

# DEVELOPERS & LEED® FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT



*Westlawn Revitalization, Milwaukee, WI, Stage 3 Certified Neighborhood Development (LEED Silver, 54 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.

Complete, connected, amenity-rich and transit-served projects are also a recipe for walkability, and they command a premium as a result: according to the Brookings Institution, each step up a five-step ladder of walkability adds \$9 per square foot to annual office rents, \$7 per square foot to retail rents, an 80% increase in retail sales, more than \$300 per month to apartment rents, and nearly \$82 per square foot to home values.

The development team leveraged LEED ND for Harper Court to help translate ten years of debate into a shared vision for an unprecedented redevelopment. The project, the first private-sector contribution to the community in several decades, achieved unanimous support from local constituents and stands as a model for local engagement and thoughtful planning.

Christopher S. Dillion  
Harper Court Partners, LLC

## PROGRAM GOALS

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

**SMART LOCATION AND LINKAGE:** Locations proximate to existing neighborhood pattern leverage efficiencies in private contributions to infrastructure costs and grant access to established local economies. Protecting natural resources and sensitive lands ensures healthy ecosystem functioning and resilient ecological systems.

**NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN AND DESIGN:** Compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods with good connections to nearby communities command a premium as 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, resulting in lower development operating costs.

## BENEFITS

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

### SITE APPROVAL

FOR PROJECTS THAT DO NOT YET HAVE ENTITLEMENTS, PURSUING LEED ND CERTIFICATION CAN HELP...

Secure local government approvals for the project master plan (expedited permitting, zoning variances, etc.).

Negotiate a superior site plan with the local government.
Projects going through planned-unit development review for which LEED® ND criteria are especially compatible.
Earn financial or structural incentives from the local government.
<b>BUSINESS CASE &amp; MARKETABILITY</b>
Housing values are higher where it's walkable: homes with above-average levels of walkability command a premium between \$4,000 and \$34,000.
Walkable streets increase the value of office & retail properties: properties with a high walkability score were worth 29%-40% more than properties with low walkability scores
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.
Reduce project operating costs through district- and building-scale energy and water efficiency measures.
Developers report significant community support for green neighborhoods, representing significant pent up demand for the development qualities that LEED ND is proven to deliver.
Pursuing LEED ND generates positive media impressions and helps distinguish a bid in an RFP or RFQ process.
Efficient use of resources and lower infrastructure investments for urban infill development. Research published by Smart Growth America shows infill development tactics used by LEED ND projects had lower up front construction and ongoing maintenance costs, and generated the most tax revenue per unit compared to development on the urban fringe.
Market the project to prospective tenants and development partners.

## USING LEED ND

The rating system is geared towards certifying new development or major redevelopment and the following project types are strong candidates for LEED ND:

- Urban infill
- Brownfield redevelopment
- Greyfield redevelopment and suburban retrofitting
- Public housing complex redevelopment
- Transit oriented development
- Greenfield development on adjacent land

The LEED ND certification process has three optional stages that recognize achievement along the long build-out timelines of large-scale development projects:

**STAGE 1, CONDITIONALLY APPROVED PLAN:** At any time before the entitlement process is complete, a project can apply for a full review at Stage 1. If successful, the project is awarded a letter of support stating that it has earned Conditional Approval of a LEED ND Plan.

**STAGE 2, PRE-CERTIFIED PLAN:** This review is for projects that are fully entitled by public authorities and ones that have already have started construction. Successful projects can earn a Pre-Certified Plan certificate.

**STAGE 3, CERTIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT:** When it is fully complete, the project can apply to be considered a LEED ND Certified Neighborhood Development. If successful, a plaque for public display at the project site is issued and the project is listed as certified on the USGBC website.

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