

Snapshot: Timber Ridge at Talus, Issaquah, Washington

Part of a large urban “wild land” spanning 20,000 acres across Cougar, Squak and Tiger mountains, Timber Ridge at Talus was the first continuing care retirement community in the United States to achieve LEED Silver certification status. The Life Care Services’ team worked for a decade with environmental groups and the City of Issaquah to create an ecologically sensitive plan. To protect the gateway to the Issaquah Alps, only a quarter of Talus’s 630 acres is open to human habitation.

Like other LEED-certified communities, Timber Ridge met the following criteria:

- *Sustainable sites:* maximizing open space; reducing heat island; reducing light pollution; using storm water quality control; using alternative transportation; reducing construction pollution
- *Water efficiency:* water-efficient landscaping; reducing water use
- *Energy and atmosphere:* commissioning of building and equipment that



Large windows increase the amount of natural light in a Timber Ridge at Talus dining room. Image courtesy of Life Care Services LLC

- meet or exceed energy performance; refrigerant management
- *Materials and resources:* use of rapidly renewable resources, regional materials, and recycled materials; recycling construction waste; recycling building waste

- *Indoor environmental quality:* smoke-free building; use of low-emitting paints, adhesives, carpets, composite woods, and other materials; controllability of lighting and thermal systems (i.e., with sensors); increasing daylight and views

“LEED causes the developer and designers to consider things they previously wouldn’t have considered,” says Project Development Manager Jason Jorgensen. By doing so with Timber Ridge, they not only ensured that the community would be environmentally friendly, but they also had the bonus of “being moved to the front of the schedule for city development approvals.”

A major benefit of having built to LEED specifications is “it keeps our operational costs down,” which helps keep resident fees down, adds Executive Director Scott Doherty. “This has been most noticeable with our utility cost.” In addition, the environmentally friendly community “has created a positive ‘buzz’ and a sense of pride for our residents to know they are making a difference.”