planning Manager
City of Bainbridge Island
(206) 780-3767
lhudson@ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us

City Establishes Groundbreaking Housing Design Program

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, November 19, 2009 – The Bainbridge Island City Council took the final step last week in establishing policies designed to encourage new housing that is both affordable and sustainable. The groundbreaking Housing Design Demonstration Projects (HDDP) program will promote innovative residential housing projects that provide more diverse and affordable housing options while using progressive green building and sustainable development practices.

The program is the first in the nation to provide incentives for buildings that meet the Living Building Challenge, a rigorous set of standards for environmentally and socially responsible building. An ordinance establishing the framework for the program was passed in August, and the Council last week gave unanimous approval to a tiered point system through which developers can “earn” incentives by incorporating specified green building, innovative site design, and affordable housing elements in new residential projects.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to address two important goals for our community – increasing our affordable housing stock and encouraging environmentally friendly building,” said City Councilmember Hilary Franz, who worked with Associate Planner Jennifer Sutton to develop the legislation. “By linking green building standards with affordable housing, the ordinance will help us create a more sustainable future for our community – socially as well as environmentally.”

Under the point system, developments that meet minimum standards for housing diversity and innovative site design will be eligible for some flexibility in site development. Those that meet higher standards for green building, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Built Green Washington, or Living Building Challenge certification; include homes 1,600 square feet or smaller; use innovative site design elements, and incorporate affordable housing will also be eligible for a density bonus. Developments that attain the Living Building Challenge or offer at least 50%

affordable housing units will be eligible for the highest incentive, an increased density bonus. The policy also requires builders to meet energy efficiency and water use reduction goals, and encourages progressive design strategies like natural storm water management, drought tolerant landscaping, community gardens, links to pedestrian and bicycle transportation routes, and habitat restoration.

About LEED Green Building Rating System®. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System® was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. It is a voluntary, nationally recognized, and third-party verified green building standard. LEED can be applied to all types of buildings, public and private, and has four progressive levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. LEED certified commercial and institutional buildings use an average of 32% less electricity, 26% less natural gas and 36% less total energy than standard buildings. They also use 40% less water and construction that results in 70% less solid waste, further reducing emissions over traditional construction and operation. Research shows that there is no significant difference in average cost for green buildings as compared to non-green buildings. Upfront cost increases for green buildings range from 0 to 4% and lower the expected lifetime operating costs by 20%. For more information, visit www.usgbc.org.

About the Living Building Challenge. A program of the International Living Building Institute and Cascadia Region Green Building Council, the Living Building Challenge is pushing the boundaries of green building by using restorative design principles to help our society move quickly to a state of balance between natural and built environments. The Living Building Challenge requires developments at all scales to be informed by their eco-region's characteristics; generate all of their own energy with renewable resources; capture and treat all of their water; operate efficiently; and be designed for maximum beauty. There are seven performance areas—site, water, energy, health, materials, equity, and beauty—and all criteria in each category must be met in order for a project to be certified.

The Living Building Challenge aims to facilitate changes in the green building industry by embracing the psychology of the “end game” to examine the best knowledge and practices available today – including design, construction and operation; material sourcing; building codes; economics; consumer expectations; etc. – and creating a benchmark of the highest level of sustainability currently possible in the marketplace. It is a challenge to all design professionals, contractors and building owners to create the foundation for a sustainable future in the fabric of our communities. For more information and to download the standard, visit www.ilbi.org.

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