

## Building a Sustainable Community

More of the nation's apartments and condos are going green as multifamily builders and developers respond to growing consumer interest in sustainable building practices. Green building encourages a whole-systems approach through design and building techniques to offer both environmental and financial benefits like:

- Lowering operating costs and increasing asset value.
- Conserving energy and water.
- Reduction of waste sent to landfills.
- Increasing comfort, health and safety for occupants.
- Reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.
- Providing appealing amenities such as covered parking and efficient appliances.
- Demonstrating an owner's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Cost may be a concern for many multifamily developers. However, studies have found that there is no significant cost difference between a sustainable building versus a conventional building as long as sustainable strategies are considered early in the development cycle. By including these principles, cost savings will be achieved through reduction in utility costs as well as improved value and durability. Being green will set your community apart from others, and a recent survey showed that 74 percent of buyers and renters are willing to pay more for green amenities.



### Reducing lawn size will result in significant water savings!

- Xeriscape landscaping using desert-adapted plants will cut water use by over half.
- Limit turf and determine a specific function for the site.
- Non-sprinkler drip zones around buildings, sidewalks and parking lots reduce maintenance and legal issues.
- Channel rainwater and stormwater off of roofing or hard surfaces and direct to landscape areas.
- Create amenities such as shaded public areas and cool spaces for residents to gather.

## Recommended Sustainability Measures

**Planning & Design** – consider site selection, mixed-use development, building orientation, access to alternative transportation, site design that promotes social interaction and physical activity, landscaping strategies, covered parking, stormwater management, and recycling.

**Sitework** – manage the construction process to minimize disruption to the site and preserve natural areas, protect

worker health, use construction materials efficiently and reduce waste.

**Structure** – consider building materials for durability and efficiency including framing, roofing and siding materials, insulation and windows.

**Systems** – ensure efficiencies in heating, ventilation and air conditioning; daylighting and electric lighting; appliances; onsite energy generation; and plumbing fixtures.

**Finishes & Furnishings** – select healthy, environmentally preferable finishes and furnishings, including adhesives, sealants, paints and metal coatings; flooring options, reclaimed materials, cabinets, counters and trim and furniture.

**Operations & Maintenance** – cover O&M practices including maintenance manuals and training for residents and building staff, and educational signage and tours.

*Check out the following sites for Green Building Guidelines*

### Scottsdale Green Multifamily Rating Checklist

Follows national building code changes, construction industry trends, and evolving federal, state and municipal energy/environmental policy and recommendations. The checklist provides region-specific green building measures.

[http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/greenbuilding/GB\\_Multi-Family\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/greenbuilding/GB_Multi-Family_Checklist.pdf)

### California Multifamily Green Building Guidelines

Alameda County in California developed comprehensive guidelines that provide a common starting point for the owner, architect, and contractor to address green building in a proposed project. It provides useful timelines for decision-making, as well as cost/benefit guidelines, technical information and references.

<http://stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=291>

### Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design LEED Standards

The US Green Building Council created this national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project meets the highest green building and performance measures. Multifamily developers would use the "commercial new construction" standards.

<http://www.usgbc.org>

### National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) National Green Building Program

NAHB developed standards to include a comprehensive rating system, criteria applicable to high- and low-rise condominiums and apartment buildings, as well as housing in mixed-use projects. A multi-unit checklist serves as a flexible, regionally appropriate resource for multi-unit developers seeking green certification.

[http://www.nahbgreen.org/WholsGreen/pro\\_multifamily.aspx](http://www.nahbgreen.org/WholsGreen/pro_multifamily.aspx)