

GREEN JOBS FOR DOWNTOWN AUSTIN



Exploring the Consumer Market for Sustainable Buildings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Austin has been experiencing rapid population growth¹ and is now the fastest growing city in the country.² In context of this growth, Austin residents and policymakers have made a clear commitment to green and sustainable development.³ Austin's consumers consistently demand green building and a variety of fair trade and organic retail options,⁴ while city plans emphasize the construction of a dense downtown that ensures sustainable jobs and a sustainable economy for Austinites.⁵ However, declining wages and dangerous conditions in the construction industry threaten Austin's vision for a sustainable downtown.⁶

After ten years of serving and advocating for construction workers, Workers Defense Project (WDP) created a program, Premier Community Builders (PCB),⁷ to partner with developers to ensure good working conditions on their projects. Similar to organic certification for food⁸ and LEED certification for energy efficient buildings,⁹ PCB certification informs consumers that a developer creates good, sustainable construction jobs for Austinites.¹⁰

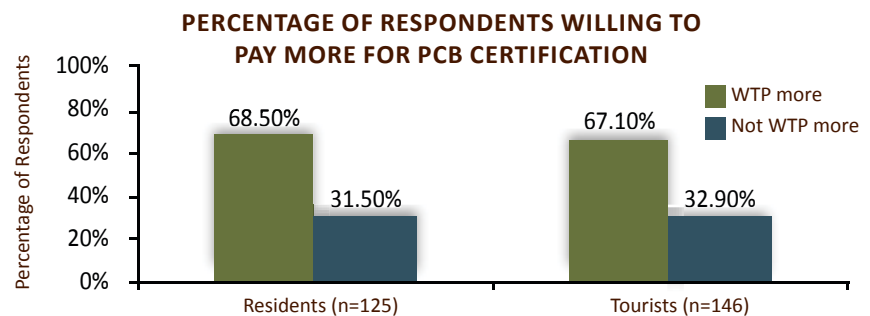
To explore the market for PCB certification, WDP, in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Development at the University of Texas at Austin, conducted the **Green Jobs for Downtown Austin** study. Researchers collected 286 surveys from downtown residents of mixed-use buildings and tourists staying in downtown hotels, and also conducted 6 focus groups with downtown Austin residents, real estate professionals and event planners.

While more research is needed, this study provides important insight into the opinions of downtown Austin residents and tourists. The following is a summary of the key findings of the surveyed consumers:

**67% of
tourists
are willing
to pay
more**

WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION ADDS VALUE

A majority of both resident and tourist survey respondents indicate that they are willing to pay more for PCB certified buildings that meet sustainable workforce standards.



Though there was a difference in willingness to pay based on political beliefs and level of education, respondents across the political spectrum and at all levels of educational attainment express a willingness to pay for PCB certification.

**32% of residents
would pay 5% more**

GOOD JOBS MEAN QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

Respondents connect better workplace conditions with higher quality construction. In the words of one resident, “when you have workers that are given rest and water breaks and that receive living wages for all hours of work and appropriate safety equipment and training ...I think you can see it in the finished product.” Consumer respondents connect PCB certification with a good, long-term investment, and they identify PCB certification as a useful tool for deciding where to buy.

56% of tourists
respondents would
feel proud to very
proud to stay in a PCB
certified hotel

CONSUMERS WOULD BE PROUD OF PCB

Consumers largely felt that staying in a PCB certified building would be a source of pride. PCB certification could set downtown buildings apart: 46% of resident survey respondents indicate that they would feel **proud** to **very proud** of living in a building that is PCB certified. Similarly, 56% of tourist survey respondents indicate that they would feel **proud** to **very proud** to stay in a PCB certified hotel.

On the other hand, consumers stated that poor working conditions might prevent them from living or staying in a building. This suggests that PCB certification can both enhance a developer’s brand while also reducing liability for negative publicity.

GROWING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown Austin realtors and event planners believe PCB certification could establish important market differentiation that would be attractive to clients. Participants in the real estate agent focus groups indicated that PCB certification could lead to new marketing opportunities for clients by highlighting the connection between certification and high quality construction. Thus, certification could show the prestige of a building. Event planners also indicated that PCB Certification could be a valuable marketing tool, especially in a city like Austin that portrays itself as being socially and environmentally conscious. As one planner explained, “If it [PCB] became more and more talked about...if the clients’ attendees are interested in it, they’re gonna be interested in it. I think over time this definitely would be of interest.”

43% of resident
respondents indicated that
it was unlikely to **very
unlikely** that they would
purchase a home if they
knew the law had been
broken in its construction

DEVELOPING CONSUMER TRUST

Third-party monitoring adds legitimacy to certification programs. As one participant said, “if I found out that something is certified something I would probably want to know [is] who is doing the certification. ‘Cause I think often times you like find that... the industry group calling things green is telling you that it’s green... that is way less powerful than somebody else [a third party].” Survey data substantiated these findings: a majority of both resident and tourist respondents indicate they would trust an independent organization more than self-regulation or regulation by either an industry-affiliated association or the government.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

From the survey and focus group results the following recommendations were developed. Through PCB certification developers can:

Build a positive public image.

Austin residents are known to be thoughtful consumers that support local initiatives and sustainable business practices.¹¹ About 30% of resident respondents and 40% of tourist respondents *often* to *always* consider a company’s practices when making purchase decisions (and over 50% do at least sometimes). Furthermore, over 75% of both resident and tourist respondents said they were *not too likely* to *very unlikely* to purchase a home or stay in a hotel if labor laws were violated in its construction. Both real estate agents and event planners expressed the belief that with the right information, PCB certification could act as an important market differentiator. In order to capitalize on this market differentiation, developers can advertise their commitment to PCB standards, and provide consumers with information regarding the impact PCB certification has on the lives of workers and the sustainability of Downtown.

Advertise quality craftsmanship.

Downtown residents want to ensure they are making a good, long-term investment when purchasing downtown—and quality of construction is a major factor in making that determination. Consumers view worker treatment as a good indicator of quality craftsmanship, and they indicate a willingness to do the research necessary to determine the best place to invest their dollars. Simply stated by one downtown resident, “fair labor certification to me means that it’s gonna be quality.” Developers should emphasize to consumers that PCB certification means a higher quality product.

Develop consumer trust.

Monitoring by an independent organization adds legitimacy to a certification program in the eyes of consumers. Developers interested in gaining the most benefit from PCB certification should take note that consumers often view self-regulation and regulation by industry-affiliated associations with skepticism due to the profit motives of each party.¹² Developers seeking to use PCB certification to truly differentiate their product should highlight that it is monitored by an unbiased independent organization.

Strengthen relationships with public officials.

By ensuring good, green jobs with PCB certification, developers can show their commitment to the City of Austin’s goal of sustainable, green development.¹³ Developers can offer PCB certification in their development proposals as a community benefit. Such community benefits can give developers a competitive edge during the public process.¹⁴ Furthermore, PCB certification earns developments an additional green building point from Austin Energy Green Building.¹⁵ As consumers and policymakers incorporate the workforce into their vision of sustainability, developers have the unique opportunity to lead the way by showing their commitment to their workforce.

Over **58%** of resident
and tourist respondents
would most trust
monitoring done by an
independent organization

END NOTES

- ¹ Castillo, J. (2012, April 5). Austin-area growth rate ranks 2nd in nation. *Austin-American Statesman*. Retrieved 10 September 2012 from <http://www.statesman.com/news/local/austin-area-growth-rate-ranks-2nd-in-nation-2284182.html>.
- ² Forbes magazine. (2012). America's fastest growing cities [internet photoessay]. *Forbes.com*. Retrieved 30 October 2012 from <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/mlj45hdf/1-austin-texas/>.
- ³ For examples refer to the city plans: the new city comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*, Imagine Austin Planning Commission. (2012, June 15). *Imagine Austin comprehensive plan*. Retrieved 25 October 2012 from ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/compplan/web_IACP_full_reduced.pdf and the *Downtown Austin Plan*, The City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department (2011). *Downtown Austin plan*. Retrieved 29 August 2012 from ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/DowntownAustinPlan/dap_approved_12-8-2011.pdf.
- ⁴ Heijjeil. (2011, January 4). Austin organic food markets expand to meet demand [web post]. *Austin Post*. Retrieved 13 October 2012 from <http://www.austinpост.org/food/austin-organic-food-markets-expand-meet-demand>.
- ⁵ Imagine Austin Planning Commission. (2012). *Imagine Austin comprehensive plan*. Retrieved 25 October 2012 from ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/GIS-Data/planning/compplan/web_IACP_full_reduced.pdf. p.14.
- ⁶ Hinkle, J. (2012, April 12). Study: Poverty rising in Central Texas. KXAN. Retrieved 22 October 2012 from <http://www.kxan.com/dpp/news/local/austin/study-poverty-rising-in-central-texas> and State Occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. (2010). *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. Retrieved 29 October 2012 from http://bls.gov/iif/state_archive.htm#TX.
- ⁷ Premier Community Builders. (n.d.). Our standards [website]. Retrieved 23 October 2012 from <http://www.buildaustin.org/our-standards.htm>.
- ⁸ For more information on Organic certification see: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). National organic program. [website]. Retrieved 16 October 2012 from <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop>.
- ⁹ Information about the LEED Certification program can be found on the USGBC website at: <https://new.usgbc.org/leed>.
- ¹⁰ Premier Community Builders. Our standards [website]. Retrieved 23 October 2012 from <http://www.buildaustin.org/our-standards.htm>.
- ¹¹ A survey cited in the *Downtown Austin Plan* shows that if given \$100 to spend on improvements in downtown Austin, respondents would allocate to "sustainability" the second highest portion of the money (first is a streetcar), The City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department (2011). *Downtown Austin plan*, p.17. Retrieved 29 August 2012 from ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/DowntownAustinPlan/dap_approved_12-8-2011.pdf.
- ¹² Conroy, M. (2007). *Branded!: How the 'certification revolution' is transforming global corporations*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers. pp. 14-15.
- ¹³ According to Land Development Code 25-2-593 central business district and downtown mixed-use zoned projects require at least a one-star rating from Austin Energy Green building, see the Austin Energy website at: <http://www.austinenergy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/Programs/Green%20Building/Participation/requirements.htm> and the city ordinance at: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/030612-93.pdf>. Also see: Austin Energy. (n.d.). City of Austin - Green Building Requirement for City Projects [website]. Retrieved 25 October 2012 from <http://www.doe.gov/savings/city-austin-green-building-requirement-city-projects>.
- ¹⁴ Dunbar, W. (2011, December 7). A dense discussion [blog post]. *Austin Chronicle*. Retrieved 13 November 2012 from <http://www.austinchronicle.com/blogs/news/2011-12-07/a-dense-discussion/print/>
- ¹⁵ Austin Energy. (2011, June 14). Austin Energy Green Building creates incentive for just treatment of construction workers [press release]. Retrieved 13 November 2012 from <http://www.austinenergy.com/about%20us/newsroom/Press%20Releases/Press%20Release%20Archive/2011/justTreatment.html>.



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After ten years of serving and advocating for construction workers, Workers Defense Project (WDP) created a program, Premier Community Builders (PCB) to partner with developers to ensure good working conditions on their projects.¹

Premier Community Builders Certification Standards²

- Ensure that workers are safe on the job.
- Ensure that workers earn a wage that allows them to provide for themselves and their families.
- Ensure that workers have the training opportunities they need to earn rewarding careers in the construction industry.





BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE DOWNTOWN

BUILDING A GREENER MARKET

Austin, famous for its laidback atmosphere, college football, and live music scene is well known for being a trendsetter in all things green. Austin is consistently named one of the nation’s greenest cities.³

Austin’s unique character and green values, alongside its strong economy,⁴ contribute to making it the fastest growing city in the country.⁵ Recent reports show that the Austin area’s population is increasing by more than 53,000 people a year.⁶ In the context of this rapid growth Austin residents and policymakers have made a clear commitment to green and equitable development.⁷ Consumers consistently demand green building and a variety of fair trade and organic retail options,⁸ and City plans emphasize building a dense downtown that “provides equitable opportunities for people, and protects the environment.”⁹ These plans are already materializing – at least 16 mixed-use residential towers and hotels are scheduled to be built downtown in the next 5 years.¹⁰ This translates to millions of square feet of downtown construction that by City mandate must be green built.¹¹

While the Austin community supports sustainable growth, the city is struggling to ensure that new development creates good, safe, construction jobs. Texas is the most deadly place for construction workers in the country,¹² and many workers struggle to make ends meet.¹³ In response, policymakers and consumers are taking an interest in developers who construct green buildings that benefit the environment as well as the Austin residents who build them.¹⁴



After ten years of serving and advocating for construction workers, Workers Defense Project (WDP) created a program¹⁵ to partner with developers to ensure good working conditions on their projects. The program, called the Premier Community Builder Program (PCB) certifies that a development created good, green construction jobs for Austinites.

The following report is a summary of key findings that provide insight into how developers can differentiate and enhance their brand by certifying that their buildings are sustainable for the environment and for the workers who build them.

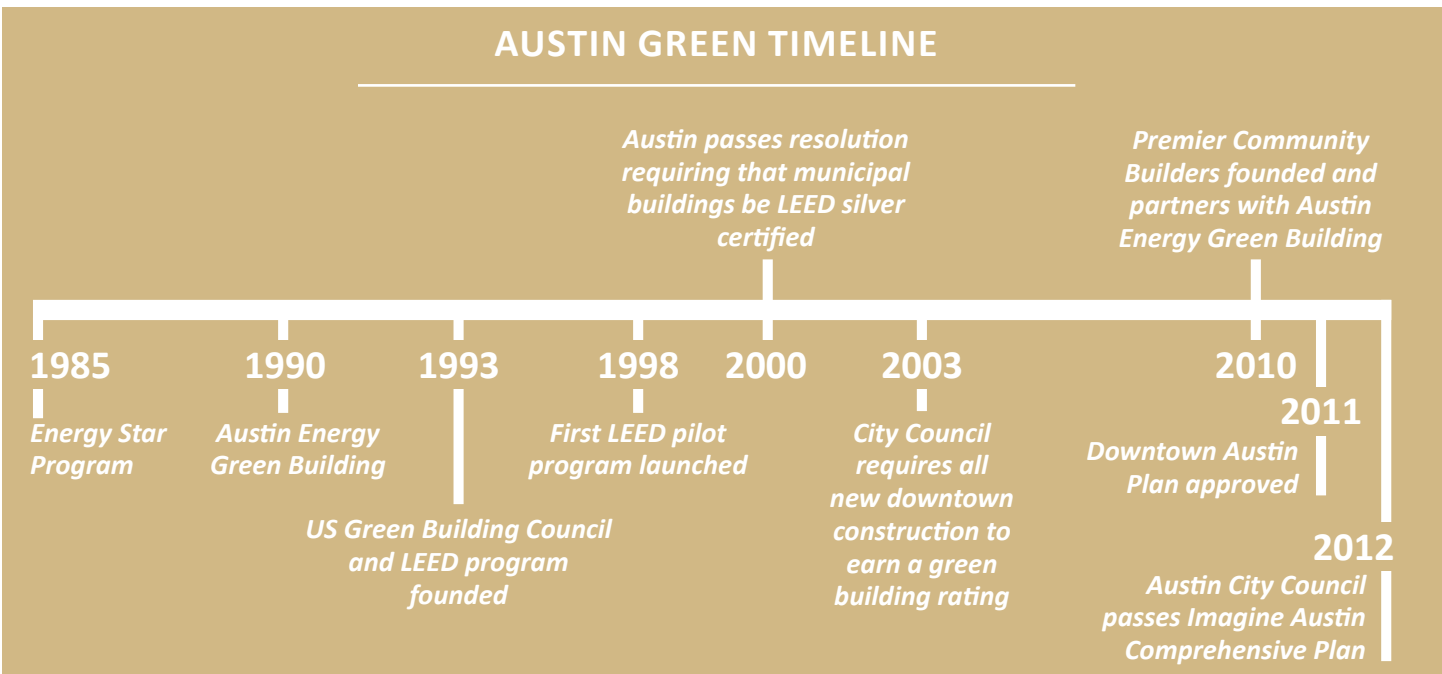
GOOD JOBS FOR A GREEN AUSTIN

Austin, Texas, is an ideal setting for innovation in green and equitable building. The city has won numerous awards for its innovative approach to sustainable urban living.¹⁶ Furthermore, the city's consumers and voters have created demand for a variety of sustainable products: from the nation's first green building program¹⁷, to a variety of organic and fair-trade grocers,¹⁸ to ambitious zero-waste initiatives.¹⁹



Over the last two decades in the United States considerations of sustainability in development have broadened to incorporate economic and social equity goals alongside environmental concerns.²⁰ Both the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) endorse this new vision of sustainability calling it “the triple bottom line” or the “3 E’s” of environment, economy and equity. The USGBC, which administers the Leadership in Energy and Efficiency Design (LEED) green rating certification program, explains in its *Guiding Principles* that its vision of sustainability supports development that balances “environmental, social and economic prosperity.”²¹ AEGB, which administers a star system for rating buildings on their environmental practices, has gone a step further by incorporating social equity goals into their rating metrics.²² LEED now rates over 2,500 buildings per year²³ and, to date, AEGB has rated 9,900 homes (over 11,000 multi-family units and over 140 commercial buildings²⁴).

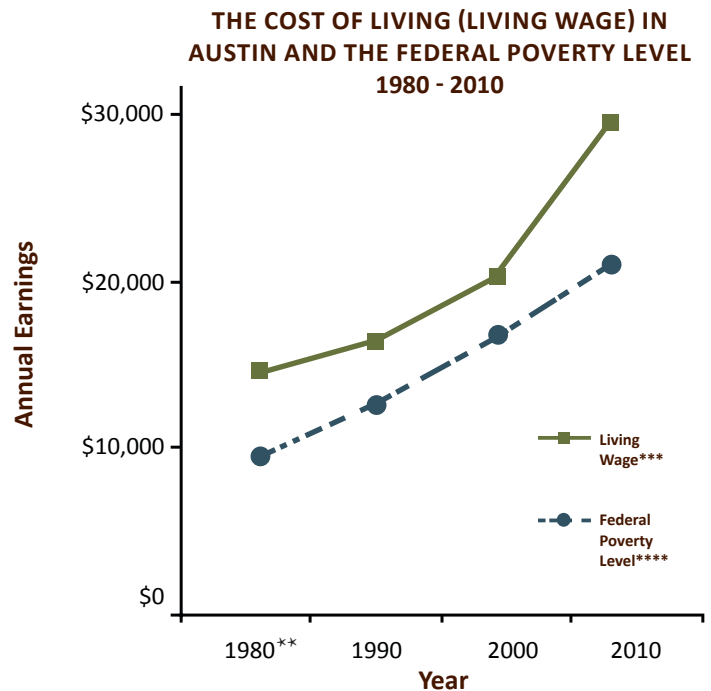
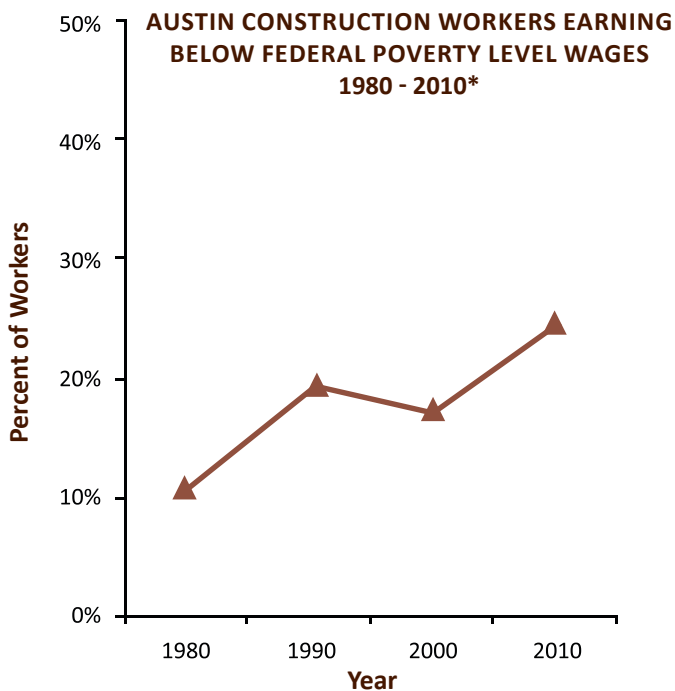
Austin’s comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*, describes how green buildings, workforce training, and living-wage jobs are essential to creating a more sustainable city.²⁵ Developers can capitalize on this vision by creating good construction jobs. As one focus group participant mentioned: “I feel like Austin is a unique place that people actually do care. You can market [workforce certification] to people who are making [a] buying decision. It would appeal to the hearts of Austinites.”



CHALLENGES TO A GREEN WORKFORCE

While the City of Austin has a proven record of innovative sustainability programs, it still faces a number of hurdles to becoming a true model for sustainability. The dangerous and poor working conditions faced by the construction workforce threaten green building's triple bottom line of environment, economy, and equity. Industry pressures have resulted in jobs characterized by low and declining wages, unsafe working conditions and few employment-based benefits.

Since the 1980s in Austin, the percentage of construction workers earning above poverty level wages has decreased while the cost of living has continued to increase.



*Data is from the U.S. Census Bureau's Public Use Microdata Areas series (PUMAs) and was provided by the Texas State Data Center. Data is county-level and includes workers in construction jobs who earn below 100% of the federal poverty level. Due to Census data categories, data for 1980 only includes workers earning below 99% of the poverty level.

**1983 HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) is used to calculate the Living Wage for 1980 as it's the earliest year FMR data is available.

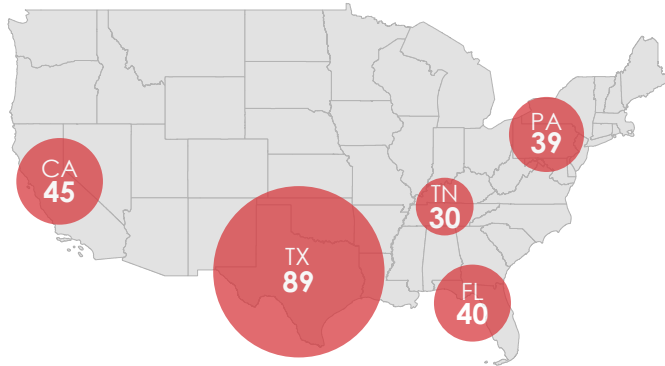
***Living Wage is based on the Universal Living Wage Campaign formula using the FMR for a 1-bedroom home.

****The federal poverty level is calculated using the Federal Poverty Guideline for a 4-person household.

The portion of construction workers living below the federal poverty line increased from 10% in 1980 to almost 30% in 2010. From 1980 onwards the cost of living in Austin has continued to increase. Under current conditions a worker must earn over \$30,000 a year to affordably rent a 1-bedroom apartment in Austin.

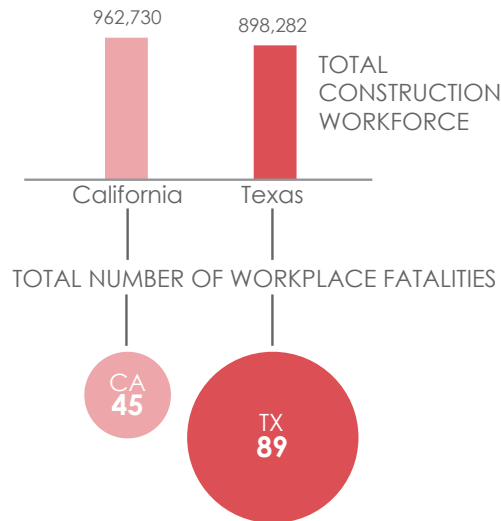
In addition to declining wages, workers in the Texas construction industry face unsafe working conditions, high fatality rates, and receive few employment benefits.²⁶

NUMBER OF FATAL WORK INJURIES BY STATE, 2010



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fatal Occupational Injuries by Selected Industries*, 2010.

CALIFORNIA VS. TEXAS



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fatal Occupational Injuries by Selected Industries*, 2010 & U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2010.

FATAL WORK INJURY RATE Per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers

California **5.2**



Texas **10.7**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *State Occupational Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities*, 2010.

NONFATAL WORK INJURIES AUSTIN, 2012

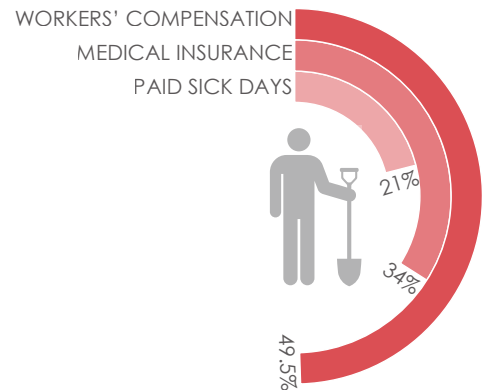


SURVEYED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS REPORT HAVING **SUFFERED A WORKPLACE INJURY THAT REQUIRED MEDICAL ATTENTION**

Source: Workers Defense Project, *Build a Better Texas*, January 2013.

DANGEROUS WORK, FEW BENEFITS AUSTIN, 2012

Percent of Surveyed Construction Workers Receiving Certain Employment-based Benefits



Source: Workers Defense Project, *Build a Better Texas*, January 2013.

WORK WITHOUT GUARANTEED PAY AUSTIN, 2012

22% of construction workers report **not being paid** for their work

*20% report not being paid for work performed; 2% were paid wages below federal minimum wage.

Source: Workers Defense Project, *Build a Better Texas*, January 2013.

GOOD FOR WORKERS, GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Certification has proven a successful tool for providing both social benefit and product differentiation in diverse industries. Certification allows companies to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental standards by partnering with a third-party organization to monitor and “certify” that standards are met. A certified company then displays a seal that symbolizes this commitment to consumers. In this way certification adds value to a company’s products by linking its brand to sustainability.²⁷

Certification makes it easy for the consumer to decide where to buy and feel good about the positive impact of their purchase.²⁸ Certification is a powerful marketing tool for industry trendsetters and, as has been seen with other products, can give companies an edge over their competitors.

Companies that have adapted to increasing consumer demand for certification are thriving.²⁹ The table below lists how some well-known companies that have used other certification programs and some of their successes.

TABLE 1. BUSINESSES USING CERTIFICATION TO ENHANCE THEIR BRAND

Business	Certification	Social Benefit	Business Successes
Home Depot ³⁰	Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification by Forest Stewardship Council	Addresses issues of environmental concern related to deforestation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st retailer to preference FSC certified wood. • Benefited forests and local communities while improving their previously faltering public image. • Public recognition of Home Depot by the Rainforest Action Network in the New York Times incentivized other retail chains to commit to FSC.
Whole Foods ³¹	USDA Organic by U.S. Department of Agriculture	Verifies production standards for agriculture that prohibit the use of pesticides and genetically modified organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 273 stores are certified organic by an independent third party. • While other grocery chains trade at a discount, Whole Foods trades at more than twice the valuation of the Standard & Poor’s 500 Index.
Starbucks ³²	Fair Trade International Certification by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations	Guarantees products have met specific trade-related standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales of Fairtrade certified products grew 12% worldwide between 2010 and 2011. • Growth in sales earned 1.2 million farmers in 66 countries \$83 million in Fairtrade Premium. • Starbucks doubled its purchases of Fair Trade coffee between 2008 and 2009, to 40 million pounds a year.³³

Certification programs share **3** characteristics:³⁴

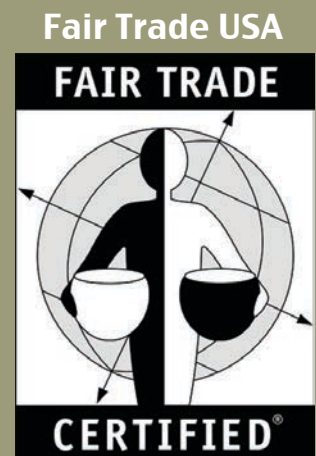
1. Certification is earned by meeting a set of sustainability standards.
2. A process exists for verifying whether standards have been met.
3. There is a “certification mark” (a logo, seal, or label) that markets sustainable business practices to consumers.



“Certified Organic” is one example of a certification now easily recognized by consumers.³⁵ Administrated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the seal designates foods that have been produced without “synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering.”

“Fairtrade represents a market-driven response to trade inefficiencies and inequalities. By redefining purchase utility in terms of a holistic view of the supply chain – specifically by reconnecting producer and consumer interests – Fairtrade has positioned trade justice as a premium brand value for many customers.”³⁶

– Alex Nicholls, Co-Author of *Fair Trade: Market-Driven Ethical Consumption*





PREMIER COMMUNITY BUILDERS (PCB) CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

In 2009 three workers fell to their deaths building a high-rise in Austin’s West Campus neighborhood.³⁷ Though the high-rise was a “green” project, worker safety issues showed that environmental standards are not enough to ensure implementation of an equitable vision of sustainability, one that recognizes the interests of all stakeholders.

After these accidents, Workers Defense Project, alongside industry and community partners, developed the Premier Community Builder (PCB) certification to both recognize developers that met sustainable workforce standards and encourage other developers to do the same. PCB certifies developers that ensure workers are fairly compensated, safe on the job, and given training opportunities. Premier Community Builders distinguish themselves as leaders in green building by creating safe jobs, investing in the local economy, and constructing high-quality buildings.



Premier Community Builders Certification Standards³⁸

- **Ensure that workers are safe on the job.**
- **Ensure that workers earn a wage that allows them to provide for themselves and their families.**
- **Ensure that workers have the training opportunities they need to earn rewarding careers in the construction industry.**

METHODOLOGY

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a black pen, writing on a document. The document features a colorful bar chart with bars in shades of blue, yellow, and red. The background is blurred, showing more papers and a red object, possibly a stapler or a folder.

The Research Team

The research team was comprised of faculty and graduate students from the School of Architecture, the Department of Geography and the Environment, the School of Social Work, the College of Communications, and the Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning at The University of Texas at Austin and staff from Workers Defense Project. Workers Defense Project is a nonprofit community organization that promotes fair working conditions for Austin's low-wage workers.

Green Jobs for Downtown Austin is the result of a nine month exploratory investigation conducted by the Center for Sustainable Development at the University of Texas in partnership with Workers Defense Project, that explored the consumer preferences of a diverse group of stakeholders invested in the future of Downtown Austin. The study collected information from stakeholders about workforce practices and the PCB certification program. After extensive research into certification programs and survey methodology, researchers from The University of Texas at Austin and Workers Defense Project staff collected surveys from 125 mixed-use residents (renters and owners) and 161 hotel guests. Researchers also conducted focus groups with six different stakeholder groups: downtown Austin home owners and renters, realtors and leasing agency staff, hotel guests, event planners, and developers.

To obtain survey samples, the research team asked the management or homeowners association board of every mixed-use building and hotel downtown for permission to survey. The research team also surveyed two boutique hotels in the urban core in order to capture a broader range of hotel guests. Online or paper surveys were distributed to all residents of the 8 mixed-use buildings and to guests approaching the front desk of the 5 hotels that granted the research team access.



CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES

DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDY RESPONDENTS

Green Jobs for Downtown Austin included four “types” of participants:

- Residents, people who live in downtown mixed-use buildings, participated both in the survey and in three focus groups.³⁹
- Tourists are defined in the study as people staying in downtown Austin or boutique hotels.
- Real estate professionals participated in focus group sand include several individuals working a range of positions (including agents, brokers and maintenance) in one major leasing agency and a couple private agents.
- Event planners participated in one focus group and were drawn from two agencies, one that focuses on weddings and another that serves large corporate clients.

RESIDENT PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 124 completed surveys were collected from residents of the 8 mixed-use buildings surveyed. The majority of survey respondents (62.6%) were owners of their downtown condo and 86.8% considered it to be their primary place of residence. A brief snapshot of other respondent demographic characteristics alongside downtown demographics (using 2010 census data) is given in the figures below. The snapshot comparison shows that on basic characteristics the resident survey sample and the downtown population are fairly comparable.⁴⁰

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT OF DOWNTOWN RESIDENT SURVEY RESPONDENTS AS COMPARED TO THE DOWNTOWN AUSTIN POPULATION

	Downtown Resident Respondents	Downtown Austin Population (2010)*
Age	43.8% 20 to 34 years old	46.7% 20 to 34 years old
Race/Ethnicity	87.0% white, 7.3% Latino, 0.8% African American, 2.4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.8% Native American	72.3% white not Latino, 12.8% Latino, 4.9% African American, 7.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.3% American Indian
Gender	43.4% female 56.6% male	42.1% female 57.9% male
Education	86.3% hold at least a Bachelor's degree	77.8% hold at least a Bachelor's degree**
Household Size	over 90% have 2 or less persons in their household	over 90% have 2 or less persons in their household
Employment Status	87.1% employed	64.2% employed**
Annual Income	59.6% earn \$75,000 or more	65.5% earn \$75,000 or more

*Data is census tract level. from the U.S. Census Bureau for tracts 7, 11, & 12 combined. Census Tract 16.05 is omitted as only a small portion that consists only of commercial units is included in downtown.

**This percentage is higher if only data from Census Tract 12 (where the majority of the buildings surveyed are located) is used.

A total of 161 completed surveys were collected from guests of the 5 hotel buildings surveyed. Hotels surveyed included major hotels in downtown as well as boutique hotels in order to get a range of hotel guest "types." A brief snapshot of other tourist demographic characteristics is given below.

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT OF TOURIST SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Tourist Survey Respondents
Age	32.5% 18 to 35, 43.5% 36 to 55, 24% over 55 years of age
Race/Ethnicity	77.8% White, 11.4% Latino, 5.7% African American, 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.6% Native American
Gender	51.9% female 48.1% male
Education	74.6% hold at least a Bachelor's degree
Employment Status	88.0% employed
Annual Income	56.2% earn \$75,000 or more

THOUGHTFUL, GREEN CONSUMERS

Both downtown resident and tourist respondents report being thoughtful consumers. Over one fourth (29.8%) of resident respondents indicate that they **often** to **always** consider whether they agree with a company's practices when making purchase decisions. This percentage is even higher for tourists. Almost half (42.9%) report that they **often** to **always** do so. Furthermore, roughly one-fourth of tourist (24%) and resident (22%) respondents indicate that green initiatives are **very important** to them. This suggests the possibility of a consumer driven market for a certified products.

"As consumers that's one of our biggest powers is to vote with how we spend our money... if that's a way for me to say, I am not purchasing here... because it's not certified, or from this particular builder because they don't follow these [fair labor] practices."

– Downtown condo resident

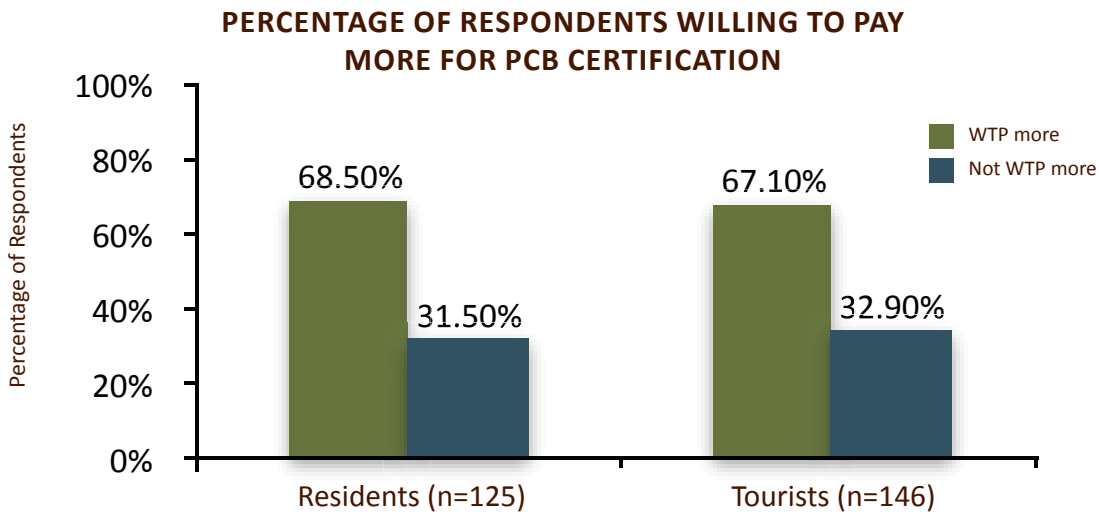


43% of tourist respondents **often** to **always** take into account company practices when making purchases

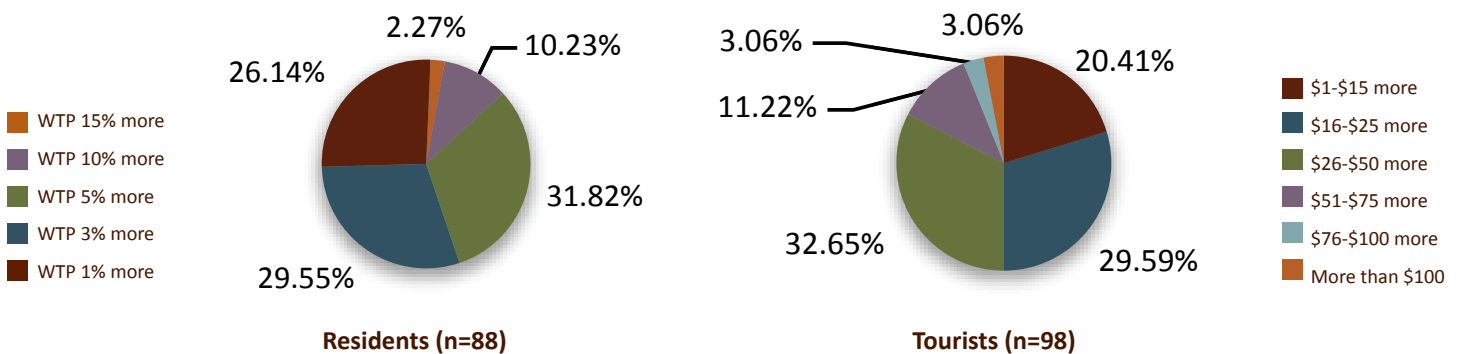
30% of resident respondents **often** to **always** take into account company practices when making purchase decisions

WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION ADDS VALUE

The majority of both resident and tourist respondents indicate that they are willing to pay more than their current monthly payment or nightly room rate for PCB certification. Approximately 69% of residents are willing to pay at least 1% more – almost half of those would pay 5% or more above their current monthly payment. Similarly, approximately 67% of tourist respondents report that they are willing to pay a higher rate, 33% of those are willing to pay from \$26 to \$50 above that rate.



RESPONDENTS WILLING TO PAY MORE BY AMOUNT OF PREMIUM WILLING TO PAY



The most common amount chosen by residents who were willing to pay more was 5%. For tourists, it was between \$26 and \$50 above their current nightly room rate. Most resident and tourist respondents who are willing to pay more indicate that they are willing to pay more than a nominal amount for certification, implying a greater interest in PCB certification.

Resident respondents’ most common responses for unwillingness to pay more were:

- 1) lack of certainty in the ability of the PCB program to guarantee fair worker treatment
- 2) insufficient income
- 3) a belief that they are not responsible for paying for industry errors

Among tourist survey respondents who were unwilling to pay more, 23.5% indicated a “belief that they are not responsible for paying for construction industry errors” as their rationale for not being willing to pay more.

Resident focus group participants also shared that learning about labor violations would influence their purchase decisions. As one participant explained in terms of her own beliefs, “I would definitely take it into account and do a bit further due diligence to see if this is a pattern, or if this [site] had so many violations that the building inspector kept coming down. That gives me a whole bunch of other red flags.” Another shared, “I’d prefer to buy a building that, I knew people were employed fairly.”

Event planners shared that their clients’ priorities included preserving the consistency of their own corporate brand or image. Comparing the certification to similar initiatives such as organic food products, they felt that their clients would be open to selecting PCB certified venues once they were more aware of the option and need. As one participant shared “if this was to really get the push and get started and these hotels started... getting this certification... maybe in a few years it could have a more deciding factor.”

Event planners noted their ability to promote fair labor certification. In the words of one planner, “since a lot of our corporate clients give us that free reign to just do whatever we need to do to create their image.” Planners also felt that because PCB certification resonates with Austin’s reputation, corporate clients interested in providing their event attendees’ with an authentic “Austin experience,” could value the program.

WIDESPREAD APPEAL OF CERTIFICATION

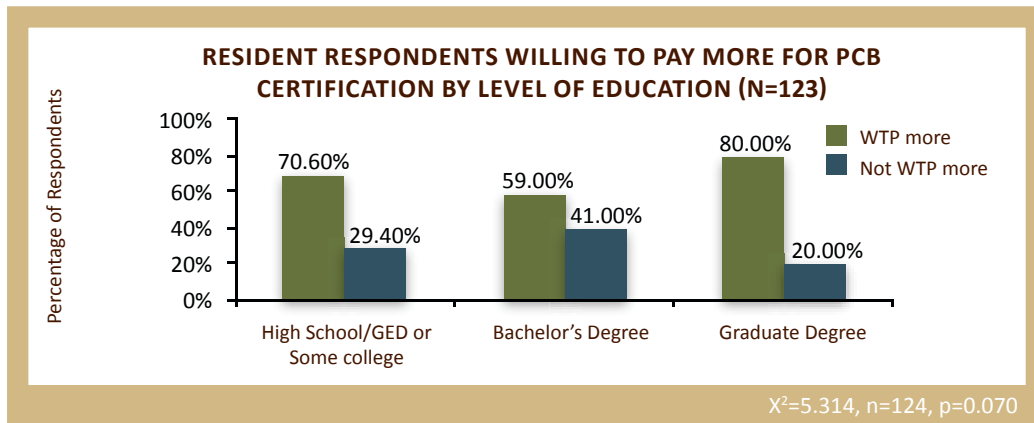
Residents and tourist respondents from across the political spectrum and with various levels of education are all willing to pay more for a sustainable workforce certified building.

While respondents who identify as Liberal/Progressive are more likely to indicate they are willing to pay more than residents who identify as Centrist or Conservative, respondents across the political spectrum indicate that they are willing to pay more than their current rate for PCB certification. 48% of resident respondents who identify as conservative and 55% of tourist respondents who identify as conservative indicate that they are willing to pay more for PCB certification.

RESPONDENTS’ WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR PCB CERTIFICATION BY POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

	Resident Respondents		Tourist Respondents	
	Willing to Pay more	NOT Willing to Pay more	Willing to Pay more	NOT Willing to Pay more
Liberal/Progressive	84.8%	15.2%	80.0%	20.0%
Centrist	51.6%	41.4%	61.5%	38.5%
Conservative	48.0%	52.0%	55.0%	45.0%
	$\chi^2=17.239, n=122, p<0.001$		$\chi^2=8.265, n=141, p=0.016$	

The majority of resident respondents at all levels of education indicate that they are willing to pay more to purchase a home in a building with PCB certification.



GOOD JOBS MEANS QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

“The builder who is willing to kind of cut those corners, probably financially and morally, what does that mean about the place where you’re living?” – Downtown condo owner

“This [PCB certification] makes me feel better if I’m shopping for something... [worker] safety to me is paramount.”

– Downtown condo owner

Focus group participants link worker treatment and building quality. Good worker treatment means quality work while poor worker treatment raises questions about how well a building is constructed. As one resident owner put it simply, “I think when you have workers that are given rest and water breaks and that receive living wages for all hours of work and appropriate safety equipment and training, those points you have up there, training on workplace rights...I think you get a more respectful product. I think you can see it in the finished product.”

Conversely participants also saw poor worker treatment as a “red flag” or indicator that the workmanship might be of poor quality. As one owner responded when asked whether he would consider purchasing a home where workers had not been paid for their work, “That would be a huge red flag for me. That tells me that they ran out of money, they were cutting corners. I would stay away from that.” Furthermore, several participants expressed concerns that failing to provide for workers represented a

potential longer-term risk for them as homeowners, “To me it’s not just an indication that it’s unsafe but obviously they were in a rush to build it and there are other things that could factor in long-term.”

In general, focus groups participants connected positive worker treatment with a high-quality home they could be proud of. This suggests that in a Downtown market characterized by luxury, PCB certification could be used to distinguish buildings as high-quality.

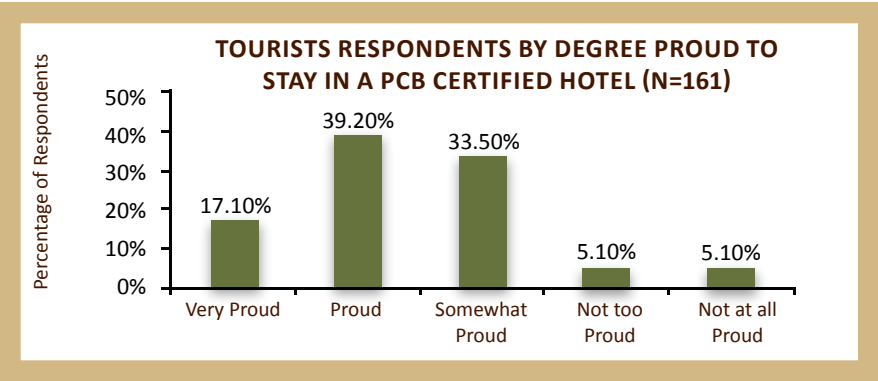
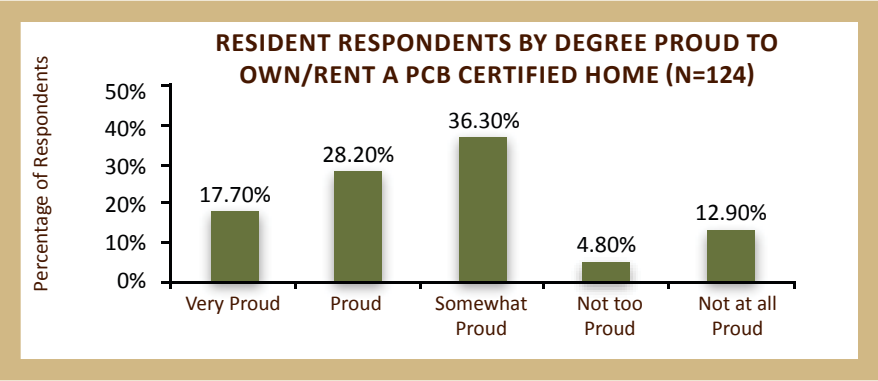
PRIDE IN PCB CERTIFICATION

Resident respondents value the prestige of living in the downtown community and in living in a certain building. This pride of ownership in a particular building represents a unique opportunity for consumers to differentiate themselves through living in a PCB certified building.

82% of resident respondents think a program that alerts buyers to workforce standards is somewhat to very important



25% of these respondents think such a program is very important.



Surveys indicated that many consumers would be proud of living in a PCB certified building that was differentiated from the rest. Almost half (45.9%) of resident respondents indicate they would feel **proud** to **very proud** of living in a building that had PCB certification.

The majority (56.3%) of all tourist respondents indicate they would be at **proud** to **very proud** to stay in a PCB certified hotel. Additionally, the majority of tourist respondents (80.1%) indicate that they think a program alerting hotel guests to standards followed in the construction of hotels is **somewhat** to **very important**; 21.7% indicate that it is **very important**.

Event planners noted that corporate clients would value the opportunity to

80% of tourist respondents state that having a program that alerts hotel guests to standards followed in construction is somewhat to very important

hold events at hotels that offered PCB certification. “They would definitely brag about that they chose a hotel... that did that [achieved PCB certification].” Planners also talked about the trust corporate clients put in them to select venues and plan events that reflected their corporate image and values, “A lot of our corporate clients give us that free reign to just do whatever we need to do to create their image.” Feedback from event planners points to an opportunity to use PCB certification to attract corporate event clients that are interested in enhancing their own brand.

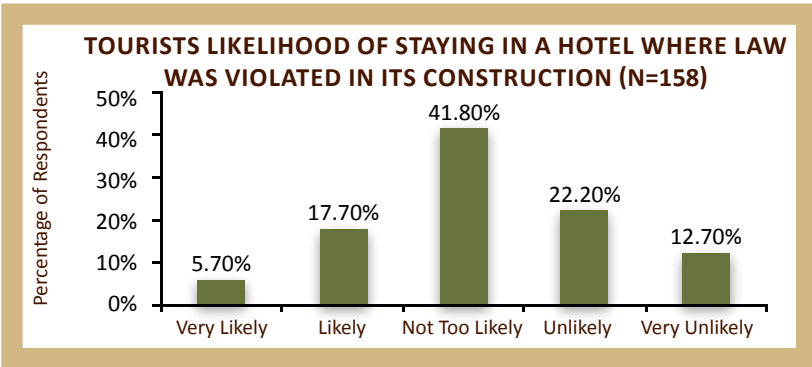
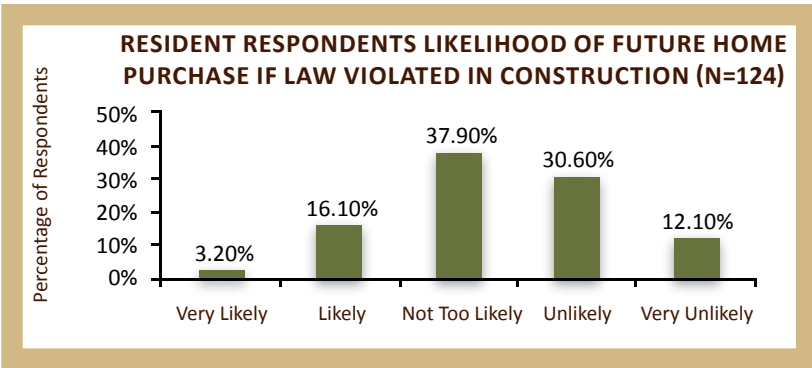
“I wouldn’t want to buy a building at all, or a place in the building that the workers, I knew were treated unfairly... where they were treated fairly... definitely lean toward that, but if I knew they were treated unfairly, I wouldn’t even want to look at that place.”

– Mixed-Use building resident

CONSUMERS AVOID POOR WORKING CONDITIONS

Study participants stressed that they do not want to purchase or live in homes where workers have been treated unfairly. Participants noted seeing media coverage of previous issues related to lack of water breaks and expressed their aversion to choosing buildings where employment violations had occurred. For some, learning of worker mistreatment was itself a clear dealbreaker. Almost half - 42.7% - of resident respondents indicate that it is unlikely to very unlikely that they would purchase a home in the future if they knew the law had been violated in construction of the building. Similarly, 34.9% of tourist respondents indicate that it is unlikely to very unlikely that they would still stay in a hotel if they knew the law had been violated in its construction.

Realtors noted public protests made selling in certain buildings more difficult, “If you see a job that is being poorly done, it’s not good. No one with a conscience can say they are not affected by that.” Awareness of public protests in particular reflected a social cost threshold that buyers and realtors said they (or their clients) were not willing to cross. As one downtown owner said, “Look at the picket line where you have to cross and...is anyone really going to cross



that picket line because...you know these people that are saying, 'We weren't paid for this.' Would someone go and buy that? No, they would not go and buy that."

Proactively ensuring fair worker treatment could be a powerful, positive market differentiator for developers, mitigating the risk of construction employment violations that can violate consumer trust.

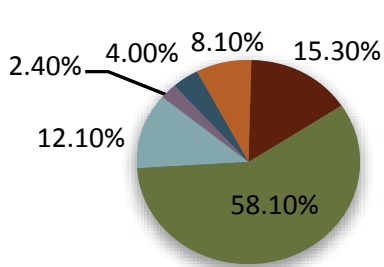
TRUSTED, INDEPENDENT MONITORING

"There should be some reporting on the bad and then there should be some acclamation about the good... There should be some accountability. I think people are interested in knowing whether or not there are fair labor practices."

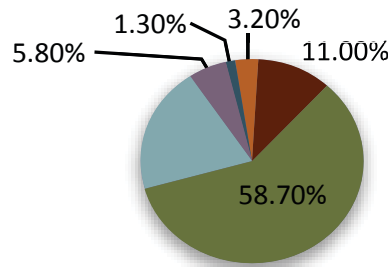
– Downtown Condo Owner

The majority of resident (58%) and tourist (59%) respondents indicate they are more likely to trust an independent monitoring organization than any of the other alternatives. Almost four times as many resident respondents chose that they would trust independent monitoring over a construction industry organization or a government agency. Similarly, almost three times as many tourist respondents chose that they would trust independent monitoring over a government agency and over five times as many tourist respondents chose that they would trust an independent monitoring organization over a construction industry association.

RESPONDENTS' CHOICE IN TRUSTWORTHY MONITORING ORGANIZATION



Residents (n=124)



Tourists (n=155)

The views of focus group participants also indicated a preference for certification monitored by an independent organization. As one resident explained "If I found out that something is certified something I would probably want to know who is doing the certification. 'Cause I think often times you like find that like oh the industry group calling things green is telling you that it's green...like, okay, that is way less powerful than somebody else [a third party]." The product differentiation that third-party monitoring added was seen as another important reason for independent monitoring, as one participant mentioned, "It is that additional luxury distinction, that might not be a good role for the government – it's a better role for [a third party]."

For certification programs to be successful marketing tools, consumers must trust that the promised standards are met. Consumers appear to most trust and value certification that is independently monitored.



BEST PRACTICES

Premier Community Builders certification provides developers with a unique opportunity to lead the way in the expanding green building market by committing to a vision of sustainability that includes a sustainable workforce. Through PCB certification, developers can:

Build a positive public image.

Austin residents are known to support local initiatives and sustainable practices.⁴¹ According to survey data, approximately 30% often to always consider a company's practices when making purchase decisions (and the majority do at least sometimes). Furthermore, 42.7% of resident respondents and 34.9% of tourist respondents indicate that they are not too likely to very unlikely to purchase a residence or stay in a hotel if they knew that a law was broken during its construction.

Thus, consumer awareness of problems on a construction project is likely to impact their purchase decisions. Consumers express that they were more likely to buy a home when provided with information indicating that workers were treated fairly. By advertising their commitment to PCB standards and providing consumers with information highlighting the impact of PCB certification, developers can potentially enhance their brand and reduce liability.

Advertise quality craftsmanship.

Downtown residents want to ensure they are making a good, long-term investment when purchasing Downtown. Consumers readily identify worker treatment as an indicator of the quality of a building's craftsmanship. As one Downtown resident put it simply, "fair labor certification to me means that it's gonna be quality." Thus, developers seeking to profit from PCB certification could be well-served by both educating consumers about the benefits PCB certification brings to workers and also emphasizing that those benefits translate into a higher quality product.

Develop consumer trust.

The majority of resident and tourist respondents chose that they would most trust an independent monitoring organization over self-regulation, regulation by a construction industry association, or regulation by a government agency. As one resident explained, "If I found out that something is certified something I would probably want to know who is doing the certification, 'Cause I think often times you like find that... the industry group calling things green is telling you that it's green... that is way less powerful than somebody else." Developers looking to differentiate their product via certification would be best served by partnering with a third-party for monitoring. Developers can play a role in ensuring that the certification adds the most value by investing in monitoring by agencies considered to be independent of industry interest.



Strengthen relationships with public officials.

Obtaining PCB certification itself can earn developers an additional green building point from Austin Energy Green Building.⁴² Additionally, PCB certification could serve as a useful indicator to city officials that a project will provide powerful community benefits.⁴³ By ensuring good, green jobs for Austin workers developers can gain another tool that could provide a competitive edge in the public process.

CONCLUSION

The green building market is rapidly expanding. LEED, founded only in 1998, has now certified over 1.5 billion square feet of development in 30 countries.⁴⁴ Texas is second in the nation for number of LEED certified homes with over 2,834 registered and certified projects as of July 2012.⁴⁵

Demand from both policymakers and consumers has primed the green building market in Austin. Now, city mandate requires that all downtown buildings be AEGB rated.⁴⁶ As consumers and other stakeholders increasingly incorporate worker treatment into their vision of sustainability, developers have the unique opportunity to lead the way by showing their commitment to workforce standards. Austin's thoughtful, "green" consumer base presents the ideal market opportunity for developers to create a model for green-building construction that creates sustainable buildings that are good for workers and good for business.

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- ⁴⁶ According to Land Development Code 25-2-593 central business district and downtown mixed-use zoned projects require at least a one-star rating from Austin Energy Green building, see the Austin Energy website at: <http://www.austenergy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/Programs/Green%20Building/Participation/requirements.htm> and the city ordinance at: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/030612-93.pdf>. Also see: Austin Energy. (n.d.). City of Austin - Green Building Requirement for City Projects [website]. Retrieved 25 October 2012 from <http://www.doe.gov/savings/city-austin-green-building-requirement-city-projects>.



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