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TERRA FIRMA

YOUR GUIDE FOR SOLID LAND USE PLANNING

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING FROM LAND PLANNING SOLUTIONS!



The staff at **Land Planning Solutions** wishes you and your family a happy and safe Thanksgiving Weekend.

In observance of the holiday, **Land Planning Solutions** will be close on Thursday, November 27th and also on Friday, November 28th.

LEED 101

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is national standard for developing and operating environmentally efficient buildings. The LEED program was created by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1998 and provides a set of standards for environmentally sustainable construction.

LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a project meets the highest green building performance measures by awarding points for satisfying specified environmentally sustainable criteria. The certification recognizes projects for performance in five key areas: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. For example, a project may be awarded one point for redeveloping a brownfield site, and may be awarded ten points for landscaping with vegetation that does not require irrigation.

Currently there are several LEED rating systems or "tracks" used for certification purposes, depending on the specific type of project. These tracks are LEED for New Construct

LEED for Existing Buildings, LEED for Commercial Interior LEED for Retail, LEED for Schools and LEED for Core & Shell rating systems. The Neighborhood Development rating system is currently in its pilot period and is open to public review and comment at www.usgbc.org until January 5, 2009. Upon inception in early 2009, LEED for Neighborhood Development will be the first national certification system for green neighborhood design and development.

Each rating system described above has a specified number of points required to meet the minimum criteria for LEED certification. By achieving additional points, a project can attain Silver, Gold or Platinum levels of certification. For example, within the LEED for New Construction rating system a minimum of 26 points is required for general certification, 33 points for Silver, 39 points for Gold and 50 points to achieve Platinum certification.

There are many environmental benefits of earning LEED certification, including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, conservation of water and energy, reduction in waste sent to landfills, and healthier, safer work environments. Moreover, there are numerous financial benefits including lower operating costs, increased asset value, and the potential for tax rebates, zoning allowance and additional density in hundreds of cities across the U.S. through "green building incentive programs".

Separate from the LEED certification process, individuals may earn the title of LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP) as proof of their knowledge of the LEED rating system and green building practices and principles. This credential indicates that the individual has passed the accreditation exam administered by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), and enables an individual to facilitate the rating of buildings with the various LEED systems.

As the green development trend continues to attain increased acceptance in the mainstream, LEED will continue to play a major role as the national standard in green building. **Land Planning Solutions** is a proud member of the U.S. Green Building Council and has a LEED Accredited Professional on staff to assist with any of your green building needs. If you have any questions about potential certifying your project, please contact us at **(239) 405-7983** or alexis@lpsfl.us.



WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

This time of year most people are trying to stretch every dollar in preparation for the holiday season. That means there's no better time than the present

cut back on your water bill by using water efficient landscaping techniques in your yard and garden.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that a household's outdoor water use often exceeds the total amount of water used for all other purposes combined! This is especially true in warmer climates, like Florida.



While there are numerous approaches water-efficient landscaping, Xeriscaping is one of the first conceptual approaches developed to formalize this principle. This practice is defined by the EPA as "quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment." The term is actually a combination of the Greek word "xeros," which means "dry," and "landscape."

The seven principles upon which Xeriscape landscaping is based are: proper planning and design, soil analysis and improvement, appropriate plant selection, practical turf areas, efficient irrigation, use of mulch and appropriate maintenance.

The following are some helpful hints based upon the principles that will help you cut your water bill and create a "Florida Friendly Yard":

- ❖ Group plants according to their water needs.
- ❖ Use native and low-water-use plants.
- ❖ Limit turf areas to those needed for practical use.
- ❖ Use efficient irrigation systems, such as drip systems.
- ❖ Use rain shutoff sensors to stop unnecessary irrigation.
- ❖ Schedule irrigation wisely - the best time to water early in the morning due to lack of evaporation and higher humidity.
- ❖ Make sure soil is healthy.
- ❖ Remember to mulch! Mulch suffocates weeds, saves labor and reduces plant competition for water and

nutrients.

For more information on native planting options, xeriscape design practices, and how to reduce water use in your yard, check out www.epa.gov and www.floridayards.org.

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