LEED® for Neighborhood Development

LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) integrates the principles of smart growth, New Urbanism and green building into the first national rating system for neighborhood design. The rating system was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in partnership with the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

Significance of LEED for Neighborhood Development certification

LEED for Neighborhood Development recognizes development projects that successfully protect and enhance the overall health, natural environment and quality of life in our communities. The rating system encourages smart growth and New Urbanist best practices by promoting the location and design of neighborhoods that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and creating developments where jobs and services are accessible by foot or public transit. It also promotes an array of green building and green infrastructure practices, particularly more efficient energy and water use—especially important in urban areas where infrastructure is often overtaxed.

Project types

LEED for Neighborhood Development is designed to certify exemplary development projects that perform well in terms of smart growth, urbanism, and green building. Projects may constitute whole neighborhoods, portions of neighborhoods, or multiple neighborhoods. Projects are often mixed-use, though small single-use projects that complement existing neighborhood uses may also use the rating system. Local jurisdictions should not use LEED-ND as a replacement for comprehensive planning, however, many local jurisdictions may find that LEED for Neighborhood Development is a meaningful tool to help promote sustainable land development if incentivized or used as a guideline when revising local plans and regulations.

Credit Categories

The following credit categories are included in the rating system:

- **Smart Location and Linkage** encourages communities to consider location, transportation alternatives, and preservation of sensitive lands while also discouraging sprawl.
- **Neighborhood Pattern and Design** emphasizes vibrant, equitable communities that are healthy,
- walkable, and mixed-use.
- **Green Infrastructure and Buildings** promotes the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure that reduce energy and water use, while promoting more sustainable use of materials, reuse of existing and historic structures, and other sustainable best practices.
- **Innovation and Design Process** recognizes exemplary and innovative performance reaching beyond the existing credits in the rating system, as well as the value of including an accredited professional on the design team.
- **Regional Priority Credit** encourages projects to focus on earning credits of significance to the project's local environment.

Stages of Certification

LEED for Neighborhood Development differs from other commercial and residential LEED rating systems as it has three stages of certification, which relate to the phases of the real estate development process.

- **Stage 1 – Conditionally Approved Plan**: provides the conditional approval of a LEED-ND Plan available for projects before they have completed the entitlements, or public review, process. It is

envisioned that completing Stage 1 will help projects get support from the local government and from the community.

- **Stage 2 – Pre-Certified Plan**: pre-certifies a LEED-ND Plan and is applicable for fully entitled projects or projects under construction. Completing this review can help projects secure financing, expedited permitting or attract tenants.
- **Stage 3 – Certified Neighborhood Development**: completed projects formally apply for LEED certification to recognize that the project has achieved all of the prerequisites and credits attempted.

A review of just the Smart Location & Linkage prerequisites is also available for project teams after registration and before completing all of the documentation for a particular Stage. This will enable project teams to evaluate if their location is eligible for LEED-ND.

Registration and Certification

The rating system can be downloaded for review by interested parties, including for-profit and nonprofit developers, owners, and others involved in projects that may seek LEED for Neighborhood Development certification, and local governments interested in reviewing the rating system for possible incentives or as an evaluation tool.

Registration and certification are available through LEED Online at www.leedonline.com. Further information about registration and the certification process can be viewed at: www.gbci.org.

LEED for Neighborhood Development and other LEED rating systems

All LEED-ND projects are required to have at least one certified green building. Points are also available within the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system for having certified green buildings in the development and for integrating green building and infrastructure practices within the project. These credits relate to energy efficiency, reduced water use, building reuse, recycled materials, and heat island reduction.

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