

BTR, Homes, and Townhomes Eligible for Multifamily/ Multi-Unit Practices



Summary

The 2020 NGBS has a handful of practices that specify they are intended for multifamily, multi-unit, or multifamily buildings. On reflection, homes and townhomes should also be eligible for these practices. Incorporating these practices can provide sustainability benefits to the environment and residents regardless of building types. Further, because eligibility for the practices is written inconsistently and without using defined terms, they are subject to interpretation. Home Innovation will allow certain practices containing the terms “multifamily” or “multi-unit” to be used to earn points toward certification for homes and townhomes as described below.

Discussion

Since the 2020 NGBS was developed, it is increasingly common that entire communities of rental homes and townhouses are seeking NGBS Green certification. While individual homes and townhouses are regulated under the International Residential Code (IRC), and thus considered single family for NGBS Green compliance, they are operated more like multifamily communities. As a result, the Home Innovation staff was asked if homes and townhomes in communities with mixed building types (multifamily and single family) OR Build-to-Rent (BTR) communities entirely of homes and townhomes could earn points for these practices.

After a thorough review of the relevant practices, Home Innovation agrees that a specific subset should be eligible to earn points for homes and townhomes. In general, these were practices that used the term “multi-unit” or multifamily,” as neither term is defined in the 2020 NGBS. However, Home Innovation will not allow practices that used the term “multifamily building,” which is specifically defined in the 2020 NGBS as “a building containing multiple dwelling units or sleeping units and classified as R-2 under the IBC.” To allow homes or townhomes to claim those points for practices specifically designated for buildings regulated by the IRC was deemed to be outside of the authority of Home Innovation as certification agency.¹ Buildings seeking certification for new construction as well as remodeling will be able to earn points for these practices.

¹ The 2024 NGBS TG 3 however has recommended that the Consensus Committee review these practices and consistently allow homes and townhomes, as applicable, to be eligible for the points. The 2024 NGBS development is expected to wrap up by the end of 2024. Thus, it is possible that the 2024 NGBS allows these practices for all building types.

Verification Guidance

Single family and BTR communities are eligible for the specific practices shown below.

505.5 and 11.505.5 Multifamily or mixed-use community garden(s). Local food production to residents or area consumers.

- (a) A portion of the lot of at least 250 sq. ft. is established as community garden(s) for the residents of the site.
- (b) Locate the project within a 0.5-mile walking distance of an existing or planned farmers market/ farm stand that is open or will operate at least once a week for at least five months of the year.
- (c) Areas and physical provisions are provided for composting.
- (d) Signs designating the garden area are posted.

Verification Guidance: SF/BTR homes are eligible.

505.6 and 11.505.6 Multi-unit plug-in electric vehicle charging. Plug-in electric vehicle charging capability is provided for not fewer than 2% of parking stalls.

Verification Guidance: SF/BTR homes are eligible if 2% or more of the total of shared/communal/visitor parking stalls in the development/community have plug-in electric vehicle charging capability.

505.7 and 11.505.7 Multi-unit residential CNG vehicle fueling. CNG vehicle residential fueling appliances are provided for at least 1% of the parking stalls. The CNG fueling appliances shall be listed in accordance with ANSI/CSA NGV 5.1 and installed in accordance with the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions.

Verification Guidance: SF/BTR homes are eligible if 1% of the shared/communal/visitor parking stalls in the development have residential CNG vehicle refueling.

505.9 and 11.505.9 Smoking prohibitions. Signs are provided on multifamily and mixed-use lots prohibiting smoking at the following locations:

- (a) Smoking is prohibited within 25 ft. (7.5 m) of all building exterior doors and operable windows or building air intakes within 15 vertical feet (4.5 m) of grade or a walking surface.
- (b) Smoking is prohibited on decks, balconies, patios and other occupied exterior spaces.
- (c) Smoking is prohibited at all parks, playgrounds, and community activity or recreational spaces.

Verification Guidance: BTR homes are eligible for (a) and (b) if smoking is prohibited and signs posted for all homes in the development/community. BTR homes are eligible for (c) which is self-explanatory. SF homes are not eligible because once sold to a homeowner there is no way for the smoking restrictions to remain in place.

1002 and 11.1002 CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE MANUALS AND TRAINING FOR MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS

This section includes all practices from 1002.1 to 1002.6 for new construction and 1002.1 to 1002.6 for remodel.

Verification Guidance: SF/BTR homes are eligible for all mentioned practices under section 1002 and 11.1002.

FAQ

Q: What about practices 705.7 Submetering system; 706.14 Third-party utility benchmarking service; and 505.10 Exercise and recreational space?

A: These practices are ineligible for BTR homes and townhomes as the practices specifically refer to multifamily buildings which is a defined term in the 2020 NGBS.

CERTIFICATION AGENCY INTERPRETATION:

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