

The City of Austin has a long-term goal of reaching “net zero” emissions by 2050. Approximately 55% of those emissions are created by energy use. Unity Church of the Hills (UCOH) is progressive in saving energy by installing energy saving devices, LED lighting, and having an LEED-built building, Unity Oaks. LEED is the acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a green-building code for construction of commercial and residential properties.

Unity Oaks, which opened in 2011, has many sustainable features in its design:

#### Energy

- Reflective, metal roofing and structure readied for future integration of solar panels.
- Efficient light fixtures, bi-level lighting fixtures, and LED lights.
- Well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation and strategic ventilation.
- HVAC units are high-efficiency equipment rated at EER 10.8, providing long-term compliance.
- Reflective roofing.
- Sustainable site positioning and strategic placement of windows for use of natural light.
- Outdoor lighting fixtures reduce the Heat Island Effect.
- Trees planted to create shade along new sidewalks.

#### Indoor Environmental Quality

- Walls insulated for minimal acoustical trespass between classrooms.
- Painted with Green Planet paints for low to no gas emissions.
- All classrooms have windows for use of natural light.
- Exterior windows are insulated glass for thermal comfort.

#### Materials

- Flooring has Marmoleum Composition Tile (MCT), a non-toxic alternative to vinyl.
- The MCT tiles have 46% recycle content and have 23% rapidly-renewing content.
- The interior wooden doors are FSC certified, which designates care of forest ecosystems.

#### Water

- Restrooms are equipped with dual flush toilets and low-flow features.

A by-product of many LEED-built buildings is the contentment of occupants, who feel an increased sense of wellbeing due to appropriate use of materials and access to daylight. For more information about sustainable buildings and communities, see <http://leed.usgbc.org> of the United States Green Building Council.

Libby Weedman, the LEED-certified architect who helped design Unity Oaks, provided the information of features listed above before she retired from the Heimsath Architects firm.