

Oregon BEST

Green Building Working Meeting – 2/17/09

Eco-Districts & Policies

What are the key barriers to widespread adoption of eco-districts and associated policies that could be addressed through University research?

- Regulations, zoning, etc. Incorporating flexibility into buildings and communities. Community social infrastructure
- Organizing and educating key players needed for large-scale (>1 bldg) projects
- Research into the building as a whole, the building as a community, the community as a whole. Too often measures are looked at independently where systems should be looked at as a whole, including as a community or state. Research into eco-retrofit districts in residential and commercial structures. Whole new buildings must improve, until the existing stock is replaced. We are only staving off, not correcting
- Public perception of energy production – currently considered and treated like a nuisance (i.e. substations) in codes and policies. Public needs to accept for district energy to be successfully integrated into residential neighborhoods
- Bring the economists into the conversation – real estate/appraisal/banking industries. Oregon does not have as aggressive a green schools mandate as California or Washington – BETC encourages private green development, but not public
- Property rights, cost and benefit allocation, variation of/waiver from public works engineering standards, public acceptance/adoption/maintenance
- Address carbon foot print of surrounding infrastructure
- How to design eco-districts in a system driven by individual lots
- The issues here are wide and far reaching – identify keys
- Complexity of partnering and gaining buy-in from a whole district
- Identify the codes and regulatory structures that must be addressed and how to do so. In addition to the individuals on the provided list, need more multijurisdictional reps to address regulatory/legal barriers, including city, county and state
- What is the right scale for different elements – district energy, district water, district waste?
- Existing infrastructure that generates outdated policy such as requiring all buildings to be connected to sewer system (for fee generation)
- Existing utility infrastructure in place. Do you connect? Abandon? Zoning and code barriers. Identify economies of scale for various district scaled plans. They are not all the same. Living district strategy – how to create living building challenges at the district scale

- Research on behavioral impacts of all of these areas would be a way to “sell” the use of these material/products/systems – particularly as it relates to regulatory issues and policy. At the moment, there are only limited amounts of information about how all of these things impact people and other thriving ecosystems
- How can life cycle costs be made more part of the decision making process for owners and developers?
- Economic modeling other than just for marketing. Applicability (planning) modeling for areas in addition to urban planning scenarios. Cultural
- Agencies (economic development, urban planning, school districts, and transportation area) do not overlap. They often see a collaborative approach as encroaching on their specific mandates and introducing non-essential criteria