

## USGBC-LA's Road to Greenbuild 2016

*Spread the word:* Greenbuild is coming to Los Angeles this year. Under the auspices of the U.S. Green Building Council, an estimated 25-30,000 attendees from all over the world will encamp between October 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> at the Los Angeles Convention Center for a diverse menu of seminars, professional demonstrations, high-level deal-making, schmoozing, building tours, and gawking at the variety of products and information assembled on the vast exhibit floor. Oh, and then there's the parties...

In keeping with the attention focused on the city, USGBC's Los Angeles chapter plans to maximize the opportunity to present a broad view of how sustainability is playing out locally. According to Executive Director Dominique Hargreaves, USGBC-LA is developing a fresh new message. "We have previously been identified as the go-to resource for LEED and all things associated with USGBC national. Now we are offering a fresh message," she noted.

Greenbuild 2016 has stimulated a great deal of interest among chapter members. "We already have signed up over 200 host committee members and the number is growing. Participants are divided into seven teams with two co-chairs and twenty-three members each," noted Hargreaves.

Los Angeles is an iconic place, hence this year's conference theme. "People all over the world look to LA," observed Hargreaves. We have the movies, the television industry, the unique southern California lifestyle, and our weather. The power of celebrity is a compelling draw and Los Angeles is a center of attention."

It should be noted that 2016 is not the first year that Greenbuild was scheduled for Los Angeles. Originally slated for a 2007 Los Angeles debut, the conference had to be switched to Chicago late in the planning calendar because of the changes in the Los Angeles Convention Center's master calendar that moved up the annual Auto Show to its current annual timeframe of late Fall.

Hargreaves noted some of the elements that the local chapter will be responsible for, including building tours of landmarks not necessarily LEED-identified. This is, after all LA. "We are planning twenty-five tour circuits that feature opportunities for attendees to view our local culture as well as progressive sustainability projects including zero net energy and important existing building projects. In keeping with the Greenbuild 2016 theme, we are focusing on iconic projects," observed Hargreaves.

The annual Greenbuild legacy project competition has received seventeen submissions including school projects with a sustainability education element, and proposals for park space. "We have to pick a project before Greenbuild so that it can be showcased," she noted.

The local greening committee has designated three main thrusts, including a Los Angeles River cleanup, with committee members and other volunteers cleaning the riverfront closest to downtown; a hospitality greening opportunity that offers a Gap Analysis to hotels within 1.5 miles of the Convention Center site; and a project offered to local

businesses using the City's green certification program. That project offers local business participation incentives that enhance marketing and branding.

The Greenbuild 2016 Volunteer Committee is key to the success of the chapter's utilization of the conference presence in the city. Outreach to local colleges and universities has targeted a goal of attracting 800 students as volunteers donating eight hours during the conference in such roles as managing and sorting refuse bins to separate out recyclables; providing directions to attendees to various events and showcases; and manning a volunteer lounges.

"Every pair of hands is a help when 25-30,000 attendees descend on an event such as this," Hargreaves stated. "This is a major exercise in coordination and communication is key. Young people will help to build momentum through social media, encourage enthusiasm for sustainability on campus, and create a buzz. They are the future of the movement," she noted.

Hargreaves also appreciates the response to Greenbuild from local leaders. Mayor Eric Garcetti is a valuable asset. He can speak with authority and firsthand knowledge about USGBC's mantra of the triple bottom line – projects that are good for the environment, the community, and the economy. Likewise, according to Hargreaves, State Senate Pro-Tem President Kevin De Leon and former White House senior official and now LADWP's Director of Economic Development and Sustainability Nancy Sutley are all in on Greenbuild 2016.

The city is undergoing an extensive building boom. There are fewer parking lots left in many parts of the city, having been converted to building sites.

The chapter has decided to place a high priority on the needs of people and the active role that individuals can play in building sustainable communities. This entails further relationship building and developing a broader support base. Hargreaves stressed the need for interested people to see the chapter as the place to come to connect with like-minded colleagues, as well as to learn, share, and participate in leading the locally based greening effort.

"Our projects are designed to benefit all communities, not just Class A buildings. It's time that we reach out to others who feel that they have been disinvested in areas of Los Angeles that truly need and thirst for green solutions," she said.

Hargreaves cited an Existing Building project began in mid-2015. Working with SCOPE, a south Los Angeles organization that builds grassroots power to create social and economic justice for low-income, female, immigrant, black, and brown communities, the chapter hopes to heighten the awareness of environmental sustainability. The intent is to provide opportunities to "green the block".

This ambitious project offers local south LA business owners a variety of opportunities to enhance their companies' energy efficiency and cost-saving potential. The businesses have access to LADWP's Small Business Direct Install program. Direct Install offers opportunities to use local contractors to do the work, and the businesses have the

opportunity to qualify to receive energy efficient equipment such as aerators and low-flush toilets.

There is also an education component that explains the importance of these strategies as well as emphasizing the community enhancement benefits. The project includes the leadership of nationally recognized environmental activist Majora Carter.

Located in the historically significant neighborhood adjacent to the 1992 riot flashpoint at Florence and Normandie Avenues, the collaborators have already begun to host community design workshops. Local neighborhood participants are also encouraged to describe their vision of what they would like to do in the interest of developing a comprehensive action plan.

Ultimately, according to Hargreaves, the plan is to improve the neighborhood and promote opportunities for entrepreneurs interested in expanding the local economic base. The project will debut at Greenbuild 2016 with tours planned. A workshop scheduled for Tuesday of Greenbuild Week will highlight the project.

The chapter is also expanding its geographic footprint. Beginning in January, USGBC-LA has assumed administrative responsibility for USGBC's Inland Empire chapter. According to Hargreaves, "The Inland Empire chapter has had passionate leaders with a deep need for organizational support. In recent years, the region has been adversely affected by climate change and down spiraling economic conditions." USGBC-LA now offers administrative support to the I-E chapter's activities in promoting environmental sustainability.

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