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Living Future's Living Cities - Explorations of a Positive End Game, Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, Katja Irvin, AICP, co-directors, Sustainability Committee

The International Living Future Institute (ILFI: <http://bit.ly/MRlhDm>) 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/OSyfyE>)—"a visionary path to a regenerative future." LBC 2.0 guides the planning and design of regenerative places, from the site/building to the city/region scales. It takes LEED to the next level—to ultimate sustainability success—where impacts are reduced to net zero, e.g. eliminated, if not transformed to positive, e.g. become restorative of the regenerative life support cycles of the biosphere and local bioregion. As such, it is a planning innovation worth following if not testing!

Motivated by the idea that the future we imagine shapes human behavior and the prevalence of dystopian images of our urban future (think Blade Runner), the ILFI launched the Living City Design Competition in 2010 (<http://bit.ly/NqR1nI>). The competition engaged top international design and planning talent in applying LBC2.0 to the city scale. Their results (<http://bit.ly/NG0wNg>) showcase a positive urban future adapted to local conditions. This visioning is a first step in making the big, bold, transformative moves required for practical, next-generation urban sustainable development that planners can use now to begin creating the regenerative cities we need. One local application, Berkeley+Bay (<http://bit.ly/Myel13>), sketches the implications for the City of Berkeley and points towards a challenging larger regional application in the future.

One of LBC 2.0's distinguishing features is the set of 20 performance parameters of "net-zero" principles that are now feasible using existing science, technology, and practices, along with a small dose of on-going innovation to further improve practicality. Raising the bar to net-zero is the key strategic move that transforms sustainability from an added cost to an innovation platform and profit path to the ecological-economy that underpins a sustainable society. Sustainable development is no longer pie-in-the-sky utopianism. We live in a new age of enviro-capitalism (<http://bit.ly/zuJFrh>) where solutions have become smart business and smart planning.

LBC 2.0 redefines the concept of green building by setting extremely ambitious goals that raise the bar by spurring the innovation needed to plan and develop regenerative buildings and places. Those goals include 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.

Although LBC 2.0 is not a recipe for a fully sustainable global society, it portends a huge



step forward for a large component of a sustainable society—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 many others. When combined with a strategic approach, as the ILFI anticipates with its recent merger (<http://bit.ly/MRlhDm>) of LBC 2.0 with the Cascadia Green Building Council, The Natural Step, and Ecotone Publishing, LBC 2.0 is poised to become a major driver of sustainability throughout the built environment, economy, and society. As such, planning can leverage and extend LBC 2.0 through collaboration and innovative sustainability planning.

Resources

Need More Ideas for Measuring Sustainability?

- Newly crafted City of Dubuque Indicators and sustainability principles ().
- The Rockford, Illinois region is developing an ambitious sustainability plan (see and The Indicators section).

Sustainability Committee Web Site

- **Explore** more resources for innovative sustainability planning ().
- **Read** the Committee's inaugural E-Update ().
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