Waste Reduction - Preserving Trees During Site Development:

Economic, Environmental and Social Benefits

Retaining and protecting trees and flora in site development projects is a sound design principle (and waste reduction strategy) that provides numerous economic, environmental and social benefits, including the following:

- The economic value of the property is enhanced.
- Faster sales and shorter lease-up times are achieved.
- The aesthetics of the site are enhanced.
- Replanting costs are reduced, especially if the goal of the replanting is to create a look of mature growth.
- The need for lawns is minimized, thereby reducing the economic and environmental costs associated with lawn care.
- Drainage system costs are reduced as there is less of an impact on the natural drainage of the site.
- Subsequent energy consumption and energy costs of the building or home are reduced as trees block winter winds and shade the structure from sunlight during the summer. In fact, carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a household's energy consumption for heating and cooling!
- A building set in a beautiful and mature natural environment communicates a positive public image of the organization and people who create such living and working spaces.
- Trees add to a neighborhood's sense of community, reduce traffic and street sound by absorbing noise and can significantly cool urban areas that generate heat.
- Trees and vegetation control erosion, protect water supplies, provide food and create habitat for wildlife.
- Waste disposal or recycling costs are reduced as there is less waste (tree stumps, tree parts, brush, etc.) to be managed.
- The burden on solid waste management facilities – disposal sites or recycling centers – is lessened.
- Air quality is enhanced as trees absorb carbon dioxide, (a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming), filter out pollutants from the air and produce oxygen.
- Reduced site disturbance is included as a recommended building practice in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Rating System and can fulfill credit requirements needed for LEED® certification.

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