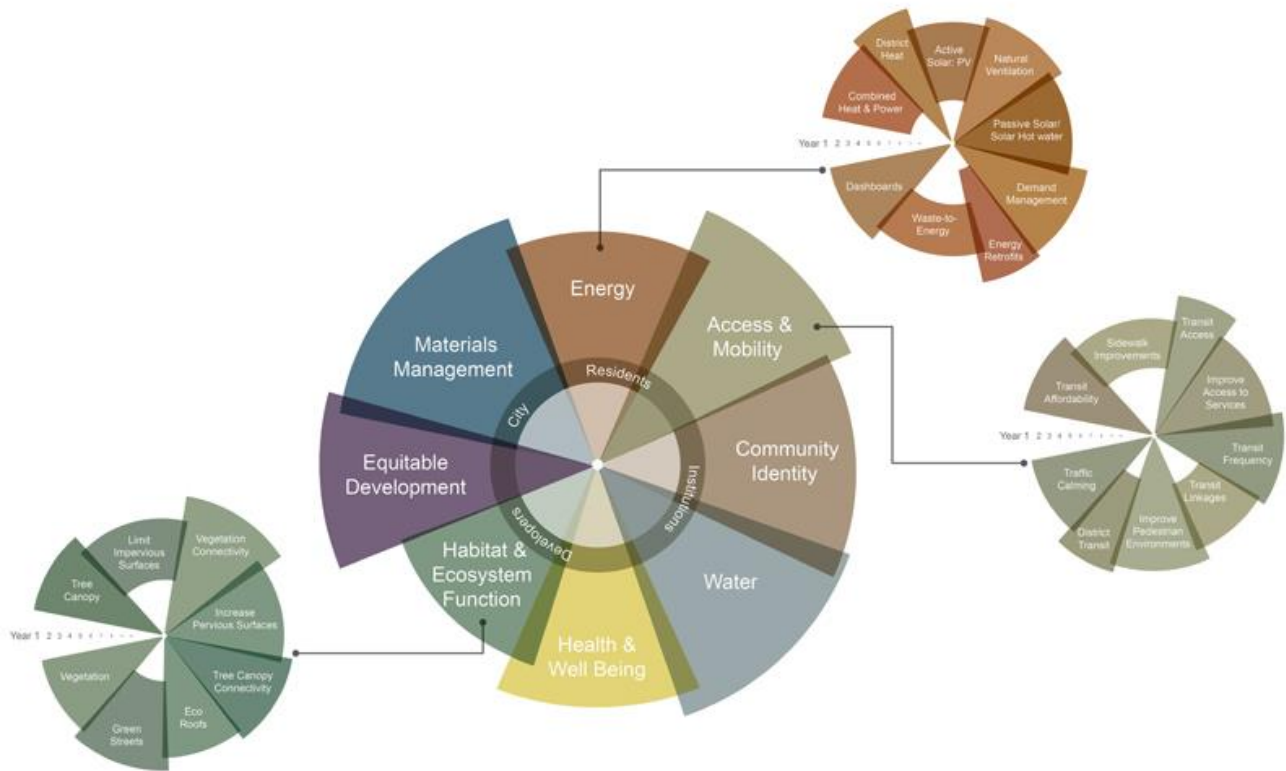


# GREEN TRENDS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ECODISTRICTS

## EMERGING TOPICS PAPER SERIES WORKING PAPER #24



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# GREEN TRENDS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ECODISTRICTS

## Emerging Topics Working Paper #24

*This document provides an overview on EcoDistricts. It is part of a series of profiles to introduce affordable housing practitioners to emerging trends in green, sustainable living. This short work defines EcoDistricts, surveys the sector, and details case studies of innovative implementations.*

<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>II. Trends</b>	<b>III. Case Studies</b>	<b>IV. Additional Resources</b>
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### I. Introduction

An [EcoDistrict](#) is “a new model of public-private partnership that emphasizes innovation and deployment of district-scale best practices to create the neighborhoods of the future – resilient, vibrant, resource efficient and just.”

EcoDistricts is also the name of the organization, formerly known as Portland Sustainability Institute, which provides tools, services, and training to practitioners who wish to apply EcoDistrict principles in their cities.

The EcoDistrict movement believes the neighborhood scale is the key to developing sustainable cities quickly. Developers, businesses, community leaders, and other district-level stakeholders, in addition to city-level policymakers are to play a facilitating role.

The movement is collaborative—the EcoDistricts [Summits](#) and [Incubators](#) allow stakeholders to develop and share best practices, and learn from thought leaders.

The goals of EcoDistricts are organized into eight [Performance Areas](#):

1. Equitable development
2. Health & wellbeing
3. Community identity
4. Access & mobility
5. Energy
6. Water
7. Habitat & ecosystem function
8. Materials management

To achieve these goals, EcoDistrict projects may include:

- Transit
- Green space
- Affordable and market-rate housing
- Composting
- Zero waste programs
- Stormwater management
- Benchmarking of neighborhood sustainability performance
- Microgrids
- Car sharing
- Bike lanes

## II. Trends

The EcoDistrict movement is relatively new—the term “EcoDistrict” has been in active industry use for less than 10 years .

There is a definite trend in green planning and development towards broadening the scale. EcoDistricts is not alone. The two most prominent organizations that believe the neighborhood scale is the key to developing sustainable cities are:

- Portland-based, **EcoDistricts**, launched in 2008
- Seattle-based **2030 Districts**, an [emerging partner](#) of EcoDistricts

Additional organizations and initiatives that address sustainability at the district level include:

- [Living City Block](#)
- [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#) (US HUD, DOT, and EPA)
- [Preservation Green Lab](#) (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- [Green Impact Zone](#) (Kansas City, MO)
- [PlaNYC](#) (New York, NY)

### III. Case Studies

Successful EcoDistrict projects will require a critical mass of stakeholder support from businesses, land owners, community leaders, and government. These stakeholders will need to be able to converge upon and implement a shared vision of what the district will become.

#### III.A. Seaholm District: Austin, TX



([Image source.](#))

The main focus of the [Seaholm Development District](#) Project in Austin, TX is the preservation of the historic Seaholm Power plant, a long dormant plant and iconic piece of Austin architecture. The 8-acre development will incorporate affordable and market rate housing, office, restaurant, and retail space, a hotel, a new [Austin Central Library](#), parks, and other public space.

The City of Austin has created a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Zone to partially finance the redevelopment. TIF debt is anticipated to provide [\\$20 million in funding](#). The full cost of the development has not been made public, but estimates have been made of more than [\\$100 million](#).

#### Stakeholders and partners include:

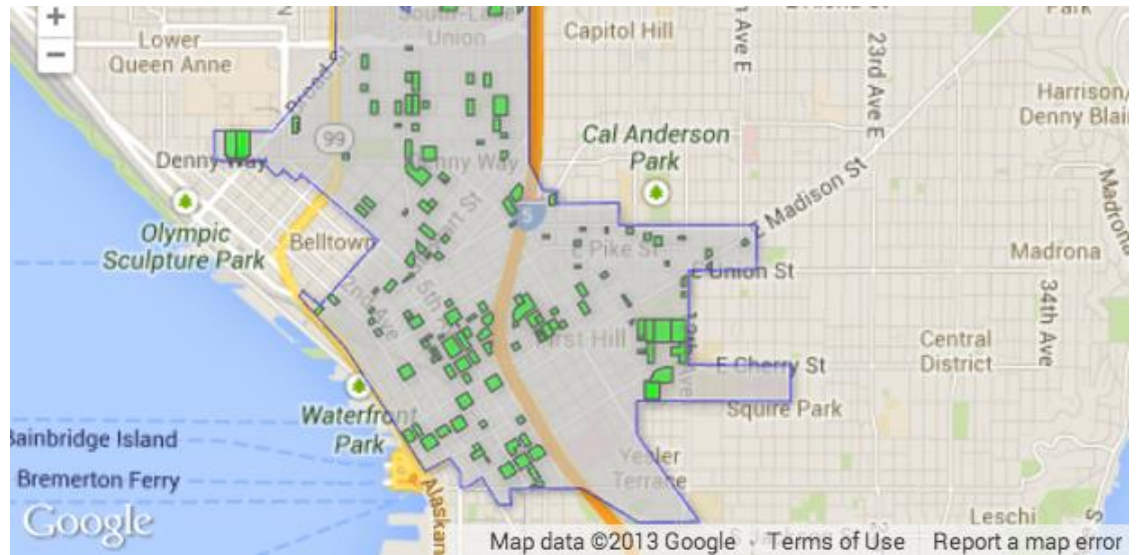
##### Public Sector (City of Austin)

- Office of Sustainability
- Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office
- Public Works Department
- Parks and Recreation Department

##### Private Sector:

- [Seaholm Power, LLC](#) (developer)
- Trader Joe's
- La Corsha Hospitality Group (restaurant developer)

### III.B. Seattle 2030 District



([Image source.](#))

The [Seattle 2030 District](#) is a high-performance building district in downtown Seattle. This initiative spans all major sectors of the built environment, including municipal buildings, commercial office space, university buildings, multifamily residential, hotels, restaurants, museums, and more.

The Seattle 2030 District is focusing on achieving greater impact with a district-level approach via

- District-wide heat recovery
- Distributed generation

### IV. Additional Resources

- Ecodistricts: [ecodistricts.org](http://ecodistricts.org)
- 2030 Districts: [2030district.org](http://2030district.org)

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