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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Greg Hannan, Community Development Director  
**From:** Emily Fernandez, Community Project Planner  
**CC:** Thom Sheridan, City Manager; Katie Behnke, Economic Development Manager  
**Date:** August 21, 2023  
**Subject:** Follow-Up on Green Home Certification

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### History

The Environmental Awareness Committee (EAC) first presented to City Council about green home certification programs at the 6/14/22 Council workshop. Council was supportive at the time of the EAC compiling educational resources for the City website to make residents aware of potential cost savings from sustainability improvements. Council also suggested the EAC consider expanding educational workshops. Council noted that the County Building Standards Department may already track green certification or be better positioned to implement a certification program because the County inspects interior renovations. Council suggested that the EAC verify the County's efforts and curate a list of the best certification programs available to residents.

### Educational Efforts & Research

In response to Council input, the EAC worked with staff to develop a new page on the City website, [Environmental Resources for Residents](#), published Fall 2022. The page explains Inflation Reduction Act funding that provides rebates and credits to homeowners for making green home improvements. The committee invited a local LEED Green Associate (green-certified architect) to discuss details of Inflation Reduction Act funding at the December 5, 2022 EAC meeting. The EAC then invited the Director of Public-Private Partnerships at Pearl Certification to its April 3, 2023 meeting to discuss how to capture the value of sustainability certificates in the home buying and selling process. Additionally, the EAC invited the LEED Green Associate back to present a workshop on Inflation Reduction Act funding at the City's April 2023 Earth Day event.

Staff contacted Summit County Building Standards to determine what work the County performs related to green certification or tracking sustainable projects. The Chief Building Official noted that the County does not specifically track sustainable renovations and recommended contacting the US Green Building Council (USGBC) for resources. Staff found that the USGBC maintains a directory of LEED-certified projects, but only one project from Hudson is listed in the past 15 years. The lack of local LEED or other sustainability-certified projects may indicate a lack of local knowledge of the programs available, as well as a lack of infrastructure for maintaining an inventory of certified projects.

Per Council’s initial input, the EAC further researched third-party certification programs that are widely recognized and available to residents. The committee identified five relevant opportunities:

1. RESNET HERS Energy Rating Index Report
2. DOE Home Energy Score
3. LEED Certification
4. Appraisal Institute “Residential Green and Energy Efficient Addendum”
5. Pearl Certification

The EAC is proposing a **green home certification registration** as an additional method to increase awareness of sustainable home improvement resources and related cost savings. The independent certifications above could be listed as options for achieving a registration that the City of Hudson could administer.

## **Proposed Green Home Certification Registration**

### *How the Program Could Work*

Green certification could be added as a registration form on the City’s existing permit page. Staff would not be responsible for verifying whether home improvements meet technical sustainability criteria. Instead, residents would submit certified reports verifying that they have achieved one or more of the nationally recognized green certifications noted above (see attachments, *DRAFT - Green Home Certification Registration* and *Examples of Accepted Reports*).

### *Benefits of the Program*

- The registration is a voluntary option for homeowners to register their sustainability efforts locally
- Provides a central inventory of green-certified homes in Hudson, as an inventory does not exist
- Registrations could help indicate whether EAC education efforts are reaching residents
- Allows Council, EAC and staff to draw insights that could be used for additional education (ex. if most residents pursue one certification over others, detailed assistance could be prepared on applying for the more popular certification)
- Allows staff to track sustainability efforts to better understand resident interest in sustainability, and potentially identify opportunities for service improvement (ex. insight on whether the land development code aligns with residents’ home improvement goals)
- A green home inventory would be a strong effort to document in the City’s credit reporting
- An inventory would provide data to highlight in community and economic development efforts
- The City could generate awareness & goodwill by enhancing the program with recognition for certified homes (ex. a temporary yard sign could be installed or a plaque dated to be displayed for 1-5 years similar to the Hudson Heritage Association program)

## **Other Considerations**

- Consider coordination with Summit County to share data and encourage a regional inventory.
- A media effort may be required to generate awareness of the program.
- Unlike permits, residents would not be charged a fee to register for the certification inventory (minimal review work, no inspections needed).
- The inventory would be no cost to the City aside from staff time to process registrations. If a recognition program were added, funding for plaques or signs could be explored.