

Our intent has been to produce a tool to help figure out the "greenness" of a project. It can be used to think about a material, a method, or a complete project.

We have identified 11 factors to be considered. More may appear as we use the guidelines and reflect on the process. These factors are: cost, aesthetics, embodied energy, water management, waste, energy consumption, return to earth, lifespan, fair trade, embodied social cost, and safety. This document defines each of the factors as we understand them.

We give each factor a range of possible values from negative to positive 10 (-10 to 100). The inclusion of negative numbers is intended to recognize the possibility that some aspects of a particular process or plan can be detrimental, not merely neutral. We originally visualized these ranges as being like the sliders on a sound mixing board; each slider can be moved independently of all the others, but their output all blends together to make the sound. Each of our factors can be valued independently, but together they give us an "output" that helps us to decide the merit of a project.

The guidelines, and this worksheet, are most useful when used to compare different options. It can be challenging to balance such an array of varied factors. These guidelines are intended as a way for us to do that at The Commons.

As we discussed what we meant by "green building guidelines" in the Infrastructure Team at The Commons, we realized that as individuals we had been influenced by many others who have done work in this area. These influences include the work of William Rees and Mathis Wackernagel at UBC (ecological footprint analysis), Daniel Goleman (Ecological Assessment and Life Cycle Assessment), and other guidelines for building, including the the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. For us these other documents and ideas were simply an influence on our discussions, just as we hope that these guidelines will influence the discussions of everyone who plans to build or renovate a structure, or otherwise make changes to the infrastructure of The Commons.

This document outlines the Green Building Guidelines as discussed in August, 2009.







