

Association of Condominium,  
Townhouse, and  
Homeowners Associations



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## March 2009

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### Upcoming ACTHA Events

**"Learn and Lead" program:  
March 12 in Des Plaines and  
April 29 in Oak Park**

**April 25: "Collections/Assessments"  
and ACTHA Annual Meeting,  
Schaumburg**

**For details, visit [www.actha.org](http://www.actha.org)**

## A "Green" Strategy

*By: Daniel Baigelman, AIA of Full Circle Architects*

By this time everyone has heard the term "Green" used to describe healthy, energy efficient and environmentally friendly buildings. Plenty of information is available for new building construction and major rehabilitation, but very little guidance is available on how to make an older inhabited property Green. This article provides a Green Strategy for making reasonable Green improvements (to older inhabited properties) within a realistic timeframe.

The Green Strategy utilizes three common tools typically used to manage condominium properties: the "Engineering Report," "Reserve Study," and "Construction Rules." The Engineering Report is an existing conditions assessment of the property. The Reserve Study is a long-range capital improvement plan, typically spanning a 20-year period. Lastly the "Construction Rules" is a document which controls improvements in and around the individual residences. By modifying each one of these tools to incorporate Green features, it is possible to successfully reach your goal.

### Green Engineering Report

Create a *Green Engineering Report* to evaluate existing conditions as well as determine an initial baseline for performance of the building systems. In addition to providing standard inspections, include a building Energy Audit as part of the work. Search for areas where potential improvements would be beneficial and investigate their viability.

### Green Reserve Study

Develop a *Green Reserve Study* incorporating eco-friendly improvements in lieu of replacing main components "in kind." When existing materials wear out, they should be replaced with environmentally responsible materials. And when existing equipment fails, it should be replaced with more energy efficient equipment. Improving indoor air quality and conserving natural resources should be considered part of every project, not an ancillary concern. As part of that thought process all improvements should include property disposal of waste materials, recycling wherever possible. In order to accommodate these considerations, anticipate spending slightly more in Reserve contributions to substantially reduce operating costs in the future.

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### Green Construction Rules

Develop a set of *Green Construction Rules* to address items within the individual residences. Whenever a residence is remodeled, require the design to be in keeping with the building's overall Green movement. Initially provide suggestions in a "Rider" that is attached to the original Construction Rules for Green improvements. Later, when the property becomes substantially Green, modify the Construction Rules to incorporate a minimum level of Green performance.

An older property can reasonably be Green within approximately 20 years. A new property, that is not already Green, should anticipate a longer transition period to upgrade the relatively new systems and materials. Based on current trends, owners anticipate being in their residences longer and are more

willing to make Green improvements that enhance their own living environment. As the property becomes healthier, more energy efficient and environmentally friendly, it will become more valuable and marketable.

The Green Strategy is a new concept for this marketplace. Professionals are now available to assist property managers and boards to navigate through the eco-improvement process. These professionals can assist with developing a program to make reasonable Green improvements with a realistic time-frame. Now is the time to put the pieces and parties in place, and create a more viable property for you to enjoy.

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