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Sustainable HOA Certification

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8 Attractions You Won't Want to Miss in Denver. Rocky Mountaineer. (2021, March 15). <https://www.rockymountaineer.com/blog/8-attractions-you-wont-want-miss-denver>.

Project Objective

Homeowner Associations (HOAs) have the power to help shape the physical, cultural, and environmental quality of the community and the surrounding ecosystem. Building upon the Sustainability Guidebook created by a former MENV capstone team, our team has created a Certification Framework offering environmental, social, and economic benefits to HOAs in the transition to a healthier and more sustainable environment. Our goal is to encourage residents of HOAs in the greater Denver metropolitan area to implement sustainable strategies through an accessible, achievable, and verifiable certification process. We want to guide residents of HOAs to understand the benefits of implementing sustainable projects for their own well-being and the planet's well-being, as well as show the power that community-based organizations can have in helping cities achieve their climate action goals.

Methods

2020 Sustainability Guidebook

This guided the beginning steps of our project. We used the eight sectors defined in this guidebook in our framework. These eight sectors include community, HOA governance, financials, building management, water management, waste management, energy efficiency, and transportation.

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout the summer semester, our team met with a variety of stakeholders to further understand the different aspects of sustainability, particularly within the world of HOAs. We met with stakeholders at Aurora Water, the International WELL Building Institute, Association Reserves, and many more. Additionally, we hosted a Visioning Workshop with stakeholders to receive feedback on our Certification.

Research

We initially conducted research on the best practices of existing certifications, like LEED and WELL, and used that research in our Research Paper. Later on, we conducted research on applicable rebates and incentives available to homeowners of HOAs in the Denver metro area.



The CAP Management team visiting the Aurora Water-wise Garden





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Project Outcomes

Research Paper

In an effort to develop a well-rounded certification, our team wrote a research paper that focused on answering several questions involving the best practices of other existing certifications and how they can be applied to HOAs.

Framework

The framework is in the shape of a pyramid (as seen below) and provides an overview of the certification. We chose a pyramid because it is a symbol of strength and support, and displays a holistic approach. It reinforces the idea that in order to successfully achieve the sustainability projects at the top, the HOA needs to have strong financials, governance, building management, and community.

Resource Pages

Our team created one resource page for each of the eight sectors identified in the framework. Each one provides an overview of the issue, the rebates/assistance available, an estimated timeline, and the costs associated with implementing projects in the specified sector.

Credit Library

This Credit Library precisely outlines the prerequisites and optimizations for each sector of the framework. Additionally, it provides specifics on how to achieve each credit and each level of certification.

Scorecard

The scorecard (see below) provides a clear, but brief overview of the certification, illustrating which credits are needed to achieve a specific certification level (copper, silver, gold, or platinum).



The Framework

Water Management		Waste Management	
Silver (Copper + One Area of Focus)	1/2 Optimizations	Silver (Copper + One Area of Focus)	1/2 Optimizations
Indoor Water Efficient Infrastructure/Appliances	Prerequisite	Education (signage, workshops, etc.)	Prerequisite
Smart Irrigation Controllers	Optimization	Waste Audit	Optimization
25% of Yard Converted to Native/Water-Wise Landscaping	Optimization	Responsible Waste Infrastructure	Optimization
Gold (Silver +)	1/2 Optimizations	Gold (Silver +)	2/3 Optimizations
Rain/Storm Water Management	Optimization	Use of Responsible Materials	Optimization
50% of Yard Converted to Native/Water-Wise Landscaping	Optimization	Host Community Swaps	Optimization
		Location for Hazardous Materials/Hard To Recycle	Optimization
Platinum (Gold +)	1/2 Optimizations	Platinum (Gold +)	1/2 Optimizations
Greywater Reuse System	Optimization	Circularity & Resilience	Optimization
75% of Yard Converted to Native/Water-Wise Landscaping	Optimization	Achieve 4/5 Optimizations from Silver and Gold	Optimization

The Scorecard

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