

Summary of Findings in Local Green Building Incentives Spreadsheet

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This paper accompanies the local green building incentives spreadsheet found on the Municipal Law section of the Center for Climate Change Law's website. The spreadsheet details 165 local green building incentives and classifies them into eight types. These types are briefly described below and the localities that employ each particular incentive are listed.

Categories of Green Building Incentives:

- Expedited Permitting Process – 38 programs
- Fee Reductions and Waivers – 33 programs
- Technical and Material Assistance – 31 programs
- Density Bonuses and Variances – 19 programs
- Tax Incentives – 18 programs
- Grants – 11 programs
- Loans – 8 programs
- Rebates – 7 programs

Expedited Permitting Process – 38 programs

Many municipalities expedite the permitting process for green building projects by providing priority plan and permit review. Whereas normal permitting may take months or even years, resulting in increased project costs and delays, priority review may take place in as little as 7 days. This reduction in time can save the developer a great deal of money, without requiring a large financial investment from the municipality.

Aventura, FL	Marin County, CA
Bellingham, WA	Miami Beach, FL
Big Bear Lake, CA	Miami Lakes, FL
Bothell, WA	Miami-Dade County, FL
Buckeye, AZ	Northbrook, IL
Chandler, AZ	Portland, OR
Charlotte County, FL	San Bernardino County, CA
Chicago, IL	San Diego County, CA
Columbia, SC	San Diego, CA
Costa Mesa, CA	San Francisco, CA
Cupertino, CA	San Rafael, CA
Dallas, TX	Santa Cruz, CA
Deltona, FL	Santa Monica, CA
Gainesville, FL	Sarasota County, FL
Hillsborough County, FL	Scottsdale, AZ
Issaquah, WA	Solana Beach, CA
Jacksonville, FL	Ventura, CA
Los Altos Hills, CA	Washington, D.C.
Los Angeles, CA	West Hollywood, CA

Fee Reductions and Waivers – 33 programs

Municipalities may also waive or reduce permitting fees for green construction and improvements. Most programs require that the property owner pay all fees upfront, to ensure compliance. These fees are fully or partially reimbursed after construction and certification are complete.

Anchorage, AK	Lakewood, CO
Asheville, NC	Marin County, CA
Aurora, CO	Mecklenburg County, NC
Babylon, NY	Miami Beach, FL
Bothell, WA	Miami Lakes, FL
Burbank, CA	New Albany, OH
Burbank, CA	Northbrook, IL
Catawba County, NC	Riverhead, NY
Chandler, AZ	San Antonio, TX
Chicago, IL	San Bernardino County, CA
Columbia, SC	San Diego County, CA
Costa Mesa, CA	San Rafael, CA
Cupertino, CA	Sarasota County, FL
Deltona, FL	Solana Beach, CA
Doylestown Borough, PA	Tucson, AZ
Gainesville, FL	Wilmington, OH
Jacksonville, FL	

Technical and Material Assistance – 31 programs

Municipalities can assist green developers by providing technical or material assistance for projects. Forms of technical assistance include: free consultation with green building experts, access to special city resources, and free plan review. Municipalities also offer marketing assistance, including plaques, award programs, and publicity benefits to help promote green developers in the community.

Arlington County, VA	Miami Lakes, FL
Aventura, FL	Northbrook, IL
Big Bear Lake, CA	Oakland, CA
Bothell, WA	Pasadena, CA
Buckeye, AZ	San Antonio, TX
Chandler, AZ	San Bernardino, CA
Charlotte County, FL	San Diego, CA
Columbia, SC	San Rafael, CA
Deltona, FL	Santa Cruz, CA
Gainesville, FL	Sarasota County, FL
Issaquah, WA	Scottsdale, AZ
Jacksonville, FL	Seattle, WA
Los Altos Hills, FL	Solana Beach, CA
Marin County, CA (Res / Com)	Washington, D.C.
Marin County, CA (Com)	West Hollywood, CA
Miami Beach, FL	

Density Bonuses and Variances – 19 programs

Some municipalities provide density and height bonuses for green building projects, typically contingent upon certification with LEED or another recognized rating agency. Types of density bonuses include: increases in the permitted Floor Area Ratio (FAR), increases in the number of approved dwellings, and increases in the number of building stories. A few municipalities offer other variances as well. Density bonuses and variances can provide significant benefits to the property owner, without imposing a significant cost on the municipality.

Acton, MA	Kearny, NJ
Arlington County, VA	Long Beach, CA
Ashland, OR	Nashville, TN
Aventura, FL	Pittsburg, PA
Bar Harbor, ME	Portsmouth, NH
Bellingham, WA	Seattle, WA (residential)
Bothell, WA	Seattle, WA (commercial)
Brookhaven, NY	Tampa, FL
Cranford NJ	West Hollywood, CA
Germantown, TN	

Tax Incentives – 18 programs

Municipalities may award green building projects by exempting property owners from paying taxes for a period of time. Tax exemptions may be measured based on construction costs, or as a percentage of annual property taxes. Some programs increase the exemption amount for higher levels of certification. Although municipalities lose some tax revenue through these programs, the increased assessed property value from an energy-efficient, greener building may offset these losses over time.

Anne Arundel County, MD	Honolulu, HI
Baltimore County, MD (Res)	Howard County, MD
Baltimore County, MD (Com)	Montgomery County, MD (Com)
Carroll County, MD	Montgomery County, MD (Res)
Chatham County, GA	Onondaga County, NY
Cincinnati, OH	Prince George’s County, MD
Cleveland, OH	San Antonio, TX
Hartford County, MD	Seattle, WA
Harris County, TX	Syracuse, NY

Grants – 11 programs

A few municipalities offer grants for green construction projects and installation of energy saving systems. Grants are typically awarded retroactively, after completion and certification, to ensure compliance. Grants are one of the most effective incentives, but they are also the most costly incentive.

Boulder, CO	Pasadena, CA
Chicago, IL	Santa Monica, CA
El Paso, TX	Seattle, WA
King County, WA (Com)	Washington, D.C.
King County, WA (Res)	Wilmington, OH
Los Angeles, CA	

Loans – 8 programs

Municipalities may also offer low-interest loans for green construction projects and installation of energy saving systems. These programs provide financing for projects that lower utility bills, thus generating long-term savings for the property owner. Most of the programs are structured so that the loan is repaid through an assessment on property tax bills, and is attached to the property in the event of a change of ownership. Loans are a cost-effective way for the municipality to finance green building projects.

Babylon, NY Berkeley, CA Boulder County, CO Honolulu, HI	Milwaukee, WI Palm Desert, CA San Francisco, CA Sonoma County, CA
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Rebates – 7 programs

There are already numerous utility rebates available for property owners who install energy-saving appliances and improvements, and now some municipalities are offering these rebates as well. Municipalities offer rebates for installation of photovoltaic systems, solar water and area heaters, insulation, energy efficient HVAC systems, sealing, and various other appliances and installations.

Aurora, CO (Com) Aurora, CO (Res) Lakewood, CO Long Beach, CA	Pasadena, CA Seattle, WA Sunset Valley, TX
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