

PARKSMART FAQ: A PRIMER ON THE GROUNDBREAKING GARAGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

By Rachel Yoka, CAPP, LEED AP BD+C

What is Parksmart? Parksmart (formerly Green Garage Certification) is the only sustainability rating system designed for parking structures, featuring parking and transportation-specific measures that address the unique challenges and opportunities to increase efficiency and sustainability in this distinct building type.

What Happened to Green Garage Certification?

Originally developed and launched by the Green Parking Council, Green Garage Certification was rebranded Parksmart under the aegis of Green Business Certification, Inc. (GBCI), the certification arm of the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). GBCI acquired the program effective January 2016 and added the Parksmart Certification to its complement of sustainability ratings systems, including the LEED family of certifications for buildings, renovations, existing buildings, and neighborhoods.

What Is the Role of the Parksmart Advisor?

Parksmart Advisors are trained by IPI, in coordination with GBCI, to offer specialized consulting services to clients and organizations pursuing Parksmart Certification for parking structures. The Parksmart Advisor serves as a guide and technical expert on the program. Although Parksmart Advisors are not required for Parksmart Certification submissions, their training and experience with the program will benefit both the certification process as well as the sustainability decisions and improvements made to parking structures in pursuit of certification.

How Do I Become a Parksmart Advisor?

Individuals who successfully complete the training program receive a certificate and are listed as approved advisors by GBCI. The training is currently offered in a full-day, face-to-face professional development class that includes scenarios and application of measures in a case-study format, as well as an assessment at the conclusion of the training. IPI is currently collaborating with GBCI to develop an online, blended-learning format

for the Parksmart Advisor Training, allowing anyone to take the class during a set period of time online with an instructor. This training program will be available in early 2017.

How Is the Certification Organized?

Parksmart Certification is arranged in four major categories: management, programs, technology and structure design, and innovation. Each of the four areas contains individual measures that are scored on a point basis to offer varying levels of certification under the program. Currently, there are no required measures in the rating system.

Does the Program Address New Construction and Renovation?

Certification is available to both new and previously constructed parking structures. Currently, all garages follow the same standard. Additional detail on these classifications is available in the Guide to Parksmart Certification.

How Does Parksmart Certification Relate to IPI's Sustainability Framework?

IPI's Sustainability Framework provides seven primary objectives that advance sustainability goals and the parking profession. These seven objectives are complemented by 10 action items for IPI as an organization. The Framework reinforces the certification, stating our intention to "increase education and information sharing and promote the use of rating systems and benchmarking tools such as the Parksmart Program for new and existing parking assets." The Framework sets objectives and strategic direction for the parking



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industry but does provide specific guidance on how to increase efficiency and sustainability. The Parksmart Standard provides specific, detailed operational guidance and best practices for every parking facility, regardless of whether certification is pursued.

What Are Some of the Criteria Addressed by Parksmart?

The management section contains 16 measures totaling 90 points and includes parking pricing, shared parking, proactive operational maintenance, and building systems commissioning. The programs area contains 13 measures totaling 64 points and includes wayfinding systems, traffic flow plan, carshare program, rideshare program, low-emitting and fuel-efficient vehicles, alternative-fuel vehicles, alternative-fuel fleet vehicles, bicycle parking, and bicycle sharing/rental. The largest section, technology and structure design, contains 18 measures totaling 88 points: HVAC systems—occupied spaces, ventilation systems—parking decks, lighting controls, energy-efficient lighting system, and design for durability. The innovation section includes a single measure focused on including new technologies, best practices, and unique ideas to the program. It also allows points to be applied to those projects that successfully and significantly exceed certification benchmarks.



Mahesh Ramanujam, COO of USGBC and president of GBCI, spoke at the 2016 IPI Conference & Expo.



What Resources Are Available to Support the Parksmart program?

- The Parksmart Certification Standard, which is available in the USGBC online store, serves as the primary reference for certification and contains detailed information on measures, objectives, point values, compliance paths, and documentation requirements.
- The Guide to Parksmart Certification is the companion document to the Standard. Available for free download, this document introduces the structure of the program, includes eligibility, certification levels, and basic guidance on pursuing certification.
- The Parksmart Documentation Package contains the technical revisions to the certification program that have been added since the launch in 2015. The revisions offer clarification and revised compliance paths for select measures.
- The Parksmart scorecard serves as a working document for applicants and Parksmart Advisors to track progress toward certification.
- *The Parking Professional* magazine highlights structures that have achieved certification in the parking.org Resource Center.

Contact parksmart@gbci.org to register a project. For more information, visit gbci.org/certification.

What Does the Transition to USGBC Mean for Parking Professionals?

With the acquisition of the program by GBCI, the Parksmart program gains significant resources to expand and promote certification, as well as advance the content of the program through innovation and collaboration. Similar to the LEED rating systems, the next version of Parksmart will refine the program and the specific measures, raising the bar for the entire industry. Parking professionals now have an industry-specific program to certify their structures, with enhanced visibility, awareness, and recognition for their sustainability achievements. P