

Comparison of Multifamily Residential Green Building Programs

The tables below compare multi-family residential (MFR) green building requirements currently in effect in twelve jurisdictions to evaluate the level of green building standards being required and the project size thresholds at which those requirements apply. Separate tables are used to summarize requirements for New Construction and for Additions and Renovations.

The levels of requirements fall into four categories: Lesser Requirements, GreenPoint Rated, LEED Certified, and LEED Silver, and LEED Gold. Lesser Requirements is used to classify programs with point requirements below GPR or LEED Certified.

The rows in the summary tables list the different thresholds used to trigger green building requirements. The programs researched used seven different requirement thresholds ranging from no size threshold (applies to all MFR projects) to 50,000 square feet. Most often, MFR thresholds for new construction are based on number of units or number of stories. For additions and remodels thresholds are often based on project valuation or percentage of the existing structure being altered.

The verification process used by each city or county is indicated in parentheses after each entry in the table. The five general categories used are as follows:

USGBC	Certificate from USGBC required
BIG	Sign-off by certified GreenPoint Rater required
AP	Sign-off by Certified GreenPoint Rater or LEED Accredited Professional required
Internal	Verified by city or university staff
Self-verify	Applicant provides assurance
TBD	Ordinance establishing verification procedure is under development

USGBC and BIG verification offer the advantage of 3rd-party verification, certifying that the required green building features have been incorporated. AP and Internal verification are defined by each jurisdiction and therefore the verification processes used in these categories varies significantly. For more information on procedures and other details, see *Summary Table—Multi-Family Residential Green Building Programs*.

Green Building Programs – New Construction				
Project Size Thresholds	Lesser Requirements	GPR	LEED Certified	LEED Silver
No Size Threshold		Morgan Hill (BIG, 70+ pts) San Rafael (AP, 60 pts) San Francisco (AP)* Santa Rosa (Internal)	Morgan Hill (USGBC)	Morgan Hill (USGBC, > 2,000 sq. ft. per unit)
≥ 3 units		Sunnyvale (BIG, 75 pts) San Mateo County (BIG) Palo Alto (AP/Internal, 70 pts)	San Mateo County (USGBC)	
≥ 5 units		Los Angeles County (BIG)	Los Angeles County (USGBC)	San Francisco (AP, ≥ 75' height)
≥ 10 units		San Jose (TBD)	San Jose (TBD)	
≥ 4 stories			Pasadena (LEED AP, Internal)	
≥ 75' high			San Jose (TBD)	
≥ 350 sq. ft.	Santa Cruz (Internal, 20+ pts)			
≥ 50,000 sq. ft. and ≥ 50 units			Los Angeles (LEED AP, Internal)	

+ This requirement includes an escalator. – i.e., as homes increase in size beyond a specified threshold, additional points are required

* Phases to 75 points in 2010 for ≥ 5 units and ≥ 75' height, 2011 for ≥ 5 units, 2012 for < 5 units

** This requirement will go into effect in 2012. From 2009 through 2011, LEED Silver is required.

Green Building Programs – Additions/Renovations				
Project Size Thresholds	Lesser Requirements	GPR	LEED Certified	LEED Silver
≥ 3 units and ≥ 50% remodel		San Mateo County (BIG)	San Mateo County (USGBC)	
≥ 5 units		San Francisco (AP, 75 pts, ≥ 75' height and ≥ 25,000 gross sq. ft.)		San Francisco (AP, ≥ 75' height and ≥ 25,000 gsf)
≥ 350 sq. ft.	Santa Cruz (Internal, 5+ pts)			
> 500 sq. ft.		San Rafael (AP, 60 pts, 50% increase in size of unit)		
≥ 50,000 sq. ft. and ≥ 50 units			Los Angeles (LEED AP, Internal, > 50% replacement cost)	
≥ \$100,000 valuation	Morgan Hill (BIG, 25 pts, ≥ 250 sq. ft.)	Palo Alto (self-verify)		
≥ \$250,000 valuation		Morgan Hill (BIG, ≥ 750 sq. ft.)		

Overview of Multi-Family Residential Green Building Programs

The table below describes multi-family residential (MFR) green building ordinances and policies in several jurisdictions. The table is separated into five geographic/jurisdictional categories – surrounding counties, cities within the County of Santa Clara, other northern California cities, other California jurisdictions, and jurisdictions with large private universities.

City, County, or University	Requirements for New Construction	Requirements for Additions & Remodels
I. Surrounding Counties		
San Mateo County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-rise MFR (3 or more units and 3 stories or less), GPR or LEED Certified (LEED for Homes) • Guaranteed with bond (\$5,000 or \$1.50/sq. ft.) to be paid at occupancy if certification not complete • Bond released when GPR/LEED certificate presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 50% or greater remodels • Same verification procedure as new construction

City, County, or University	Requirements for New Construction	Requirements for Additions & Remodels
San Francisco City & County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 5 units, GPR (2010) phasing to 75 points (2012) • ≥ 5 units and < 75' height, GPR (2010) phasing to 75 points (2011) • ≥ 5 units and ≥ 75' height, LEED Silver or GPR 75 points (2010) plus meet specific credits for water efficient landscaping, water use reduction, and construction debris management • Compliance may be verified and/or certified by any means, including third-party equivalent (verification / documentation provided by licensed professional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥ 5 units and ≥ 75' height and ≥ 25,000 gross sq. ft., LEED Silver or GPR 75 points (2010) plus meet specific credits for water efficient landscaping, water use reduction, and construction debris management • Major alteration: significant upgrades to structural, mechanical, electrical and/or plumbing systems
II. Cities in Santa Clara County		
SCC Cities Assoc "model ordinance" (phase 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 9 units, GPR or LEED Certified • ≥ 9 units, LEED Silver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD • Recommending checklist only (50 points) in the interim
San Jose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • < 10 units, GPR or LEED Checklist only • ≥ 10 units, GPR or LEED Certified • ≥ 75' height, LEED Certified • Policy adopted, ordinance under development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions and renovations not addressed in policy
Palo Alto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥ 3 units, GPR 70 points, internal verification and verification by qualified green building professional • ≥ 30 units, LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development) checklist must be submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions and renovations ≥ \$100,000 valuation, self-verification
Sunnyvale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥ 3, GPR 75 points • Density bonus for GPR 100 points • Historic and hardship exemptions available • Phase 2 and 3 approved by resolution will increase requirements in 2011 and 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions and renovations > 250,000 valuation, checklist required
Morgan Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≤ 2,000 sq. ft. per unit, GPR 70 points or LEED Certified • > 2,000 sq. ft. per unit, GPR 70 points + 1 point per additional 70 sq. ft. (150 point maximum) or LEED Silver • GreenPoint Rated or LEED AP verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition ≥ 250 sq. ft. and remodels ≥ \$100,000 valuation, GPR 25 points • Addition ≥ 750 sq. ft. and remodels ≥ \$250,000 valuation, GPR 50 points • GreenPoint Rated verification
III. Other Cities in Northern California		
San Rafael	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New units, GPR 60 points • GreenPoint Rater must complete a form verifying that the points have been achieved prior to final inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes additions > 500 sq. ft. (conditioned space) and 50% increase in size of unit, GPR 60 points

City, County, or University	Requirements for New Construction	Requirements for Additions & Remodels
Santa Rosa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new residential buildings, GPR Internal verification by the compliance official 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential additions are exempt
Santa Cruz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 points + 1.5 points for each additional 100 sq. ft. over 350 sq. ft. (City of Santa Cruz checklist) Internal verification during plan check and specific green building inspections during construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 points + 1.1 points for each additional 100 sq. ft. over 350 sq. ft. (City of Santa Cruz checklist)
IV. Other California Jurisdictions with Interesting Programs		
Los Angeles County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 5 units, GPR or LEED Certified or California Green Builder certification (2010) Verification by certification or equivalency (determined by Public Works) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinance does not explicitly include or exclude residential additions and remodels
IV. Jurisdictions with Large Private Universities		
Pasadena (Cal Tech)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 4 stories, LEED Certified equivalent² Internal verification by the City's LEED AP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additions and renovations not included
Cal Tech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cal Tech has higher standard – LEED Gold (USGBC) for all new buildings 	
Los Angeles (USC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 50,000 sq. ft. and ≥ 50 units, LEED certified equivalent² LEED AP required on project LEED AP, owner, & architect sign implementation agreement Internal verification by planning staff at plan check time (1 of 7 projects audited by independent consultant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥ 50,000 sq. ft. and ≥ 50 units and valuation > half replacement cost, LEED certified equivalent² Same verification procedure as new construction (no verification besides normal building inspection after plan check)
USC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific policy or requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Notes:

- LEED AP = LEED Accredited Professional
- LEED equivalent generally means that a LEED-accredited professional must provide a letter certifying that checklist items are included in the building plans and that all required LEED checklist components are incorporated in construction prior to final inspection. The process varies somewhat between jurisdictions and other entities such as universities that use this approach.