
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 16, 2004

TO: Chuck Soules, Public Works Director

FROM: Cindy Strecker, on behalf of the Recycling and Resource Conservation Advisory Board (RRCAB)

RE: Recommend Green Construction Elements be included in proposed new Public Library

CC: Bob Yoos, Solid Waste Division Manager
Mollie Mangerich, Operations Supervisor

The purpose of this memo is to submit a recommendation that the proposed new Library Building be built (or remodeled) as a “green” or “sustainable” building. As you are aware, City Commissioners have asked the Recycling and Resource Conservation Advisory Board (RRCAB) to research and recommend energy conservation strategies for consideration. The RRCAB believes this particular project could be a model that could help educate the public about how sustainability can be incorporated into design criteria and construction. Time appears to be of the essence since this concept needs to be introduced before the design phase and Request for Proposals are issued for the construction or remodeling of the Lawrence Public Library.

“Green” or “sustainable” buildings are designed to use natural resources such as energy, water, building materials and land more efficiently than buildings built only to code standards. In addition, these buildings typically have better indoor air quality and more natural light, resulting in better employee health and increased productivity. The U.S. Green Building Council has developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system as a design tool for developing green buildings. The LEED system has six categories indicating the areas in which green building concepts are incorporated: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation and design process. A building may become LEED certified by accumulating a certain number of points in each of these categories. While a green building does not have to be certified, the positive press associated with the certification is often desired.

A 2003 study called “The Costs and Financial Benefits of Green Buildings: A Report to California’s Sustainable Building Task Force” confirmed that “minimal increases in up front costs of about 2% to support green design would, on average, result in life cycle savings of 20% of total construction costs – more than ten times the initial investment.” Green buildings save taxpayer dollars and minimize negative environmental impacts by consuming fewer resources and producing less waste in the design, construction and operation phases. Savings result from reduced energy, water and waste costs, lower operation and maintenance costs, and improved worker productivity and health. There is still potential for financial benefits even with limited additional funding, as many green building features can be incorporated with little or no up front costs.

One of the keys to success in green building design is to use an integrated design process in which designers work as a team with input from contractors, occupants and Operations and Maintenance staff from the very beginning of the project. Cost differentials associated with green building design can often be minimized by having clear goals from the start of design and by working with a committed design and construction team. The Request for Quotes/Request for Proposals process should be modified to ensure that contractors have the appropriate expertise. Thus, it is very important to make a commitment to green design before the design process is begun.

Opportunities to showcase the “green design” elements of the building should be exploited as part of the design itself, with educational signage, kiosks, and tours. These measures will help ensure long-term community benefits that transcend aesthetics and on-site energy saving, encouraging understanding and off-site replication.

The RRCAB asks that you review this document and forward it to the City Commissioners on behalf of us. If you would like further information on this recommendation we would be happy to provide that to you. Please let the RRCAB know when you have forwarded our recommendations on – either directly to us or through WRR Operations Supervisor, Mollie Mangerich. Thank you for your assistance.