



Gautami Palanki

Senior Vice President of ESG Strategy at Howard Hughes Holdings Inc.

2024 Individual Leadership Award

Howard Hughes Holdings Inc., a community builder, owns, manages, and develops commercial, residential, and mixed-use real estate in key U.S. markets. In 2023, the company had a \$4 billion market cap and nearly 700 employees. Its award-winning assets include the country's preeminent portfolio of master planned communities including: the Seaport in New York City; Downtown Columbia® in Maryland; The Woodlands®, Bridgeland® and The Woodlands Hills® in the Greater Houston, Texas region; Summerlin® in Las Vegas; Ward Village® in Honolulu, Hawai'i; and Teravalis™ in the Greater Phoenix, Arizona region. These communities span over 118,000 acres and are home to over 350,000 residents.

Gautami leads the company's sustainability strategy and is responsible for advancing the organization's commitment to responsible development and operations across the company's national portfolio. For nearly 20 years, Gautami has been working at the intersection of sustainability, technology and real estate, building and leveraging her deep technical knowledge as a trained architect, and unwavering passion to accelerate climate action globally. She was recruited for her role at Howard Hughes based on her subject matter expertise, cross functional strategic thinking, and industry recognized leadership. In her career, she has developed technology products, certification standards, and global market transformation programs to drive climate action at scale. Highlights of her work include:

- **Led the technical development of the globally recognized Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building standard.** As technical director from 2013-2016 at the U.S. Green Building Council, developers of LEED, Gautami focused on transitioning LEED, a 25-year-old green certification framework, to be a data- and performance-driven standard. As part of this work, she helped design and launch LEED v4.1 for Existing Buildings, LEED for Cities, LEED for Transit and LEED Zero. She worked with various stakeholder groups and across global markets, including Africa, Europe, Asia, North and South America to build consensus and drive adoption of performance based green building practices more broadly.

- **Led product development and global adoption for a software platform that tracks, manages, and offers a global benchmark for environmental performance.** As the Director at Arc Skoru Inc. between 2016 – 2021, Gautami led a global team in developing and rolling out a technology platform to track and measure climate action within the built environment. She oversaw platform development and education, helping some of the world's leading companies integrate performance data and monitoring into their real estate processes and systems. Under her leadership, the platform was adopted in 122 countries and included performance monitoring for individual buildings, as well as cities related to energy, water, waste, transportation, air quality, and carbon emissions.
- **Established a comprehensive climate action program across all business units, as the first dedicated sustainability professional at Howard Hughes Holdings and achieved Rank 1 in the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB).** As the first SVP for ESG Strategy for Howard Hughes appointed in 2021, Gautami is part of the senior management team and has advanced the company's sustainability and product innovation strategy. She led the efforts to build and integrate environmental, social and governance metrics into the company's business and diversified portfolio of office, retail, and residential buildings, and in varied geographical regions. She developed and currently oversees the execution of a decarbonization strategy including the 1.5-degree-aligned GHG emission reduction targets validated through Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). She also championed the first inclusive contracting policy and secured LEED precertification for The Woodlands in Texas, the largest community globally to be recognized. The work thus far has been celebrated by industry think tanks and in reports, including NAREIT, U.S. Green Building Council, and Urban Land Institute.
- **Provides subject matter expertise and industry thought leadership as an advisor and member of industry groups:** US Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR Affordable Multifamily Housing Leadership Group; The Real Estate Roundtable's Sustainable Policy Advisory Committee; Urban Land Institute's Responsible Product Investment Council; GRESB's Expert Resource Group; Institute for Market Transformation's Building Innovation Hub and US Green Building Council's Resilience Working Group. She was also an invited delegate to COP28, the first UN Buildings and Climate Global Forum and has been a speaker at Climate Week NYC, Greenbuild International Conference and other leading green building events around the world.