



2014 ECODISTRICTS Incubator Report



CITIES

13
PROJECTS



Central Addition | Boise, ID The Boise Central Addition, on the edge of downtown, is comprised of a mix of residential, institutional and commercial development. It is bordered by the Boise River Greenbelt and Julia Davis Park, which include recreational amenities and access to biking and walking pathways. With an increase in green building activity, programming and sustainable development projects, the Boise Central Addition's vision is to create a vibrant neighborhood where property owners, businesses, residents, and partners collaborate to implement sustainable development practices that enhance ecological services, maintain historic character, strengthen the economy, and contribute to Downtown's livability.

Civic Area Development | Sutherland Park | Western Industrial Park | Boulder, CO The Civic Area Development is a 27-acre municipal campus in the heart of downtown Boulder. The civic area is both well-served and divided by transit routes including the Boulder Creek bike path and the Canyon Boulevard corridor, which is targeted to be redesigned as a pedestrian and bike-friendly "complete street." Sutherland Park, formerly the Sutherlands Lumberyard, aspires to be a modern urban village with active green spaces to live, work, eat, play, and stand, delivering an eclectic and vibrant scene. The Western Industrial Park comprises roughly 50 acres, 15 of which are currently in production as a compost, mulch, and dimensional lumber processing facility. It is across an irrigation canal from the Boulder County Recycling Authority, Household Hazardous Disposal, and a coal and natural gas plant. Shared energy utilization and reduction are a main goal for the site.

eco-D | Detroit, MI eco-D is a collaborative structure and process that supports the creation of sustainable neighborhoods throughout Detroit. The team focused on four diverse neighborhoods that are implementing green development plans. Midtown Ecodistrict is a small scale "district" connected to Midtown's thriving cultural center, funded by Enterprise Foundation. The Eastern Market Corporation Ecodistrict is a mixed-use district in early planning stages, funded by Kresge Foundation. The Lower Eastside Action Plan—Project Green is a wide swath of the lower east side, with a green development plan created through community engagement and partnership with community development groups. The Brightmoor Alliance is a collaboration among neighborhood groups to redevelop their blighted communities with a sustainability focus.

Perrin Park | Detroit, MI Perrin Park comprises of 30 acres in Northeast Detroit, has a 31% vacancy rate of housing units, 47% unemployment rate, and 42% of residents living below the poverty level. The community has transformational potential due to its proximity to several planned city and private development and redevelopment projects. The pilot project will focus on economic vitality, environmental regeneration, and equitable participation, in partnership with the Center for Community Production, a production and training lab focused on permaculture, digital fabrication, experiential learning, and technology.

Uptown Eco-Innovation District | Pittsburgh, PA Uptown is at the epicenter of two dynamic real estate markets in PA – Downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland. The area also is home to two large universities, a major medical center and a professional sports venue. About 82% of Uptown residents commute by using low carbon transportation modes. In 2010, a group of local civic and government leaders began conversations about developing a bus rapid transit system to run through the already transit-rich corridor. Maximizing this opportunity requires a holistic vision that captures the mobility needs of the community and builds upon timely real estate and market development opportunities.

Port Towns | Prince George's County, MD Port Towns is the most historic and ethnically diverse enclave in Prince George's County. Covering 2.18 square miles, the Port Towns project has two chief goals: (1) to be a regional leader in recycling, reuse, and repurposing of building and organic waste by transforming industrial space and (2) creating a leading edge facility to help incubate and accelerate the development of green and sustainable businesses. Ideally located adjacent to the District of Columbia and its increasingly vibrant economy, Port Towns benefits from a shared vision of environmental stewardship within the four local jurisdictions – Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston – as well as from political support from experienced and innovative community-based sustainability organizations.

Pacific Beach | San Diego, CA Pacific Beach has a young, rising population of high income and high expense urban singles and college students, with density rising over the years due to increased construction of multi-family housing. Restaurant and nightlife culture has grown with the community's popularity as a beach destination. A coalition of active organizations has partnered with the city to continue and expand district-scale sustainable activities, including ecosystem protection, renewable energy, access to healthy foods, and alternative transportation, among many others. The group also has plans to develop a Community Benefit District and other maintenance funding programs.

False Creek Flats | Vancouver, BC The False Creek Flats is the industrial core of Vancouver, housing a number of service, wholesale, and manufacturing activities. "The Flats" is inhabited by more than 500 businesses, including non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and public services. The Flats is one of the few areas in Vancouver's core that has ample room for new development. The city has also put forth the goal to transform this area into the greenest place to work in the world as part of its Greenest City Action Plan. Furthermore, the city owns a number of vacant sites and buildings in the area. As a central industrial zone, the Flats is also riddled with transportation challenges, including a significant rail presence, arterials around the edges, and steep grade changes along two of its borders. Finally, the Flats is one of the few significant industrial areas left in the city, serving an important economic role including back-of-house production for the arts and produce wholesale for local grocers.



HIGHLIGHTS

Each year, EcoDistricts convenes city teams from across North America for a three-day intensive, project-based workshop designed to accelerate district-scale sustainability. Since 2012, EcoDistricts has trained 26 teams representing 30 projects across the continent. In 2014, the eight teams we gathered, representing 7 cities and 13 projects, were already hard at work promoting healthy, vibrant, sustainable and just cities in their neighborhoods. The Incubator is designed to bring their practice to the next level, deepening their knowledge, challenging their assumptions, and spurring new approaches to community-driven transformation. Each team leaves with a customized and comprehensive EcoDistricts Roadmap for their project.

The teams heard from more than 25 industry experts on district assessment, governance, project development, and management, as well as toured Portland neighborhoods that are experimenting with some of the nation's leading best practices in sustainable development, from the MAX light rail and Portland Streetcar to the city's bioswales and stormwater management in Tanner Springs Park.

"I think the strength of the EcoDistricts approach is stepping outside the traditional municipal framework and thinking about other stakeholders and how to get things done through others," said Vancouver's Juvarya Veltcamp.



After three days, each team identified their key Incubator takeaways and achievements. The Pacific Beach team built a strong foundation for their project and a bond between team



members that they will take back to San Diego. Perrin Park leaders learned two valuable aspects of successful governance – messaging and community engagement. The group from Boulder spent their time developing relationships as a team and looking for mutually beneficial solutions within a diverse group of partners. Boise team members identified key partners and stakeholders that needed to be integrated into the future planning process.

The Port Towns, MD and Pittsburgh, PA teams both came away with clearer ideas on governance, priority projects, and structured roadmaps. Vancouver leaders identified the need to break down their lofty goals into neighborhood-scale targets, getting back to the fundamentals of their project. And Detroit's eco-D group began plans for individual neighborhood stakeholder compacts and set a goal to get two neighborhood projects off the ground by the end of 2014.

"What really resonated with me is that we are creating a process where we can actually accomplish projects. We're getting things done," said Sarida Scott of Detroit's eco-D team.



And Prince George's County's Howard Ways said, "We've learned to think more creatively, be more innovative, and think more about collaboration."

By bringing together the best city and district innovators in North America, the Incubator is creating a network-within-a-network of sustainable district-scale development leaders.

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DAYS

13
PROJECTS

56
TEAM MEMBERS

29
FACULTY + FACILITATORS

About EcoDistricts

EcoDistricts provides support and leadership for urban change makers and innovators to accelerate sustainable district- and neighborhood-scale regeneration and create just, sustainable and resilient cities for all.

We believe effective, sustainable development requires a new model of private-public-civic partnership that emphasizes innovation, transparency and collaborative action. Success requires the adoption of clear upfront triple-bottom line performance metrics and a rigorous process management and monitoring framework to help stakeholders navigate planning, project delivery and performance over time.

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