

## **238 New Developments Nationwide Join Pioneering LEED for Neighborhood Development Pilot**

### **Green Building Rating System Expands to Community Scale, Integrating Smart Growth, New Urbanism and Eco-Efficient Design**

(Washington, DC) – August 8, 2007. LEED for Neighborhood Development – the pilot rating system launched jointly by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) □ is off to a promising start. A total of 238 developments have signed up to participate in the pilot program, which will be the first national certification system for sustainable neighborhood design and development. LEED for Neighborhood Development will integrate the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green building into the design and development of communities, moving beyond the single green building approach. The LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot is on track to be one of the largest launches yet for a new LEED program.

The LEED Green Building Rating System, developed by USGBC, was originally created as a way to define green building for new commercial construction and has since expanded to include building types ranging from existing buildings, commercial interiors, and core & shell developments to single family homes and □ most recently □ neighborhood developments. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high standards for environmentally responsible and sustainable development.

“The LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot program is the next generation of green building thinking,” said Rick Fedrizzi, USGBC President, CEO & Founding Chair. “By applying what we’ve learned about individual green buildings to entire neighborhoods, we’re linking urban planning and environmentally friendly design and construction in a whole new, beneficial and healthy way.”

“Tapping the greenest building potential today means stepping outside the four walls of a structure into the places where projects are situated. Taking a more comprehensive approach lets builders draw on a host of new opportunities for reducing the overall environmental footprint by making communities mixed-use and pedestrian friendly,” said NRDC’s Ashok Gupta. “Creating a neighborhood-based standard encourages architects, builders and planners to think bigger about energy savings, transportation impacts, and the overall shape of cleaner, healthier, more efficient communities.”

NRDC’s Smart Growth program helped to establish the LEED for Neighborhood Development pilot program by soliciting the help of several smart growth 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.

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.

“The strong launch of this rating system is part of a potential sea change in how communities develop and grow,” said John Norquist, President and CEO of the Congress for the New Urbanism. “The conventional transportation and development practices of the past 50 years made creating green communities impossible – automobiles were needed to get everywhere. The LEED for Neighborhood Development system serves as a guideway for developing compact, walkable, well-connected communities with a holistic approach to sustainability.”

Over the course of the next year, the pilot projects will seek certification and help to test the Neighborhood Development system. USGBC, CNU, and NRDC will use the pilot program to learn more about how LEED for Neighborhood Development works with real-life pilot projects before revising and approving the final version of the system for a full public launch in 2009.

Within the group of 238 projects participating in the pilot, there are projects located in 39 different states and 6 other countries. The projects range in size and nature, from urban infill projects that are less than an acre in size to whole new communities that are more than 12,000 acres.

In addition, the pilot registration fee for 14 projects that are being led by non-profit and community-based entities was partially or wholly covered by a generous grant from The Kresge Foundation of Detroit, Michigan. The Kresge Foundation has been a leading supporter of sustainable design for the nonprofit sector across the country. This grant represents the Foundation's commitment to an exciting new direction, moving beyond the building-by-building approach found in its signature Planning Grant and Capital Challenge Grant Programs, to support of efforts to develop sustainable, green communities. The Kresge Foundation has noted that LEED for Neighborhood Development has a very important role to play by providing a framework to guide this work.

For more information about the LEED for Neighborhood Development program, visit [www.usgbc.org/leed/nd](http://www.usgbc.org/leed/nd).

Click here to see the list of pilot projects (22 projects have projects have elected to remain anonymous).

#### About USGBC

The U.S. Green Building Council ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)) is the nation's leading non profit composed of corporations, builders, universities, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations working together to transform the way buildings are designed, built and operated. Green buildings are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Since its founding in 1993, the Council has grown to more than 10,500 member companies and organizations, a 90-person professional staff, a broad portfolio of LEED® green building tools, the industry's popular Greenbuild International Conference and Expo ([www.greenbuildexpo.org](http://www.greenbuildexpo.org)) and a network of over 70 local chapters, affiliates and organizing groups.

#### About NRDC

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 1.2 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

#### About CNU

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 communities. Whether it's bringing restorative plans to hurricane-battered communities in the Gulf Coast, turning brownfields and 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.