

Green Building Policy Proposal -Summary

The mission of the Green Roof Review Task Force was to recommend modifications, clarifications, and improvements to the Green Roof Initiative through a collaborative, consensus-based process that honored the vote and the benefits that the ordinance (current law) would have achieved. The well-rounded 24-member group includes representatives from City Council, City staff, green roof proponents, the real estate industry and additional experts. See the [full list here](#).

Task Force members reached consensus in their final meeting on a proposal that implements the ordinance and provides more options to achieve the benefits of the ballot measure. The recommendations do not reflect any one members' ideal policy; rather, all agree the proposal is an acceptable and balanced compromise because it strengthens the existing ordinance while improving flexibility, allowing each owner of an existing large building and each new builder to find the most cost-effective ways to achieve the benefits of the existing ordinance.

A key point of importance is that the new requirements and options – such as cool roofs and ground level green space - achieve benefits equal to or greater than the original ordinance, and drive down compliance costs for developers and owners.

For example, the proposal recommends requiring cool roofs (a high solar reflectance roof) on all buildings exceeding 25,000 square feet. Cool roofs are more effective than partial green roof coverage in reducing Denver's urban heat island problem.

The proposal also allows green spaces on the ground level instead of only on roofs, increasing Denver's urban green spaces while helping to more effectively manage storm water. The proposed revisions to the original ordinance achieve equivalent greenhouse gas emission reductions to the solar installations initially required with the ordinance, but with more options and versatility.

The original coverage requirements were disproportionately burdensome to large single-story buildings in terms of the coverage required. The new proposed amount of coverage required on a site will be 10 percent of the roof area multiplied by the number of floors (or Roof Area Ratio, RAR), up to a maximum required coverage of 60 percent. The goal is to simplify the ordinance and make it more equitable across different building types and sizes.

Highlights from the proposal are below. The entire proposal is available [here](#).

The proposal recommends that new buildings must include a cool roof plus one of eight compliance options:

1. A green roof or green space anywhere on the site.
2. A financial contribution for off-site green space.
3. A combination of green space and solar panels.
4. A combination of green space and energy efficiency measures.
5. A solar array covering 70 percent of the roof.
6. Energy efficiency measures so that the building is 12 percent more efficient than current energy code.
7. LEED Gold or equivalent certification.
8. Enterprise Green Communities Certification.

The proposal also recommends that owners of existing buildings will have to install a cool roof plus select one of five compliance options at the time of replacing their roof:

1. A small green roof or green space anywhere on the site.
2. An on-site solar array.
3. LEED Silver or equivalent certification.
4. A financial contribution for off-site green space.
5. Enrollment in a flexible Energy Program to achieve emission reductions similar to those achieved by the on-site solar option. The program will include options to buy community solar or to improve building energy efficiency in any way that makes the most sense for that building.