

## Environmental Building Standard recommendations

This is a brief summary of some of the recommendations that were created specifically around environmental building standards and what we think the county should continue to do or add on to what they are already doing. These recommendations are a part of a twenty-seven page policy report on sustainability the Youth Commission created for the Board of County Commissioners as an assignment they gave us. This summary of our recommendations was created for you, the reader, to review and understand the recommendation around an area that you might be interested in. You can also obtain the full copy of the report by calling Elizabeth Hill at her extension 5133. Having the full report on hand can give you a fuller explanation of our reasoning and process for each recommendation.

*LEED's standards should apply to everyone constructing a new building.*

- We understand that the county is already taking a step by having the public service building LEED certified but we think that they could do more. We want all buildings that are newly built to be LEED certified. It's not only environmentally sustainable by reusing materials but it is healthy for the employees that work in the building. This would include schools, county buildings, and any large buildings that are constructed.

*Buildings should be on or near a possible mass transportation route for access.*

- We believe that having access with public transportation will help play a role in developing Clark County. Having businesses near public transportation will also offer employees an incentive to take public transportation to reduce the amount of cars on the road as well as saving employee's money on gas. Clark County has already seen a massive explosion in urban growth as well as an influx of business plazas arriving; all Clark County needs now is to provide a strong public transportation to these places to offer growth and more development.

*Support green materials (reusable building materials).*

- Common parts of a building that could be reused to help build another building could include things like energy efficient windows, fluorescent light bulbs and lighting fixtures, office furniture or even greenery around the building. The more items that are reused, the less material goes into our landfills. This also means that materials would not have to be used to make more products, thus reducing the amount of pollutants put out by factories. Reusable building materials should also be available to be reusable with homes too.

*Encourage or influence partial LEED standards on already built buildings.*

- What we are recommending is that the county start phasing in LEED standards to other businesses to help local businesses as well as large businesses achieve an environmental safe standard. A slow phase-in of LEED standards could mean adding a few energy efficient windows, insulation to keep warm temperatures in the winter, or even retrofitting old energy sucking appliances to help further boost savings.

How much more does it cost?

- In our research we found a number that said it usually only costs five percent more than building non-sustainable.

## Environmental Building Standards Recommendation

This is a follow up on the environmental building standard recommendation. The Youth Commission had done some research and found that the cost of building green buildings cost roughly five percent more then to not build with green materials. Here is an exact quote from the article that was found.

“The environmental impact of buildings is often underestimated, while the perceived costs of green buildings are overestimated. A recent survey by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development finds that green costs are overestimated by 300 percent, as key players in real estate and construction estimate the additional cost at 17 percent above conventional construction, more the triple the average cost difference of about 5 percent.”

There was some question as to the five percent number. So to verify the number a Youth Commissioner did some more research and found a few architects that might know the answer. Two of them responded back. First Daniel Lajoie, who is a part of Departure Design, replied back with,

“First, it's like asking how much is a car. It depends on the "shade of green". There's super sustainable projects, there are "light green" projects and everything in between. Also commercial projects vary greatly from residential (which we work on). Yes the 5% number is one that has been historically out there, however the "green" agenda has also made rapid changes making building practices / materials more cost effective. Many building construction items considered green are, in fact, the same cost as regular materials. Typically, installation is the same for green as not green.”

Then Suzanne Zuniga from replied with,

“There is no absolute number for the additional cost of sustainable building, as it depends both on what the baseline is and what the sustainable building is and both are unique to the site, program, location, etc. As a general rule of thumb I would say 5% is fairly accurate average. That said, it would be higher for smaller buildings and lower for larger buildings, in general. Many sustainable buildings have come in under budget, mostly large commercial or industrial buildings that were very wasteful to begin with. Many others have come in costing way more than 5%, mostly single family residences.”

So both responses verify that on average five percent more is the correct number. They also both say that it depends greatly on what you want to accomplish and how green you want to be.

Here are the websites of the two architects:

[www.zuniga-arch.com](http://www.zuniga-arch.com)

<http://www.departure-design.com/about.php>