

US GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL – RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER

Strategic Plan

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I. Executive Summary

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) was formed in 1993 in an effort to meet building industry needs and provide a single entity to encourage integration, leadership and education. This consensus-based group of building professionals has fulfilled this need, becoming the center for action facing the industry's multiple interests. Members of the US Green Building Council in Rhode Island want to establish a firm foundation of support for promoting and encouraging environmentally sound, green development practices. In light of 2007 federal legislation promoting the creation of a single green building standard (HR 6) with significant emphasis on sustainability, as well as proposed 2008 state legislation regarding same, interested parties in Rhode Island feel compelled to organize a local chapter of the USGBC.

The RI Green Building Council (RIGBC) wishes to transform the region's built environment by accelerating the widespread adoption of green development practices, technologies, policies and standards. We endeavor to move the building industry forward with a combination of educational programs, trainings, conferences and demonstration projects, underpinned by strong, yet sensible legislation, a modernized building code infused with sustainability requirements, market-based solutions that will incentivize green development and public/private partnerships to jumpstart it. The Chapter's membership will be open and diverse, comprised of leaders and visionaries from all segments of the development industry, including product manufacturers, environmental organizations, building owners, building professionals, utilities, city/state government, research institutions, professional societies, public schools and universities. This type of representation provides a unique, integrated platform. The Chapter's growth and public acceptance will be achieved by implementing the strategies and goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

II. History of the Rhode Island Green Building Council

Green building advocates in Rhode Island began informal meetings in the fall of 2007 to discuss formation of a local Chapter of the USGBC. The head of this informal steering committee contacted the USGBC to communicate these intentions. Woodard & Curran and the New England Institute of Technology donated accommodations that enabled the steering committee to begin its work. The Interest Group Checklist was completed in April and the Organizing Group Checklist begun. After discussing the option of becoming a branch with the Connecticut Chapter, and with the advice of the Regional Representative to the USGBC, the steering committee, after conferring with a founding sponsor and on a consensus vote, decided to pursue full chapter status. A Letter of Intent was prepared for submission to the USGBC and presented electronically for acceptance on April 21, 2008 in advance of a conference call of the Regional Council. The Regional Council approved the steering committee's request to become an Interest Group. The USGBC Chapter Steering Committee auspiciously ratified that vote the next day, Earth Day, April 22, 2008.

The newly formed Interest Group held its first public meeting in May of 2008 that attracted over 100 participants, representing multiple constituencies. A lengthy list of issues was communicated during this meeting, around which ad hoc committees and “knowledge clusters” were formed. In June, the Interest Group received Organizing Group status. A second public educational meeting was held later that month, again attracting over 100 participants. A small reception was held prior to that meeting with potential key sponsors and organizational supporters. A subset of the original Interest Group met with the Chapter Coordinator for the Upper Northeast Region the following day to review the Organizing Group checklist and exchange ideas regarding the direction of the Chapter. A video of the May meeting was given to the Chapter Coordinator. A list of the Organizing Group, draft bylaws, and draft strategic plan were submitted shortly afterward to the USGBC for review. Since then, the Organizing Group held three additional monthly public meetings (standing room only) and grew its database of potential members to over 500 people. An events calendar reflecting a meeting schedule along with public education and outreach efforts was prepared and is updated continuously. An estimated budget that corresponds to the strategic plan was also drafted.

Draft documents required for Provisional Chapter Acceptance were submitted to the USGBC in September of 2008 and include the following:

- › Mission Statement
- › By-laws (revised according to updates provided by the USGBC)
- › Strategic Plan with Estimated Budget
- › Events Calendar
- › Organizing Committee List
- › Certificate of Incorporation for the US Green Building Council – Rhode Island Chapter, a nonprofit corporation and acceptance of a Fictitious Business Name: the RI Green Building Council from RI’s Secretary of State.

On October 1st, 2008, the USGBC granted the RIGBC Provisional Status. The RIGBC signed the Provisional Chapter License Agreement. In November, the RIGBC constituted a 19-member board of directors and held its first official board meeting where the bylaws were officially approved and conflict-of-interest forms signed. Officers of the Board were elected and each board member was given a committee to oversee, staffed by volunteers who self-selected onto these committees. Work on a budget to dovetail with the objectives of the strategic plan began in earnest.

III. Introduction

The Strategic Plan is an integrated set of policies and decisions that will best position the RIGBC to achieve its stated mission and goals in conformance with USGBC guidance and in cooperation with regional and state partners concerned with promoting green development. The purpose of the plan is to provide a common view about the RIGBC’s vision, mission, goals, and how the RIGBC intends to achieve them.

The plan describes how RIGBC will focus the time and resources of its members, potential staff, volunteers, funding sources and various supporters to actualize its vision and achieve its mission during the next three years or until the leadership of the organization determines that the time has come to revisit the plan.

A secondary objective of the plan is to align its purposes and actions with the USGBC’s five-year plan (2009-2013) so that the board and potential staff can make the best use of resources while attaining mutual short and long-term objectives that make sense for the national organization, but especially for Rhode Island. This plan is meant to be a starting point that will evolve over time. The planning process for

our organization needs to be a continuous, systematic effort, refocusing as necessary to ensure that our endeavors are directed at achieving our goals. Most important, with Rhode Island experiencing the #1 highest unemployment rate in the nation, coupled with its ballooning deficit and struggling economy, this plan also aims to catalyze individuals and organizations toward meaningful change that can prepare individuals for the new green economy and create jobs.

A member of the initial Steering Committee and Interest Group led the preparation of the draft strategic plan. The final plan with corresponding budget is anticipated to be approved by the Board of Directors at its December 4, 2008 board meeting.

Relationship to the US Green Building Council (USGBC)

The Rhode Island Chapter plans to promote communication and interaction between the USGBC, regional chapters, as well as state and local partners interested in promoting environmentally responsible green development. It is in the RIGBC's best interest to seek guidance on key tools, programs and processes to get up to speed quickly.

The USGBC has established a committee to address the issue of national - Chapter relations. The committee has drafted guidelines for Chapter formation, which have been reviewed by the USGBC board. The Chapter intends to follow current and future guidance issued from USGBC, striving to accommodate its ambitious objectives. In 2009, the Rhode Island chapter will integrate and align its goals and strategies with those outlined in the USGBC's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan as appropriate. The major goals outlined in the USGBC include:

1. Sustainable Cities and Communities – Catalyze and lead the building sector's active participation in the movement to achieve sustainable cities and communities
2. Climate and Natural Resources – Lead the dramatic reduction and eventual elimination of building construction and operations' contribution to climate change and natural resource depletion.
3. Green Building Marketplace – Accelerate green building demand, delivery and accessibility.
4. Public Policy – Advocate for effective and comprehensive green building policy and codes at all levels of government.
5. International – Advance green building around the world by developing certification capacity, sharing knowledge, and collaboratively advancing regionally appropriate and effective green building practices and policies.
6. Organizational Excellence – Leverage USGBC's organizational structure and capacity to support and catalyze the market transformation required to achieve its mission.

The Rhode Island Chapter has representation on the USGBC's Upper Northeast Regional Council and the Regionalization Task Force. The Chair has attended the National Advocacy Day event in Washington, DC, as well as attended national and regional leadership retreats to share lessons learned. The Chapter also provided representation for this year's Greenbuild 365 regional booth at the national conference. The Chapter plans to take full advantage of the USGBC's Extranet – a comprehensive online reference bank of various guidelines, templates and other useful studies and information, and utilize the services of a new Chapter Growth Consultant until such time paid staff are hired to assist the Chapter.

IV. Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: Our vision is to have a positive impact on our state's environment, economy and social well being by actively promoting environmentally responsible and affordable building and development efforts that serve all Rhode Islanders.

Mission Statement:

The primary mission of the Rhode Island Green Building Council is to promote environmentally responsible and sustainable development standards and practices in the state of Rhode Island. To optimize our effectiveness, we will build upon and complement the work of agencies and organizations that promote environmentally sustainable design practices. Major areas of focus will include:

- › Implement the USGBC's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building standards, practices and technologies.
- › Promote green design and construction at the neighborhood or community level, including renovation and operation of new and existing buildings, especially in the urban core and historic neighborhoods.
- › Provide outreach, education and economic development opportunity for members.
- › Train the current and future workforce for jobs in the new green economy, including workers in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

V. Goals

The goals listed below are the steps to achieve our mission. Each committee has goals and will be responsible for their successful completion.

General

- › Immediate Goals:
 - › Build alliances with relevant organizations, including professional and trade associations, nongovernmental organizations, regulating/permitting agencies, bonding institutions, chambers of commerce and state and federal agencies to promote environmentally sustainable development
 - › Build support for the Chapter through meetings, presentations and small group sessions
 - › Survey stakeholders to identify most important information needs and gaps
 - › Establish the legal, organizational and financial base for operation of the Chapter
 - › Provide networking opportunities for potential new members
 - › Publicize the Chapter through various news networks and media
 - ›
 - › Position the Chapter for statewide recognition as the clearinghouse for information and guidance regarding green development
- › First Year Goals:
 - › Establish local office space with potential administrative staff
 - › Develop programs to attract and maintain members
 - › Establish and maintain information systems including a webpage and list serve
 - › Establish and maintain working committees, ideally unified around a common theme or project such as Rhode Island's LEED Neighborhood pilot project, American Locomotive
 - › Provide local training in LEED green building and development standards, including study groups

- for individuals pursuing the LEED AP (Accredited Professional) designation
- › Promote the Chapter through speaking opportunities for industry associations and other groups
- › Participate in regional energy or green building conferences
- › Promote green business opportunities for members
- › Initiate a membership drive
- › Identify a site for a green resource center (modeled after the NEXUS Green Building Resources Center in Boston, Massachusetts)
- › Develop an effective working relationship with the RI Builders Association and High Performance Schools Group to promote environmentally sustainable development
- › Encourage students across Rhode Island to form clubs and engage with the RIGBC
- › Two-Three Year Goals:
 - › Hire a paid Executive Director or other staff person
 - › Roll out an internal communications system and file sharing tool for internal governance
 - › Enhance the online capability of information systems to improve upon the delivery of green information for the public via the web page, including links to technical databases, information about successful state/local green initiatives, professional directories and “Ask an Expert” section
 - › Identify additional key partners and stakeholders to grow membership
 - › Enhance fundraising and grant writing efforts as well as build membership to support programs
 - › Host at least six LEED workshops from LEED 101 to the more advanced course offerings
 - › Encourage local experts to explore becoming LEED faculty education providers
 - › Continue to offer free educational events for the public and “members only” events by sector
 - › Continue to participate in regional energy or green building conferences and interfacing with professional associations
 - › Continue to engage Rhode Island’s youth including integration of sustainability into high school and college curriculums
 - › Develop strategies for addressing the most important information needs among stakeholders and overcoming institutional barriers to green buildings, e.g., separation of capital improvement and expense budgets, lack of full cost accounting, regulatory barriers, lack of financial incentives to governmental and private sector partners, and redundant startup efforts across jurisdictions
 - › Reconcile/advance green building codes, standards and regulations for both commercial and residential construction in response to new legislation
 - › Provide representation on the RI House of Representatives Commission to Study Green Development in the State toward the goal of passing legislation
 - › Plan and possibly begin development of a virtual green resources center or physical green resource center which may be part of a larger green redevelopment project
 - › Assist in green collar workforce training and development efforts regarding LEED and REGREEN (REGREEN is an interior design standard developed by the USGBC and American Society of Interior Designers)
 - › Consider hosting a green building design charrette and/or construct an affordable green building demonstration project
 - › Hold annual Chapter membership meeting in accordance of Chapter bylaws
 - › Potentially host an international sustainable economic development summit and expo to quantify the green resources in the state and potentially create a market for export of green products and services, working closely with academia, chambers of commerce and other interested parties.
 - › Become the recognized source of information to the building industry for the most up-to-date innovations and state of knowledge, and become a regional agent for improving performance criteria as the industry gains practice and confidence.

VI. Committee Structure

The board has 19 members including the Chairperson (see spreadsheet attached which illustrates the board composition and associated committees). Each board member represents a USGBC national organization. The Development and Sponsorship Committee is a subcommittee of the board.

Standing Committees

The three required standing committees are Finance, Membership and Program. Lastly, in response to the USGBC's latest request to generate action plans from the strategic plan, certain basic metrics have been identified to help committees track on items that measure action.

1. Finance Committee (works closely with Sponsorship Committee)

Purpose: As a non-profit corporation, the Chapter has specific financial requirements for governance of its members. Sound fiscal management is critical to ensure that sponsorships, membership dues and other funds are used appropriately and efficiently. This committee will set guidelines and policies for how and when fiscal management and reporting should occur in the budget and accounting process. These two committees will work to develop and distribute a sponsorship package that clearly states the mission of the local Chapter while addressing practical incentives for membership and funding.

Suggested Metrics:

- Percentage growth in budget — for example, number of new members, number of grants secured, number of sponsorships, etc.
- Growth in revenue sharing opportunities through national membership and LEED workshops
- Timely and complete documentation in line with any required or advisable financial or accounting paperwork

2. Membership (works with Education/Outreach and Communications Committees)

Purpose: Local and national membership is a significant part of engaging multiple sectors in the green building movement. In addition, it is an important revenue stream that helps support programs and outreach on both national and local levels. The membership committee will outline specific quantitative goals on recruitment and retention while also focusing on increasing membership diversity related to constituent groups focused on existing buildings, commercial interiors and homes.

Suggested metrics:

- New members to be recruited, e.g., number of members, categories of membership
- Specific reference and goals for underrepresented membership categories
- Number of members to be retained each year
- Types of marketing strategies to be used (ex. telemarketing, brochures, e-newsletters, one to one recruitment, alliances and networking with related local organizations).

3. Program Committee (works mainly with Education and Outreach Committee)

Purpose: Programs are a significant portion of a Chapter's efforts and purpose. This committee will clearly lay out the type, frequency and purpose of various programs. This committee will also design a Chapter operations program so that it can become self-sustaining and capable of generating income for both the local Chapter and the USGBC, consistent with the mission of LEED and the USGBC

Suggested Metrics

- Number of high quality and diverse educational offerings that appeal to various market sectors
- Number of LEED workshops LEED APs and LEED Faculty/Education Providers

- ❑ Attendance from non-member entities and stakeholders at Chapter events
- ❑ Number of alliances with other local groups to provide joint programs on mutual topics of interest

Ad-hoc Committees

The board has several ad hoc committees which while in the process of refining the full scope of their charge, also work together with other committees on shared initiatives (ex: Advocacy and Standards/Codes). Some committees take their efforts directly to the market as opportunities arise (ex: Education/Outreach and Renewable Energy Technologies- see the Events Calendar). Not all ad-hoc committees need be defined here, as many are self-explanatory and still evolving. Several of these committees will be responsible for achieving the objectives noted in the Goals section of this plan.

1. Education and Outreach (works with multiple committees, but primarily with the Program Committee)

Purpose: This committee will create effective and consistent outreach materials about green buildings and the work of the USGBC and local Chapter. It will actively promote efforts among various constituent groups to institutionalize sustainable development practices through exemplary projects, educational programs, curriculum development at the high school and college level and targeted programs for professionals interested in becoming LEED APs... This committee may accomplish this objective through a statewide conference to address issues of national and regional interest. The Education/Outreach Committee will also maintain a calendar of events and help educate the next generation of students and young professionals about green building.

Suggested Metrics * See Program Committee, as these metrics are similar.

- ❑ Number of high schools assisted with curriculum development or demonstration projects
- ❑ Number of faculty, staff, facilities directors, building managers, etc. trained
- ❑ Number of universities that sign the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment Letter
- ❑ Number of student clubs formed

2. Advocacy/Government Relations (works with Standards, Codes & Regulations Committee, as well as with the Residential Green Building Advocate and Green Schools Advocate)

Purpose: Chapters are increasingly playing a leadership role within USGBC in approaching community leaders and governmental officials and agencies. However, as highly specialized and sensitive work, any local public policy efforts need to be well planned and well executed. This committee will clearly outline the objectives of such efforts.

Suggested Metrics

- ❑ Number of elected officials and relevant government agencies/departments reached
- ❑ Success in crafting legislation that suits various constituent groups
- ❑ Success in building code reform
- ❑ Number of mayors that sign the US Conference of Mayors Climate Pledge and/or number of town councils that pass similar resolutions

3. Graphics and Communications (works with Public Relations and Technical Committees)

Purpose: Chapter communications comprise two major components, internal communications to members and external communication to the general public and media. This committee will detail specific plans for member communication and relevant media as well as community outreach. This committee will also work to highlight and promote regional green projects.

Suggested Metrics

- Number of Chapter notices or newsletters
- Number of press contacts and associated stories running in local, state or regional publications
- Level of acceptance of the Base Camp governance tool
- Ability to maintain and enhance the web site for external users

4. Public Relations Committee

Purpose: The main purpose of this committee will be to create public relations campaigns and develop media strategies including identifying target audiences, key messages, and strategic partners to leverage resources as well as understand media-related policies. This committee will work to create press opportunities for Chapter chairs and officers and routinely assemble and distribute press releases or packets, articles written by members, selected USGBC articles and other information packages

Suggested Metrics:

- Number of stories run in various news outlets, including print, television and radio
- Number of major media sources routinely contacting the local Chapter for green building information
- Expansion of the press list beyond local markets
- Diversity of publicity tools (packaged presentations, speakers' bureaus, etc.)

5. Green Building Products and Systems “Green Marketplace” (works with the Renewable Technologies Committee)

Purpose: There is a need to help people distinguish between various green product certifications while alerting them to potential “green-washing.” The main purpose for this committee is to accelerate green building demand and delivery by creating a platform, whether virtual or physical, to identify green product manufacturers, especially within a 500-mile radius, and green building systems such as HVAC systems, water/wastewater systems, recycling and solid waste management systems, etc. A list of service providers and practitioners, as well as a list of LEED projects would be part of the virtual resource. *This committee is pursuing multiple avenues to fund the Green Marketplace including grants.

6. Affordable Green Building

People need to understand how to build green affordably. This committee may pursue a community development project with a neighborhood bank that supports the mission of access to affordable housing, particularly, green affordable housing. *This committee is pursuing multiple avenues to fund the demonstration project including grants.

7. Green Collar Job Training & Workforce Development

This committee will work closely with potential employers to address the need for skilled workers in the new green economy and to foster collaboration.

Attachments:

RIGBC Board Members and Committees List
RIGBC Events Calendar
RIGBC Projected 3-Year Budget (back up document not included)