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LEED 2012 is now LEED v4 - Why?

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On June 6, 2012 Rick Fedrizzi, CEO, USGBC sent out an email to USGBC members that stated, "In response to overwhelming feedback from our members, core LEED users and engaged stakeholders, USGBC announced today that it will delay the ballot on LEED 2012 until June 1, 2013. Because of this date change LEED 2012 is being renamed LEED v4." Why did this happen and what does it mean to the LEED process?

The background... Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 2000 with the goal of redefining how we think about the places we live and work. LEED provides designers and owners with a framework for measuring how green the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of a building is.

The process...USGBC is committed to continually update and improve the LEED rating system while advancing the boundaries of sustainable design. This requires USGBC to update the LEED rating system on a regular basis. The update cycle has varied between 2 and 4 years, and each update includes public engagement with USGBC members, users, and stakeholders. This history indicates we can expect another change in 2015/16.

The delay... USGBC is responding to the overwhelming number of comments on LEED 2012 by allowing users additional time to better understand changes, while giving USGBC additional time to develop the needed resources and simplify the reporting requirements. Beta testing will occur during the delay, which USGBC hopes will result in a stronger final program and simpler reporting system.

The changes... This revision is a major overhaul, with changes ranging from reference updates, to minor updates, to significant changes. The site-related credits have some major changes, including:

- * New "Location and Transportation" Section: The new section provides two new credits: one for Neighborhood Development projects, and one for High Priority Sites with development challenges (e.g., brownfields). This section also includes repackaged credits moved from the Sustainable Sites Section such as Density, Transportation, Parking, Bicycle Facilities, Sensitive Land Protection, and Fuel-Efficient Vehicles.

- * Revamped "Sustainable Sites" Section: LEED v4 has a new credit for "Site Assessment" that encourages early site analysis to inform the design. The Stormwater Design Quality Control and Quantity Control credits have been merged into one credit, and the site-specific criteria has been revised for more frequent, low-intensity storm events. Other credits have been renamed and requirements tweaked.

To fully understand the depth of changes, go to the USGBC website to review their summary of changes or the "tracked version" of LEED. For more information, USGBC Massachusetts Chapter provides online resources and sessions on LEED v4.

How to get involved... USGBC has committed to a fifth public comment period that will be open from October 2, 2012 through December 10, 2012; this is your opportunity to voice your opinion on the

changes. USGBC National Members can opt-in to vote; voting begins on June 1, 2013.

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