



**DATE:** November 12, 2014

**TO:** WMA Board and Energy Council

**FROM:** Gary Wolff, Executive Director

**BY:** Wes Sullens, Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** **LEED-EB Certification of StopWaste Headquarters**

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### **BACKGROUND**

When StopWaste decided to renovate a building and move our headquarters to downtown Oakland, we set goals for our new space to be a shining example of green design, construction and operation. We succeeded, and were awarded the prestigious LEED Platinum certification by the US Green Building Council under their New Construction & Major Renovation (LEED-NC) rating system in 2007. We were the first major renovation project in the country to achieve Platinum certification, and we did it for less than a 3% incremental cost over base construction.

### **DISCUSSION**

In the years since our building was opened in 2007, we have continued to operate our green building in a way that minimizes impact on the environment, saves money, and provides a pleasant work environment. We use energy and water wisely, and purchase green products where we can. We recycle and compost, and analyze our purchases to make sure items brought into the building can be recycled or composted at end of life. We are a certified green business, a Water Smart award winner, and have earned the Energy Star designation since 2010. One of our projects -- including statistical analysis by academic real estate professionals -- found that buildings with credible green labels are worth about 9% more when sold than comparable buildings without such labels.

The LEED rating system has been through a number of changes in the 7 years since our original LEED-NC certification. LEED is now in 150 countries worldwide, comprising more than 220,000 projects, and over 10 billion square feet of construction. The USGBC now certifies over 1.5 million square feet of space to the LEED standard every day. Green buildings represent half of the US commercial construction market value, and that number is growing as things like green codes become mainstream. To capture the momentum, in 2013 the USGBC finalized a fourth major iteration of the LEED rating system since its inception in the early 1990's (called in the field "LEED v4"). LEED v4 raises the bar for green building strategies, and with new international benchmarks, makes it a global rating system. Due to our long-term involvement with LEED, we were able to

enroll the StopWaste building as a beta project for the then very new LEED v4 rating system, which includes LEED for Existing Buildings (LEED-EB).

LEED for Existing Buildings is a different kind of rating system than LEED-NC for several reasons:

- Requires strict organizational policies for operating and maintaining a green building
- Requires a “performance period” where utilities, purchases and activities are monitored and reported to prove high performance
- Does not require any construction to take place
- Engages occupants with surveys and opportunities to help the process, such as conducting waste audits or monitoring an individual’s workstation energy demands

Our 12-month LEED-EB pursuit resulted in StopWaste achieving Platinum certification, with 81/100 points. This *makes us the first Platinum certification to the LEED Version 4 rating system on the planet!*

Some highlights:

- we recycle 81% of discarded materials from our building,
- bring 100% of our e-waste to qualified e-stewardship recyclers.
- 73% of our ongoing purchases meet rigorous green labels, and 85% of our cleaning products are green.
- we rate among the top 96% of buildings in the nation for energy use, achieving an ENERGY STAR score of 96/100.
- our onsite solar array provides about 10% of our electricity use, and we purchase renewable energy offsets for the remainder of our energy.
- we consistently use less than half the water of a typical office building indoors, and use very little water outside.
- our policies for purchasing and maintenance/janitorial ensure integrated pest management and non-toxic cleaning practices whenever possible.
- 66% of our staff gets to work using alternative transportation (e.g., public transit, bicycles, etc.)

By achieving LEED-EB Platinum, we've demonstrated our on-going commitment to green practices, and that we are among the worldwide leaders in such practices. But achieving EB Platinum does not mean we stop. We still have areas of improvement, including getting to near-zero waste, purchasing a greater percentage of our ongoing consumables that have sustainable attributes, improving interior comfort in some spaces in the building, and helping others to achieve similar successes. We are working with the Alameda Free Library to achieve LEED-EB certification and may (subject to funding availability) offer grants to other member agencies pursuing green certifications.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.

