

# Another Shade of Green



By *Keith Lindemulder*

According to the recent NAHB educational class called ‘Green building for Building Professionals’, here are some interesting discoveries- builders in the class realized they didn’t need to change a lot of what they’re doing to really make a difference and the various checklists which are part of the program will help them to build more efficient homes. Also, the ability to share information with builders is extremely helpful. I had a chance to explain the benefits of using steel and how CFS framing systems can be an integral part of a green home. Finally, I was surprised how little information was presented about CFS framing in the class itself. In the coming months I’ll be working with the presenters to bring them up to speed on what we’re doing with CFS so it can be part of the on-going training.

This week we wanted to start looking at the six main sections of the LEED-NC program. The first section we’ll look at is “Site Selection”. Site Selection includes various strategies which deal with the impact of the buildings location and the building site. Building on previously developed land is preferred over using undeveloped locations. Generally speaking, previously developed property will already have infrastructure like sewers, roads and other utilities in place or close by lessening the work required for a new building.

Other credits in this section are available for things that reduce the number of cars on the road and for the impact the building itself. For example, a building that is located close to public transportation is more likely to have the people who occupy the building use a train or other mass transit. Likewise, buildings with fewer parking spaces (and likely more bike racks!) will have less of an effect on the environment due to what’s called the “heat island” effect. Heat from the sun is absorbed by parking lots and buildings and radiated back, increasing the temperature of the surrounding area. Reducing the number of parking spaces helps minimize this effect. Putting a metal roof (sometimes referred to a “Cool Roof”) on the building also help. Metal roofing is another important use of sheet steel.

There is one prerequisite requirement in this section which deals with pollution prevention. Building a building is a dirty, dusty job. To comply with LEED-NC, part of the building process must include a detailed pollution prevention plan which includes how things like soil erosion, sedimentation and air pollution issues are going to be handled. A building built using a Cold-Formed Steel frame can be significantly lighter than using alternative materials due to the high strength to weight ratio of steel. In some cases the foundation and footings for a building can be redesigned to minimize excavations. Any redesign work should be part of the Construction Activity Pollution Prevention Plan.



Next week – Water Efficiency. Have a SAFE and Sustainable week!

**Reduce!**

**Reuse!**

**Recycle!**



**STEEL**  
IS THE NEW GREEN.



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