



LEED-ND Project Evaluation

An innovative land use and transportation planning service from Fehr & Peers

LEED-ND is a new certification program for development projects that is receiving considerable attention from developers and land use planners. "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development" rates projects based on over 50 elements of urban design and transportation sustainability. The program creators (CNU, NRDC, US Green Building Council) assert that LEED-ND certification will be helpful in obtaining entitlements and in project marketing, based on their belief that certification will make a development proposal more appealing to local jurisdictions, approval agencies, and eventual residents and businesses. (see: www.usgbc.org/leed/nd/)

Transportation factors represent about one-third of the LEED-ND evaluation criteria. They address three of the nine prerequisites for a project to be deemed worthy of consideration for LEED-ND. Transportation features also represent 16 of the 49 LEED-ND rating criteria for those projects meeting the prerequisites. Transportation prerequisites and credit criteria include:

- Site location at an infill location or in an area with lower VMT per capita than regional average
- Transit service within ¼ mile of dwellings or business entrances
- Mix of retail and residential within close proximity
- Medium to high residential and non-residential densities
- Dense street grid, short blocks
- Street connectivity with surrounding areas
- Parking footprint minimized, and located on side or at rear of buildings,
- Streets designed to limit traffic speeds.
- Shuttle service to major rail stations and/or major destinations
- Subsidized transit passes
- Comprehensive bike network and bike parking
- Innovations such as Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) or car-share program

Unless a project is located on an infill site, it will not even be considered for certification unless a determination is made that the site's VMT per capita is less than the regional average. The need to objectively evaluate site VMT and other transportation prerequisites and credits presents an opportunity for Fehr & Peers to play a key role in the project certification process.



Fehr & Peers also offers the unique capability to address the relationship between LEED-ND and environmental impact analysis under CEQA or NEPA. By correlating the LEED-ND evaluation criteria with 5D analysis metrics, we can determine not only the LEED-ND rating score of a proposed development, but a correlated reduction in vehicle trips and vehicle miles per capita and associated environmental impacts

The 5D methods also allow us to identify potential site-plan refinements that may improve a project's LEED-ND ratings and reduce its travel impacts. The 5D's predict the degree to which a development plan trip generation will increase or decline with changes in the following metrics: **d**ensity, **d**iversity, **d**esign, **d**estination accessibility, **d**istance from transit. Each metric is closely related to several LEED-ND criteria.

- **Who needs this?**

Land Use Planners and Developers

Planners attempting to create a LEED-ND certified development project benefit from our ability to expertly measure the criteria related to the project's transportation characteristics. Transportation features influence about 1/3 of the prerequisites to LEED-ND consideration and about 1/3 of the evaluation criteria. In addition, we offer the expertise to apply to 5D's to objectively measure the sustainability of the project with respect to reducing travel and emissions impacts.

Environmental Agencies and Analysts

The 5D's can work effectively with LEED-ND to measure several key LEED-ND criteria (such as project area VMT) and translate the benefits generally associated with LEED-ND certification into the project's environmental clearance process. The ability to reliably quantify the project's reductions in vehicle trips and vehicle miles allows us to accurately determine the traffic impacts and required mitigation measures, as well as emissions, carbon footprint and global warming impacts.

Local Jurisdictions

Local jurisdictions benefit from having studies for development planning, project review and impact assessment based on objective, quantitative methods that are also tailored to capture the unique characteristics of each project. This is especially valuable when the unique characteristics are associated with sustainability, impact minimization and related community benefits.

- **How is it better than what I already have?**

For developers of sustainable projects, LEED-ND provides a means of receiving recognition from the planning and environmental communities and potentially favorable consideration by reviewing and approval agencies and the public.

- **Who else is using it?**

LEED-ND is undergoing final testing before full deployment. The sponsors are presently engaged in a pilot review of about 100 development projects throughout the US. Over 300 projects submitted applications for consideration in the pilot program, demonstrating a high level of interest in the program from the planning and development communities.