

Board of County Commissioners

Leon County, Florida

Policy No. 21-7

Title: Building Sustainability Policy

Date Adopted: December 14, 2021

Effective Date: December 14, 2021

Reference: None

Policy Superseded: None

It shall be the Policy of the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that Policy No. 21-7 “Building Sustainability Policy”, is hereby adopted, to wit:

- A. **Purpose** - To adopt and implement a policy that supports and contributes to sustainability, codifies current County practices, and establishes green, energy efficient, sustainable, resilient, and healthy building standards and expectations for County-owned building renovation and new construction projects.

It shall be the policy for renovation and new construction projects in County-owned and operated buildings:

- Incorporate the six principles of sustainable design as defined by the U.S. General Services Administration: Employ Integrated Design Principles; Optimize Energy Performance; Protect and Conserve Water; Enhance the Indoor Environment; Reduce the Environmental Impact of Materials; Assess and Consider Building Resilience;
- The project design and construction place emphasis on optimal synergy of cost, environmental, societal, and human benefits while meeting the mission and function of the facility.
- Aspire to LEED Gold but achieve no less than Silver level for major renovation and new construction.

- B. **Background and Intent** - Consistent with the goals and action items in Leon County’s Integrated Sustainability Action Plan, Leon County is working towards integrating sustainability into all levels of government operation. Building energy consumption consists of a large majority, approximately 75%, of the County’s greenhouse gas emissions from government operations, underlying the importance of designing and renovating County facilities and buildings with efficiency and sustainability integrated into the design.

Buildings are a primary source of greenhouse gas emissions. However, environmental impacts from building renovation, new construction, day-to-day operation, and eventual deconstruction can be significantly reduced through proper site selection, design, materials, and proactive maintenance.

Sustainable design is based upon the basic objectives of sustainability, which are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments. More specifically, sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. Utilizing a sustainable design philosophy encourages decisions at each phase of the design process that will reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health of the occupants, without compromising the bottom line. It is an integrated, holistic approach that encourages compromise and tradeoffs.

Leon County is a full-service chartered County providing a broad range of public amenities and essential services to the region. To fulfill this mission, the County operates and maintains a diverse range of physical structures and more than one hundred buildings located in Leon County. The County, as a demonstrated leader in environmental sustainability, has an opportunity and obligation to reduce impacts to the environment to the maximum extent practicable, while realizing the co-benefits of reduced operating costs and enhanced employee wellness, and to set an example for others to follow.

Leon County, through adoption and implementation of this Policy, desires to formalize its commitment to environmental protection, energy conservation, and health and wellness, as they relate to new construction and renovation projects. To accommodate future updates in technologies, industry standards, third-party certification systems and methodologies of integrating sustainability, staff may update the technical criteria in the Facilities Design Guidelines or other related documents to add additional options or pathways that could support a building in meeting the principles of sustainable design.

- C. **Scope and Applicability** - This Policy applies to all renovation and new construction projects over 5,000 square feet, in County-owned and operated buildings which provide services to the public or workspace for public sector employees. The architects, engineers, contractors and other professionals working on or assisting with these projects are to abide by this Policy.

For purposes of this Policy, major renovation is the modernization through comprehensive replacement or restoration of virtually all major systems, interior finishes (such as ceilings, partitions, doors, and floor finishes), and building features.

This Policy is intended to apply only to Leon County-owned and operated buildings which provide direct or indirect services to the public or workspace for public sector employees.

- D. **Administration** - The County's lead on construction and renovation projects, the Department of Public Works, shall be responsible for the oversight and implementation of this Policy.

The use of a collaborative and integrated team is to be formed to ensure a diversity of building perspectives are considered throughout the design and construction of qualifying projects. The Sustainable Project Team (SPT) shall consist of at least one representative from the following work areas: Building Engineering, Sustainability, OMB, and Facilities Management, with other representatives participating as needed.

This Policy shall be applied on an individual building project basis. The SPT is responsible for considering the project scope and purpose of the building as well as mission needs to determine how best to apply the Sustainability Facility Design Standard. In consideration for building mission and unique functions, the SPT will evaluate the building's inherent function, mission, safety, or designation. Should any of these factors prevent the project from meeting the minimum threshold as outlined in the Policy, an exemption may be granted by the County Administrator. Additionally, the County Administrator may exempt a project as needed for unique circumstances such as unplanned wind or water damage which require emergency renovation. Should an exemption be granted, the six principles of sustainable design will be applied to the extent practicable.

It remains at the discretion of the SPT to establish and maintain all processes for appropriately documenting the assessment of County buildings, whether conducted internally or using external resources.

- E. Sustainability Facility Design Standard** – Ensuring principles of sustainable design are applied across all building modifications, a two-tier approach shall be followed for building modifications, including new construction, major renovations, and minor renovations/repairs.
1. New construction and major renovations: New construction and major renovation shall utilize the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building certification system as a tool for evaluating and measuring achievements in sustainable design. At a minimum, County buildings are to meet LEED Silver but aspire to LEED Gold in the design and construction of qualifying projects.
 2. Minor renovations and repairs: The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Buildings, as set forth by the General Services Administration, will be applied as appropriate to projects which do not rise to the threshold of new construction or major renovation.

Adopted December 14, 2021