

**Portola Valley Green Building Ordinance
Build It Green, GreenPoint Rating Point Requirements***

Project Type	Size	Points Required	Additional Points	GPR Certification Requirement	GPR Checklist Requirement
New Construction	> 3,000 sf	75	1 for every 50 sf	GPR	New Home Single Family
New Construction	≤ 3,000 sf	75	NA	GPR	New Home Single Family
Whole House Project	≥ 400 sf	50	NA	GPR	Existing Home Single Family (Whole House Label)
Detached Accessory Structure	> 120 sf	25	NA	Self	Existing Home Single Family (Elements Label)
Small Additions or Remodels	≥ 400 sf	25	NA	Self	Existing Home Single Family (Elements Label)
Small Additions or Remodels	< 400 sf	NA (checklist completion only)	NA	Self	Existing Home Single Family
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	Detached**	75	NA	Self	New Home Single Family
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	Attached**	50	NA	Self	Existing Home Single Family (Whole House Label)
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	Interior Conversions**	25	NA	Self	Existing Home Single Family (Elements Label)

*** See Additional Requirements Below**

**** Square footage thresholds for Accessory Dwelling Units will be defined in the update to the Second Unit Ordinance.**

Portola Valley Green Building Ordinance Additional Requirements by Structure Type

For new, single-family residential projects:

Solar Photovoltaic and Solar Thermal “Ready” Infrastructure. “Section 110.10 Mandatory Requirements for Solar Ready Buildings” of the California Energy Code is added as mandatory and amended to read:

- Solar zone. The solar zone shall be located on the roof or overhang of the building and have a total area of no less than 500 square feet. If the project applicant determines that the entire energy needs of the project can be met with a solar photovoltaic system that occupies less than 500 square feet, the project applicant can demonstrate this with the Title 24 Calculation and solar photovoltaic system plans.
- Interconnection pathways. provide a pathway for conduit and plumbing to support the installation of future solar photovoltaic and solar thermal infrastructure. The pathway for conduit and plumbing shall be routed from the attic space (or equivalent) to the point of interconnection with the electrical service panel and the water-heating system.

Electric Vehicle “Ready” Infrastructure. “Section 4.106.4 Electric vehicle (EV) charging for new construction” of the California Green Building Standards Code is added as mandatory and amended with the additional requirements as outlined below.

- Service panel and/or subpanel shall provide, at minimum, capacity to install a 208/240v, 50 amperes grounded AC outlet and dedicated branch circuit.
- Raceway or wiring with capacity to accommodate a 100-ampere circuit; terminating in a listed cabinet box, enclosure, or NEMA receptacle.
- The raceway shall be installed so that minimal removal of materials is necessary to complete the final installation.

Graywater “Ready” Infrastructure. Install graywater “ready” systems as outlined below. Additional plumbing piping is installed to permit the discharge from all clothes washers and all applicable fixtures from bathrooms located above grade to allow for future installation of a distributed irrigation system, either subsurface or treated. All graywater “ready” systems must be installed in compliance with Chapter 16 of the California Plumbing Code.

- Identify an appropriate location for possible future installation of a graywater treatment system, including storage tanks.
- Include either a separate multiple pipe outlet or a diverter valve and an outside

“stub-out” installation on clothes washing machine hook-ups, to allow separate discharge of graywater direct for irrigation.

- Include a building drain(s) for lavatories, showers, and bathtubs, segregated from drains for all other plumbing fixtures connected to the black water pipe a minimum of three (3) feet from the building foundation.
- Provide power supply for future graywater treatment system.
- The graywater system shall be comprised of purple piping. The diverter valve on the clothes washing machine system shall be labeled as “LAUNDRY-TO-LANDSCAPE CAPABLE.”

Reduction of Potable Water Use on Turf. For all projects with landscapes that include the use of turf, install rainwater catchment system. Irrigation needs of turf should be calculated using the Applied Water for Turf Calculator. All rainwater catchment systems must be installed in compliance with Chapter 17 of the California Plumbing Code.

- Rainwater Catchment System Size. The rainwater catchment system size shall be determined by using the [“Applied Water for Turf Calculator.”](#) The rainwater catchment system will need to be sized in order to satisfy 50 percent of the estimated annual water demands for the first 500 square feet of turf installed on the project. The rainwater catchment system will need to be sized in order to satisfy 100 percent of the estimated annual water demands for installed turf that is greater than 500 square feet.
- Alternative. A fully installed graywater system connected to an irrigation system that can satisfy all of the annual water demands of turf as identified in [the Applied Water for Turf Calculator](#) can be used as an alternative to installing a rainwater catchment system.

For Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU):

The Town desires to encourage the production of accessory dwelling units and, therefore has identified a simplified process for green building requirements related to all accessory dwelling units. Specifically, although minimum points are required as set forth below, self-certification is allowed.

All ADUs

Laundry facilities. If the structure includes laundry hook-ups, include a diverter valve and an outside “stub-out” installation on the clothes washing machine hook-up, to allow separate discharge of graywater direct for irrigation. The diverter valve on the clothes washing machine system shall be labeled as “LAUNDRY-TO-LANDSCAPE CAPABLE.”

Detached ADU Only

Solar Photovoltaic “Ready” Infrastructure. “Section 110.10 Mandatory Requirements for Solar Ready Buildings” of the California Energy Code is added and amended as follows: detached accessory dwelling units shall provide a pathway for conduit to support the installation of future solar photovoltaic infrastructure. The pathway for conduit and shall be routed from the attic space (or equivalent) to the point of interconnection with the electrical service panel.

For new, non-residential projects:

New, non-residential projects shall comply with all mandatory CALGreen measures. The mandatory measures shall be verified by a third party approved by the Town for which the applicant will pay for the review.

Electric Vehicle “Ready” Infrastructure. “Section 5.106.5.3 Electric vehicle (EV) charging for new construction” of the California Green Building Standards Code is added as mandatory and amended with the additional requirements as outlined below.

- Service panel and/or subpanel shall provide, at minimum, capacity to install a 208/240v, 50 amperes grounded AC outlet and dedicated branch circuit.
- Raceway or wiring with capacity to accommodate a 100-ampere circuit; terminating in a listed cabinet box, enclosure, or NEMA receptacle.
- The raceway shall be installed so that minimal removal of materials is necessary to complete the final installation.

Portola Valley Green Building Ordinance FAQs for Residential Projects

What is Build It Green (BIG) and the BIG GreenPoint Rated Checklist?

Build It Green is “a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote healthy, energy- and resource-efficient building practices in California. BIG created Green Building Guidelines that “are a comprehensive resource of best practices for green building.” The BIG GreenPoint Rated Checklists (there is one for new residences and one for addition/remodels to existing residences) are tools used to assess how environmentally friendly a proposed building project will be via the use of a point system.

What is GreenPoint Rated Certification?

Click here for a link to Build It Green’s website that outlines the GreenPoint Rated Certification process as well as fees and expected timelines:

<https://www.builditgreen.org/greenpoint-rated/how-it-works/rating-process-and-fees>

What projects are required to complete and submit a BIG Checklist?

- All projects applying for ASCC review (new residences and additions larger than 400 sf).
- All building permits for new residences, additions and/or remodels regardless of square footage.

How many points does a project need to achieve?

See chart above, called “Build It Green, GreenPoint Rating Point Requirements.”

How do I calculate the square footage of the project? Do basements count in this calculation of floor area? Do garages count in calculation of floor area?

For new construction: Total square footage of all structures being proposed (residence and accessory structures). Basements (seven feet or greater in height) *do* count in this floor area calculation. Garages *do* count as floor area except that unconditioned garage space shall only count as 50% of that square footage.

For addition/remodels: Total square footage of all new floor area plus the square footage of remodeled and replaced areas of the structure. Areas demolished shall not be deducted from the total new square footage.

Is my addition/remodel considered a “Whole House” project or an “Elements” project under BIG?

The Elements label applies to homes in the following situation:

- A portion of the home is undergoing a remodel or addition (e.g., a master bedroom addition or a kitchen remodel). The entire home will not be evaluated for green building practices.
- The homeowner anticipates qualifying for GreenPoint Rated Whole House over time and wants to verify sections under current remodeling.
- The home is undergoing some energy upgrades that do not encompass the requirements to meet GreenPoint Rated Whole House.
- A structure <400 sf that is accessory to the main structure.
- The Whole House label should be used in the following situations:
- The homeowner is completing a gut remodel and replacing all of the systems

(i.e., stripping less than 90% of the walls to the studs, leaving the foundation framing and exterior finish). Note: if the home has removed significant framing and the exterior casing, it is considered new construction.

What projects need to be certified by a Green Point Rater?

All new construction projects and addition/remodel projects achieving “Whole House” status with BIG that are subject to ASCC review will be required to be certified by a certified GreenPoint Rater. (Projects subject to ASCC review that are achieving an “Elements” status may be self- certified).

Prior to building permit issuance, documentation must be provided by a qualified rater indicating that the proposed plans adequately meet the green building ordinance requirements (note: please include GreenPoint Rater name and signature on the checklist submittal).

Prior to final inspections and occupancy for the project, a qualified rater shall provide documentation verifying that the project has been constructed in accordance with the approved BIG Checklist, the project meets the minimum number of points required by the Town’s Green Building Ordinance, and has been GreenPoint Certified with Build-It-Green.

What projects must be GreenPoint Certified under Build-It-Green?

All projects that must be certified by a GreenPoint Rater (i.e., new residences and Whole House projects) must also be GreenPoint Certified with Build-It-Green prior to final inspections.

Who can certify a project?

Projects requiring certification must be done so by a qualified green building professional, i.e., a person trained through Build It Green as a certified GreenPoint Rater.

What is “self-certification?”

For “Elements” projects subject to ASCC review and all other smaller residential addition/remodel projects not subject to ASCC review, but requiring a building permit, “self- certification” of the project is permitted. “Self-certification” means verification by the project architect, designer, or a qualified green building professional certifying that the project has met the standards and has attained the compliance threshold as indicated on the approved BIG Checklist.

There are some items on the checklist that say “R” for Required – do I need to also fulfill these requirements on the checklist?

Yes, any and all items notated on the checklists as “R” must be met as part of the project.

Does my completed checklist need to be on my permit plan sheets?

Yes, include the checklist in your plans. Additionally, if your project requires certified GreenPoint rating, also include a signature line for the GreenPoint Rater on the plan sheet where the spreadsheet is printed.

What happens if I am unable to meet the required number of points at the end of my project?

The Town’s Planning Director will review the submitted documents and determine whether the applicant has achieved the required compliance threshold as set forth by the ordinance. The Planning Director will determine if the project 1) complies, 2) there has been a good faith effort to comply, or if 3) the project is non-compliant. Projects deemed non-compliant shall not receive a final inspection until the applicant has implemented equivalent alternative measures approved by the Planning Director or unless an exemption is granted for the project.

Can I switch out one checklist item for another during construction provided that I will still be able to achieve the number of points required for my project? If so, what is the procedure?

Item substitution is acceptable provided that the mandatory checklist items are still met and that the project will still meet Title 24 energy requirements. Prior to final inspections of the project, project certification documents will be submitted to the Town that address any item substitutions.

What if the ASCC approved my project at a point level above the required minimum threshold and I find that I cannot meet that point level (but I do meet the minimum threshold)?

Even if the ASCC approved the project with a checklist showing more than the minimum required points, only the minimum point threshold need be met. Any points beyond the minimum requirements are encouraged, but are at the discretion of the applicant.

What do I need to do in order to get a final inspection/occupancy on my project?

For new residence and Whole House projects, prior to final inspections and occupancy for the project, a qualified rater shall provide documentation verifying that the project has been constructed in accordance with the approved BIG Checklist, the project meets the minimum number of points required by the Town's Green Building Ordinance, and has been GreenPoint Certified with Build-It-Green.

For Elements projects, prior to final inspections, verification by the project architect, designer, or a certified green building professional certifying that the project has met the standards and has attained the compliance threshold as indicated on the approved BIG Checklist is required.

Upon receipt of this documentation, the Compliance Official will review the documentation and determine whether the applicant has achieved the required compliance threshold. Once approved, the final inspection may be scheduled.

Is there an exemption from complying with the Green Building Ordinance?

If an applicant for a covered project believes that circumstances exist that make it a hardship or infeasible to meet the requirements of this chapter, the applicant may request an exemption as set forth in the Ordinance. In applying for an exemption, the burden is on the applicant to show hardship or infeasibility.