

# Green Builder Programs

## PURPOSE

To promote voluntary compliance by homebuilders with green building standards.

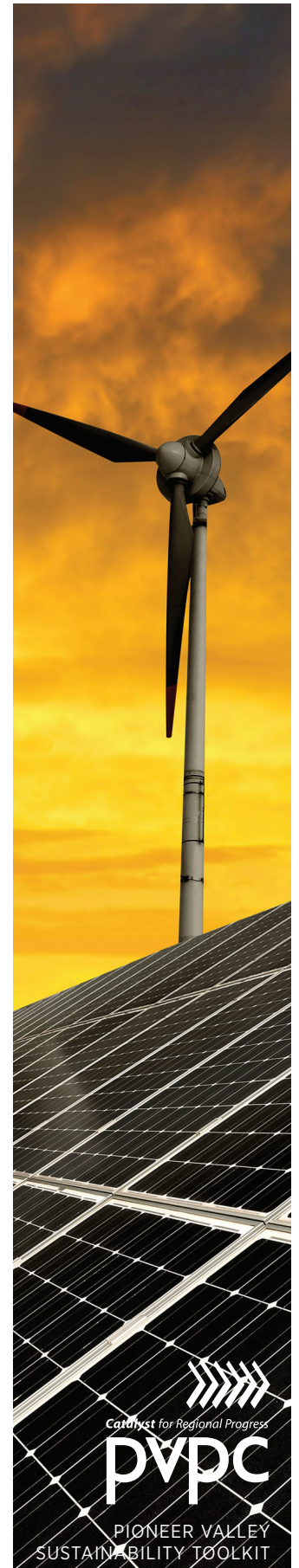
## HOW IT WORKS

Communities can create voluntary builder certification programs offering incentives – such as priority plan review and guaranteed permitting timelines – to homebuilders who follow green building practices in new residential construction.

## EXAMPLES OF WHERE STRATEGY HAS BEEN ADOPTED

Nearby in the Northeast region, the Town of Acton, Massachusetts adopted a zoning by-law (section 5.5B.2.2.d) allowing for a density bonus for buildings achieving LEED certification in their East Acton Village District. The Township of Cranford, NJ adopted a similar measure (Ordinance No. 2005-46), establishing a Green Building Density Incentive program, whereby redevelopers who achieve LEED certification and comply with the specific program requirements may earn a development density bonus from the Township. The Town of Babylon, New York went farther by adopting a local law that requires LEED certification for any new construction of commercial buildings, office buildings, industrial buildings, multiple residence, or senior citizen multiple residence over 4,000 square feet. If certification is achieved, the Town refunds the certification fees paid to USGBC by the developer.

Further away, the City of Austin, Texas created what is now the Austin Energy Green Building program in 1985. The city-run program helps new and established contractors to design and build homes with the health of the occupant, the environment, and energy efficiency at the center of the process. The city provides information, resources, education, and consulting services related to green building to homeowners and developers in the voluntary program. The program is free and benefits the city, developers, and residents in different ways. The city gets a better designed, longer lasting, more energy efficient housing stock and thus a higher assessed value on the housing stock. The developer's project and the developer's company become part of Austin's searchable online directory of green building professionals, and are featured in bimonthly newsletters. The



homeowners benefit from owning a healthy, easy to maintain, and energy efficient home as well as qualifying for rebates, loans, and energy efficiency improvements.

Also, the City of Mill Valley, California, just north of San Francisco, has developed an incentive system for builders and developers who surpass the minimum environmental and ecological requirements for new construction. The rating system, which all new residential and commercial development must meet, is based on the LEED score, “Build it Green” checklist or “Green Point” checklist depending on size and type of development. All three systems are independent guides to assist in ranking a building’s efficiency. The city provides some incentives to developments that exceed these requirements. The incentives include the presentation of a plaque from the city to the developer, allowing the contractor to use the City Green Building logo on promotional material, and featuring the business or project on the city’s website.

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## LINKS TO MODEL BYLAWS OR MORE INFORMATION:

LEED BUILDING CODE INCENTIVES:

<http://www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=2021>

AUSTIN ENERGY GREEN BUILDING:

<http://www.austinenergy.com/energy%20efficiency/Programs/Green%20Building/index.htm>

MILL VALLEY GREEN BUILDING:

[www.millvalleylibrary.org/Index.aspx?page=948](http://www.millvalleylibrary.org/Index.aspx?page=948)

US GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL:

<http://www.usgbc.org/>

BUILT GREEN:

<http://www.builditgreen.org/>

GLOBAL GREEN USA:

<http://www.globalgreen.org/>

US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY:

<http://www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/>

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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