An Indianapolis neighborhood plans its future

Published on **25 Jun 2013** | Written by **Ken Potts** | Posted in **Industry**

Real estate projects may have slowed over the past few years, but there is a great example in Indianapolis of one development corporation's use of LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND), coupled with patience and persistence, to realize their goals. In mid-June a group of USGBC Board members had the chance to tour the community and witness key features of the rating system in action. We were very impressed!

Mapleton-Fall Creek provides an excellent example of LEED-ND to revitalize a community's health and well-being. Over the last 50 years, this once-vibrant neighborhood (just 3.5 miles north of Indianapolis Monument Circle) suffered the suburban-sprawl-induced injustices all too common in cities across the country. The Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation (MFCDC) chose the LEED-ND framework to engage the remaining residents, public entities, and private investors in a comprehensive strategy to heal the community and plan for its future growth. MFCDC's participation in LEED-ND has been made possible in part due to their selection into USGBC's Affordable Green Neighborhoods Grant Program, generously funded by the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

MFCDC worked with city officials to improve walkability and connectivity in Mapleton-Fall Creek. Traffic-calming measures, roadway re-striping, signal improvements and trail extensions provide for improved mobility through the neighborhood. Already well-served by public transit, Mapleton-Fall Creek is now prepared for both residential and commercial improvements. This will allow residents to shop locally while also having easy access to jobs downtown or in adjoining neighborhoods.

The housing stock is also on its way back to good health. Habitat for Humanity has joined the effort with the construction of several new homes, with a commitment to energy and water efficiency standards of LEED for Homes. These as well as other rehabilitated homes are now occupied by 45 new families in the LEED-ND project area alone.

Community garden plots are now supplying fresh food, pocket parks supports safe recreation, and the rainfall that flows to nearby Fall Creek is managed through raingardens, stormwater retention systems, and remediated soils.

LEED-ND's integrated approach to the planning of healthy communities has been applied with skill and commitment by a broad array of participants here. The Neighborhood Development projects started recently may take a decade (or more) to mature and will undergo continual change. If managed well, the resulting impacts will have positive benefits lasting generations. I look forward to future visits to Mapleton-Fall Creek.

Ken Potts

Chapter members, Member employees, USGBC board

USGBC Articles can be accessed in the USGBC app for iOS or Android on your iPhone, iPad or Android device.

3 comments

Leave a comment

Jessica Millman 2 years 22 weeks ago
President, The Agora Group, The Agora Group

I'm so glad Mapleton-Fall Creek is getting the attention it deserves! What a fabulous LEED-ND project!

Tyson Domer 2 years 22 weeks ago
hundredyear Consulting

Ken-
Thanks for sharing your thoughts and observations on Mapleton-Fall Creek! We were certainly thrilled to show you and the USGBC board how LEED-ND is helping us to engage partners and approach our work more holistically. I'm always happy to arrange personal tours for anyone that is interested in seeing how LEED-ND works "up close and personal." More info on our process is at http://www.mfcdc.hundredyear.net

Jarrod Reid 2 years 22 weeks ago

that is a thing of beauty. We need more of this kind of thinking in Indianapolis (mostly the suburban zones). Looking forward to taking a peek at that space the next time I head downtown!

Leave a comment

Don't have an account? Create one

You must be signed in to leave a comment.

Email

Password

SIGN IN

Address
2101 L Street NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20037

Within the United States:
1-800-795-1747

Outside the United States:
1-202-742-3792

© 2012-2015 U.S. Green Building Council