The Upper Northeast region market briefs and state snapshots

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As USGBC New York Upstate Chapter Executive Director Tracie Hall says of USGBC's Upper Northeast region in her video message (see below), "We like to call ourselves, 'seven states, but one sustainable state of mind,'" Our region, which includes Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and upstate New York, has much to be proud of. A new set of resources provides the Upper Northeast with an exciting opportunity to speak with one voice to amplify our many sustainability credentials. I would like to highlight some successes, challenges and opportunities unique to our region.

We love all our schools

Our chapters are working with universities as partner entities in delivery of education, celebration of buildings and in work on campus buildings. Academic institutions are here to stay, and they have valuable buildings and capital plans that are benefiting from greener goals. For example, LEED work in Maine is dominated by higher education projects, and the New Hampshire chapter is focusing on Green Apple Day of Service initiatives to increase its connections and influence in its communities.

We have older building stock and infrastructure

Even so, LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance projects constitute less than 6 percent of all certified projects in any of our chapters' areas. With the increasing advocacy efforts of our chapters, we have helped to usher in legislation calling for attention to our older properties and the energy they use.

- New York has Executive Order #88 (a governor-issued mandate) for state-owned properties to reduce energy usage by 20 percent by 2020 from the baseline year of 2010-2011 (see this blog post).
- Rhode Island is working to re-establish the Rhode Island historic preservation tax credits and to link the issuance of those tax credits with an energy performance baseline.
- Connecticut has property-assessed clean energy (PACE) legislation, allowing energy efficiency and renewable energy project bonds to be repaid through property taxes.

We primarily have a medium-density built environment

The work by our chapters on greening buildings has begun to make a difference in suburban sprawl. We are losing old farmland to developers even as we boast about the benefits of our many midsize cities. However, chapter members are now bringing their vast local knowledge and experience onto city planning teams, to local business improvement districts and in their involvement as small business owners. On the bright side, having mostly medium-density development is good for programs and outreach and also for maintaining connections among chapters.

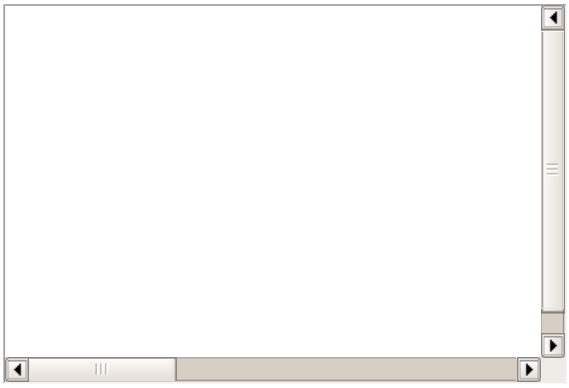
We have public transportation that is easy and accessible

Surprisingly enough, projects within our region could perform better on their walkability scores (despite what you think you know about the Northeast). *If there is one regional issue to work on, this could be it,* especially as it ties not only into transportation but into adjacent development potential all along the Northeast Corridor. It gives us an opening to discuss local sustainability efforts on a regional and national scale.

Overall, we have achieved several legislative successes, reduced energy use by 27 percent better than code in the 1,244 LEED-certified commercial projects in

our region and initiated collaboration with other entities, such as ASHRAE, BOMA, AIA, etc. **Kudos to the upper Northeast region — keep your eye on the greening!**

Access the resources for all of the Upper Northeast region states as well as the other USGBC regions as they are released.



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1 comment

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Jeremy Sigmon 2 years 21 weeks ago

Director, Technical Policy, U.S. Green Building Council

Nice blog, Jodi, and thank you for your leadership in the region! I'll be collecting links to this and all the others in the comments section of my original post. Find it here: http://www.usgbc.org/articles/50-states-50-stories-new-reports-highlight-state-impact-green-building-market

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