

**Oregon BEST – Green Building Working Meeting  
EcoDistricts and Policy  
Breakout Session  
February 17, 2009**

**Quick Overview of Barriers Noted:**

- Planning modeling
- Cultural
- Existing infrastructure
- Zoning and code

**Infrastructure:**

- Infrastructure was identified as a key expertise category that was needed. It shouldn't be limited to pipes and ductwork. It needs to be expanded to include the local economy, the "software" side.
- Two groups are needed under infrastructure: (1) hardware group and (2) software group.
- Policy for technology, regional policies, development policies and other existing policies are a key concern as well.
- Economic models also need to be understood, so they are clear to those making investments.
- Where is the business school in this conversation? Real estate, economics, non-monetary costs, accounting. These are all important issues that need to be addressed and understood.
- Scenario building and evaluation/visual tools that could help analyze various situations are needed.
- There is a disconnect between planning and urban scale decisions. We need to define what kind of impact urban design has on building performance.

**Standards/Metrics**

- Further development of standards/metrics is needed.
- Create an open source that allows others to see the metrics and standards used – something industry can't or doesn't do.
- Create a higher standard for a region and put some kind of scholarly evaluation and critique on current standards.
- It is important to make sure that we look at whole systems. We need the ability to analyze metrics as a complete system instead of just by separate parts – roofs, low flow showers, etc.
- What does Oregon BEST bring new to the table – education and research. We need to understand the landscape and map it - step back - so efforts aren't duplicated. Create a baseline.
- What is definition of an EcoDistrict or EcoCity? What are the standards? What it lacks are strong academic based metrics.
- Produce a good baseline that can be distributed to the public.

- A problem is that there are many different standards. We need to work on creating metrics that all can use, and creating standards can create jobs, as seen with LEED.
- BEST could be a central data gathering point. An open data source for anyone wanting LEED research, etc.
- Measure social engineering. Conducting research on why we are open to green building research and how we can get others to do that.
- BEST can play some role in helping with post occupancy analysis to see what is working and what isn't.
- We want standards to be dynamic, have analysis feedback. A great place for BEST.
- If we want to raise a set of metrics, we need to put a stamp on it like LEED. Create a brand.
- Format of standards – how do we organize the information and make it accessible? This also helps build the market demand for it. It helps increase efficacy, something that not everyone else has. Value added.
- It may be worth studying the formation of LEED standards. What activities got that pathway accelerated? What touch points got it there? That could help inform an EcoDistrict strategy. We've been a leader, but we need to be much more explicit now.
- Look at models on how to establish emerging models.

#### **Design Assistance Research Teams for Practitioners**

- BEST to create EcoDistrict university researcher SWAT teams to help figure out economies of scale. A design assistance umbrella.
- Case studies, evidence-based design that shows how others have successfully done things, especially with large scale issues - systems that span multiple buildings with different regulations and codes.
- University of Pennsylvania has something like this set up, but it is not focused on sustainability.
- Applicability to global businesses. Oregon-based design assistance that applies to national and international interests.
- So, if you hire an Oregon architect, then you get the BEST Oregon-based design assistance as well.
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has a model – quick response. They solicit 4 teams that are ready to go with problems. BEST could create a quick response of researchers.
- Funding would be needed for quick response teams to free up researcher time and availability.

#### **Better Communication/Partnerships with Faculty**

- It is very hard to partner with universities on real projects. The day lighting lab is a good tool, but you have to get on a list and wait for 3 months, which isn't realistic for business.
- Identify projects that need private sector help.

- Infrastructure that connects research with practitioners – this needs to be expanded and turned into a valuable resource.
- Are universities aware of practitioner barriers? An example was given that OIT was ready help when other universities weren't or not able to.
- BEST should prioritize and look for academic people who are going to work together as a group.
- The barriers are too high when you have to wait 3 months or knock on different doors to get help.
- Tackle the difficulty of university-industry working together.
- Practitioners may have ideas that need more research or that researchers may be interested on working on.
- Money is a key issue. There has to be a financial mechanism to connect faculty with practitioners.

### **Continuing Education**

- Become a source of ongoing/continuing information. An educational process that people can be accredited to.
- A way to spread the generalized knowledge out to practitioners and a “think tank” for deeper research.
- Create research hub in environmental green building psychology. Why are people interested in green building or use green practices? Help identify motivations.
- The education component. Creating a system wide approach hand-in-hand with business. A program that would allow someone to access to the whole university system and not just one university.
- Is there a natural affinity between BEST and Manufacture 21 or lunch bucket groups? Training at an earlier level.

### **EcoDistricts**

- What is the economic model to support EcoDistricts?
- Need to create demand for and piloting of EcoDistricts.
- What are the conditions and boundaries for EcoDistricts? We don't have a cohort of projects to plug into.
- BEST should possibly look for an EcoDistrict project to start or help create. It should be taken into consideration however, that production would be slowed with the inclusion of academics and research evaluation. Finding pilots could be a good first step.
- We need to operate on larger scales, than just inserting one green aspect into a building. There are firms currently doing green building in this region. We need to develop some kind of expertise.
- Issue of existing versus new buildings. 95% of buildings are already built. What would be required to turn those into EcoDistricts?
- What about turning PSU into an EcoDistrict?
- We need to make sure that we don't limit ourselves to just one type of EcoDistrict. There are many different types of districts - downtown, university, industry, residential.

- The complexities of EcoDistricts are huge, so start with identifying barriers and look to streamline participation.

### **Tools for Ecology**

- A critical piece is the model tool to look at ecology. Can we support ourselves when peak oil is down?
- Information from Natural Ecologists and about the integration of natural environment is needed.
- How do you integrate environmental health to support the ecology of a EcoDistrict? A green roof here, here, and here doesn't mean that the area is ecologically healthy.
- Look at regional, industrial, etc. communities and do an eco-analysis of each. A baseline of different areas to understand where the opportunities are so you don't make projects harder by choosing the wrong site.

### **What kind of RFPs could Oregon BEST Put Out?**

- Baselines
- Pre-intervention baselines
- Post-intervention baselines
- Enhancing pre-design processes