
This research examines green building and related policy issues through the context of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Program (LEED). The progress the building assessment system has made, the current and future issues with green building policy, the LEED framework, and the role of the planner are all addressed. My claims are that 1.) Although a good start, LEED’s framework lacks the necessary mechanisms to ensure its users select the most sustainable credits during the design phase; 2.) The users lack the appropriate incentives because of LEED’s structure and in turn select credits based on other reasons such as cost that are not in alignment with the programs inherent pro-sustainability principles.

By examining the LEED framework and credit selection process, this study aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system. The goal of the research is to help identify if LEED has potential as a strong sustainability regulatory mechanism. The research looks at the certification process and examines patterns in the credit selection process based on a 117 building sample population. By dissecting LEED’s framework and conducting interviews with eight environmental building professionals, I present conclusions and recommendations that can assist in the research and development of better green building practices, certification, and policy making.