

**Report to/Rapport au :**

**Planning Committee  
Comité de l'urbanisme**

**and Council / et au Conseil**

**June 18, 2012  
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**CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE**

**Ref N°: ACS2012-PAI-PGM-0127**

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**SUBJECT: 2012 GREEN BUILDING PROMOTION PROGRAM**

**OBJET: PROGRAMME DE PROMOTION DES BÂTIMENTS ÉCOLOGIQUES  
DE 2012**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Planning Committee recommend that Council receive the 2012 Green Building Promotion Program, as attached in Document 1.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Comité de l'urbanisme recommande au Conseil de prendre connaissance du Programme de promotion des bâtiments écologiques de 2012 ci-joint en tant que Document 1.**

**BACKGROUND**

The City's green building efforts began in 2005, when the Green Building Policy for the construction of corporate buildings was adopted. The Policy requires that all new City buildings meet a minimum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified standard. The policy has been very effective; to date, four City of Ottawa buildings have been awarded LEED certification (three at the Certified level and one at

the Gold level.) Seventeen more buildings have been completed and are now in the certification process, and another seven are in the design and construction stages.

There are many environmental benefits to building green, including:

- reduced energy use and CO2 emissions;
- improved air quality;
- reduced quantities of stormwater runoff and better quality of stormwater;
- reduced urban heat island effect; and
- reduced pressure on aquifers and water supplies through water-efficient plumbing and landscaping.

In addition to the environmental benefits of building green, there are important economic and social benefits. The economic benefits include lower energy costs, reduced exposure to rising energy prices and reduced pressure on municipal infrastructure and services. From a social perspective, recent research has documented improved health and wellness for people living or working in green buildings.

While the City can choose to construct its own buildings to a LEED standard, the larger challenge is promoting green buildings in the broader community. Recognizing this, in April 2009, Council approved a Green Building Pilot Program with the overall goal to increase the number of green building projects in the private sector, particularly those that provide public benefits and reduce demand on energy and City infrastructure. (Ref. No. ACS2009-ICS-ECO-0001). The main objectives of the pilot program were to:

- create and foster an integrated review process and understanding of green building projects at the staff level;
- promote green building in the broader community; and
- recommend an overall ongoing program and constructive role for the City to play in promoting and assisting green building projects and integrated green design processes.

Since then, considerable work has been done to advance green building in Ottawa, including:

- a training course in the LEED Green Associate standard, providing 22 development review staff with a solid grounding in the principles of green building;
- a conference on green building retrofits, held in May 2010 in partnership with the Canada Green Building Council and Carleton University;
- a series of three workshops for development and building review staff on principles of sustainable design, as well as a workshop on changes to the Ontario Building Code;
- improved online information resources and promotion (accessible at <http://www.ottawa.ca/greenbuildings>);

- hosting the 2011 Green Building Showcase breakfast event at City Hall, including a set of 17 information panels profiling Ottawa green buildings which have since been displayed at a number of City buildings; and
- extensive research on best practices in promoting green building in other cities.

Building on these initiatives, the 2012 Green Building Promotion Program (Document 1) recommends a variety of activities the City can undertake to further promote green building construction. This includes improved training and information flow to establish a Green Express Lane to facilitate green development approvals and promote green buildings, cost-benefit research to evaluate the business case for financial incentives to green new or existing buildings, initiating a 'green roof' program, amending the Official Plan to better use existing regulatory tools in securing green development, and a renewed focus on finding ways to green existing as opposed to new building stock. The proposed activities of the Green Building Promotion Program are discussed below.

## **DISCUSSION**

The 2012 Green Building Promotion Program is identified as a specific Term of Council deliverable which supports the City's environmental stewardship priority, under Strategic Objective ES3 - Reduce Environmental Impact.

In developing specific recommendations to green the building stock, staff undertook the following actions:

- An assessment of the original Green Building pilot results to date;
- Consultation with the building industry and internal staff to gather input on potential program activities;
- A review of the legal tools and enabled powers available to the City; and
- A review of green building promotion programs in other cities, with particular attention to Ontario municipalities whose legal context is comparable to Ottawa.

Subsequently, a range of strategies were reviewed and considered for inclusion in the Green Building Promotion Program, including:

- regulatory/mandatory green development standards;
- financial incentives such as grants or development charge reductions;
- removing unnecessary regulatory obstacles to certain aspects of green building;
- procedural incentives such as a green development review process;
- development incentives such as Section 37 height and density bonusing;
- further staff training in green development principles and programs; and
- further public education, promotion and information resources.

Details regarding these activities and findings are described in Document 1.

As a result of this research, to increase the number of green buildings being built or retrofitted in Ottawa, the 2012 Green Building Promotion Program recommends the following:

*ACTIVITY 1: Development and implementation of a Green Express Lane for developments incorporating green building techniques*

- Design and implement improved service to green developments, including but not limited to those intended to meet LEED or Green Globes certification, through improved staff training, better coordination with Building Permit office, and direct access to qualified, knowledgeable review staff.

*ACTIVITY 2: Provide staff training and develop information resources*

- Undertake staff training to inform Development Review planners and Building Officials on energy efficiency programs offered by Enbridge and Hydro-Ottawa, in order to better coordinate promotion activities among the City of Ottawa and utility providers.
- Extend LEED Green Associate training opportunities to other departments; take advantage of group training discounts to include staff from other departments involved in green building development and operation (e.g. Construction and Design).
- Explore feasibility and cost/benefit of a “LEED Sustainable Sites” information service that would advise prospective developers whether their proposed site would meet the criteria for Sustainable Sites credits under LEED-NC 2009 (Site Selection, Development Density/Community Connectivity, Public Transit Access and Brownfields).

*ACTIVITY 3: Explore financial incentives for green building*

Explore financial incentives for new green construction through a social cost-benefit analysis of various green building features. Results of the analysis will form the broad basis for a possible future financial assistance/incentive program to green buildings. This analysis will include assessment of the feasibility of a property-secured loan program providing financial aid for energy retrofits through a Community Improvement Plan, Local Improvement Charge or other mechanism with a report back to Council in 2013

*ACTIVITY 4: Ottawa Green Roof Program*

- Develop a research, education and promotion program aimed at raising community awareness and building capacity in green roof techniques, technologies and permit requirements.
- Establish a Green Roof Working Group to identify actions to increase green roofs in Ottawa including a potential framework of Official Plan policies that could call for mandatory green roofs in certain developments, as well as a possible grant program for green roofs. The working group would include representatives from the building and development industry, technology experts and other stakeholders and would report to Council in 2013.

*ACTIVITY 5: Ottawa Green Development Standard*

- In the next five years, develop and implement a “made-in-Ottawa” Green Standard, as time and resources become available. Green Standard to be conceptually modelled on Toronto's Green Standard, i.e. a two-tier system with a

mandatory component (Tier One) and a possible financial incentive-based component (Tier Two) that is adapted to reflect Ottawa's context and priorities.

**ACTIVITY 6: *Pursue opportunities to green the existing building stock***

- Carry out research and develop policy proposals for the next iteration of the Green Building Promotion Program, with a particular focus on improving the environmental performance of existing buildings. This will begin with a stakeholder workshop in partnership with the Ottawa Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council in fall 2012.

The proposed activities for 2012 will be funded from the existing Green Buildings capital account. The Environmental Services Department (Environmental Sustainability Branch) has been consulted and will be helping to lead energy policy and program initiatives.

**RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

Ottawa's rural area will benefit as the the program has citywide relevance as greener construction can be encouraged throughout Ottawa. While the majority of green buildings tend to be built in urban and suburban locations, green developments have been undertaken in rural villages.

**CONSULTATION**

In 2010-2011, an online survey was carried out to solicit the building industry's views on green building. The vast majority of respondents (84 per cent) believe the City should do something to promote green building practices. At least 50 per cent of the respondents supported each of the following actions:

- Promote the green building concept to potential buyers and the community at large;
- Provide a financial incentive;
- Provide more information to local developers;
- Facilitate green building through the approvals process; and
- Provide more information to local builders.

Staff has also met with, and received correspondence from, the Greater Ottawa Homebuilders' Association (GOHBA) in May 2011. GOHBA has requested that four specific actions be taken with respect to green building:

1. Promote awareness of green building to the public;
2. Eliminate barriers to using innovative green construction materials and techniques;
3. Amend zoning policies to be in line with the City's long term vision; and
4. Consider homeowner incentives.

GOHBA's letter is attached as Document 2.

Ecology Ottawa also submitted a report entitled "Building Ottawa's Energy Revolution," dated March 2009, which makes three specific recommendations:

1. The city should increase its standards for new municipal buildings from basic LEED certification to LEED Gold certification.
2. The city should introduce incentives for private developers to build green, such as tax exemptions, conditional re-zoning, reduced permit fees and development charges, and a fast-track approvals process.
3. The city should implement its proposed LEED promotion project as soon as possible.

Ecology Ottawa's submission is attached as Document 3.

Ecology Ottawa and the David Suzuki Foundation have also submitted requests for a specific program to use the Local Improvement Charge mechanism to provide financing for home energy retrofits.

Many of the proposals in these two documents are addressed in the proposed 2012 Green Building Promotion Program, attached as Document 1.

The City Environmental Advisory Committee also passed a resolution in support of an Ottawa feasibility assessment for a Property Secured Loan program and their resolution is attached as document 4.

### **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLORS**

Not applicable as this is a City-Wide report.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management impediments to implementing any of the recommendations associated with this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As at March 31, 2012, funds in the amount of \$183,438 were available in 904643 Leadership in Energy and Environmental to fund Green Promotions Program initiatives.

Funds for the Green Promotions Program were not identified in the Term of Council Priorities; there are no additional Strategic Initiatives funds available for this program.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

The Green Building Promotion Program makes recommendations consistent with the Ontario Building Code and regulatory specifications concerning accessibility will continue to be enforced.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The environmental benefits are substantial, as outlined in Document 1, and include reduced energy use and CO2 emissions, improved air quality, improved quality and reduced quantities of stormwater runoff, reduced urban heat island effect, reduced pressure on aquifers and water supplies through water-efficient plumbing and landscaping, and improved health of building occupants.

### **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct technical implications associated with this report.

### **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The *2012 Green Building Promotion Program* is identified as a specific 2011-2014 Term of Council deliverable which supports the City's environmental stewardship priority, under Strategic Objective ES3 - Reduce Environmental Impact. The program (strategic initiative #29) directs staff to "foster green building development in the private building sector by creating a green checklist for builders, training staff on green buildings, creating Web-based information and recognition, establishing a facilitated development approvals process, and providing a report on potential incentive programs."

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

- Document 1 [2012 Green Building Promotion Program - Full Report – attached separately](#)
- Document 2 [Letter from Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association attached separately](#)
- Document 3 [Submission from Ecology Ottawa attached separately](#)
- Document 4 [EAC Resolution on Home and Small Business Energy Retrofit Program attached separately](#)

### **DISPOSITION**

Subject to approval of this report, program activities (outlined in Document 1) will be carried out by Planning and Growth Management with assistance from the Environmental Services Department where required. Funding for future program activities will go to the appropriate standing committee approval.