

Sustainable Facilities Policy

The County of Chatham ("County") is committed to environmental, economic, and social stewardship of County buildings and facilities and continues to demonstrate environmental leadership in the community. Effective February 20, 2017, the following types of county owned or county funded projects will be will be designed and constructed with a goal of achieving LEED Version 4 Silver Level (or an equivalent third-party certification) and as a minimum, be formally LEED certified, and designed to earn ENERGY STAR Certification:

- All new building construction projects
- Major renovations of buildings 5,000 sq.ft. & greater; and
- Renovations impacting major building systems affecting energy consumption

Preference will be given to design practices that can demonstrate a return on investment (ROI) of seven (7) years or less. ROI will be factored into the analysis of all major building systems.

In addition, county Staff will choose existing County-owned facilities to become LEED Existing Building: Operations & Maintenance (EBOM) certified and achieve ENERGY STAR Certification over a 10-year phased approach. Preference will be given to buildings and systems that can demonstrate a 7-year ROI.

The County made the determination to require a third party certification recognizing the value the process will bring to the County's goal of being an environmental leader. These certifications have become customary practice in the building community as entities have seen the proven benefits and reduction of associated premium costs.

Recognized benefits include:

- A comprehensive industry-accepted process and framework to guide design, building, renovation, operation and maintenance;
- A community of professionals to offer support, guidance and practical experience;
- Access to the latest technologies and practices;
- A vehicle to measure the County against other municipal environmental leaders globally;
- A rigorous third party commissioning process;
- An ongoing method to assist with measurement, verification, recording and reporting of sustainable features;
- Cost savings and improved working conditions; and
- A consistent county-wide method by which the County will design, construct, renovate operate and maintain its occupied facilities.

However, recognizing that no system is perfect, Chatham County may divert from this policy on a case by case basis if implementation of the policy is found to be uniquely cost prohibitive or where a certification process conflicts with the County's environmental, economic or societal values.

Policy Purpose:

This Policy for Sustainable Facilities (“Policy”) is intended to direct County staff and staff of agencies for which the county provides funding of facilities to locate, design, construct, operate and maintain sustainable County-owned and County-funded facilities, which meet the functionality and service delivery needs while minimizing environmental impacts and conserving and protecting current and future resources. Sustainable facilities not only provide environmental benefits to the community, they result in economic savings to the County; support the region’s sustainable building industry; and protect occupant health, maximize productivity and encourage sustainable employee behaviors. All these elements are crucial for staff to address when striving to achieve the County’s goal of becoming a global leader in environmental sustainability.

Definitions:

County-owned, managed, and/or funded: Facilities owned, managed or provided funding by the County.

Designed to Earn ENERGY STAR: Recognizes a design project that meets strict EPA criteria for estimated energy performance. It signifies that, once built, the building is poised to achieve top energy performance and will be eligible to earn ENERGY STAR certification.

ENERGY STAR Certification: Recognizes an existing building that meets strict EPA criteria for estimated energy performance. It signifies the building achieves top energy performance.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design): Consensus based generalized point rating system for locating, designing, constructing, operating and certifying sustainable buildings. Rating system addresses environmental predetermined categories that include sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental policy, design and process innovation, and LEED Accredited Professional.

LEED-EBOM: Consensus based generalized point rating system for ongoing operations and maintenance of existing commercial and institutional buildings. The certification system identifies and rewards current best practices and provides an outline for building’s to use less energy, water and natural resources; improve the indoor environment; and uncover operating inefficiencies.

Major Renovation: A renovation of at least 5,000 square feet of internal occupied space involving significant mechanical, electrical & plumbing features of the facility.

New Construction: County-owned buildings and facilities that are to be planned and constructed on a new or existing site.

Uniquely cost prohibitive: A cost premium greater than a 5% of the total project budget, due to the inclusion of sustainable features & associated design fees per certification of new and existing facilities