

REAL ESTATE



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Q | I am designing a commercial building to meet Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (“LEED”) certification standards, or to incorporate other “green” building elements. Does this make me eligible for development bonuses under local zoning codes?

A | Depending on where your project is located, it may. Typically, cities allow “bonus” floor area or height when a developer provides some kind of compensatory public benefit, like street amenities, affordable housing contributions, or the purchase of landmark or open space credits. Some jurisdictions are now adding a “Green Building Program” to this menu of options. In the City of Redmond, for example, you are eligible for bonus development not only through LEED certification but also more modest measures such as reducing impervious surface, retaining native vegetation, installing drought-tolerant landscaping, or collecting rainwater. These green elements may provide a more cost-effective way to achieve bonus development than other alternatives.