



**WESTSIDE CITIES**

- BEVERLY HILLS
- CULVER CITY
- LOS ANGELES
- SANTA MONICA
- WEST HOLLYWOOD
- COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

**WESTSIDE CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**“TAKING THE LEED”  
SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY**

**THURSDAY JUNE 5, 2008 8:30 AM TO 12:30 PM**

**PANEL TWO: GREEN BUILDING BLOCKS**

**10:24 AM – 11:45 AM**

**MODERATOR:** **Deborah Weintraub, AIA, LEED<sub>AP</sub>**  
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**Questions:**

**1. Based on your knowledge of what has been done to date, please list specific new strategies that the Westside Council of Governments (as a voluntary Joint Powers Authority of six jurisdictions) should consider to advance the effort to build Green, and briefly why you chose those strategies.**

**2. List frustrations that you have experienced in trying to build Green.**

**RIC ABRAMSON, AIA**

**1. STRATEGIES:**

**A. POLITICAL STRATEGIES:**

**I. Public Utility Alliances:** Use the Joint Powers Authority to negotiate meaningful civic alliances between cities and utility companies so that cities can receive “local public use power credits” for energy generated that has been added back to the grid within each individual City. If unable to do so, explore generating power locally through a shared, regional power district.

**II. Urban Beautification Programs:** Set aside “targeted” matching subsidies or “directed” redevelopment funds for qualified small businesses and residents to implement specific “beautification efforts” that integrate green building practices.

**III. Civic “Green Team”:** Jointly establish a free Green counseling team, available by appointment, rotating throughout the WCCOG jurisdiction, for developers, business and residents to better understand local Green Building requirements and the programs (FAR incentives, expedited approvals, etc.) or services available to them to integrate them. This team might also consult with municipalities to help simplify the challenges posed by local submittals, consultancy, certifications and inspection requirements.

**B. ECONOMIC STRATEGIES:**

**I. Rebates & Stipends:** Lobby for substantive rebate programs and/or modest stipends (“Eco-dollars”) for businesses and residents that add power back to the grid.

**II. Award Innovation:** Establish an annual WCCOG Awards program with meaningful rewards (i.e. \$10,000.00 min.) to those who have innovated creatively by developing solutions and/or applications that will be available for others.

**C. CULTURAL STRATEGIES:**

**I. Public Education:** Invest in a “joint” Public Information campaign for all WCCOG households and businesses that: (1) defines and illustrates Green strategies; (2) identifies resources, programs, and services already in place; and (3) outlines cost benefit analyses that evaluate why it makes sense to be and build Green.

**II. Local Green Business Programs:** Create a WCCOG-wide rating system, much like County Health does with restaurants, to identify and recognize businesses that have built and continue to operate in a “Green” way with a symbol in their storefront. Publish a “Shop Green” Business Directory to encourage public patronage of these businesses.

**2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. Inter-Departmental Communication & Coordination:** Too often local departments and agencies are unable to coordinate new Green Building requirements passed by local governments. Criteria and checklists are either not clear or service only one department.

**II. Code & Policy Compatibility:** Codes are often at odds or contradict the goals of Green Building programs.

**III. Prescription v. Performance:** Prescriptive rules take precedence over actual building performance. Green Building requirements and national standards such as LEED have yet to fully account for Green needs regionally.

**IV. Scale Inequity:** Small businesses are expected to integrate the same measures as large scale developments, yet the cost for implementing Green practices are not proportional.

**V. Land Use Policy:** Green Building strategies such as adaptive reuse and live/work should be welcomed, encouraged, and even incentivized.

## **BRADLEY T. COX**

### **1. STRATEGIES:**

**I. Expedite the green building and development review process:** Expedite the discretionary planning process including tract map processing, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions, project permits, site plan reviews, etc. Expedite the EIR process for LEED projects.

**II. Implement FAR increases or density bonuses for projects that are building to LEED Silver or higher in appropriate areas. Create new performance based incentives to encourage sustainable development:** A fee should be imposed on each additional square footage of the FAR gained as a result of the agreement, and be allocated to an affordable housing trust fund. Parking minimums should be changed to parking maximums for projects that are within ¼ mile of transit/stations located within a transit corridor, and where appropriate, urban residential density should be encouraged adjacent to commercial properties. Provide density bonuses in areas where density is appropriate.

**III. Provide State, Federal and City tax credits for energy efficient buildings. Provide greater tax credits from local municipalities for purchase of materials and goods used to achieve energy efficient buildings:** Extend the Federal Energy Act of 2005, approve California state legislation that mirrors the Federal Energy Act, including enabling legislation that provides an allowable budget for education and training of LEED certifiable professionals.

### **2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. Lack of collaboration between city departments and inter-governmental stakeholders:** There are conflicting interpretations of codes, and each city has established their own guidelines and codes. Develop an acceptable regional standard applied consistently across the board. Fix contradictory and/or sustainable codes and interpretations.

**II. Lack of training and education in the various city departments that are responsible for implementing green policy and procedures:** Establish a consistent standard of education – LEED certifiable professionals including field inspectors and others who will be responsible for interpreting codes.

**III. Cost premiums for building green:** There are low cost and high cost green buildings – how cities implement and manage the process will determine the ultimate cost impact to developers, and the incentive to build to the highest green standards.

## **WARREN KARLENZIG**

### **1. STRATEGIES:**

**I. Mandate LEED-Neighborhood Development:** Could be required under AB 32 or pending national bills (Lieberman-Warner); consider economic benefits and incentives from the state.

**II. Transit Oriented Development:** Could be required under AB 32 or pending national bills (Lieberman-Warner); consider economic benefits and incentives from the state.

**III. Passive lighting and cooling strategies:** No cost or low cost to developers - development incentives available if criteria met State programs (CEC) for technical assistance.

### **2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. Green costs too much!** Many low cost, amortized, or no cost options available.

**II. Windows that don't open:** Fresh air offers cooling, reduces indoor air pollution, increases productivity, and allows for smaller HVAC systems.

## **WALLY MARKS**

### **1. STRATEGIES:**

**I. Advocate with other municipalities in the greater Southern California region to curb, contro, and filter urban runoff.**

**II. Advocate at State and Federal levels to expand photovoltaic benefits and incentives to not-for-profit organizations by means of selling or transferring incentives.**

**III. Advocate for market based incentives rather than regulatory statues.**

### **2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. The need for better City inter-departmental coordination. For example, does Public Works have the interest of Redevelopment's need for calming traffic patterns?**

**II. The need for better City assistance with respect to awareness program for Green Building.**

**III. Is LEED the building standard that a city should use with respect to measuring a new project impact on a community? Should each city devise its own community based guidelines?**

## **GREG REITZ**

### **1. STRATEGIES:**

**I. Publicly recognize green builders with awards and publication in local newspapers:** Developers are in need of positive PR, and official recognition of good development practices is a valuable incentive.

**II. Create an education and publicity campaign promoting the virtues of green building, and list the leading green buildings in the region:** Educate real estate agents, tenants, and homeowners. Publicize the idea that they should be seeking green buildings. Developers and builders are more likely to build green if they believe the market understands the value of green building. Helping them market their projects would be a real incentive.

**III. Offer a density bonus or reduced parking ratios for low impact projects:** Low impact should be defined as projects that are LEED certified and include traffic reducing strategies. Projects that can show a high level of LEED certification and demonstrate decreased vehicle miles traveled should be rewarded. Alternatively, allow properties to sell development or "air" rights and require the purchaser of these rights to build green. Ask any developer what would get them to build green and their first answer is always increased density, height, or FAR (floor area ratio). Most government agencies have not agreed that green building rises to the level where such incentives are justified. Nonetheless, this would certainly be a significant inducement. To balance the equation a bit more, public agencies could require that the buildings also include significant traffic mitigation measures. Finally, many developers and property owners would be happy to purchase increased density on the open market. If the municipal governments consider trading of development or air rights, green building and traffic mitigation could be a prerequisite for the project proposing the larger development.

### **2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. The entitlements process and the integrated design process are out of synch:** Ideally, integrated design results in a building whose form and systems form a cohesive whole. The integrated design process requires a fairly significant investment in the schematic design phase- more so than standard building practices. This represents a greater financial risk to builders when their project has no entitlements or building department approvals. Investing more up front will remain a barrier to wider adoption of good design practices.

**II. Zoning codes are rigid and do not reflect optimum green design form:** Shading, daylighting, solar orientation, and natural ventilation are influences that dictate form and often conflict with prescriptive zoning codes that require certain setbacks, stepbacks, and open space dimensions.

**III. Solar panels should be an exception to the limits on projections above the height limit (as long as it does not cast shadows beyond that of the building envelope at noon on Dec 21).**

## **LAWRENCE SCARPA, AIA**

### **1. STRATEGIES:**

**I. Break free from Net-metering:** Work to eliminate net metering in favor of a feed-in tariff based incentive program similar to the Aachen Solar Tariff Model in Germany. In the early 1990s the city of Aachen (Aix-en-Chapelle) Germany set the world of solar energy on its ear. Until that time development of solar PV depended entirely on direct and substantial subsidies. Then in June, 1993 Aachen's city council approved the first solar PV tariff that paid a profitable price for solar generated electricity.

Aachen calculated a tariff that would allow recovery of the "cost" of solar PV plus a modest profit. This principle is much like that used to determine the tariffs or electricity rates for regulated electric utilities.

The city did not base its tariff on the "value" of the solar electricity. This was--and is--revolutionary because solar PV is expensive and if rates are based on what it costs to install solar PV, the tariff will be much higher than that for other, cheaper, technologies. Aachen's city council took a bold move and said in effect, "we want solar and we're willing to pay what it takes".

At the time, solar generated electricity in Germany was paid 90% of the retail rate under Germany's 1991 electricity feed law, the Stromeinspeisungsgesetz.

Aachen determined that in addition to the feed law tariff, it was necessary to pay a citywide solar tariff of 2 DM/kWh (US\$1.28/kWh) for ten years. Shortly thereafter the Bavarian city of Freising followed suit. Between 1994 and 1997, 30 Bavarian villages implemented a similar program.

Aachen and its sister cities established the principle of paying for the cost of generation for the generating technologies they desire - and not necessarily those that are the cheapest.

The Aachen model became the foundation for Germany's successful EEG, the Renewable Energy Sources Act (also known as the Act on Granting Priority to Renewable Energy).

Aachen's solar tariff and subsequent solar tariffs under Germany's EEG provided successful examples for the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association in proposing a solar tariff for Ontario.

**II. Develop a competitive tax credit financing process for public municipalities and all non-profit organizations to finance initial capital costs for LEED certified buildings (or for the entire structure):** This could work in a similar manner to the tax credit system that is used to finance affordable housing projects. It could be a competitive process with only a certain number of buildings financed per year, where only the best buildings would receive the tax credit awards. The TCAC (Tax Credit Allocation Committee) can adjust from year to year the types of projects that would receive priority for funding. This is a proven successful model used to fund 100% affordable housing projects, and could be used as a model to develop incentives for energy efficient and sustainable buildings for ALL non-profit organizations, and not limited strictly to affordable housing projects. Not all affordable housing projects are financed with tax credits, but almost all apply.

**III. Develop or work to include projects that achieve LEED "Gold" or higher in the provisions of SB1818 that has recently been adopted by the City of LA:** SB1818 allows projects that include affordable housing to take "by right" exceptions to the planning and zoning code such as density bonuses, side yard reductions, reductions in parking and open space requirements without going thru an entitlement process.

**IV. Help to pass legislation to require dual flush toilets and waterless urinals for all public buildings.**

**V. Work towards removing the lamp from every other alternating street light in southern California:** Light levels would be adequate. Alternately, undertake a study that would show that this provides safe levels of lighting, and increase spacing of all new street lighting in SoCal.

## **2. FRUSTRATIONS:**

**I. The single biggest factor is how to overcome the initial capital costs:** Even when it can be proven to "pay back" in the short term, most people are unwilling or are unable to invest large sums of \$\$ for future payback. Unlike getting a rebate for an appliance, toilet, or refrigerator where the capital outlay is small, green systems require a substantially larger capital investment that makes it difficult.

**II. Inspectors are generally unfamiliar with solar systems and other sustainable products or systems:** Because of this we are continually subjected to corrections, requests, city approvals, etc. that other projects with more standard equipment avoid.