

Sustainable DC

Built Environment Working Group

Meeting #1 Notes in Chronological Order

- Scheduling: Next Meeting tentatively December 13 at 6pm
 - Do a Doodle to choose best days?
- [Ethan Landis] DCRA is a gatekeeper for built environment in DC, but it has no director of sustainability on staff. DCRA needs dedicated leadership on these issues.
 - DCRA raises ~\$1 million/year in green building funds that are regularly taken away for general funds.
 - DCRA staff need more training
 - Sustainability needs to be integrated into everything DCRA does instead of being a small side item.
- [] Biggest Opportunity is in green renovation of existing buildings
 - [] There is a tax penalty implicit in the building code: when you improve a building its value goes up and you pay more in property taxes. This reduces the net present value of the renovations and makes the payback period longer.
 - [Julia Craighill] We need baseline information, and data on the existing building stock
 - Transparency is critical!
 - Make energy usage transparent so occupants and owners can see their usage and others' usage. (Energy Benchmarking—DC is doing this)
- [] Roads and Streets
 - Roads and streets aren't just or transportation; they make up 40% of the built environment!
 - What are the costs of current obsolete infrastructure?
 - Stretch Goal proposal: every time DDOT improves a road, they green it—this includes tree boxes that are big enough, use of appropriate trees and native plants, etc
- Youth education: link permitting process and youth services so young people can observe work being done and learn job skills.
- Block-wide initiatives: Improve a block at a time, not building by building
- [Ralph Yatsko]: The building code for 2012 is 20-25% more efficient
 - We need to fast track this code
 - We need to find ways to apply this code to existing building stock
- Deconstruction: waste is itself a resource! Link deconstruction and reuse to permits for existing building retrofits.
- [Liz Blazevitch] We need a real survey of the current built environment
- [Liz Blazevitch] Need citizen education—education is missing component in the working group structure.
 - Best practices in training and education workshops for historic buildings:
 - Chicago Bungalow Initiative

- Philadelphia Row House Imitative
- Weatherization and Green retrofits are key part of green economy. MD works with community colleges to certify retrofit professionals.
 - DC needs to do a better job with training and certification
- [Bobby Bell]:
 - Leadership crucial: integration is crucial for sustainability. Need leadership at top of companies and departments to create this integration.
 - Harsher and stricter penalties for waste generated by renovations. Recycle waste
 - More green spaces
 - Rain gardens in communities
 - Make social, recreational green spaces—countless economic and public safety benefits
- It would be useful to know what specific sites for development and development codes the city is planning.
 - [Brandon] We will report back to WG
- Need new financing—site based recc.
- [Catherine Matthews]
 - Look at carrots and sticks
 - Regulations just pile on top of each other
 - We need to harmonize regulations and remove outdated ones that don't have benefits
- City is constrained by greenspace
 - Always hard to take away uncultivated space and use it for buildings
- Trash pickup: why do I need to buy a can because the city cut back on trash pickups?
- Engage stakeholders!
 - Re-design dc.gov website—it's antiquated, ugly, and useless
- Affordable housing:
 - Convert existing stock to green and healthy homes
 - A lot of what DC does with its money is affordable housing
 - That model is untenable
 - Use modular housing
- Information and real-time data collection
 - Use smartphone apps with real time info; Get people to participate in data collection
 - Interaction with built environment
 - IBM's smart cities apps--<have talked to IBM to get \$ to launch pilot programs in DC
- District Energy Systems: Want to know more:
 - Are there regulatory barriers?
 - Can we look at energy flows *within* buildings?
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- Zoning re-write
- Reduce commutes!

- Why can't we tax commuters?
- Public Art also important! Public Art is not just design; it is a community development tool!
- Form-Based codes
 - Height restrictions are a problem
 - Where is "downtown" anyway?
 - Can we do a feasibility study for form-based codes and smart growth overlays in DC?
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- Identify 30 buildings that can reduce energy use towards *net zero*
- What are the VALUES we have?
 - "\$1 billion invested is not a value but a budget!"
 - We want to have the biggest overall impact
- Re-use water on site
- Equitable development
- We need to integrate with other workgroups.