City of Bellevue | Development Services

Director's Rule 02-2026

Version
Final

Summary
This Director's Rule explains how projects in Bellevue's Mixed-Use Land Use Districts can earn green building bonus points through the Amenity Incentive System. It establishes a two-tier system of approved green building certifications and sets additional requirements that support Bellevue's climate and sustainability goals.

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Rulemaking Authority
LUC 20.40.100; LUC 20.20.420; and 20.25R.050

LUC or BCC Provisions Implemented or Interpreted
LUC 20.20.420; LUC 20.25R.050; LUC 20.20.010; and local adoption of the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC)

Decision
Approved

Horner, Rebecca Digitally signed by Horner, Rebecca
Date: 2026.03.11 10:55:02 -07'00'

Rebecca Horner AICP Director
Development Services Department Date:
March 18, 2026

DSD Director's Rule – Green Building Rule

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this rule is to implement and interpret LUC 20.20.420, which applies to green building components of amenity incentive programs in Mixed-Use Land Use Districts.

LUC 20.20.420 establishes that "The Director shall establish a tiered list of green building certification programs" that "may be used to achieve bonus points in the Amenity Incentive System for Mixed Use Land Use Districts as provided in LUC 20.25R.050." LUC 20.20.420 allows that "For any tier, the Director may establish additional requirements beyond meeting program certification that can further advance the City's sustainability goals."

B. Background:

LUC 20.20.420 describes two considerations for the Director to consider "when establishing tiers and selecting green building certification programs" for the purposes of green building components of amenity incentive programs in Mixed-Use Land Use Districts:

- "What percentage of applicants will be able to achieve the green building certification program at the specified tier."
- "The impact of the green building certification program on achieving the City's sustainability goals, including those specified in the City's Environmental Stewardship Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan."

The Director's Rule was informed by the Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment Economic Analysis and incorporates input from the development community, green building experts, and peer jurisdictions running comparable programs to set ambitious yet achievable 'tiers' of green building incentives.

This Director's Rule facilitates progress towards adopted goals and targets in the 2044 Comprehensive Plan and the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan, including:

- 50% community-wide reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2030
- 95% community-wide reduction in GHG by 2050 (net zero)
- 50% per capita reduction in vehicle miles traveled by 2050
- 15% community-wide reduction in energy use by 2030
- 95% of all new jobs and 75% of all new housing located within ¼-mile of a frequent transit stop by 2050
- Facilitating green building construction through incentives that drive efficient, electric buildings.

C. Rule:

The amenity incentives provided through LUC 20.25R.050.D.2.g are divided into two tiers. In Mixed Use Land Use Districts subject to Part 20.25R LUC, bonus points for each tier are as follows, as defined in LUC 20.25R.050.D.2.g:

Tier One = 0.3 points per gross square foot of certified building
Tier Two = 0.4 points per gross square foot of certified building

The total number of bonus points earned equals the total additional building floor area available to the development through green building certification, up to the maximum for the Land Use District described in LUC 20.20.010.

As provided for in LUC 20.25R.050.D.2.g.iii, if a residential development located entirely on a site located less than or equal to 40,000 square feet achieves Tier Two certification, it shall be allowed up to the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the Land Use District described in LUC 20.20.010 without obtaining any other bonus points under this amenity incentive system.

The requirements associated with each tier shall be as follows:

1. Tier One.

To achieve Tier One green building certification, projects must meet the following requirements:

i. **Green Building Certification.** Obtain certification from an approved green building certification program at the level specified in Section D. Alternatively, obtain the second-highest building certification award level from another green building certification program, approved at the Director's discretion, that the Director determines is functionally equivalent to a Tier 1 certification level specified in Section D (for green building certification programs with multiple levels, this will generally be the second-highest building certification award level). For any green building certification program, the applicant shall meet the applicable requirements of the latest version of the program in effect on the date that vested rights are first established for the project under LUC 20.40.500.

ii. **Electric Vehicle Charging.** For buildings with more than two dwelling units and no private garage, property owners must provide electric vehicle capacity and infrastructure exceeding the minimum requirements of WAC 51-50-0429. The minimum thresholds for Tier One Green Building Incentives are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Tier 1 EV Parking Requirements

Occupancy	**EV Charging Stations**	**EV-Ready Parking Spaces**	**EV-Capable Parking Spaces**
Group A, B, E, F, H, I, M, and S occupancies	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces
Group R occupancies: Buildings that do not contain more than two dwelling units	Not required	One for each dwelling unit	Not required
Group R occupancies: Dwelling units with private garages	Not required	One for each dwelling unit	Not required
All other Group R occupancies	10% of total parking spaces	25% of total parking spaces	35% of total parking spaces

iii. **Carbon Reduction.** Complete one of the following three options for reducing the building's carbon footprint:

Option 1. Embodied Carbon. Satisfy one of the following three pathways to reduce the emissions associated with building materials in the project.

Pathway 1. Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion. Achieve a minimum 50% diversion rate for all construction and demolition waste, by weight.

Pathway 2. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Life Cycle Assessment. Track and reduce embodied carbon of major structural, enclosure, and hardscape materials using a whole-building life cycle assessment. Demonstrate a 10% reduction in global warming potential (GWP).

Pathway 3. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Materials Type Approach. Demonstrate that three structural, enclosure, or hardscape materials commonly used throughout the project have lower embodied carbon impacts than industry benchmarks as demonstrated by product-specific Type III Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).

OR

Option 2. No On-site Combustion. Design all project buildings to operate 100% on electric power, including lighting, HVAC, appliances, and all other permanent uses, with the following exceptions:

- Commercial kitchens and other retail food service uses may install natural gas-powered appliances.
- Emergency backup power systems.
- Outdoor Grills and firepits.

OR

Option 3. District Energy. Demonstrate that the project is ready to connect to a Low or Zero Carbon District Energy System upon the system's completion. Follow the associated requirements in the WA State Energy Code for Low-Carbon District Energy systems.

2. Tier Two.

To achieve Tier Two green building certification, projects must meet the following requirements:

i. **Green Building Certification.** Obtain certification from an approved green building certification program at the level specified in Section D. Alternatively, obtain the highest building certification award level from another green building certification program, approved at the Director's discretion, that the Director determines is functionally equivalent to a Tier 2 certification level specified in Section D. For any green building certification program, the applicant shall meet the applicable requirements of the latest version of the program in effect on the date that vested rights are first established for the project under LUC 20.40.500.

ii. **Electric Vehicle Charging.** Provide additional capacity and infrastructure for electric vehicle charging beyond that required by Table 429.2 of WAC 51-50-0429. Minimum thresholds for achieving Tier Two Green Building Incentives are in Table 2.

Table 2. Tier 2 EV Parking Requirements

Occupancy	**EV Charging Stations**	**EV-Ready Parking Spaces**	**EV-Capable Parking Spaces**
Group A, B, E, F, H, I, M, and S occupancies	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces
Group R occupancies: Buildings that do not contain more than two dwelling units	Not required	One for each dwelling unit	Not required
Group R occupancies: Dwelling units with private garages	Not required	One for each dwelling unit	Not required
All other Group R occupancies	10% of total parking spaces	50% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces

iii. **Carbon Reduction**. Two strategies for reducing the building's carbon footprint are required:

1. Embodied Carbon. Satisfy one of the following three pathways to reduce the emissions associated with building materials in the project.

Pathway 1. Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion. Achieve a minimum 50% diversion rate for all construction and demolition waste, by weight.

Pathway 2. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Life Cycle Assessment. Track and reduce embodied carbon of major structural, enclosure, and hardscape materials using a whole-building life cycle assessment. Demonstrate a 10% reduction in global warming potential (GWP).

Pathway 3. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Materials Type Approach. Demonstrate that 3 structural, enclosure, or hardscape materials have lower embodied carbon impacts than industry benchmarks as demonstrated by product -specific Type III Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).

AND

2. Building Energy. Choose one of the following two pathways to reduce the emissions associated with building energy.

Pathway 1. No On-site Combustion. Design all project buildings to operate 100% on electric power, including lighting, HVAC, appliances, and all other permanent uses, with the following exceptions:

- Commercial kitchens and other retail food service uses may install natural gas-powered appliances.
- Emergency backup power systems.
- Outdoor Grills and firepits.

Pathway 2. District Energy. Demonstrate that the project is ready to connect to a Low or Zero Carbon District Energy System upon the system's completion. Follow the associated requirements in the WA State Energy Code for Low-Carbon District Energy systems.

D. Eligible Green Building Certification Programs

1. Built Green Multifamily Checklist

- **Certification Levels:**
  - **Tier 1:** 4-Star
  - **Tier 2:** 5-Star
- **Certification Agency:** Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties
- **Eligible Building Types:** Multifamily (i.e., any residential project other than single-family detached or townhomes)

2. LEED Residential

- **Certification Levels:**
  - **Tier 1**: Gold
  - **Tier 2:** Platinum
- **Certification Agency:** Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI)

- **Eligible Building Types:** Any building with 40% or more of its gross floor area dedicated to residential use. Any building with 40% to 60% of its gross floor area dedicated to residential use may choose between LEED Residential and LEED BD+C.

3. LEED BD+C (Building Design + Construction)

- **Certification Levels**:
  - **Tier 1:** Silver
  - **Tier 2**: Gold
- **Certification Agency**: GBCI
- **Eligible Building Types:** Any building with less than 60% of its gross floor area dedicated to residential use. Any building with 40% to 60% of its gross floor area dedicated to residential use may choose between LEED Residential and LEED BD+C.

4. Living Building Challenge

- **Certification Levels:**
  - **Tier 1**: Core
  - **Tier 2:** Petal
- **Certification Agency:** Living Future
- **Eligible Building Types**: Any

5. Passive House

- **Certification Levels:**
  - **Tier 1:** Phius CORE
  - **Tier 2:** Phius ZERO
- **Certification Agency**: Phius
- **Eligible Building Types**: Any

6. Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard (ESDS)

- **Certification Levels:**
  - **Tier 1:** Certified (50 points required for new construction)
  - **Tier 2:** Certified, plus 20 additional points from ESDS criteria
- **Certification Agency:** Washington State Department of Commerce (Projects funded by WSHTF). Self-certification by owner and architect (Other eligible projects).
- **Eligible Building Types:** Projects with capital funding through the Washington State Housing Trust Fund (WSHTF), King County, City of Bellevue, or A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)

E. Verification

Green Building Certification

The building owner or representative must register their project with the selected Green Building Certification Program and submit the Project Registration/ Enrollment Number to the City of Bellevue before bonus points are recorded as described in LUC 20.25R.050.E.

For all certification programs, the project owner or their assigned delegate is responsible for all costs associated with achieving project certification. The project owner or their assigned delegate must provide the city with official verification supplied by the certifying body for that certification program.

Additional Performance Requirements

For all additional performance requirements, the project owner or their assigned delegate is responsible for all costs associated with demonstrating that all requirements have been met. The project owner or their assigned delegate must provide the city with official verification or documentation for the additional performance requirements, as outlined below.

Electric Vehicles

Projects must submit a plan, stamped by a licensed electrical engineer, showing the minimum required infrastructure and electrical capacity to support full build-out of that infrastructure.

Projects pursuing an Electric Vehicles credit in the applicable green building certification program may instead submit the documentation required for that credit by that certification program. This does not change the amount of infrastructure the project is required to provide.

Reduce Embodied Carbon – self certification

If projects are pursuing certification through **Pathway 1. Construction and Demolition Waste Diversion**, then the applicant must submit a summary report, using a template provided by the City, showing the total C&D waste diversion rate for the project, in aggregate and by waste stream. Projects must also provide electronic access to the hauling reports.

Projects pursuing a **Construction and Demolition Waste Management** credit in the applicable green building certification program may instead submit the documentation required for that credit by that certification program. This does not change the minimum percentage diversion rate the project is required to achieve.

If projects are pursuing certification through **Pathway 2. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Life Cycle Assessment**, then the applicant must submit output from an approved embodied carbon measurement tool, listed below:

a. **Builders for Climate Action Building Emissions Accounting for Materials (BEAM) estimator tool**. BEAM was developed by the team at Builders for Climate Action to suit the needs of the low-rise building sector.

b. **Embodied Carbon in Construction Calculator (EC3)** is a free and easy-to-use tool offered by Building Transparency that allows benchmarking, assessment, and reductions in embodied carbon, focused on the upfront supply chain emissions of construction materials.

c. **Tally** is Building Transparency's life cycle assessment (LCA) tool that calculates the embodied carbon of building material selections directly in Revit.

d. **One-Click LCA** is a life cycle assessment software that can be used in pre-design to quickly evaluate carbon emissions for a range of options and connected to design and BIM software to provide more detailed LCAs at later stages.

e. **Athena Impact Estimator** generates embodied carbon estimates based on simple user descriptions of building assemblies, including bay sizes and loads. More details on materials can be added as needed.

f. A commonly accepted, industry-standard calculator with sufficient evidence to support industry acceptance, as determined by the reviewer.

If projects are pursuing certification through **Pathway 3. Reduce Embodied Carbon – Materials Type Approach**, then the applicant must submit product-specific Type III EPDs for three structural, enclosure, or hardscape materials and documentation that the materials installed have lower GWP per unit than industry benchmarks. Industry averages for embodied carbon intensity values are defined by the U.S. EPA, the most recent CLF Material Baselines report, or similarly robust and widely recognized publications and industry-wide EPDs applicable to the project region, as approved by the Director.

<u>Reduce Embodied Carbon – third party credits.</u>

a. Projects pursuing Built Green certification may demonstrate achievement by meeting requirements of the Built Green version 2024 credit 7-8: **Calculate an embodied carbon baseline and show at least a 10% reduction.**

b. Projects pursuing LEED certification may demonstrate achievement by meeting the requirements of the LEED v4.1 **Residential Building Life Cycle Impact Reduction** credit or the LEED v5 BD+C **Reduce Embodied Carbon** credit.

c. Projects pursuing Living Building Challenge certification may demonstrate achievement by meeting the requirements of the LBC **Materials** Petal.

All-Electric Building

As part of a submittal demonstrating compliance with the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC), projects must submit plans, drawings, or other documentation demonstrating that buildings are 100% electric except where exemptions are allowed. The plans, drawings, or other documentation must be approved by a qualified professional.

District Energy

As part of a submittal demonstrating that the project is ready to connect to a Low or Zero Carbon District Energy System upon the system's completion, the project must submit plans, drawings, or other documentation showing that the project follows the associated requirements in the WSEC for Low-Carbon District Energy systems. The plans, drawings, or other documentation must be approved by a qualified professional.

F. Rating System Versions:

For any green building certification program, the applicant shall meet the applicable requirements of the latest version of the program in effect on the date that vested rights are first established for the project under LUC 20.40.500. Projects must then achieve certification using that version. If at the time that the project seeks certification from the applicable green building certification program, the version of the program to which the project established vested rights is no longer supported by the certification program, then the project must conform to the requirements of a green building certification program available by operation of this rule for which certification is available.

G. Assurance

A performance bond, in a form approved by the Director, equivalent to the value of the bonus FAR earned by operation of LUC 20.25R.050.D.2.g, shall be provided to the City by the developer. In the event the project does not achieve the planned rating and other requirements within 18 months of issuance of the certificate of occupancy of the structure utilizing bonus FAR earned by operation of LUC 20.25R.050.D.2.g, the bonded fund shall be used for environmental improvements identified by the City. The value of the bonus FAR shall be calculated using a construction cost estimator acceptable to the Director.

H. Definition of Terms (Glossary)

Where a term defined in Chapter 20.50 LUC is used in this rule, its meaning shall be as defined in Chapter 20.50 LUC. The following definitions are specific to this rule and are not defined in Chapter 20.50 LUC. Where a term defined below is used in this rule, its meaning shall be as defined below.

1. "Building Certification"
   The process of engaging accredited certifiers to independently check and approve building works to ensure they comply with the safety, health, amenity and sustainability standards specified in legislation and building codes.

2. Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure
   "EV Capable" refers to a vehicle space with electrical panel space and load capacity to support a branch circuit and necessary raceways, both underground and/or surface mounted, to support EV charging.

   "EV Ready" refers to a vehicle space which is provided with a branch circuit; any necessary raceways, both underground and/or surface mounted; to accommodate EV charging, terminating in a receptacle.

   "EV Charging" refers to a vehicle space which is provided with a branch circuit; any necessary raceways, both underground and/or surface mounted; to accommodate EV charging, terminating in an operational and accessible charger.

3. "Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste"
   Any non-biodegradable, recyclable materials, or non-recyclable waste that result from construction, remodeling, repair, or demolition of buildings, roads, or other structures and require removal from the site of construction or demolition.

4. "Low or Zero Carbon District Energy System"
   Qualifying systems must meet the definition of a Low-Carbon District Energy Exchange System or the Low Carbon District Heating and Cooling or Heating Only System, as defined by the latest version of the Washington State Commercial Energy Code in effect on the date that vested rights are first established for the project under LUC 20.40.500.

5. "Waste Diversion"
   The process of diverting and redirecting waste away from landfills.