





Date: June 9, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District 
Councilmember Robert Garcia, First District 

Subject: Single-Family Residential Green Building Standards

It is estimated that buildings comprise 36 percent of total energy use in the United States and 65 percent of electricity consumed. By the year 2010, 38 million new buildings could potentially be constructed in the US alone.

Numerous municipalities have developed green building standards for both commercial and residential development. Through these policies, a city can create requirements or incentives for structures that are designed, built, renovated, operated, or reused in an ecological and resource-efficient manner. In addition to enhancing and preserving our ecosystems and improving air and water quality, structures built with sustainable elements can greatly increase energy efficiency. The City of Long Beach currently has green building policies in place for municipal buildings and private commercial development, as well as larger residential projects.

Since the Council approved the creation of the commercial development green building program in 2006, new technologies have been developed and sustainable building elements are more widely available for homes.

In an effort to further Long Beach as a sustainable city, green building policies and standards should be created for new single-family residential development and substantial residential modifications. In the development of this program, steps should be taken to ensure that homeowners and builders are given options and not financially burdened by this process during the construction and design phases. Examples of options that can be offered as part of the City's new standards include solar paneling and insulated skylights.

The City Manager and the City's "Green Team" should work with appropriate staff and stakeholders on a potential program and report back to the Council in a suitable timeframe.

Recommendation: Request City Manager to work with appropriate staff to develop a residential green building program for the City of Long Beach.