

My name is Alicia Ravetto and Chatham County is my home since 1991. I am an architect, LEED® AP since 2002, one of the first 5 LEED® AP in NC, currently with specialty in BD+C, USGBC LEED® Faculty and actively participating in committees that deal with education and outreach as well as advocacy issues related to LEED®.

As a Fulbright Scholar from Argentina, I received my Master in Architecture in 1987 specializing in daylighting and solar energy use in buildings, worked for 5 years in Raleigh designing the most energy efficient schools, in Johnston County and Wake County. I have more than 10 years of experience in LEED® consulting on large institutional projects in the Triangle area and the Triad where I am on the design team for the new \$53 million campus for Guilford Tech Community College pursuing LEED® Platinum.

LEED® is not about the plaque, it is about a process that involves all stakeholders in the decision making. It is investing in the future, in our children and citizens, in stopping or delaying the destruction of the natural environment, in learning from nature and being smarter in how we spend our money. Also a growing number of corporate real estate executives say they are willing to pay more to lease green office space and that they consider sustainability issues when making decisions about locations, according to recently released research from CoreNet Global and Jones Lang LaSalle.

As recognized by the local EDC, *“utilize current best practices in attempting to attain a high level of environmental design, reduced environmental impact and enhanced related efficiencies of such municipal buildings. Those best practices may include the combination of costs versus benefits as to the efficient use of building materials, energy use and overall environmental impact.*

LEED® Silver, from my experience, is currently equivalent to best practices. To achieve Gold you might need to spend some extra money and for Platinum you will definitely do so if you build in a rural county where the benefits of access to amenities by public transportation are not available.

LEED® has become the most known, and accepted rating system. There are 1 Billion SF of certified buildings in the US. The LEED green building certification program's greatest strength lies in its consensus-based, transparent, ongoing development cycle. The ability to be flexible allows LEED to evolve, taking advantage of new technologies and advancements in building science while prioritizing energy efficiency and other green building strategies.

I have been the consultant for Freelon Architects on (3) regional libraries with funding from bonds that commissioners voted for almost 10 years ago. The libraries, same size as this one that we are now enjoying in Chatham County, did not cost a penny more and went from Certified, to Silver to Gold, in part due to the increasing level of understanding and participation of the General Contractor. The Durham County Human Services Complex, a 270,000 SF, \$53 million project, under construction in downtown Durham is pursuing LEED® Gold (at no extra cost for LEED® including consultants from Rocky Mountain Institute in Colorado).

In the county, I have designed the RAFI USA Building and Dan Pollitt Conference Center, which opened in 2001. Teamwork from the start in 1997, led the organization to have the first Energy Star office building in NC. The most effective energy saving strategies were daylighting, passive solar, energy efficient lighting, natural cross ventilation, high levels of insulation and a high efficient HVAC system. The building uses less than \$1/SF-yr or 30,000 Btu/SF-yr after almost a decade of actual energy consumption. The design strategies utilized were not rocket science then and are not today.

I would ask you:

Do you want your facilities to be high performing buildings that save energy, water, have good indoor air quality, and be a good steward of our natural resources?"

So if the answer is "Yes of course we do" then the only question becomes the cost to do LEED Certification.

The cost paid to the USGBC/GBCI is negligible for registration and review fees. The main cost is for the designers to create/assemble the documentation that substantiates that they are in fact achieving what they think they are. The cost of the Commissioning agent ensures on site verification that the systems are performing correctly. Wouldn't you want these services anyway regardless of LEED ? I know I would! Ronald Reagan said trust but verify. LEED is the best program available to verify. A case study of a LEED certified 75,000 SF classroom and office building at Wake Tech North Campus presented at a recent state energy conference by Doug Brinkley showed that spending \$370,000 on design certification fees, commissioning, and construction there was a 14% return on investment and payback in 5.1 years.

I chaired the Green Building Task Force that recommended that the Chatham Commissioners adopt the resolution that all new buildings and renovation of more than 20,000 SF be LEED® Silver and reduce the energy use by 50% in comparison to an average building built to current codes.

Owners such as yourselves, the County, are leading the way in transforming the market by elevating the bar for high performing buildings that you will own and operate for 50-100 years. Budget cuts are currently making the energy and water savings more significant than ever. The Life cycle analysis of all resources used in renovations and new construction projects is becoming the basis of decisions for the implementation of good design, construction and operations and maintenance strategies.

For your information we are including a document with a list of Public Entities in our region that use LEED.

In closing, I support the continuation of the LEED® requirement for Chatham County and request the consideration of the future adoption of LEED® Gold based on the analysis and follow up on the current buildings obtaining LEED® certification. This should occur immediately or in a maximum of one year.