City of Fort Collins Green Building Program
Ideas and Comments
(Comments have been compiled from committee member and public input)

Green Building Code:

- Not all projects will achieve the highest level possible for green building, but we don't want to discourage people from trying. The incentives should push developers to go for it. We may be able to assign "regional priority" points that can help provide balance to the issues that face the developing community.

- We are spending a lot of time discussing the code in the context of new construction. I'd like to know how many new homes can be built within the City; I have a feeling it's fewer than I'd expect. If that is the case then shouldn't we be spending most of out time on remodeling/recycling of buildings and those codes?

- Would it be possible to require a certain percentage of renewable energy for higher density projects?

- Code needs to have a feedback mechanism so that the City can continue to develop the code based on lessons learned.

- Balance and flexibility are important. LEED is currently attractive because it has so many options that allow a builder to get to the same point. A new code should include that flexibility.

- A lot of the construction that is going to be taking place in Fort Collins is redevelopment and infill which can make a project more challenging. Need to keep that in mind.

- Green building is important and should be included in City building codes.

- The current templates have some very strict requirements that, if mandated, may have a negative impact on businesses due to increased construction and administration costs.

- Want an effective code that has an impact. Need to focus efforts on requirements that will be the most effective in helping the City reach community goals.

- Green building should be a fun, creative process. Should not mandate so much that it becomes a burden and limits creativity and innovation.

- Need to be careful about how the code review process is going to impact the builders financially and administratively. Don't want an onerous process; it needs to be verifiable and enforceable.

- Verification is important. If we do not verify that these requirements are actually being done, what is the point?

- It is important to integrate the 2009 I-Codes with the green building code review process.

- The City should focus more on the areas that will help them reach the community goals of GHG emission reductions, energy efficiency, etc.

- The code should focus on the areas that are difficult and expensive to correct if done incorrectly (ex. tight thermal envelope, moisture barriers, etc).

- There are barriers that currently exist that may hinder green practices. For example: City charges extra $8k for drain fee for restaurant using china instead of throw away paper plates. Brought this issue to the City 18 months ago. No change or response. The goal should be to put a process in place to 'hear' the issues and determine if they require change; make change happen or respond appropriately. Another issue: restaurants w. solar or demand water heaters are still required by county code to have oversized hot water heaters. These inherently drive wasteful energy costs.

- Adoptive reuse of existing buildings in lieu of demo and build new should be a hallmark of the green building code, both residential and commercial. Historic preservation and Secretary of Interior standards should be integrated into codes. Great incentives should be given for 'embodied energy' of helping existing buildings, the massive reduction of materials going to the landfill that would go if the building is demolished and the BTU energy that was used to build the original building which would be lost is demolished."

- I am working on the RMI2 building. We are striving for LEED gold certification. The consultant costs to manage and verify the LEED requirements cost us ~ $100,000. Can we develop a code that gives

the benefits of a LEED building without requiring verification services that are required with LEED?

- Transportation to and from new and existing projects need to be integrated to code consideration. (Safe bike routes to schools, stores, shop, other commute routes, etc.)

- Noise management. Can/should noise in a building and from outside a building be part of the effective green assessment?

- Can landscape materials (Color, type of solid materials, reflectivity) be contributing to the energy efficiency of a nearby building?

- Include placement of vegetation for shading on one hand and exposure for effective active and passive solar systems on the other.

- Require Xeriscaping around buildings and integrate food crop production where irrigation is used. Addresses water management on and around buildings. Direct precipitation off of buildings can be used effectively to irrigate vegetation on and around buildings. Require mulching to integrate evapo-transpiration.

- Outdoor lighting of and around buildings – achieving safety but also preserving the night sky by reducing spurious light. Suggest bldg. codes that address this for both commercial and residential buildings.

- If the goal is to encourage the use of mass transit, perhaps the parking code should not require so many spaces for multifamily housing - discouraging parking spaces would encourage the use of mass transit by residents.

- A materials waste management plan should be defined by the size and type of project. Small remodel projects should not be required to use the same plan as a new 10,000 sq.ft. building.

- What points are builders going for to achieve the Bronze level of the NGBS in Longmont? It would be worth the time and energy to establish which of the available NGBS point truly are effecting change and making significant environmental impacts. Would these points be the same for new homes and for remodel projects/ Knowing remodel projects, builders are only able to affect a certain percentage of the home.

- Fort Collins needs to be careful about regulating the deconstruction of homes and buildings. Boulder regulated this and didn't have the infrastructure in place to deal with it.

Green Building Incentives, Education and Recognition:

- Codes are designed as the bare minimum that needs to be completed for a project. Incentives help raise the bar.

- Possible Incentive: If a developer is working on a unique, sustainable project, could the City help set it apart and get it to higher level City staff member who could help make the project happen?

- The only place to currently recycle wood is Hageman's and you have to pay to drop of loads. They City could subsidize this cost or offer a drop off site where materials get turned into mulch.

- A lot of what is done on a project is on the request of the owner or client. There should be some incentives for the owners/end users as well as builders.

- Giving incentives to the contractors would be better if the City decides to rely on third party verification. The incentives will help the contractors pay the extra costs associated with that verification.

- One option could be to add a tax for people who are doing a poor job or building large home with inefficient equipment and then give rebates to homes that are built green. Feebate system.

Green Building Program:

- Utilities could work with the building department to create a program where recognition is provided to projects who excel in each section of the code (site, energy, water, etc.). This would help lump sections together to simplify the program. To build in an incentive, the City could create an award program that chooses a project on an annual basis to get an award (monetary?) for going above and beyond code. Could also provide incentives by offering free advertising/marketing for projects/builders who are excelling at green building.

- A lot of emphasis is being placed on presentation of the program to the city council. Who is educating council about green building and this program? What educational processes are council members required to go through?

- There are third party verification systems that are already in place. The City could base their recognition and incentive program on those systems and then supplement the costs associated with verification.