



NEWS

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DEVENS ADOPTS EMBODIED CARBON REDUCTION GUIDELINES

The Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) recently developed and adopted a set of tools and guidance to assist applicants with reducing the carbon footprint of their development projects in Devens. Embodied carbon is the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with building materials throughout their whole lifecycle - from extraction of raw materials, processing and assembly of those raw materials, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, construction, use and maintenance, demolition, haul-away, and landfill or recycling. The built environment is responsible for ~42% of annual global CO₂ emissions so reducing embodied carbon in our building materials and infrastructure can significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the impacts of climate change, while helping Massachusetts meet its decarbonization targets which aim for a 50% decline in GHG emissions from 1990 levels by 2035 and net zero by 2050.

Recognizing that there are a number of embodied carbon reduction strategies that already exist, the DEC, in consultation with the Sustainable Performance Institute and the Carbon Leadership Forum, developed the “Devens Embodied Carbon Reduction Guidelines” (the “Guidelines”) as an education and awareness tool to get developers thinking about lower carbon building materials early on in project design. These Guidelines provide developers with resources that allow them to evaluate their building material choices – helping them build more with less and contributing to the sustainable redevelopment mission of the Devens Reuse Plan.

DEC Chairman William Marshal stated “The DEC recognizes the opportunity and responsibility we have to assist developments in reducing their carbon footprint early on in the permitting process. Providing applicants with tools and resources to lower the embodied carbon footprint of their buildings is an important step in helping them meet their own corporate sustainability objectives, as well as the goals of the State and the Devens Forward Climate Action and Resilience Plan.”

Lower embodied carbon materials and the buildings that are created with them not only reduce carbon emissions, they also contribute to healthier and more resilient buildings that can improve worker productivity, while withstanding more frequent and intense storm events that we are already experiencing as the climate changes. Decarbonization, combined with the energy efficiency measures in Devens also has positive impacts on the long-term value of buildings.

DEC Director Neil Angus, stated “these guidelines are consistent with our eco-industrial and circular economy approach to redevelopment in Devens – helping businesses work together as a “system” of industries, maximizing efficiencies and minimizing waste. It’s about building smarter and healthier, not just for the environment, but for the economic, social, and health benefits to building owners and occupants.”

The Embodied Carbon Guidelines and Checklist are available on-line at: <https://www.devensec.com/news.html>

The Devens Enterprise Commission is the regulatory and permitting authority for redevelopment of the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone. Its role is to administer and enforce the reuse plan, by- laws, regulations and sustainability vision within the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone.