Plan-it sustainably

Living Future's Living Cities – explorations of a positive end game

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The International Living Future Institute (ILFI: http://bit.ly/MRIhDm) recently won the Buckminster Fuller Challenge 2012 (http://bit.ly/MC32TN) for its innovative framework known as the Living Building Challenge (LBC) 2.0 (http://bit.ly/OSyfjE) — "a visionary path to a regenerative future." LBC 2.0 guides the planning and design of regenerative places at the site, building, and city/region scales. It takes LEED to the next level — to ultimate sustainability — and can be used by projects to reduce their environmental energy impacts to net zero (e.g., eliminate them) or positively transform the environment (e.g., restore the regenerative life support cycles of the biosphere and local bioregion). As such, it is a planning innovation worth following if not testing.

One of LBC 2.0's distinguishing features is a set of 20 "net-zero" performance parameters that are now feasible using existing science, technology, and practices, along with a small dose of ongoing innovation to further improve practicality. These extremely ambitious goals call for ultra-efficient, nontoxic buildings and places that generate all of their own energy onsite using renewable sources; capture and treat all of their own water; are constructed of nontoxic, sustainably sourced materials; use only previously developed sites; and are beautiful and inspiring to their inhabitants.

Motivated by the idea that the future we imagine shapes human behavior and the prevalence of dystopian images of our urban future in our culture (think Blade Runner), the ILFI conducted the Living City Design Competition in 2010, http://bit.ly/NqR1nI. It engaged top international design and planning talent in applying LBC 2.0 principles to the city scale. Their results (http://bit.ly/NG0wNg) showcase a positive urban future adapted to local conditions. One local application, Berkeley+Bay (http://bit.ly/MyeI13) shows how LBC 2.0 could be applied in the City of Berkeley and points toward a challenging larger regional application in the future. Such visioning is a first step in making the big, bold, transformative moves required for practical, smart urban sustainable development that planners can implement to begin creating the regenerative cities we need.

Raising the bar to "net-zero" is a key strategic move for the built environment and economy. It will spur the innovation needed to plan and develop regenerative buildings and places. Through the required innovation, it transforms sustainability from an added cost into a profit path that will invent the ecological-economy required for a sustainable society. In this way, sustainable development changes from pie-in-the-sky utopianism to enviro-capitalism (http://bit.ly/zuJFrh) where sustainability solutions are smart business and smart planning.

Although LBC 2.0 is not a recipe for a fully sustainable global society, it portends a huge step forward for a large component — the built environment. LBC 2.0 is the 21st century realization of the 20th century vision for regenerative planning and design, with roots in the pioneering work of Buckminster Fuller, Ian McHarg, John Todd, and others. When combined with a strategic approach, as evidenced through the ILFI consolidation of the Cascadia Green Building Council, LBC, The Natural Step, Network USA, and Ecotone Publishing (http://bit.ly/MRIhDm), LBC 2.0 is poised to become a major driver of sustainability throughout the built environment, economy, and society. As such, planners' collaboration with ILFI and use of LBC 2.0 for innovative sustainability planning can leverage and extend LBC 2.0 to simultaneously accelerate its positive impact and advance Planning's sustainability agenda for creating regenerative places from site to city to regional scales, http://bit.ly/QjJrNq.

Resources for Measuring Sustainability

- Newly crafted City of Dubuque Indicators (http://bit.ly/NqSyKp) and sustainability principles http://bit.ly/NqSDhj
- The Rockford, Illinois region is developing an ambitious sustainability plan, http://bit.ly/OSCeN6
- Green homes sell for 9 percent more http://bit.ly/OU5Z05

Sustainability Committee Web Site

- **Explore** more resources for innovative sustainability planning, http://bit.ly/NqSUkg
- **Read** the Committee's inaugural Update http://bit.ly/OivxWA
- **Subscribe** to the Committee's email list http://bit.ly/MVdpQh
- **Collaborate** in ways that fit your time and interests http://bit.ly/Oh7sxp

NEW URL FYI: APA Sustaining Places http://www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/index.htm, http://bit.ly/QjJrNq ■