Join Us

Our vision is to create just, sustainable and resilient cities and neighborhoods for all. We provide support and leadership to city builders and entrepreneurs, policymakers and urban innovators to accelerate sustainable district- and neighborhood-scale regeneration.
Life thrives when the ecosystems that support it are healthy.

What does that mean for human ecosystems—the cities and neighborhoods in which we play out our lives? At EcoDistricts, we believe that healthy communities arise only when stakeholders pay equal attention to economic opportunity, equity, and ecological health.

So, for us the triple bottom line isn’t a nice aspiration: it’s a core operating principle.

We want to inspire every city to revitalize itself from the neighborhood up, creating healthy, thriving communities built on these principles. As this Annual Report demonstrates, we’re building a market to do just that.

In 2013, we made great strides in encouraging and rewarding leadership and creating a dynamic structure for cultivating just, sustainable and resilient cities and neighborhoods for all. We hosted over four hundred city-makers at an incredible Summit in Boston. We gathered teams from around North America at our three-day Incubator training. We laid the foundation for announcing our Target Cities pilot program. We also embarked on the collaborative process of finalizing our EcoDistricts Protocol, a framework for how city makers can weave environmental sustainability with equity for better economic outcomes, prosperity and community resilience.

Our framework for urban regeneration is replicable and adaptable. It begins with a comprehensive approach to sustainability informed by the effective use of metrics and inspired by a powerful vision. It seeks out innovation and experimentation. It requires community development leaders to take a principal role, while embracing new partnerships and leadership. It requires the willingness to invest in wise policy, the commitment to see changes enacted and the creativity to keep things moving.

It’s not simple. It’s not a punch list. But it is possible—it is happening. We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished over the past year, and we’re excited about what’s coming next. With our network of partners and fellow city makers, we’re ready to spur deep and lasting change throughout North America and beyond, from the neighborhood up.

Best Regards,

Rob Bennett, CEO
2013 at a Glance

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR A GROWING MARKET. 2013 was a watershed year for us. In recognition of the growth of the movement we serve and the organization’s evolution, we changed our name from Portland Sustainability Institute (PoSI) to EcoDistricts. We also partnered with organizations and individuals that stepped up to give EcoDistricts the resources it needed to succeed.

FOUNDING MEMBERS

A community of Founding Members provided the financial support to help push EcoDistricts onto the national stage, including commitments totaling $800,000 over two years. Our Founding Members were our earliest investors, integral to helping us building capacity and grow the new market of district-scale sustainable development projects.
NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPANDED SERVICES

We trained over a thousand professionals in our EcoDistricts approach and crafted strong partnerships with organizations including the Canada Green Building Council and the Green Building Council of Australia to bring our programming outside of the US. We also contributed directly to the development of district-scale sustainability in cities including San Francisco, Denver, Vancouver, British Columbia and Washington, DC.
In May 2013, 47 leaders from eight North American cities gathered in Portland to shape the future of green neighborhood development in their communities. Over three days, city teams created individual roadmaps to guide their projects from design through implementation. By bringing together the best city and district innovators in North America, the Incubator is creating a network-within-a-network of district-scale development leaders.
BEND, OR — Bend’s team came to the Incubator to address challenges around city, community and property owner engagement, neighborhood identity, and replicable district-scale sustainable development models for Bend.

BURLINGTON, VT — The Burlington Rail Yard Enterprise project is built around a lakeside brownfield neighborhood poised to create a new urban street grid that will grow a vibrant business scene and meet the community’s housing needs.

CAMBRIDGE, MA — Over the past 30 years, Kendall Square has become a major commercial, innovation and transportation hub. The Incubator team came away with concrete strategies for making it a mixed-use community with a balanced housing mix and influx of jobs.

CHARLESTON, SC — The Charleston team came to the Incubator with the goal of catalyzing public interest and investment in public spaces and stormwater management, and left with a strategy to develop their city as a center of affordable and equitable “place-based” sustainability solutions.

DENVER, CO — The Sun Valley team identified new ways to spur both private and public investment and partnership in an isolated and underserved community, while incorporating the area’s existing light manufacturing industry into environmentally focused development and job creation.

OAKLAND, CA — The City of Oakland is leading a collaborative effort to integrate affordable housing, public transit, and neighborhood revitalization efforts in a severely economically disadvantaged transit corridor – the International Boulevard Corridor, which spans over seven miles.

ORLANDO, FL — Central Downtown Orlando encompasses metro Orlando’s cultural, commercial and residential center, which is currently transitioning to high-tech businesses and residential development.

SAN DIEGO, CA — The San Diego leaders used their experience at the Incubator to target neighborhood priorities such as better connectivity between North Park residents, business owners and landowners and to address the specific issues of the economic value of land use, a broader tax base, and the North Park site’s vacant landowners.

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**Incubator Updates**

*We cover a lot of ground in our three-day Incubators, but the real test is what happens afterwards.*

- The Sun Valley team from Denver turned Incubator experience into participation in our Target Cities program.
- Leaders from San Francisco’s South of Market Central Corridor also attended the Incubator in 2012. In two years, officials have developed a citywide Ecodistrict policy framework and have launched the first Ecodistrict pilot in the South of Market Central Corridor.
- Since attending the 2012 Incubator, Boston’s Innovation District has emerged with ambitious goals such as high-efficiency district utility investment and coordinated community-wide action.
- Incubator alumni from Cleveland, including its Office of Sustainability, Neighborhood Progress Inc. and Enterprise Community Partners, have partnered to spearhead “The Community Climate Toolkit”.
In November 2013, the world’s leading urban innovators converged on Boston for the 2013 EcoDistricts Summit. We’ve developed a unique reputation with our annual Summits. They are rare, collaborative opportunities for thinkers and doers, community activists, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and leaders of all stripes to come together and ask: how can we rebuild our cities from the neighborhood up? **OUR 2013 SUMMIT TOOK THAT LEGACY OF ACTION AND INNOVATION AND RAN WITH IT.**

Planetary futurist Alex Steffen kicked things off with his rousing talk on the moral imperative of our work as sustainable urban practitioners. “Making cities is the #1 thing humans do,” Steffen noted, “and we have no Planet B. Cities with sustainable development initiatives are the answer to a livable future.”

We dove into the uncharted waters of the Shareable Cities movement with presentations on how this neighborhood-based movement is transforming the way we engage, live, work, connect and build resilience in our communities. The movement is gaining traction, but as Antwi Akom of I-SEEED commented, “What we have today is pockets of Shareable Cities. What we need is fully just, connected and sustainable urban areas.”

Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis, Georgetown University’s Uwe Brandes, and Detroit’s Toni Griffin set the stage for a rich conversation about resilience and strategies for bouncing forward with blue and green infrastructure, community gardens, pop-up businesses and urban recreation fields.

Our closing panel set the stage for the 2014 Summit. Adam Beck joined Dan Epstein of the UK’s Useful Simple Trust, Boston’s Planning Director Kairos Shen, Walker Wells of Global Green, and Codman Square Executive Director Gail Latimore to seed the conversation on Growing the EcoDistricts Marketplace.

The City of Boston as a whole served as host, teacher and curriculum. Summit participants got an insider’s look at Boston’s district-scale sustainability projects through a series of tours and a Research Symposium.
Laying the Groundwork

TARGET CITIES / ECODISTRICTS PROTOCOL

The Target Cities program and EcoDistricts Protocol began with the belief that, when it comes to neighborhood redevelopment, the process by which change occurs shapes the end result. Flawed process leads to flawed outcomes—displacement, gentrification, environmental damage, economic stagnation and growing inequality. Both Target Cities and the Protocol will help guide cities in the creation of public-private-civic partnerships capable of defining district-scale development project goals and carrying them out.

Target Cities will be a two-year partnership with development projects across North America to amplify and accelerate district-scale community regeneration and create replicable models for next-generation urban revitalization. In 2013, we release an Expression of Interest to North American cities, outlining the program design and requirements.

We also secured support from the Kresge, Surdna, and Bullitt foundations to help fund the Target Cities program and Protocol development.

Vital to the success of Target Cities will be the development of the EcoDistricts Protocol, a simple tool that will support and reward district-scale projects in two key areas: rigorous performance goals and effective process management. Built off of the EcoDistricts Framework’s four-step methodology, the Protocol will include tested and replicable models for assessment, governance, finance and municipal policy support. It will also guide the alignment of key stakeholders and investors interests, build robust governance, promote assessment and accelerate catalytic projects around key performance areas.
## 2013 FINANCIALS

### Statement of Financial Position

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### Statement of Activities

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US EPA, Sustainable & Healthy Communities Research Program

NONPROFITS
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Boston LISC
Codman Square NDC
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Institute for Sustainable Communities
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At EcoDistricts, we provide support and leadership for urban change makers and innovators to accelerate sustainable district- and neighborhood-scale regeneration and create just, sustainable and resilient cities and neighborhoods for all.

We believe effective district or neighborhood-scale 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.

LEARN MORE AT: ECODISTRICTS.ORG