



Green Roof Zoning Incentives

The City of Philadelphia offers a Parking Landscaping Incentive for green roofs, a Density Bonus for residential green roofs, and a Density Bonus for green buildings, which can earn points by including a green roof.

Parking Landscaping & Screening

The Philadelphia Code requires that zoning permit applications for all parking lots, except those accessory to single-family and two-family uses, must include a Parking Landscape Plan. The Parking Landscape Plan must provide for at least 10% of the interior of the parking lot to be landscaped, in all zoning districts except I-2, I-3 and I-P. If an applicant installs a green roof on a primary or accessory structure on the same lot, the amount of interior parking lot landscape may be reduced by one square foot for each one square foot of vegetated roof area installed.¹

Applicants must meet all other relevant Parking Landscaping and Screening requirements. Parking Landscape Plans are reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission before a zoning permit can be issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I).



Density Bonuses

The Philadelphia Code offers exceptions to certain residential density rules when a new development or redevelopment includes a green roof that meets certain criteria.² These exceptions can increase the number of dwelling units permitted in a residential building, depending on the zoning district and size of the building. Projects must be located in RM-1, CMX-2, or CMX-2.5 zoning districts, and must meet all other applicable use standards.

In other zoning districts, the Philadelphia Code provides density bonuses for green buildings that are designed to achieve LEED Gold or Platinum certification.³ LEED Gold and Platinum certification requires earning points from various credit categories, depending on the type of construction project. Including a green roof in the building design may help applicants qualify for points in multiple categories, including Heat island reduction and Rainwater management, among others. If the design can achieve LEED Gold or Platinum certification, applicants may be eligible for either a floor-area ratio (FAR) or a height bonus, depending on location of the site:

Zoning District	CMX-3*	CMX-4	CMX-5	I-2	ICMX
FAR Bonus	Up to 400%	Up to 200%	Up to 400%	Not eligible	Not eligible
Height Bonus◇	Up to 36'	Up to 36'	Up to 36'	Up to 36'	Up to 36'
* only in Old City Residential Area Bridge Approach per §14-502(2)(b)(.17)					
◇ only within the Central Delaware Overlay (CDO) Zone per §14-507					

Vegetated roof structures are exempt from height limits when they extend less than 30" beyond the limit in residential districts or 5' in commercial districts.⁴ Applicants must meet all other relevant Development Standards. Applicants must complete a development checklist demonstrating compliance before a zoning permit can be issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I).

¹Philadelphia Code §14-803(5)(e) Interior Landscape Requirements for Parking Lots.

²Philadelphia Code §14-602(7) Exception to use tables for green roofs. Cannot be used in combination with Parking Landscaping Incentive.

³Philadelphia Code §14-702 (10) Green Building or Site.

⁴Philadelphia Code §14-701 (6) Exceptions to Dimensional Standards.