

2019-2021

Strategic Plan

GREEN

BUILDING

UNITED

greenbuildingunited.org



Green Building United is committed to making all buildings in our region sustainable, healthy, and resilient. Buildings matter to our health and well-being because we spend the majority of our time indoors; they factor prominently in our economy because of the vast scale of the design, construction, development, and operations sectors; and they represent the best, most actionable opportunity to reduce climate and environmental impact through the efficient use of energy and natural resources.

As the building industry continues to evolve, Green Building United will lead the way locally on green building education, advocacy, and programs. This strategic plan outlines a course for the next three years by looking closely at where our work stands now, where it needs to go to advance our mission, and how the organization will develop the resources required to achieve our goals. The plan reflects Green Building United's recent evolution on a number of fronts: the merger of three green building organizations into one; a new name and a refreshed brand; a broader focus that ranges from improving base building codes to benchmarking existing buildings and certifying them using the many tools and standards that continue to raise the bar for building performance. In short, Green Building United's goal is to improve the sustainability of all building types at all points in the building lifecycle.

MISSION

Green Building United fosters transformative impact in our communities through green building education and advocacy.

VISION

A sustainable, healthy, and resilient built environment for all.

Green Building United was founded in 2001 as a grassroots organization committed to advancing sustainability in the built environment at the regional scale. We are an independent 501(c)(3) organization comprised of several communities who are defined by geography, programs, and areas of professional practice. Green Building United is an Aligned Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, and also maintains strategic partnerships with other national green building organizations including International Living Futures Institute (ILFI), Passive House Institute US (PHIUS), and North American Passive House Network (NAPHN).

Through our work as a mission-based, member-oriented nonprofit organization, we aim to improve quality of life through the built environment across our region, which spans the five-county Philadelphia area, Lehigh Valley, and State of Delaware.

Education & Engagement

Green Building United provides networking and educational programming designed to create lasting community and environmental impact in a collective, positive way. We provide a variety of learning opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills around green building and sustainability. Our education and networking events build our community by engaging within and beyond our membership, volunteers, and stakeholders. Our programming also demonstrates Green Building United's value to partners, sponsors, and members.

Green Building United offers introductory- through expert-level content on a wide range of topics (Passive House, Living Building Challenge, LEED, health and wellness, green stormwater infrastructure, and more), in a variety of settings. Through workshops, seminars, webinars, building and site tours, and multi-day conferences, we help our stakeholders build their professional networks while maintaining professional credentials and staying current with the latest on policies and codes. Green Building United also provides a number of volunteer opportunities through committee and board work, signature events, and special projects.



Where do we need to go?

- Engage communities that are currently not well-represented within Green Building United
- Focus on quality educational content and volunteer pathways over quantity
- Streamline organizational activities for improved cohesion and effectiveness
- Raise the profile of the organization as the premiere source of information on green building
- Grow membership and member engagement every year



How do we plan to do it?

- Develop clear, actionable internal and external communication strategies
- Set metrics, measure impact, and communicate results of education and member engagement activities
- Ensure representation from all stakeholder groups on committees to build a strong, cohesive organization
- Consistently improve programming through better planning, coordination, and evaluation

Policy & Advocacy

By engaging its diverse membership in policy and advocacy efforts, Green Building United's community can credibly inform lawmakers and bureaucrats of the impact of legislation and policies on sustainability industries. In addition, engagement in state and local policy and advocacy efforts to improve sustainability in the built environment scales impact well beyond single projects. This work reaches audiences that may not already be engaged in sustainability, and is the key to transforming markets.

Green Building United monitors legislative activity in the states of Pennsylvania and Delaware, as well as the City of Philadelphia. Each year, we develop a coordinated action plan through a stakeholder process which includes prioritizing key bills and policies to advance green building and identifying tactics to educate and mobilize the organization's membership, elected officials and government, and the general public. This action plan is then implemented and re-evaluated the following year.



Where do we need to go?

- Leverage current policy and advocacy efforts to deepen our community's engagement in ongoing work
- Expand reach to the general public and press
- Present ideas proactively to accelerate the growth of green building



How do we plan to do it?

- Develop a coordinated annual action plan for state, regional, and local policy and advocacy efforts that includes proactive and reactive action items
- Implement the action plan and effectively report results to broad stakeholder community
- Expand Green Building United's advisory role on green building policy in both the public and private sector and the press
- Cultivate stronger relationships with businesses to gain support on key legislation

Strategic Initiatives

Green Building United leads several strategic initiatives that complement and reinforce our education and advocacy work. Strategic initiatives are the place where we directly implement programs or lead research designed to advance specific goals within our mission. These initiatives change over time based on resource capacity and need, but are carefully selected to maximize the impact of the organization. While they are staff-led, strategic initiatives provide deep engagement opportunities for the broader community of members, volunteers, and partner organizations.

Philadelphia 2030 District. Green Building United convenes the Philadelphia 2030 District, a voluntary, private-sector led program involving the owners, managers, and developers of the city's largest properties to achieve deep reductions in energy use, water use, and transportation emissions. The 2030 District improves the efficiency and resiliency of the building sector in Philadelphia, and has been identified as a key strategy in meeting the City of Philadelphia's Climate Action goals.

Energy Code Implementation. Green Building United, with our partners, offers trainings and networking opportunities to support recent, sweeping energy code changes in Philadelphia. City Council unanimously voted to adopt the 2018 International Codes, which represents an increase in energy efficiency of over 30 percent as compared to current code. This move is one important step towards the city meeting its goal to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050.

Climate Resilient Communities. Green Building United pursues local climate action and environmental justice by building capacity with community organizations on the science of climate change, emergency preparedness, and adaptation design and planning. We focus on both the built environment and social dimensions of these issues, understanding that the effects of climate change disproportionately impact low-income communities.

Energy Benchmarking. Green Building United supports the City of Philadelphia's benchmarking and disclosure law, which allows building owners and operators assess their energy usage over time, gauge performance relative to others in the marketplace, and better understand how energy efficiency projects can offset their usage. Green Building United builds on this increased awareness around energy use, supporting energy efficiency in the building sector with trainings on behavior change, improved operations, and strategic capital investments.

Strategic Initiatives

Green Building United leads the Delaware Pathways to Green Schools Program

Currently in its fourth year, the program provides mini-grants, one-on-one support, and expert resources to K-12 schools in Delaware that are committed to becoming healthier, more sustainable, and more energy efficient. Participating schools work toward achieving certification and national recognition through Eco-Schools USA and the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools award.



Where do we need to go?

- Significantly increase the impact of our work by growing each of these strategic initiatives
- Improve communications about the work we are already doing
- Build new partnerships that can extend our reach
- Secure stable funding that ensures our ability to manage complex, high quality programs over a multi-year timeframe



How do we plan to do it?

- Create work plans for each strategic initiative
- Develop a coordinated funding plan to strengthen financial support for each of our strategic initiatives
- Develop reporting tools and communication strategies that increase exposure for initiatives

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