

Plan-it sustainably

Innovation in the Northern Section: San Francisco takes the leading edge

By Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, co-director, Sustainability Committee

After many years of SF Environment's path-breaking accomplishments, the San Francisco Planning Department is also accelerating sustainability with the completion of recent plans, formation of a multi-agency sustainability program (<http://bit.ly/Q0dgnl>) and exploration of promising frameworks. Recent plans with significant sustainability components include Bayview Hunters Point–Candlestick Point, Treasure Island, Transbay, and Merced Park. A year ago, SF Planning convened a multi-agency team to advance citywide sustainability by coordinating the work of the SF PUC (water, wastewater and power), SF Environment, Capital Planning, Public Works, and the Successor to Redevelopment Agency. To deepen their sustainability planning capacity, they participated in the Portland Sustainability Institute's EcoDistrict training this past May.

To create a common basis for collaboration and program development, the team engages in ongoing dialogue with monthly program development meetings and presentations. Key presentation topics have included transformative energy and water infrastructure, infrastructure ownership models, new business models for smarter cities, optimizing district-scale energy and water systems, and integrated water resource management. This cross-silo group's evolving EcoDistrict approach encompasses the district scale, neighborhood scale, and industrially zoned land. Their emerging focus is coordinating private development and public infrastructure improvements through new modes of finance and stakeholder governance to create the next generation of sustainable urban infrastructure and planning capacity.

Other SF Planning initiatives include applying an EcoDistrict approach to the Central Corridor Plan Area and a pilot neighborhood, exploring the Living Building Challenge and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development, and participating as a partner city in the International Biophilic Cities Research project.

Are you advancing innovative sustainability planning in your city? Feature your initiative in this column. Post a longer description and links to resources on the Committee's Blog. Email a summary to Scott at SustCommAPA@gmail.com. What is and is not working? Join the conversation; add value; move the Section's sustainability needle!

Links:

- **Are Canadian cities at the sustainability tipping point** after 12 years of innovative integrative community strategic sustainability planning? <http://bit.ly/Roy9DN>
- **Mountain View pursues an EcoDistrict approach** to the North Bayshore Precise Plan. <http://bit.ly/SW1YLb>
- **ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability** and partners launched **STAR Communities**, a community rating system for sustainable communities. <http://bit.ly/PcfTy5>
- US EPA's **Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities** is accepting applications through Oct 26, 2012, and has a host of resources. <http://1.usa.gov/WNx8cC>

Sustainability Committee Update

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For a longer discussion of SF innovation (and even more links) see this post on the *Plan-It Sustainably Journal-Blog* <http://bit.ly/PMHofn> ■