



# Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards™ Program

Program Policy Manual – Revised Oct. 2012

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# 1 Purpose

The purpose of the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards™ (GTSDA) Program is to recognize land developments and redevelopments that go beyond compliance in protection of water quality, preservation of natural habitats and open space, use of green building techniques, enhancement of community fabric, and education of the public.

## 2 Program Organization

The *Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards* program is a partnership of regional agencies, local governments, and industry associations. The Program has three bodies: a Governing Council, a Technical Committee, and Judging Panel.

### 2.1 Governing Council

The Governing Council is responsible for governance and oversight of the Program. It also makes high-level decisions, such as approving the Judging Panel makeup and the Technical Criteria by which applications are evaluated.

The Governing Council is made up of representatives from organizations that have agreed to be Partners in the Program through adopted or approved Resolutions of Partnership. At this writing, the following organizations have Resolutions of Partnership to participate in the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program:

- Watershed Education for Communities and Local Officials, NC Cooperative Extension
- Chatham County
- NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation
- Home Builders Association of Durham, Orange, and Chatham Counties
- Home Builders Association of Raleigh and Wake County
- Triangle Land Conservancy
- Green Home Builders of the Triangle
- Town of Butner
- NC Source Water Protection Program

### 2.2 Technical Committee

The Technical Committee conducts the day-to-day operations of the Program. These responsibilities include proposing the technical criteria for the application evaluation process, soliciting and compiling applications, recruiting the Judging Panel, coordinating site visits, recruiting sponsors, planning the Awards Ceremony, and informing the Governing Council of progress on these activities.

The Technical Committee consists of a mix of Governing Council representatives and other interested volunteers and is informally constituted.

### 2.3 Judging Panel

A panel of independent judges is selected by the GTSDA Program Governing Council to evaluate eligible applications. The Judging Panel comprises professionals in the fields of engineering, natural resources sciences, planning, architecture, landscaping, and others.

## 3 Levels of Recognition and their Benefits

### 3.1 Levels of Recognition

There are five categories of recognition that may be bestowed upon an eligible project submitted by an applicant for recognition under the GTSDA Program.

The **Gold Award** is the highest level of distinction available in the GTSDA Program. This honor is only bestowed on substantially complete land development projects that have high achievement<sup>1</sup> on ALL of the applicable Technical Criteria as determined by the Judging Panel.

The **Silver Award** is the second-highest level of award for substantially complete land development projects or applicable phases that have high achievement<sup>1</sup> on MOST of the applicable Technical Criteria as determined by the Judging Panel.

An **Honorable Mention** may be awarded if a substantially complete land development project or applicable phase does not qualify for a Gold or Silver Stewardship Award but did achieve highly on specific criteria.<sup>1</sup> The Honorable Mention will specify which criteria the project is being recognized for.

A **Design Recognition** may be awarded for a project that has not yet been substantially completed but that shows exemplary promise for implementing the principles of the GTSDA Program. Projects receiving Development Design Recognition may reapply in subsequent years for GTSDA Program recognitions for which only complete projects are eligible. The site plan submitted for recognition by the GTSDA Program must have received all state and federal permits (associated with design phase) as well as local government approvals.

A **Concept Recognition** may be awarded for a proposed site design or site plan that exemplifies how a particular site *could* be developed innovatively and according to the principles of the GTSDA Program. Concept Recognition eligibility is not contingent upon receipt of state and federal permits and local government approvals for the development project. The site design or plan should meet or exceed the level of environmental protection afforded by regulations but may do so in a manner that could entail regulatory flexibility.

### 3.2 Recognition Benefits

**Gold Award**-winning projects will receive official signage displaying the GTSDA Program logo that may be used on site at the award-winning project only. The sign is not transferable to other project sites or to other locations. Upon receipt of a Gold Award, a recipient will be conferred a digital image of the GTSDA Program logo which may be used by the recipient in association with the award-winning project only and may not be used in general marketing or other ways by the recipient that are not directly related to the award-winning project.

**Silver Award**-winning projects will be presented with a plaque identifying the project that receives the recognition. There is no right, express or implied, to use the logo of the GTSDA Program on any marketing materials or on any other materials. The GTSDA Silver Award may be mentioned only in materials related specifically to the award-winning project.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the increasing stringency of local requirements, particularly in the realm of water quality, requirements need not always be *exceeded* for the project to attain high achievement for a given criterion.

**Honorable Mention**-winning projects will receive a certificate acknowledging the element(s) of the project that merited recognition. This recognition confers no rights to use the trademarked logo of the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program in any way. Any reference to receipt of the Stewardship Honorable Mention must be clearly limited to the specific criteria being recognized with the Honorable Mention (e.g., “Project X received a Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program Honorable Mention for Habitat Protection”). The GTSDA Program may provide further specifications on how the Honorable Mention Recognition may be publicized.

**Design Recognition**-winning projects will receive a certificate acknowledging the element(s) of the project that merited recognition. This recognition confers no rights to use the trademarked GTSDA logos in any way. Any reference to receipt of the Development Design Recognition must be clearly limited to the specific elements receiving recognition (e.g., “Project X received a Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program Design Recognition”). The GTSDA Program may provide further specifications on how the Design Recognition may be publicized.

**Concept Recognition**-winning projects will receive a certificate acknowledging the element(s) of the project that merited recognition. This recognition confers no rights to use the trademarked GTSDA logos in any way. Any reference to receipt of the Concept Recognition must be clearly limited to the specific Concept design submitted and evaluated by the Judging Panel (e.g., “Project X Concept Plan [date, designer, description] received a Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards Program Concept Recognition”). The GTSDA Program may provide further specifications on how the Concept Recognition may be publicized to help differentiate the plan recognized from other plans that may be developed for the same site.

## 4 Basic Requirements

In order to qualify for any recognition awarded by the GTSDA Program, the project must meet the following basic requirements:

1. Project is located Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Orange, or Wake Counties
2. Project complies with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, unless it is a Concept Plan (eligible only for a Concept Recognition)
3. Participating Developers/Owners conduct visits to site by the Judging Panel, Governing Council, and Program affiliates and provide additional information as requested
4. Periodic evaluation of the project is authorized in perpetuity
5. The applicant(s) has not made a monetary contribution to the GTSDA Program for the current awards cycle, which is concluded with the Annual Awards Banquet
6. Project may not be an individual single-family homesite

## 5 Application Process

### 5.1 Application Deadlines

Applications may be accepted at any time up to the deadline of the year for which the project is being considered. Each year, the application deadline will be established by the Program and is subject to extension at our discretion. Any applications submitted after the deadline may be

considered for the following year's GTSDA Program cycle. In order for applications to be deemed complete, they must contain at a minimum all the information listed on the Application Form.

## 5.2 Applicant Screening

After the applications deadline, the Technical Committee will review the submitted applications to determine their eligibility for consideration under the current GTSDA Program cycle.

*Examples of grounds for an ineligibility determination may include:*

- application was incomplete
- project does not meet basic Program criteria
- project previously received a Gold Award
- project is not located within an eligible area
- project was reviewed in a previous year, did not qualify, and no substantial changes have been made

Once the GTSDA Program has determined which applications are eligible under the Program, they will forward all eligible applications to the Judging Panel and notify applicants of their eligibility or ineligibility. Applications deemed ineligible will be advised of the reasoning for that determination.

## 5.3 Evaluation and Decision Process

For all eligible projects, site visits will be scheduled. Representatives of the firms involved in the project will have the opportunity to present their project's merits to the Judging Panel.

The Judging Panel will evaluate how well the eligible projects meet the Technical Criteria based on the information in the application and obtained from site visits. A standard evaluation form will be used by judges for all projects to rate how well it meets applicable criteria. Each project will be judged on the overall creativity, design, and mitigation of environmental impacts. Judges will discount any criteria that are not applicable to a particular project. For example, an urban redevelopment project with little green space might not be evaluated on the Habitat criterion. If a project has been considered for recognition in a past GTSDA cycle, the Judging Panel may also review the evaluation notes from prior judges.

The Judging Panel will meet and decide which projects should receive which type of recognition, if any, under the GTSDA Program. A Governing Council member may facilitate their deliberations and take notes for them. If the Judging Panel is not able to reach consensus on a recommendation for an application, the Governing Council will consider their deliberations and decide the recognition, if any, for that project.

## 5.4 Awards Announcement

Awards will be conferred at an Awards Banquet or other public event. Applicants will be notified of the final decisions at least four weeks prior to the awards conferral event and/or prior to the RSVP deadline. The applicants may also be provided feedback from the Judging Panel after the completion of the application evaluation process. After the event, all eligible applicants will receive a letter thanking them for participation in the program as well as any recognition materials not conferred at the event (e.g., electronic version of the GTSDA Program logo for use in promoting projects that received Gold Stewardship Recognition).

## 6 Conflict of Interest

An individual has a conflict of interest if he or she has a financial interest as owner, member, partner, officer, employer, stockholder, contractor, or other participant in a private business or professional enterprise that will be affected by the outcome of any project under consideration. Personal conflict of interest includes if the person has family member with financial interest in the project.

Any Judging Panel member, any Technical Committee member, or any GTSDA Program Governing Council member **shall** declare a conflict and remove themselves from any proceeding concerning the project that generates the conflict of interest.

No applicant's development may be considered for GTSDA Program recognition in a GTSDA award cycle during which they have made a monetary contribution to the Program.

## 7 Use of GTSDA Logo

The logo and name of the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards™ Program are a trademark owned by the GTSDA Program and shall be used only with the express permission of the GTSDA Program Governing Council and only for the purposes granted. Sponsors may use a Program-supplied Program logo that indicates the year in which a contribution was made.

The right to use the GTSDA logo may be revoked at any time at the discretion of the GTSDA Program Governing Council. Examples of grounds for revocation include a finding that the logo was used in a manner inconsistent with Program Policy (established herein); the project has violated a local, state, or federal regulation; or the project no longer meets the criteria for the award that was granted.

## 8 Retraction of Award

The GTSDA Program, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to revoke any recognition it has conferred based on a failure to comply with program requirements or criteria. In applying for recognition by the Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Awards™ Program, the applicant authorizes the GTSDA Program to make future periodic evaluations to ensure that project continues to meet the standards of the recognition conferred. All applicants sign a statement on the Application Form indicating agreement to return any recognition and forfeit all benefits if it is found by the GTSDA Program Governing Council that the subject project failed to maintain the level, nature, and quality development represented in the application. Failure to keep a project in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations or substantial change to a project relative to the elements that resulted in conferring the recognition are grounds for retraction of a recognition and associated benefits.