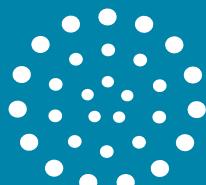




# EcoDistricts Summit 2013

BOSTON, MA | NOVEMBER 12–14

## EVENT REPORT

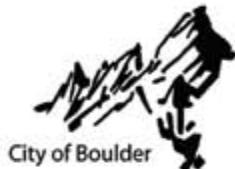


EcoDistricts

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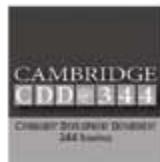


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**429**  
ATTENDEES

**100%** of this year's sponsors said that Summit participants were exactly who they're trying to reach.

**114**  
CITIES

**186**  
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**9**  
COUNTRIES

**109**  
SPEAKERS

**40**  
SPONSORS

**16**  
SCHOLARSHIPS

## BY INDUSTRY

<b>22.8%</b>	Planning + Design Services
<b>18.1%</b>	NGO + Non-Profit
<b>15.5%</b>	Local + Federal Government
<b>12.0%</b>	Other
<b>11.5%</b>	Real Estate, Housing + Community Dev.
<b>7.5%</b>	University + Research
<b>4.6%</b>	Energy + Utilities
<b>3.5%</b>	Civic Entrepreneurism
<b>3.0%</b>	Products + Technology
<b>1.5%</b>	Finance + Investment



# summit highlights



April Rinne, CSO at  
Collaborative Lab tweets:  
“Millennials aren’t looking for  
a dream home. They’re looking  
for a dream neighborhood.”

- @AlexSteffen #EDSummit13  
#ShareableCities



Boston Eco tweets: What does  
it take to create a #ShareableC-  
ity? For Antwi Akom, compas-  
sionate sustainability + cutting  
edge tech #EDSummit13

This past November, the world's leading urban innovators converged on Boston for the 2013 EcoDistricts Summit. If you've ever been to one of our Summits, you'll know that this isn't an ordinary conference with information delivered in a tidy little package. Instead, it's a collaborative endeavor, a rare opportunity 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. For three days, best practices rubbed shoulders with groundbreaking ideas and innovations as the Summit's 90+ speakers and over 400 participants covered topics from district energy and climate action plans, to building social equity, community health and interactive digital metrics.

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.” Steve Pemberton, Walgreens Chief Diversity Officer, seconded that sentiment, noting that neighborhood-based wellness and economic opportunity are the building blocks of true sustainability.

We dove into the uncharted waters of the Shareable Cities movement with TEDx-style 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's Mayor Henrietta Davis and Planning Director Susanne Rasmussen, Georgetown University's Uwe Brandes, City College of New York's Toni Griffin, and Biohabitats' Keith Bowers set the stage for a rich conversation about resilience: “It's not about bouncing back, it's about bouncing forward.” Using Detroit as a case study, we learned about bouncing

# summit highlights

forward with blue and green infrastructure, community gardens, pop-up businesses and urban recreation fields.

Our closing panel set the stage for next year's Summit. Our own Adam Back 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.

Boston's Convention and Exhibition Center provided a fantastic venue for the Summit, but the city as a whole served as host, teacher and curriculum. Summit participants got an insider's look at Boston's ecodistricts through a series of tours and a Research Symposium. And because ecodistricts are all about turning ideas into action, we hosted a Legacy Charrette for the Talbot Norfolk Triangle Eco-Innovation District, which gave Summit attendees the chance to enhance their Summit experience with hands-on collaborative learning. As many participants reported to us, "The Charrette, tours and Research Symposium were the most important aspects of the Summit."

We're incredibly pleased with how the Summit turned out, and we know that we couldn't have done it without our sponsors, Founding Members, volunteers, contributors and attendees.

THANK YOU for helping to make the 2013 EcoDistricts Summit a huge success. We look forward to seeing you for the 2014 Summit in Washington, DC!

**Join us in 2014!**  
**EcoDistricts Summit**  
**Washington, DC**  
**September 24 - 26, 2014**

Global Green USA tweets: Looking back from 2050, what was inevitable? A shift away from cars @WalkerWellsGG #ED-Summit13



## What do you want in your ecodistrict?

EcoDistricts partnered with the online platform Neighborland to discover what attendees want to see in their community. Visit: [neighborland.com/ecodistricts](http://neighborland.com/ecodistricts)



Engineering giant Integral Group tweeted: @EcoDistricts day 3, #EDSummit13 resiliency at its best, last day finishing Boston Strong [pic.twitter.com/rFMIvGPJsW](https://pic.twitter.com/rFMIvGPJsW)

# program

Our program provided attendees with well-rounded opportunities to network with leaders, learn, explore Boston and contribute to the Ecodistricts marketplace. These opportunities maximized attendees' skills and experiences and solidified the Summit's lasting power.

## Legacy Charrette Project

The Charrette gave more than 60 participants a hands-on opportunity to accelerate capacity building and project implementation in Boston's Talbot-Norfolk Triangle (TNT) Eco-Innovation District. One attendee noted, "For me, the Charrette was the most important aspect of the event."

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Block Party

Sponsored by Boston-based nonprofit Artists for Humanity, we celebrated the Summit with a neighborhood-style Block Party. Attendees enjoyed finger foods, a DJ, networking, and city-changing conversations. A school bus even provided the transportation!

## EcoDistricts Research Symposium

University researchers and ecodistrict project leaders joined forces for a day to explore the possibilities of research, case studies and reports around district-scale development. Topics discussed included existing research; the benefits, issues and gaps in ecodistrict development; and the possibility of an EcoDistricts Lab to compile all research.

## Four Neighborhood Tours

Tours of Kendall Square, Talbot Norfolk Triangle, the Innovation District and Jackson and Egleston Square provided Summit attendees with real-world examples of ecodistrict development in Boston.

## EcoDistricts Practitioners Training

Program Director Adam Beck was joined by Dan Epstein, former Director of Sustainability for the 2012 Olympics to guide attendees through the EcoDistricts Framework, and a role-play workshop to develop a Ten Point Sustainability Plan for the City of Boston.

## VIP Reception

Valued guests gathered for an evening of mingling at District Hall, a dedicated civic space in the heart of Boston's Innovation District, where the innovation community can gather and exchange ideas.

## EcoDistricts Tool Shed

This "speed dating" style session provided participants with face-to-face interaction with seven different tools that offer cities next generation techniques for delivering neighborhood sustainability projects, including active citizen engagement, waste management, district energy feasibility and more.

## EcoDistricts Idea Lab: SW Ecodistrict Washington, DC

Currently in a pivotal phase, the SW Ecodistrict in Washington, DC is considering the best strategies to ensure support of the catalytic changes it will bring. Summit attendees put their brains together to develop real-world solutions for this budding ecodistrict.

## YOU VOTED. HERE WERE YOUR TOP 3 FAVORITE SESSIONS:

### #1 Building Shareable Cities

"Building Shareable Cities was a great introduction to the Summit and the issues that were discussed over the course of the two days. The multiple speakers set the tone for the variety of discussions that filled the remainder of the Summit."

Alex Steffen, Planetary Futurist in Residence, IDEO  
Antwi Akom, Executive Director/Ass't Professor, I-SEED, San Francisco State University  
April Rinne, Chief Strategy Officer, Collaborative Lab  
Milicent Johnson, Director of Partnerships and Community Building, Peers

### #2 The London 2012 Olympics - the Making of a New Ecodistrict for London



"Dan Epstein is a true visionary and has developed a very grounded yet global understanding of the issues around sustainability and novel approaches to addressing them."

Dan Epstein, Director of Sustainability, Useful Simple Projects

### #3 The Other 80%: Creating Ecodistricts in Existing Neighborhoods

What about the 80% of urban areas that are already built out with older, established neighborhoods? These places face unique development challenges compared to large redevelopment areas. This session got participants around the work table to explore the processes and tools necessary to implement ecodistricts in existing neighborhoods.

Darin Dinsmore, Founder and CEO, CrowdBrite  
Daniel Homsey, Dir. of Neigh. Res., City/County of SF  
Donnie Oliveira, Outreach Program Manager, San Francisco Environment  
Jon Swae, Planner, San Francisco Planning Department



# feedback

We asked attendees what the most valuable aspects of the Summit were and how we can make it better. Here is what they said:

**89%** of attendees were very satisfied or satisfied with their experience

## MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE SUMMIT:

**27%** Education Sessions

**24%** Networking Opportunities

**19%** Speakers

**"The EcoDistricts Summit has set the table to discuss the most innovative ecodistrict work being done in the US and abroad. There is a level of excitement from the attendees that results from the definition of a new field of study. It reminds me very much of the early green building conferences, when we all had a sense of coming change."**

- Christine Mondor, evolveEA

"Love the vision for the Summit and the ideas and people around the table, so to speak -- keep up the great work!"

"Overall, you did an excellent job bringing a very diverse and passionate group together, and it was very educational."

"A well organized event, great to have the neighborhood tours. The session "social equity first" was the best panel on the topic at any of the summits to date."

"I've been to many conferences/summits/expos and this was one of the best I've attended as far as quality of presenters and information."

"You had MANY great-looking education sessions. It was hard to pick! Tempting to ask you to squeeze more session time into the program."

## SPEAKERS THAT INSPIRED YOU MOST:

"**Alex Steffen** and **Dan Epstein** both captured the moral imperative of our work, the importance of contextualizing it in climate reality, and the meaning of true ambition and leadership. They were both the most inspiring to me. Also, that the Summit was intimate enough for me to approach them both in the halls after their sessions was invaluable."

"**Antwi Akom**'s sobering assessment of zip code as a primary indicator of future success was particularly inspiring. There is a general excitement of ideas like shareable cities, but this excitement forgets the critical socioeconomic divides at play in our cities and neighborhoods. It will be essential for EcoDistricts to look towards bridging this gap."

"**Steve Pemberton**. His personal life history made me see that projects should be concerned about the community as well as ecologic issues."

## SPONSORS' PRIMARY OBJECTIVE FOR THE SUMMIT:

**50%** Demonstrate leadership

**25%** Learn about ecodistrict projects

**13%** Connect with urban leaders

Sponsors reported that the most important Summit benefits were recognition at the Summit and visibility as a valued partner of EcoDistricts.

**"A good cross section of policy makers, designers and owners. Great peer group!"**

**53%** attendees said there should have been more exhibitors

# ABOUT ECODISTRICTS

EcoDistricts' mission is to inspire every city to remake itself from the neighborhood up by bringing together builders and entrepreneurs, policymakers and urban innovators to create vibrant neighborhoods, smart cities and a healthy planet.

Around the world, more people live in cities than ever before. How we live in cities is one of the great challenges of our time. Urban leaders of all stripes, from mayors to community activists, see EcoDistricts as the key to solving many of their challenges, and they are launching transformative projects. In response, we're creating a powerful convening, advocacy, technical assistance and research platform to inform and drive Ecodistrict acceleration - strategic in nature, collaborative in approach and practical in application. At EcoDistricts you'll find people, tools, services and training with a laser-like focus on helping cities and urban development practitioners create the neighborhoods of the future — resilient, vibrant, resource-efficient and just.

## Connect with EcoDistricts

[TWITTER.COM/ECODISTRICTS](https://twitter.com/ecodistricts)

[FACEBOOK.COM/ECODISTRICTS](https://facebook.com/ecodistricts)

[YOUTUBE.COM/ECODISTRICTSORG](https://youtube.com/ecodistrictsorg)

[LINKEDIN.COM/ECODISTRICTS](https://linkedin.com/ecodistricts)

**Join us in 2014!**

**EcoDistricts Summit**

**Washington, DC**

**September 24 - 26, 2014**

**ECODISTRICTS.ORG**

1223 SW Washington Street, Suite 200, Portland, Oregon 97205, USA

Phone: (011) 503-863-2565 | Email: [info@ecodistricts.org](mailto:info@ecodistricts.org)