

## [The Top 10 Green Building Trends to Look for in 2010](#)



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### **10. Existing building sustainability focus**

While much of the last decade had all of us focused on shiny new green buildings as the silver bullet for the many environmental challenges in the built environment, the virtual collapse of new development has helped the industry to refocus on the real solution: greening existing buildings. There are many strategies one can employ to green existing buildings, but the most recent upgrade to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance is like your one stop shop for all things to green operations and maintenance. Implementation of building audits, ENERGY STAR® benchmarking, retro-commissioning as well as policies and practices will not only green your building, but may just lead to the greening of your entire organization.

### **9. Visibility of building performance data**

From building owners and facility managers to occupants and visitors, information is power. In this information age we expect building owners and facility managers to continue to integrate systems that provide detailed information on building performance. Seizing scale-appropriate information is key—from building portfolio tracking, whole building performance, down to the individual occupant or receptacle, real change will come when the data is in clear view. Captured data and analysis will be leveraged to change behavior, make important capital expenditure decisions and inform building certification.

### **8. Occupant engagement and behavioral change**

To bring about the kind of dramatic energy reductions we have to make in the next decade, occupants have to be engaged early in the design process, trained on how to occupy and operate the building and provided with detailed feedback on their own resource use within the building. Remarkably, building users are often completely left out of the process and treated as an unknown. The next generation of buildings will fully engage these agents of change in the fulfillment of low energy design and operation of buildings.

## **7. Training and education**

Increasingly rigorous regulations, growing political support, a variety of incentives, and consumer preferences create opportunity for professionals and companies with demonstrated green building and LEED knowledge and expertise. Cities like Washington D.C., now require energy reporting for commercial buildings, countries like Germany have outlawed air conditioning for certain building types, property management companies are certifying buildings in bulk, the LEED 2009 certification and professional programs are out and underway...there's no time to stop and certainly no time to look back. Training and education is a key strategy to help organizations and individuals tackle the question, "How do I fit in green building and LEED?" Professionals distinguished by their breadth and depth of applied experience in green building and LEED have "been there" and can facilitate your transition from awareness creation to a discipline-specific ability to analyze and execute.

## **6. Green leasing**

Owners and tenants can forge partnerships and come away with a win-win scenario with thoughtful approaches to green leasing. For both tenants and landlords who are interested in green measures for the space, education and relationship building facilitates making green building and operations part of the lease. Developing a more collaborative relationship, the stage is set to make additions to the lease in the areas of indoor air quality, energy use, water use, recycling, carbon credits, tenant-build out and green cleaning that will provide an incentive for the tenant and the landlord. The result is a more efficient building with less impactful operations. Often an afterthought in many green buildings, establishing this clear and detailed legal agreement ensures that green approaches are followed by the parties involved.

## **5. Building codes close in on LEED**

With LEED certification becoming a more feasible and even expected outcome of new construction projects, government bodies are implementing code requirements that closely match the expectations of the LEED framework. Many of our projects that targeted LEED Silver and achieved LEED Platinum, due both to the tremendous efforts of the project teams as well as advances in the building industry. Organizations that develop model codes, such as the International Codes Council and others are raising code requirements to help address energy and environmental issues. These sorts of changes in 2010 will continue to push the USGBC to expand their reach and modify their frameworks at the lower certification levels and beyond their Platinum rating as well as ensure a higher level of accountability.

## **4. International expansion of green building**

With the growth of green building councils across the globe, the USGBC emphasizing international expansion, and the increase of international firsts in the second half of 2009, we are at the cusp of a wave of international projects going through certification. As more and more countries develop LEED and LEED-like standards, there continues to be a growing need to translate green building standards and requirements into country-specific approaches that are relevant and appropriate.

### **3. Manufacturers and the supply chain retool for the green economy**

Vendors continue to work to differentiate themselves from the increasing green noise among their peers. All one needs to do is walk the exhibition floor at a green conference to hear the emphasis vendors are placing on products with green, sustainable and LEED characteristics. Through their internal practices and products, manufacturers will continue to push the market forward with their commitment to green, authentic or not. Greening the supply chain will require significant effort. Organizations such as The Natural Step provides programs and business case studies that help businesses successfully integrate sustainability into their organization.

### **2. Green building goes to scale**

Eco-efficiency at scale will continue to be a hurdle for city planners. The European “eco-district” approach to a unified community of buildings is gaining traction in the U.S. Portland’s Eco-districts program forges a new model for infrastructure, policy, and governance. In the same vein, the world will learn many lessons from the BC’s Olympic Village (eco-district) this winter. LEED ND hits the streets! With the official rating system being released by the USGBC, this exciting standard applies to new master planned development, infill projects and existing communities...just in time for the projected upswing in green development projected for the coming years.

### **1. Living Building Challenge, version 2.0**

Nothing could be more exciting to us than the vision outlined in the new version of the Living Building Challenge. This Visionary Path to a Restorative Future outlines 20 Imperatives (rather than Prerequisites) under the now seven Petals of the Challenge. Each Petal outlines the Intent, or why we should focus on these issues and revised Ideal Conditions and Current Limitations, which help us to envision an ideal built environment and describes the barriers to getting there. The former prerequisites have been updated, and in some cases combined or renamed, while others have been added to complete the standard and make it more all-encompassing. New elements include: Urban Agriculture, providing food production on-site; and Car Free Living, developing diverse mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods that support alternative transportation options. New Petals of Health and Equity add the Imperatives of Biophilia, integrating natural elements and forms into projects; Human Scale + Humane Places, places designed for people rather than automobiles; Democracy + Social Justice, moving away from gated communities, providing affordable housing and universal accessibility; and, Rights to Nature including access to Fresh Air (imagine that), Sunlight (ibid), and public access to Natural Waterways. At least four projects are slated to certify this year, with over 70 in design or construction.

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