Applying LEED to transit projects

March 2026

What are the advantages of using LEED for transit projects?

LEED-certified transit projects put the triple bottom line into action—benefiting people, planet, and profit. Designed to use less water, energy, and natural resources, these projects aim to reduce the overall impacts of development at the local, regional, and global scales.

By implementing LEED strategies, these high-intensity projects can become more efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable, delivering significant benefits to the economy, the environment, and commuters' comfort and well-being. Teams around the world are using LEED to advance a more efficient, equitable, and sustainable future. In addition, transit owners can engage commuters on the importance of sustainability and the public transportation sector's role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

An advantage of using LEED BD+C: Transit Stations is greater flexibility in meeting LEED requirements through transit-specific options and compliance paths that recognize the unique characteristics of transit projects, including above-grade, at-grade, and below-grade stations.

How can transit projects earn LEED certification?

Individual transit projects can be certified under different LEED rating systems depending on their stage in the building lifecycle. LEED BD+C: Transit Stations is the appropriate rating system for new construction and major renovations. It was developed by analyzing the LEED v4.1 BD+C rating system and integrating best practices and proven methods shared by transit authorities worldwide.

Some system-level policies and strategies implemented by a transit agency can be recognized in LEED for their contribution to an individual station's performance. For example, a policy that governs multiple stations may be eligible to count toward an individual transit station LEED application.

How many projects are registered and certified under the LEED pilot rating system for transit?

As of March 31, 2026, there are 327 LEED-certified and registered transit projects across the globe. This represents 74 million square feet or 7 million square meters.

What issues are unique to transit projects?

Transit projects face unique challenges such as first- and last-mile connectivity, higher energy and water intensity, large passenger volumes, universal accessibility, indoor air quality monitoring, and resiliency. The LEED BD+C: Transit Stations rating system addresses these

considerations by incorporating transit-specific strategies and requirements into select prerequisites and credits.

How does LEED address the unique challenges of transit projects?

LEED v5 is the most current version of the rating system and is available for all commercial projects pursuing certification under New Construction, Core and Shell, Commercial Interiors and Existing Buildings. Many of the strategies developed for transit projects under previous versions of LEED, have been adapted for LEED v5 or can be found in the new Project Priorities and Innovation credit category. Credits in this category offer greater flexibility to address unique project contexts and priorities, including typology, culture, location, areas of innovation and individual performance objectives. Sector specific Project Priority credits are continuously being developed and will be released in the Project Priority Library for use.

The LEED v4 BD+C Transit rating pilot system included many elements that are now baked into the LEED v5 rating system. The following table illustrates the connection between the two rating systems.

LEED v4 BD+C: Transit	LEED v5 BD+C: New Construction
LT Credit: 'Plan and Design for Resilience' ensures that transit owners have resiliency and emergency preparedness plans in place for disasters or disturbances to help enhance local and regional resilience	IPp1 Climate Resilience Assessment SSc4 Enhanced Resilient Site Design EQc4 Resilient Spaces
SS Credit: 'Universal Accessibility' recognizes policies for safe, convenient accessibility for a wide spectrum of transit users, regardless of age or ability	IPp2 Human Impact Assessment EQc3 Accessibility and Inclusion
EQ Credit: 'Quality Views' promotes designs that integrate biophilic connections for transit users	EQc2 Occupant Experience Option 1 Biophilic Environment

The following items may be of interest to transit projects. Many are designed to help projects with high process loads or high occupancy meet the intent of the credits.

- The Energy Jumpstart Pilot Credit is available for O+M projects with process loads of at least 60% that are unable to meet the Minimum Energy Performance prerequisite in the LEED v4 O+M rating system.

- LEED Interpretation 10493 allows LEED v4 and v4.1 BD+C projects using whole building energy simulation that can document more than 50% unregulated process load to use BD+C: Core & Shell energy performance improvement thresholds in lieu of the New Construction thresholds.
- The Whole Project Water Use Reduction Pilot Credit allows LEED v4 BD+C projects to quantify water use through whole-building water balance modeling, similar to the whole-building energy modeling compliance path. It also enables projects to capture significant water savings that previously went unrecognized, such as process water.
- The LEED v4 Energy Update is available for projects with a high percentage of unregulated or process loads can continue using C&S threshold and are also encouraged to consider LEED v4.1 credit substitution.

Additional LEED Interpretations for transit can be found in the Addenda Database by entering "transit" in the main search bar.

How does the Arc platform relate to transit projects?

The LEED v4.1 O+M rating system offers a unique, performance-based pathway to certify existing buildings and interior spaces. It leverages legacy Arc, a state-of-the-art platform for collecting, managing, and benchmarking performance across five categories: energy, water, waste, transportation, and human experience.

What does this mean for transit projects? LEED v4.1 enables airport projects to benchmark against similar high-performance facilities worldwide. Facility managers and owners can continuously monitor data and make informed decisions to optimize building performance using real-time analytics. This performance pathway can be used to certify and recertify projects every three years. Learn more.

LEED v5 BD+C, ID+C and O+M rating systems allow all space types to certify utilizing the new Arc experience, offering greater fluidity and flexibility for users. Performance tracking, certification, and reporting are all delivered in one place.

What is the LEED Building Design and Construction (BD+C): Transit Stations rating system?

The LEED v4 BD+C: Transit Stations rating system was developed by USGBC in partnership with industry stakeholders to test LEED adaptations for newly constructed stations and further explore the transit market. While still in a pilot phase, it is available to eligible transit station projects that choose to implement new LEED criteria for green design and construction.

What types of projects can use LEED BD+C: Transit Stations?

Transit owners and operators can apply this rating system to new station buildings—above-grade, below-grade, and at-grade—because LEED BD+C: Transit Stations addresses considerations specific to transit projects.

Are new buildings associated with a transit project, like transit depots or maintenance facilities, eligible for LEED BD+C: Transit Stations?

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No. Buildings or maintenance facilities associated with transit projects—such as wash plants, workshops, and repair shops—are typically comparable to industrial buildings, and project teams are encouraged to pursue LEED BD+C: New Construction. The LEED BD+C: Transit Stations rating is intended for buildings that serve passengers and directly support train or rail operations.

Are the LEED v4/ LEED v4.1 Minimum Program Requirements (MPRs) the same for Transit projects?

Yes, they are the same for transit projects. However, because LEED BD+C: Transit Stations is currently a pilot rating system, USGBC will continue to refine the applicable MPRs as needed to suit the unique needs of transit projects. Please contact us for project-specific guidance.

What technical resources are available for transit projects pursuing LEED?

There are resources available for healthcare projects pursuing LEED certification.

Technical Resources

- LEED v4 Transit rating systems explained
- LEED v4 BD+C: Transit rating system
- LEED v4 BD+C: Transit project checklist
- LEED v4 O+M: Transit rating guide
- LEED in Motion: Transportation report

Industry Articles

- Metro Celebrates Ribbon Cutting at New Bladensburg Bus Garage Facility
- Lynnwood City Center Station News
- About Moynihan Train Hall NYC
- Torrance CA Regional Transit Center News
- Transit Sector's Use of Envision and LEED Is a Story of Co-Benefits

Where can I find more owner profiles and case studies on transit projects?

- North Carolina, Raleigh Union Station Bus Facility
- California, Torrance Transit Park and Ride Terminal
- Shanghai China , Line 18 LEED projects
- Virginia, WMATA, Potomac Yard Metro Station
- Washington, Lynnwood City Center
- Israel, Red Line: Abba Hillel Station
- Florida, Lauderhill Mass Transit Center
- New York, Moynihan Train Hall
- India, Janakpuri West Blue Line

Where can I find a list of registered or certified LEED transit projects?

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View non-confidential LEED-registered and certified transit projects in the Project Directory by searching for keywords like “transit” or “rail” in the search bar. This will display projects with those terms in their titles. The search can also be conducted by selecting the rating system ‘LEED BD+C: Transit Stations’.

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information about LEED and transit stations, contact us.