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**A comparison of 2015 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria  
and the Living Building Challenge v3.0**  
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Living Building Challenge and the 2015 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria (2015 Criteria) are both holistic green building programs. While Living Building Challenge certification is available to all project types, Enterprise Green Communities certification is strictly available for affordable housing. The performance targets of the Living Building Challenge program are among the most aggressive of any green building program. Given that stringency, substantial and moderate rehabs of existing buildings, which are given an explicit certification strategy through the 2015 Criteria, are unlikely to certify through the Living Building Challenge program.

**INTRODUCTION: Living Building Challenge**

The Living Building Challenge (LBC) is an advanced national green building criteria and certification program administered by the International Living Futures Institute out of Seattle, Washington. The LBC intends to be a holistic, performance-based framework that bridges design and construction process with the end users and communities in which projects are built. The program brings a progressive approach to sustainable development that pushes project energy, water, and resource efficiency past the point of low-environmental impact and towards the goal of a regenerative environmental impact. Version 3.0 of the Living Building Challenge was published in 2014.

**PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY: Living Building Challenge**

LBC offers 3<sup>rd</sup>-party certification for projects of many different typologies: buildings, renovations, infrastructure and landscape, and community (which follows a complimentary criteria, Living Community Challenge). Each typology listed here does not require that all twenty imperatives. However, it is important to note that projects that are using the Green Communities Criteria and pursuing LBC

Certification would classify as “buildings” or “renovations”, and therefore would need to meet all twenty imperatives.

### **POINT STRUCTURE: Living Building Challenge**

The LBC program features a series of twenty Imperatives spread across seven categories called Petals.

Those Petals are:

- Place
- Water
- Energy
- Health & Happiness
- Materials
- Equity
- Beauty

Projects may satisfy various Imperatives through a unique approach called “Scale Jumping” – where multiple buildings or renovations may cooperate and share the responsibilities to complete Imperatives in unison. Scale Jumping is useful when the most appropriate solution to achieve an Imperative would require the project to use design solutions or systems that extended beyond the project boundaries.

### **CERTIFICATION: Living Building Challenge**

There are three different certifications available to projects using the Living Building Challenge program:

- Living Building Certification – “Full certification” or “Living Status,” meaning the completion of all 20 Imperatives under all 8 Petals
- Petal Certification – at least 3 Petals must be certified
- Net Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Certification

All three include a Registration phase, Documentation & Operation phase, and Audit & Certification phase. See more: <http://living-future.org/lbc/certification>

#### Living Building Certification and Petal Certification

Projects that wish to pursue Living Building Certification or Petal Certification must register online ([living-future.org](http://living-future.org)), complete an extensive documentation phase, and conduct an on-site audit after the building has been in operation for at least 12-months.

Users may elect to add a preliminary on-site audit. This preliminary audit would occur once construction is completed, but before the 12-months of occupancy, and allow for a conditional assessment of certain Imperatives that are able to be field verified without a year's worth of performance data.

#### Net Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Certification

Projects that are pursuing the goal of using no more energy on site than can be produced through renewables, may elect to pursue NZEB Certification. All projects earning the Living Building Certification or Petal Certification under Energy automatically earn the distinction of being NZEB Certified.

NZEB Certification process requires project teams to register their projects online, complete a documentation phase, and conduct a NZEB Audit. This audit does not require an on-site visit but does review 12-months of operational information to assess the performance of the building.

#### **FEES: Living Building Challenge**

Pricing is available online at <http://living-future.org/node/92>

#### **SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH THE 2015 GREEN COMMUNITIES CRITERIA**

- With respect to certifications, Green Communities Certification requires that projects earn all applicable mandatory criterion and a selection of optional criterion. Under the Living Building Certification, projects must earn all 20 Imperatives, with a few limited exceptions. Petal Certification and Net Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Certifications are also available, but would not require full compliance with the entire Living Building Challenge v3.0.
- The Living Building Challenge requires an audit 12 months post construction to complete certification, while Enterprise Green Communities certification is granted at the time of construction completion.
- The Living Building Challenge requires developments to be net-positive on total water use, total energy use, and materials; whereas the 2015 Criteria has performance requirements that reference other benchmarks, such as ENERGY STAR and ASHRAE.
- The Living Building Challenge is applicable to all project types, whereas the 2015 Green Communities Criteria is focused exclusively on affordable housing.
- Both the 2015 Criteria and the Living Building Challenge highlight the importance of resiliency planning, referencing preparedness across different criterion or petals.

- Both the 2015 Criteria and the Living Building Challenge have measures regarding sensitive site location and access to amenities and transportation.
- The Living Building Challenge features a petal explicitly dedicated to Equity. Enterprise Green Communities sees the process of building affordable housing to the 2015 Criteria as a demonstration of equitable development.