USGBC & Land Use Law Center at Pace Law School Announce Two Resources to Help Local Governments Create Sustainable Neighborhoods

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Dec. 7, 2012 (Washington, D.C. & White Plains, N.Y.) – The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the Land Use Law Center at Pace Law School today announced two new free resources — the Technical Guidance Manual for Sustainable Neighborhoods and the Neighborhood Development Floating Zone — to help local governments leverage the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system as a sustainability tool. Generous funding for the Center, in conjunction with USGBC, for the research, writing, and production of these resources was provided by the Fund for the Environment and Urban Life of The Oram Foundation, Inc., with additional support from the Natural Resources Defense Council. The announcement was made at the Center's 11th annual Land Use and Sustainable Development Conference held at Pace Law School in White Plains, NY.

Traditional U.S. zoning codes have resulted in communities with separated land uses and low-density sprawl that contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions through vehicles miles traveled, building energy consumption, increased potable water consumption, and loss of natural resources, among other environmental and social consequences. Local governments can combat these challenges by adopting plans and regulations reflecting more sustainable land use patterns. Although many communities have already taken significant action, many more are realizing that green neighborhood development practices — such as building narrower streets and creating more compact, mixed-use development — are not permitted presently under their municipal codes.

"We have taken advantage of the extensive expertise of the USGBC and its partner organizations in creating for local governments a single document they can use to zone-in sustainability, which so often is zoned-out and otherwise frustrated by local codes," said John Nolon, Founder of the Land Use Law Center. "It has been a truly exciting project and we are anxious to provide this resource to the many communities wanting to foster green development."

As the first national benchmark for green neighborhood design, LEED-ND integrates the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green building and is a planning tool available to local governments that want to support and encourage sustainable development within their communities. Sustainable neighborhood development, as defined by LEED-ND, benefits communities by reducing urban sprawl, increasing transportation choices and decreasing automobile dependence, encouraging healthy living, and protecting threatened species.

Accompanied by case studies of how municipalities have leveraged LEED-ND as a sustainability tool, the Technical Guidance Manual for Sustainable Neighborhoods will assist elected officials, local planners, and other professionals who work with municipalities to use the LEED-ND rating system to evaluate and amend land use regulations, plans, and policies to promote more environmentally sound and economically robust communities. The manual draws from research and interviews with more than 60 municipalities that have already leveraged LEED-ND to reform their comprehensive plans, land development regulations, and infrastructure planning to achieve sustainability goals.

Augmenting the manual, the Neighborhood Development Floating Zone is a model ordinance to help local governments foster green community development using the LEED-ND rating system. The Floating Zone is offered as a cost-effective and

efficient tool that can be used by local governments hoping to incentivize the private sector to follow green neighborhood development principles when the more extensive zoning update process laid out in the manual is not an option.

Both resources are available for download at no cost:

- Technical Guidance Manual for Sustainable Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Development Floating Zone

About U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)
The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. USGBC works toward its mission of market transformation through its LEED green building certification program, robust educational offerings, a nationwide network of chapters and affiliates, the annual Greenbuild International Conference & Expo, and advocacy in support of public policy that encourages and enables green buildings and communities. For more information, visit usgbc.org and follow us on Twitter @USGBC, and Facebook at facebook.com/USGBC.

About Land Use Law Center
Established in 1993, the Land Use Law Center at Pace Law School is dedicated to fostering the development of sustainable communities through the promotion of innovative land use strategies and collaborative decision-making techniques, as well as leadership training, research, education, and technical assistance. Through its many programs, the Center offers municipalities, land use leaders, citizens, advocates, planners, attorneys, real estate industry leaders, and other land use professionals assistance that enables them to achieve their development and conservation goals. The Land Use Law Center is the preeminent center of its kind offering extensive research and consulting services; conferences, seminars, and clinics; law school courses; practitioner and citizen-leader training programs; continuing legal education programs; multimedia resources; and frequent publications on sustainable land use and community development. For more information, visit law.pace.edu and connect on Twitter @LandUseLC, Facebook, and YouTube.

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