

# WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

## WHAT ARE OUR GREEN PLANNING OPTIONS?

The options available to the Borough are numerous; however, the implementation of these options is limited by the municipality's legal authority, funding capabilities, concern for residents, and available staff time. This document lists a number of options divided into mandatory regulations and voluntary options by focus. Additional space is provided at the end of this document to list additional options as they become available.

## MANDATORY OPTIONS

### STORMWATER/LANDSCAPE ONLY OPTIONS

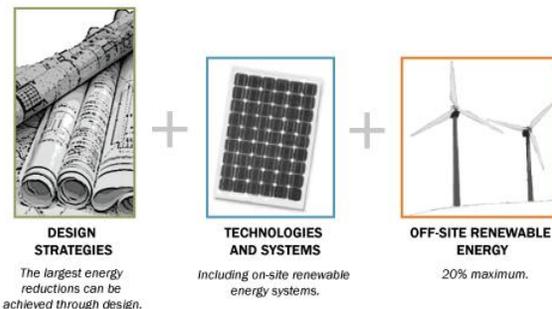
- **Option 1:** [Seattle's Green Factor](#)
  - Require that site plans requiring approval from zoning use a checklist similar to Seattle's Green Factor to determine if open space requirements are met



SEATTLE *green factor*

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY & GREEN POWER ONLY OPTIONS

- **Option 1:** [Mandatory Disclosure Policy](#)
  - Requires landlords and home sellers to provide the results of an energy audit to renter or potential homebuyer
  - Approximate cost-burden: \$350
- **Option 2:** Adopt the [2030 Challenge for Planning](#)
  - All new and renovated buildings/neighborhoods adopt and implement a 60% reduction below the regional average for fossil fuel operating energy consumption for new and renovated buildings and infrastructure (20% maximum for off-site renewables)
    - 50% fossil fuel reduction standard for the embodied energy consumption of materials.
    - Additional reductions in future years (2015, 70%; 2020, 80%; 2025, 90%; 2030, carbon-neutral)
  - Can also add additional 50% reduction standard in vehicle miles traveled and water consumption
  - To meet these goals would require zoning regulation requiring an energy reduction 30% beyond Pennsylvania building code, the equivalent of 6 mandatory points in LEED EA credit 1 for New Construction or 8 mandatory for renovation/existing building, or EPA ENERGY STAR rating of 65 in order to have a site plan approved



#### Meeting the 2030 Challenge

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### GREEN BUILDING OPTIONS

- **Option 1:** Require a green building checklist be submitted with site plans for new buildings/renovations, but not certification (LEED, NAHB NGBS, Green Globes, Enterprise Green Communities, etc.)

- **Option 2:** Require a LEED AP specialist on the design team of any new site plan for new buildings/renovations
- **Option 3:** Require buildings of a certain size or purpose obtain green building certification (LEED, NAHB NGBS, Green Globes, Enterprise Green Communities, etc.)
  - [Model Ordinance](#)

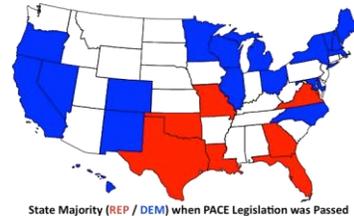
### SMART GROWTH OPTIONS

- **Option 1:** Loosen zoning regulations to allow for more property uses in residential neighborhoods such as community groceries, professional offices with fewer than 20 employees on a conditional basis (e.g. Casper City, Wyoming)
- **Option 2:** Completely reform zoning codes by replacing with form-based codes, [SmartCode](#), etc. or instituting essential fixes to code to allow for smart growth
  - [Examples](#)
  - [Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Urban and Suburban Zoning Codes](#)

### VOLUNTARY OPTIONS

#### ENERGY EFFICIENCY & GREEN POWER ONLY OPTIONS

- **Option 1:** Energy Efficiency/Weatherization Fund
  - Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (*NON-OPTION: NO LEGAL AUTHORITY IN PA*)
    - Local governments can use PACE programs to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements
    - Local governments finance the up-front costs of these improvements and property owners repay the costs as a line item on property tax bills.
    - State legislative authority must exist and local governments must setup up energy financing districts (Available in surrounding states NY, OH, MD).
  - Revolving Loan Fund
    - Advertise the [Pennsylvania Green Energy Loan Fund](#) (GELF)
      - Fixed interest rate of 3.5%, terms up to 15 years
      - Loan amounts range between \$100,000 and 2.5 million
      - Available to commercial, nonprofit, government, multifamily residential, and industrial entities
      - Must result in a 25% reduction in energy use
    - Advertise the [West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund](#)
    - Advertise [Keystone HELP](#) loan program for residential improvements
      - Fixed interest rates between 2.99% and 8.99%, terms up to 20 years
      - Loan amounts range between \$1,000 and \$35,000
      - Keystone HELP has been highlighted as one of the best energy efficiency loan programs in the country
    - Develop local revolving loan fund or add to Keystone HELP loan fund
      - Some counties offer lower interest rates than statewide program through EnergyWorks, which is supported by a DOE Better Buildings Program grant
  - 14x Stimulus



- Using local stimulus money to create a local mortgage buy down program that offers reduced mortgage interest rates contingent upon renovating or building to meet specific energy reduction targets
      - For new homes: mortgage rate lowered by ½% for a HERS 70 rating or equivalent, 1% for HERS 50 rating
      - For existing homes: refinanced mortgage rate lowered by 1% if homeowner invests in efficiency upgrades to meet HERS 70 rating.
    - Municipal costs recouped in increased tax revenue generated from construction and increase in single family home ownership. Costs could also be recouped through the sale of energy efficiency credits by the Borough
    - Example: A renovation/mortgage refinancing resulting in a new mortgage amount of \$200,000 would require a minimum investment by the homeowner of \$16,000 in energy efficiency upgrades (included in the new mortgage amount) resulting in both monthly energy savings and savings in mortgage payments
- **Option 2:** Energy Efficiency and/or Green Power Residential and Business Challenge
  - Encourage local residents and business owners to invest in energy efficient upgrades, change behaviors, and purchase green power through increased education, community leadership, accolades, and small incentives
  - Could include a partnership with a non-profit for reduced price energy audits or a partnership with the local utility for smart metering
  - E.g. [The Energy Star Challenge](#), [MN Energy Challenge](#), [EPA Green Power Communities](#).
- **Option 3:** Incentivize for Design for Energy Star, Energy Star label or a local energy efficiency checklist
  - Zoning Incentives:
    - Increase floor area ration (FAR)
    - Decrease parking requirement
    - Change requirements for open space to something more like Seattle Green Factor
    - Increase building height
    - Expedite Permitting Process
    - Decrease Permit Fee
  - Other Incentives:
    - Grants/Loan Funds
    - Publicity/Award
    - Technical Assistance

## GREEN BUILDING OPTIONS

- **Option 1:** Incentivize green building certification (LEED, NAHB NGBS, Green Globes, Enterprise green communities, local checklist, etc.)
  - Zoning Incentives:
    - Increase floor area ration (FAR)
    - Decrease parking requirements
    - Change requirements for open space to something more like Seattle Green Factor
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**SMART GROWTH OPTIONS**

- **Option 1:** Add smart growth design criteria to the Design Review Board's "Design Guide"
- **Option 2:** Encourage LEED-Neighborhood Development through zoning incentives

**OTHER OPTIONS****DO NOTHING**

Doing nothing is a valid option. Without taking any action green buildings and LEED buildings will be constructed in State College; the new construction at Foxdale Village is one such example. Market demand for green buildings is growing and will likely continue to grow in the near future.

The State of Pennsylvania may or may not adopt the international green construction code (IGCC). Buildings constructed under the code will not necessarily be "green buildings," however they will meet green building standards that are higher than the current code requires. Many of the programs mentioned above such as the 2030 Challenge and similarly the ENERGY STAR label provide good examples. Both of these programs require an energy consumption reduction 30% below the accepted international energy construction code; thus, it indicates that the IGCC code, like the IECC code will most likely be an improvement, but not necessarily a radical improvement.

**PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT**

The Borough could task an intern, AmeriCorps member, or consultant to provide technical assistance or education about green buildings. This type of education is already available to businesses through the Small Business Development Center's EMAP program, PennTAP, and by SEDA-Council of Governments. These programs are not available to homeowners, institutions, non-profits, and churches. Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light is providing this type of education to faith institutions.

*Please list any other options below?*