



## PRESS RELEASE

Contact : Marie Coleman  
Communications Associate, USGBC  
202.552.1368  
[mcoleman@usgbc.org](mailto:mcoleman@usgbc.org)

Follow us on Twitter at [@USGBC](https://twitter.com/USGBC)

### **LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System Launches as Benchmark for Green Neighborhood Design**

*Environmental Leaders Partner to Advance Walkable, Sustainable and Economically Thriving Communities*

Washington, D.C. – (April 29, 2010) – Today, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) announced the launch of the LEED for Neighborhood Development green neighborhoods rating system. LEED for Neighborhood Development integrates the principles of smart growth, new urbanism and green building and benefits communities by reducing urban sprawl, increasing transportation choice and decreasing automobile dependence, encouraging healthy living, and protecting threatened species.

The rating system encourages development within or near existing communities and/or public infrastructure in order to reduce the environmental impacts of sprawl. By promoting communities that are physically connected, LEED for Neighborhood Development conserves land and promotes transportation efficiency and walkability. A 2008 study entitled “The Economic Value of Walkability” found that households in automobile-dependent communities devote 50% more money – more than \$8,500 annually – to transportation.

The correlation between transit-oriented development and proximity to services, amenities and jobs to human health benefits and economic capital has been found by numerous studies and is advocated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, the connectivity to neighboring communities with existing transportation and thoroughfares or local retail and services, greatly benefits the citizens, businesses and local economy of the surrounding regions.

“Sustainable communities are prosperous communities for the occupants and businesses which inhabit them,” said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair, U.S. Green Building Council. “LEED for Neighborhood Development projects are strategically located in or surrounding metropolitan areas – often times revitalizing brownfields, infills or other underutilized spaces, opening new revenue streams, creating jobs opportunities and helping to drive the local, state and national economies.”

LEED for Neighborhood Development strives to create healthy, safe neighborhoods in which people from a wide range of economic levels and age groups can live and work together. Green neighborhoods foster social inclusivity as they provide accessibility to transportation, jobs, resources, education and promote healthier lifestyles. LEED for Neighborhood Development projects include or are sited to have good access to schools, businesses, residences, shopping, dining and entertainment.

“Half of the buildings we will have in 25 years are not yet on the ground,” said Kaid Benfield, Director of the Smart Growth Program, Natural Resources Defense Council. “Where we put them is even more important to the environment than how we build them, and NRDC is proud to stand alongside our partners with a system that helps guide them to the right places while avoiding the wrong ones.”

NRDC helped to establish LEED for Neighborhood Development by soliciting the help of Smart Growth America, a national coalition of organizations working for better communities and recruiting smart growth

## **U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL**

2101 L St NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20037 · Phone 202 828-7422 · [USGBC.org](http://USGBC.org)

experts to participate on the committee of volunteers that authored the rating system. The principles of smart growth focus on the importance of considering location, transportation alternatives, equity, and community form when developing land use plans.

“LEED for Neighborhood Development contains the components for compact and complete neighborhoods. With walkable streets, appropriately-scaled schools, and a mix of amenities close by, residents can lower their environmental impact while improving their quality of life,” said John Norquist, President and CEO, Congress for the New Urbanism.

CNU brought a number of leading planners and architects from the New Urbanist movement to help shape the new rating system. New Urbanism promotes compact neighborhood form, a wide range of urban housing types from multi-unit buildings to single-family homes, a vibrant mix of uses within close proximity of each other, humane public spaces and well-connected streets and blocks serving users ranging from pedestrians and cyclists to transit riders and drivers.

“LEED for Neighborhood Development projects are designed to highlight the best in a community,” Fedrizzi continued. “By bridging together adjoining districts, neighborhood developments take advantage of the greatest things a community has to offer – the people and amenities which enrich our lives on a daily basis.”

The consensus-based process that drives the development of the LEED rating systems ensures and encourages the very best in building, design and development practices.

The scope of LEED for Neighborhood Development projects can range from small projects to whole communities and encompasses a broader set of stakeholders in the process. Because of the scale of neighborhood development, projects are measured on acreage – the first LEED rating system to use a measurement other than square footage.

This is the seventh LEED rating system released by USGBC and is the first comprehensive benchmark for green neighborhood design. Projects certifying under LEED for Neighborhood Development must achieve points in three major environmental categories: Smart Location & Linkage, Neighborhood Pattern & Design, and Green Infrastructure & Buildings across a 110-point scale.

Also launching this spring is the LEED Accredited Professional (AP) Neighborhood Development (ND) credential for professionals participating in the design and development of neighborhoods. To read more about the LEED AP ND credential, go to [www.usgbc.org/credentials](http://www.usgbc.org/credentials) or to learn about the neighborhood development educational offerings, visit [www.usgbc.org/leedcurriculum](http://www.usgbc.org/leedcurriculum).

###

### **U.S. Green Building Council**

The Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Green Building Council is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings.

With a community comprising 78 local affiliates, more than 18,000 member companies and organizations, and more than 140,000 LEED Professional Credential holders, USGBC is the driving force of an industry that is projected to contribute \$554 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product from 2009-2013. USGBC leads an unlikely diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students.

Buildings in the United States are responsible for 39% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 40% of energy consumption, 13% water consumption and 15% of GDP per year, making green building a source of significant economic and environmental opportunity. Greater building efficiency can meet 85% of future U.S.

## **U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL**

2101 L St NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20037 · Phone 202 828-7422 · [USGBC.org](http://USGBC.org)

demand for energy, and a national commitment to green building has the potential to generate 2.5 million American jobs.

### **LEED**

The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. Over 35,000 projects are currently participating in the LEED system, comprising over 6.9 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 114 countries.

By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community.

USGBC was co-founded by current President and CEO Rick Fedrizzi, who spent 25 years as a Fortune 500 executive. Under his 15-year leadership, the organization has become the preeminent green building, membership, policy, standards, influential, education and research organization in the nation.

### **Natural Resources Defense Council**

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.3 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

### **Congress for the New Urbanism**

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) is the leading organization promoting walkable, neighborhood-based development as an alternative to sprawl. CNU takes a proactive, multi-disciplinary approach to restoring our communities. Members are the life of the organization – they are the planners, developers, architects, engineers, public officials, investors, and community activists who create and influence our built environment, transforming growth patterns from the inside out. Whether it's bringing restorative plans to hurricane-battered communities in the Gulf Coast, turning dying malls into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods, or reconnecting isolated public housing projects to the surrounding fabric, new urbanists are providing leadership in community building.

For more information, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).