



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Planning Committee

Date: April 29, 2025

Report No: PED24114(a)

Subject/Title: Green Building Standards Enhanced Engagement
and Recommendations

Ward(s) Affected: Urban Areas – City Wide

Recommendations

- 1) That the memorandum titled 'Hamilton Green Building Standards Building Energy Performance Refinement Technical Memorandum', attached as Appendix A to Report PED24114a, **BE RECEIVED**;
- 2) That the Green Building Standards Guidebook, attached as Appendix B to Report PED24114a, **BE ENDORSED**;
- 3) That the Green Building Standards Checklist, attached as Appendix C to Report PED24114a, **BE ENDORSED**.

Key Facts

- On October 1, 2024, Planning Committee endorsed the Green Building Standards, and directed staff to further consult with members of the Climate Change Action Committee on the energy and carbon metrics.
- Staff have engaged in additional consultation as a result of Planning Committee's direction on October 1, 2024, through Report PED24114.
- The Green Building Standards have been refined as a result of the additional phase of engagement and the recommendations of the Climate Change Advisory Committee.
- The final Green Building Standards Guidebook and Checklist are attached as Appendix B and C.

Financial Considerations

N/A

Background

The City of Hamilton Green Building Standards were brought forward to Planning Committee on October 1, 2024. At that meeting Planning staff were directed to consult with the Climate Change Advisory Committee including its Technical and Governance Working Group and Building Working Group on the following:

- a) A framework that phases in successively more stringent tiered standards over a fixed timeline with full transparency on future requirements to all stakeholders;
- b) Emissions limits that are sufficient to require new buildings to transition to efficient, low-emissions technology now or in the future;
- c) Alignment with Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy to achieve net-zero by 2050 and avoid fossil fuel lock-in.

Council also directed staff to conduct this consultation in advance of final implementation of the Green Building Standards and report back with the results of the consultation, any adjustments to the Green Building Standards that may be required, including any necessary financial resources, and timelines for the recommendations in Report PED24114.

As a result of the direction, staff launched an additional phase of engagement to further refine the Green Building Standards from December 2024 – March 2025. As such, the Green Building Standards have been refined and are attached in the Guidebook as Appendix B to Report PED24114(a). A memorandum providing details on the additional consultation and work the project team conducted is attached as Appendix A to Report PED24114(a) that documents “what we heard” and the outcomes of the consultation.

Analysis

Section 2 of the Planning Act requires that municipalities, when carrying out their responsibility under the Act, have regard for matters of provincial interest including:

- (a) the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
- (e) the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
- (q) the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians; and,
- (s) the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

Section 41 of the *Planning Act* allows for municipalities to implement sustainable design features, including Green Building Standards, through site plan control. Several municipalities across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area have successfully established mandatory Green Building Standards programs to support their climate

change objectives, including the City of Toronto, City of Pickering, Town of Caledon, City of Mississauga, and the Town of Whitby.

The Green Building Standards are an implementation tool that utilizes policy direction and goals to form performance requirements that will be applied to new developments to help achieve the City's climate action goals. The Green Building Standards are a product of the research, work, and consultation that went into producing the goals and policies of the City's various efforts to combat climate change and offer a tangible way to implement the efforts of that work moving forward.

The Green Building Standards represent one of the most tangible ways for the city to direct and influence more sustainable community development practices. While the City's Urban Hamilton Official Plan establishes broad sustainable policy direction, the Green Building Standards should be considered an important implementation tool, along with other land use planning instruments, such as the City's Zoning By-laws. The Green Building Standards afford the city an opportunity to address a breadth of emerging challenges associated with development, such as public health, climate change, energy, and resource use.

Additional Consultation

As a result of direction received from Planning Committee at the October 1, 2024, meeting, staff launched an additional phase of engagement on the Green Building Standards and the recommendations of the Climate Change Advisory Committee from December 2024 to March 2025. A summary of the engagement that occurred prior to October 1, 2024, is included in Report PED24114. The additional engagement program consisted of:

- December 10, 2024 – Initial Climate Change Advisory Committee Scoping Meeting;
- December 2024 – March 2025 – Consultation with other municipalities with Green Building Standards or similar programs;
- February 19, 2025 – Energy Performance Metrics Workshop;
- February 25, 2025 – Presentation and discussion at the Climate Change Advisory Committee public meeting; and,
- March 12, 2025 – Question and comment session on final memorandum recommendations.

Initial Climate Change Advisory Committee Scoping Meeting

The December 10, 2024, kick off meeting included members from the project team and members of the Climate Change Advisory Committee and Bay Area Climate Change Implementation Team. The purpose of the meeting was to review the recommendations made to Planning Committee by the Climate Change Advisory Committee, and to ensure the project team had a full understanding of the expected engagement outcomes.

Municipal Interviews

The Climate Change Advisory Committee recommendations are based on future tiers of the Toronto Green Standard and recent and future changes to Caledon's Green Building Standards. Two one-hour interviews were conducted by the Project Team with Green Building Standards-focused staff at these municipalities. The objectives of these interviews were to discuss the metrics, targets, and implementation approach of current and future Green Building Standards and to understand motivations for decisions and direction, current study work, and opportunities for alignment.

The results of these interviews have been summarized in Appendix A to Report PED24114(a).

Energy Performance Metrics Workshop

On February 19, 2025, the project team hosted a workshop with members from the Climate Change Advisory Committee, the Bay Area Climate Change Council, the West End Home Builders' Association, the Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association, Hamilton Community Enterprises, and staff from the Office of Climate Change and the Building Division.

The workshop focused on the recommendations of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, including a list of potential challenges associated with some recommendations, and a focus on addressing gaps and improving cost-effectiveness.

After an interactive presentation, participants were engaged in three groups with focussed discussion topics, using the committee's recommendations as the assumed pathway forward. The three topics were:

- Topic #1 – Offering simpler or more flexible pathways to compliance.
- Topic #2 – Finding ways to reduce the cost for development submissions as a result of the Green Building Standards.
- Topic #3 – Supporting the value proposition for decarbonized new construction.

Climate Change Advisory Committee Meeting

The project team attended the February 25, 2025, Climate Change Advisory Committee Meeting. At the meeting, the project team reviewed 'what we heard' at the February 19, 2025, workshop and discussed a draft of the final recommendations on the Green Building Standards.

Question and Comment Session

On March 12, 2025, working group members of the Climate Change Advisory Committee and the Bay Area Climate Change Implementation Team who were previously engaged in this round of consultation were invited to attend a session to review and clarify the final memorandum with recommendations for the update to the

Green Building Standards, attached as Appendix A to Report PED24114(a). Following this session, the recommendations presented in this report were finalized.

What We Heard

A summary of What We Heard through the additional engagement period is included in the memorandum attached to Report PED24114(a) as Appendix A.

Recommended Changes to the Green Building Standards

As a result of the feedback received at the October 1, 2024, Planning Committee, the additional engagement, and further discussions with other municipalities, the following changes were made to the recommendations for the Green Building Standards. A fulsome list is provided in Appendix A to Report PED24114(a);

- Revised Performance Metric EC1.1 for Part 9 buildings;
- Revised Green House Gas Intensity (GHGI), Thermal Energy Demand Intensity (TEDI), and Total Energy Use Intensity (TEUI) targets;
- Energy and Carbon Tier 3 Metrics; and,
- Prescriptive paths to compliance.

Revised Performance Metric EC1.1 for Part 9 Buildings

In the October 2024 version of the Green Building Standards, it was proposed that Part 9 buildings be required to meet the Energy Star for New Homes, version 17.1, or R-2000 requirements. The revised proposal adapts the Climate Change Advisory Committee's recommendation to instead implement Green House Gas Intensity (GHGI), Thermal Energy Demand Intensity (TEDI), and Total Energy Use Intensity (TEUI) limits.

Further, it was also recommended by the Climate Change Advisory Committee to encourage a hybrid heating system. This approach has been adopted in this version of the Green Building Standards; further details are provided in Appendix A to Report PED24114(a).

Revised Green House Gas Intensity, Thermal Energy Demand Intensity, and Total Energy Use Intensity Targets

The revised set of Green Building Standards proposes new limits for Green House Gas Intensity (GHGI), Thermal Energy Demand Intensity (TEDI), and Total Energy Use Intensity (TEUI). Overall, the targets have been revised to lower limits, meaning more ambitious targets have been set. However, through research and consultation, it is recommended that if an application meets Tier 2 of the Green House Gas Intensity performance metric, that Thermal Energy Demand Intensity and Thermal Energy Use Intensity requirements be relaxed as discussed in Appendix A to Report PED24114(a).

Energy and Carbon Tier 3

As per the recommendations from the Climate Change Action Committee, further research, and consultation, a third tier is proposed to be included which is an optional

metric that demonstrates on-site near-zero operations or by achievement of Zero Carbon Building Design Standard Certification. Tier 3 is an optional performance metric; further details are provided in Appendix A attached to Report PED24114(a).

Prescriptive Compliance Paths

A prescriptive pathway refers to a set of specific criteria that individual building components must meet. This approach provides a straightforward "recipe" for compliance, detailing requirements such as minimum R-values for insulation, maximum U-factors for windows, and specific standards for Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning systems, etc. By following these predefined criteria, builders can ensure their projects meet energy efficiency standards without needing to perform energy modeling or simulations. Offering prescriptive pathways may simplify implementation for developers by providing step-by-step guidelines that are easy to follow.

As per feedback from additional consultation and the Climate Change Advisory Committee's recommendation, prescriptive paths have been introduced within the Green Building Standards, further details are provided in Appendix A attached to Report PED24114(a).

Next Steps

Staff recommend that the Green Building Standards be monitored for a period of one year and further refined as necessary. Future considerations for review after the one-year monitoring period are included in the memorandum attached as Appendix A to Report PED24114(a). Following the one-year monitoring period, further recommendations may be presented as a result of the observations and data collected. Details of the monitoring program will be presented to General Issues Committee on April 30, 2025.

Alternatives

Planning Committee may choose not to approve the recommendations however staff do not recommend this alternative as it would lead to delay in the implementation of the Green Building Standards.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
 - 1.1. Reduce the burden on residential taxpayers
 - 1.2. Facilitate the growth of key sectors
 - 1.3. Accelerate our response to climate change
 - 1.4. Protect green space and waterways

Previous Reports Submitted

[PED22185 - Public Consultation on Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines – Low Density Residential Uses](#)

[PED24114 – Green Building Standards](#)

[PED25117 – Green Building Standards Implementation](#)

Consultation

- Planning and Economic Development Department
- Office of Climate Change Initiatives
- Building Division

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Green Building Standards Building Energy Performance Refinement
Technical Memorandum

Appendix B: Green Building Standards Guidebook

Appendix C: Green Building Standards Checklist

Prepared by: Mallory Smith, Planner I
Planning and Economic Development Department, Zoning
By-law Reform

**Submitted and
recommended by:** Anita Fabac, Acting Director of Planning and Chief Planner
Planning and Economic Development Department