

# LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & LEED® FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT



*Northwest Gardens, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Stage 2 Pre-Certified Plan (LEED Gold, 62 points)*

LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) pushes both the public and private sectors to look beyond the individual building to a larger district, recognizing that the location and context of buildings in relation to the public realm plays a critical role in the sustainable performance of a community.

LEED ND also spells fiscally responsible development for local governments. Complete, walkable, amenity-rich and transit-served projects require lower up front infrastructure investment and result in lower costs associated with ongoing infrastructure maintenance and delivery of key services.

Utilizing [LEED ND] in the Columbia Point Master Planning process ensured strong alignment with our sustainability goals while enabling the community to envision a more resilient future and truly understand the details of sustainable development.

John Dalzell, AIA, LEED AP®, BD+C, ND  
Boston Redevelopment Authority

## PROGRAM GOALS

LEED ND inspires better neighborhood planning and development in three areas:

**SMART LOCATION AND LINKAGE:** Locations with access to existing infrastructure and transit service leverage efficiencies in public contributions to infrastructure construction and maintenance. Protecting natural resources and sensitive lands ensures resilient ecological systems.

**NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN AND DESIGN:** Compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods with good connections to nearby communities contribute to thriving local economies and create destinations where we can all live, work, play and learn.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDINGS:** Building and infrastructure performance at the district scale reduces energy and water use, reuses materials, and minimizes waste.

## BENEFITS

There are many benefits to green neighborhood development practices and local governments play an essential role in promoting and incentivizing superior neighborhood planning and design. Below are some of the key benefits of integrating LEED ND into municipal planning processes:

- The efficient use of land and resources reduces strain on public infrastructure and contributes to a robust tax base. A study from Smart Growth America shows that LEED® ND-style development:
  - Saves an average of 38 percent on up front costs for new infrastructure including roads, sewers and water lines.
  - Saves municipalities an average of 10 percent on delivery of emergency services.
  - Generates 10 times more tax revenue than conventional suburban development, on a per-acre basis.
- Only 35 percent of people who prefer to live in a walkable community actually do so. Spurring LEED ND development is a way to attract new renters, homeowners and local businesses.
- The rating system is composed of proven strategies that can help meet existing greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- Locating projects in smart locations and employing proven urban design principles can help the bottom line of the local government and developer alike. But the benefits of green development extend well beyond the quantifiable energy, water, and fiscal savings outlined above to include equity and quality of life issues as well. LEED ND is founded on an inclusive, integrated planning and design process that delivers results for every member of the community.

## USING LEED ND

The rating system is intended to certify projects at all phases of development, from conceptual planning through design and development to completely constructed, and it can be applied to new construction or major renovation projects. The criteria can also guide informal assessment of existing neighborhoods.

**GIVE APPROVALS PREFERENCE TO LEED ND CONDITIONALLY APPROVED PLANS.** Local governments and authorities can consider a development application that has completed the Conditional Plan Approval as demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development. USGBC hopes that completing this review will result in expedited review processes and community support for the project.

**PURSUE CERTIFICATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.** In addition to considering LEED ND certification as a requirement for RFP/RFQs that are issued by the municipality, the local government can commit to pursue LEED ND certification for any large-scale projects where the municipality is serving as the developer or a development partner.

[LEED ND] is potentially the most transformative and powerful tool we have for influencing and establishing holistic and sustainable communities. But we have to use it. LEED ND's inherent power and its beauty begins by integrating its holistic framework into our comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations so we can create and guide the sustainable future for the places we call home, neighborhood, community...and earth.

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

These resources have been created specifically to help local governments leverage LEED ND to support local sustainability goals:

- [Local Government Guide to LEED ND](#)
- [Technical Guidance Manual for Sustainable Neighborhoods](#)
- [Neighborhood Development Floating Zone](#)

To learn more about the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system, contact [neighborhoods@usgbc.org](mailto:neighborhoods@usgbc.org) or visit [usgbc.org/LEED](https://usgbc.org/LEED).