FRONTRUNNER: CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

WEST HOLLYWOOD REACHES FOR THE SKY WITH SUSTAINABLE ROOF PROVISIONS

OVERVIEW

West Hollywood, a small city of less than 40,000 residents surrounded by Los Angeles neighborhoods and the city of Beverly Hills, features a very dense, compact urban form with small lots, mixed land use, and a walkable street grid, uncommon in California. The city offers a wealth of attractions, including the famed Sunset Strip, a vibrant nightlife, thriving arts and design community, and rich diversity of residents. It also illustrates a commitment to sustainability and green building practices established more than 10 years ago, before the foundation of CALGreen. Most recently, this commitment resulted in a comprehensive update of the City's green building program as well as the adoption of a single-measure reach code.

"SUSTAINABLE ROOFS":

West Hollywood's Single-Measure Reach Code Goes Vertical

West Hollywood's Senior Sustainability Planner, Robyn Eason, notes, "the City has a long history of constructing green buildings that are responsive to its unique physical characteristics. With this program update, we identified an opportunity to extend our capability in a way that reflects the City's unique construction profile." West Hollywood focused on rooftops as a key way to continue driving optimal building energy efficiency performance while encouraging energy efficiency and development of additional green space in the dense urban landscape. The City is "park-poor" with primarily small, urban-style parks and only a limited amount of open green space. By developing a reach provision that focuses on roofs, the City turned its challenging built environment into an opportunity for continued improvement.



WeHo skyline at dusk



Sierra Bonita building featuring a sustainable roof design

The “sustainable roof” provision, adopted by the West Hollywood City Council in August 2019 and approved by the California Energy Commission in December 2019, provides three options for any new construction or remodel of residential or nonresidential buildings of 10,000 ft2 or greater:

Photovoltaics (PV), sized to offset a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the building's total estimated electrical usage

Solar thermal systems (i.e., solar hot water), with a minimum 0.50 solar fraction

Vegetative roof, covering a minimum 30 percent (30%) of the roof area not occupied by mechanical equipment or access stairways as a landscaped roof

---

"We have a very engaged community," notes Eason, who facilitated a series of working groups representing stakeholders from different city departments as well as local residents, architects, developers, and planners. "We also wanted to minimize the workflow involved with compliance, so we worked very hard to simplify the entire process." The City staff reimagined its green building website to include new program materials, procedures, forms and educational materials. They also modified existing CALGreen checklists to include local WeHo measures so there would only be a single checklist for all phases of review. Finally, they revised the inspection process to integrate all the new green building requirements and utilize an ICC-certified CALGreen building inspector.

"We found the Statewide Reach Codes program of great assistance in a range of ways. The website offers many resources, including relevant cost-effectiveness studies to support our ordinance. We also found the workshops and specific technical assistance of great help as we moved through the process," said Eason. She also noted that regional organizations such as SoCalREN and the Building Decarbonization Coalition were valuable resources in the process.



WeHo’s LEED Gold-certified Public Library with a rooftop solar array.



A vegetative roof option like the example pictured above offers WeHo stakeholders flexibility in complying with the new measure.

RESOURCES

The City of West Hollywood maintains a single-source portal for relevant forms, guides, and resources to support documentation for state and local green building requirements at http://www.weho.org/greenbuilding

The City’s ordinance and Energy Commission filings are available at:

https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/

https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/

OTHER FRONTRUNNERS

City of San Rafael Pursues Collaboration in its Development and Adoption of a Flex Path Residential Reach Code City of Cotati City of San Luis Obispo
Archives