



ECODISTRICT EVALUATION

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THE CHALLENGE

The City of Bellevue's 2010 BelRed Subarea Plan includes plans to create an EcoDistrict in the area. Almost 10 years since this plan was enacted, the City asked the LCY team to conduct the following research:

- Interview individuals within the City of Bellevue whose departments play a role in this development. Determine what development has or has not taken place and what barriers have been faced. Gather interviewee's thoughts on potential opportunities and next steps.
- Identify and interview other jurisdictions with a climate similar to the Pacific Northwest that have also implemented EcoDistricts. Research their processes, challenges, and successes.

OUR METHODS

We interviewed private developers and City of Bellevue employees who know the BelRed Subarea Plan and who have played a role in the development. Within the City of Bellevue, we interviewed employees from the departments of Utilities, Transportation, Community Development, and Parks and Community Services.

To address the second goal, we conducted semi-structured interviews in other jurisdictions. We selected model jurisdictions based on the City of Bellevue's specific interests, which included regional location, environmental goals, type, and the availability of contacts within each of the managing organizations. We identified common themes across all models.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Our local interview subjects made the following observations and recommendations:

- The EcoDistrict project has not seen much development over the past 10 years.
- Review the land use code to ensure that it aligns with the environmental goals of the BelRed Subarea Plan.
- Establish environmental goals — such as open space, trails, and streams — as first-tier priorities.
- Reevaluate the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) agreement under the BelRed Lookback.
- Barriers are created by private development preference towards fee-in-lieu strategies, due to a lack of incentives.
- Reinstate the committee to look at rules and regulations. This committee could promote collaboration and communication between departments, and between the City and private developers.

CASE STUDIES

We noted differences between communities that understand the need to be sustainable and that receive federal support, and communities that need to advocate to become sustainable. Our findings reinforce the idea that policies and government support are essential to shift a community towards sustainability. Furthermore, policies must facilitate a sustainability plan that addresses community needs. Goals must be clear and transparent.



The Green Bloc Neighborhood project was initiated in 2010 by a group of neighbors wanting to actively participate in the City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan. The Green Bloc Neighborhood project is managed by Evergreen, a backbone organization that focuses on connecting stakeholders to bring innovative ideas into fruition.



The Greentopia organization initiated the High Falls EcoDistrict project in 2014. Greentopia received \$240,000 from the New York State Environmental, Research, and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to conduct a planning study for the creation of the first EcoDistrict. The High Falls EcoDistrict sits in the center of the city and unites multiple community assets, including an impending community college campus, a minor league baseball stadium, and a natural river and waterfall system.



The Capitol Hill EcoDistrict in Seattle is a neighborhood-based sustainability initiative developed in 2011 under the Bullitt Foundation. The initiative, which serves the most densely populated urban village in the Pacific Northwest, is led by the Capitol Hill Housing Cooperative.

