



**CRA/LA**

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

**Community Redevelopment Agency**  
*of the* CITY OF LOS ANGELES



# HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS POLICY 2008

## Building Green & Sustainable Communities



**THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS POLICY**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. LEGISLATIVE BASIS AND MAYORAL MANDATE.....	2
3. PURPOSE.....	3
4. GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENT MECHANISMS.....	3
4.1 Project Area Planning and Development.....	4
4.2 Individual Project Design and Development.....	4
4.3 Internal Agency Practices.....	5
4.4 Education and Outreach.....	5
5. SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTATION PROGRAM.....	6
6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION.....	6
6.1 Formation of CRA/LA Green Team.....	6

## **Section 1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, California (“CRA/LA”) is committed to ensuring that its own practices and redevelopment efforts build healthy communities that can physically, economically, ecologically, and socially sustain themselves without sacrificing the needs of future generations. In implementing its mandate to improve economically and physically blighted communities in the City of Los Angeles, CRA/LA acknowledges it is not only possible but *necessary* to redevelop these communities with close attention to improving their overall health—through sustainable building practices, well-designed neighborhoods and districts, access to healthful foods and ample recreational facilities. As we attract new growth and investment in our project areas, we must ensure that our efforts are informed by a commitment to sustainable development.

The Healthy Neighborhoods Policy (“the Policy”) is a statement of commitment that affirms sustainability and environmental stewardship as core principles of the CRA/LA. It provides guidance to staff, developers, residents, property/business owners and other stakeholders on what sustainability involves and how it can be implemented to the benefit of those stakeholders, the CRA/LA’s redevelopment project areas and the City. It establishes sustainable goals and principles for CRA/LA project areas and individual buildings within those areas, outlines performance objectives to guide the CRA/LA’s own internal operations, ensures consistency with City standards, procedures and practices and provides for the establishment of outreach and education programs within redevelopment project areas. In addition, it establishes a ‘Sustainability Consultation Program’ to foster green building in CRA/LA project areas.

The Policy has been prepared by an inter-disciplinary staff team, in close coordination with staff of the City of Los Angeles and Global Green USA consultants. Implementation plans will be contained in a series of technical manuals to be incorporated into administrative procedures within 180 days of the adoption of this Policy; drafts of these manuals will be made available as they are completed for Board and public review prior to their implementation. Specific thresholds requirements such as LEED certification will be brought back to the Board of Commissioners to consider, as needed, in the form of amendments to the basic Policy.

## **Section 2.0 LEGISLATIVE BASIS AND MAYORAL MANDATE**

The State Legislature has found and declared that the provision of an environment for the social, economic, and psychological growth and well-being of all citizens is a fundamental purpose of the Community Redevelopment Law<sup>1</sup> and that the provision of appropriate continuing land use and construction policies in blighted areas constitutes a governmental function of state concern in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of the people of the State and of the communities in which the areas exist.<sup>2</sup>

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has stated a goal of making the City of Los Angeles environmentally sustainable, with intended outcomes that include the improvement of public health, increased green space and increased environmental stewardship by the City and its residents.<sup>3</sup> By Executive Directive No. 10, City Departments, in cooperation with entities

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<sup>1</sup> California Health and Safety Code Section 33071.

<sup>2</sup> California Health and Safety Code Section 33037(c).

<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Budget Summary.

including the CRA/LA, have been directed to “create and adopt a Statement of Sustainable Building Policies to guide the private sector’s decision-making processes for planning, construction and renovation of buildings in the City,” and “adopt a Departmental Sustainability Plan” covering principles including sustainable design, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, water efficiency, landscaping and transportation resources.<sup>4</sup> This Policy is a fulfillment of all of the aforementioned mandates.

### **Section 3.0   PURPOSE**

As an entity established pursuant to the Law, CRA/LA is responsible for carrying out the Legislature’s intent to develop and implement, utilizing the powers provided under the Law and the authorizations provided in adopted redevelopment plans, appropriate land use, design, development, redevelopment and construction policies, programs and projects in blighted areas in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of the people, and to carry out the goals specifically established in each adopted redevelopment plan. The purpose of an Agency-wide Healthy Neighborhoods Policy is to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight; improve the overall quality of life and foster long-term sustainability in redevelopment project areas; demonstrate the CRA/LA’s commitment to environmental, economic, and social stewardship; contribute to the City’s goals of protecting, conserving, and enhancing the region’s environmental resources; provide healthy work and home environments for residents, employees, and other stakeholders; and yield cost savings to taxpayers through reduced operating costs and reduced consumption of non-renewable resources.

Through this Healthy Neighborhoods Policy, CRA/LA intends to be an agent for promoting ecological and environmental sustainability in our redevelopment project areas within the City of Los Angeles. This Policy will enable the implementation—within our own Agency practices and in redevelopment efforts—of sustainable programs and initiatives related to energy, materials, waste reduction, urban design, urban nature, transportation, environmental health and water consumption.

CRA/LA shall evaluate and determine its participation in future development on the basis of supporting sustainable development and promoting healthy neighborhoods, with criteria including such factors as support of transit, pedestrian and bicycle use; infill and brownfield redevelopment; solar access and power generation; on-site storm water mitigation capacity; open space creation and native vegetation; habitat restoration and access to healthy foods. By implementing this Policy, CRA/LA aims to realize clean, safe, healthy and efficient neighborhoods for all project area stakeholders.

### **Section 4.0   GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENT MECHANISMS**

The CRA/LA’s Healthy Neighborhoods programs and initiatives shall address Project Area Planning and Development, Individual Project Design and Development, Internal Agency Practices, and Education and Outreach. The following identifies goals and achievement mechanisms for each:

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<sup>4</sup> Executive Directive No. 10, July 18, 2007.

## **Section 4.1 Project Area Planning and Development**

Promote sustainable development in long-range project area planning to:

1. Encourage transportation options and transit-oriented development
2. Encourage alternative mobility modes including walking, biking, carsharing, and telecommuting
3. Promote mixed-use neighborhoods that support the functions of daily life
4. Encourage affordable and workforce housing near jobs
5. Create open space and recreation opportunities
6. Maximize use of green space to meet multiple goals, including water quality and storm water management
7. Ensure adequate tree canopy and healthy urban forests
8. Minimize local ecological degradation through efficient siting
9. Foster green business and workforce development
10. Ensure access to healthy foods and other consumer products

To achieve these project area goals, staff shall develop and implement plans and programs through the following mechanisms:

- Five-Year Implementation Plans
- Design for Development guidelines
- Annual budgets and work programs
- Policies for housing and community benefits
- Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for project area wide initiatives
- Federal, State, and local grants and other funding opportunities
- Coordination with local and regional entities

## **Section 4.2 Individual Project Design and Development**

Enhance proposed rehabilitation and new construction projects (both public and private) through the use of sustainable building practices to:

1. Reduce emission of greenhouse gases
2. Increase use of clean, renewable, or alternative energy
3. Increase energy efficiency
4. Increase use of recycled and locally-sourced materials
5. Increase efficiency in water, wastewater and storm water systems
6. Increase efficiency of construction methods
7. Reduce demolition and construction-induced pollution and waste material generation
8. Improve indoor air quality and the health of occupants
9. Reduce building operating costs through increased operation and maintenance efficiency
10. Reduce public infrastructure costs related to development

To achieve individual project-based goals, staff shall develop and implement plans and programs including standards and regulations (such as LEED Certification) that will be implemented through the following mechanisms:

- Selection criteria to evaluate Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for individual projects
- Standards and requirements in Owner Participation Agreements (OPAs), Permit and entitlement approvals
- Design review
- Monitoring, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms
- Incentives that assist in market transformation

### **Section 4.3 Internal Agency Practices**

The CRA/LA is committed to achieving the highest standards of environmental responsibility in its internal practices with the expressed intent to:

1. Reduce energy and water consumption in its own offices
2. Become a waste free organization by recycling 100% of recyclable content
3. Maximize use of alternative transportation
4. Require environmentally responsible procurement and purchasing of vehicles, equipment, furniture and supplies
5. Encourage best employee practices and a culture of sustainability through education and awareness
6. Ensure sustainable construction and renovation of CRA/LA office space
7. Promote employee health and productivity

To help meet the CRA/LA's goals for sustainable internal practices, the following programs, policies, and procedures shall be established:

- Comprehensive recycling program
- Standards for sustainable procurement, purchasing and contracting
- Criteria for locating, leasing, constructing, and renovating CRA/LA offices
- Checklist of sustainable 'wish-list' for future lease negotiation of CRA/LA office space
- Campaign to train and educate staff on best practices

### **Section 4.4 Education and Outreach**

To complement an emphasis on more sustainable community building, on going multidisciplinary education and training is needed for all those who play a role in forming sustainable communities and all those who occupy them. This includes people in the fields of land planning, design and construction, finance, and building operations and maintenance as well as residents, business operators, developers, visitors and other stakeholders within redevelopment project areas.

In addition to general education and outreach, prior to the enacting CRA/LA's sustainable standards and requirements, staff will initiate public outreach with necessary stakeholders to communicate and receive feedback on the program, including the requirements, processes, and associated incentives. This will help clarify the intentions, refine the implementation plan, and ensure a more fluid transition.

## **Section 5.0 SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTATION PROGRAM**

To foster green building in all CRA/LA Project Areas and to support the Los Angeles Green Building Program, the CRA/LA will provide, at no cost, a one-time sustainable design consultation with an approved green building consultant.

The intent is twofold: 1) to identify opportunities for integrating sustainable design features and best practices for building construction and operation as early in the process as possible, and 2) to help promote market transformation towards sustainability by educating the development community. Developers would not be required to change their designs to meet any particular standards as a part of this program, but rather engage in a collaborative dialogue to identify no- or low-cost opportunities for creating environmentally responsible buildings and communities.

This 'Sustainability Consultation Program' seeks to assist developers and architects in meeting the requirements set forth in the Los Angeles Green Building Program and/or any commitments to sustainability included as a part of an agreement with or conditional approval by the CRA/LA.

The program will be implemented as follows:

- Required of all new construction and major rehabilitation projects that receive financial assistance of \$250,000 or more from the CRA/LA
- Required of new construction and major rehabilitation projects that require CRA/LA Board's discretionary approval and meet or exceed the 50,000 square feet or 50 residential unit threshold established by the citywide green building ordinance
- Voluntary for all other projects including by-right developments

In coordination with the launch of the Los Angeles Green Building Program, the CRA/LA 'Sustainability Consultation Program' will be effective July 1, 2008 and will apply to projects subject to CRA/LA Board action after that date.

## **Section 6.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

Specific standards and procedures for implementation will be contained in a series of technical manuals that address policies for project area planning, project specific requirements, programs intended to advance internal practices, and strategies for effective outreach and education.

### **Section 6.1 Formation of CRA/LA Green Team**

The programs and initiatives described within shall be administered by a formalized CRA/LA Green Team that will steer and implement the CRA/LA's Healthy Neighborhoods Policy.

Adequate representation from departmental and regional staff will ensure the effectiveness of such efforts.

The Green Team will be responsible for the following:

- Coordinate with Departments to advance the Los Angeles Green Building Program (anticipated adoption early 2008) and maximize green building in project areas
- Guide the creation and implementation of technical standards and requirements for sustainable development in project area and individual buildings, internal agency practices, and education and outreach programs as set forth in the Healthy Neighborhoods Policy
- Liaise with and manage outside sustainability consultants
- Create performance benchmarks, monitor sustainable accomplishments and present annual report to management, the Board, and the Mayor's Office per Mayoral Executive Directive No. 10