

For immediate release:

Industrial Strength LEED Neighborhood: If you worked here, you'd be home by now. The Delaware Addition in Santa Cruz CA may point the way to our next economy, where people work and live within resilient local communities free from automobile dependence.



This mixed-use industrial district is among the first 25 developments in the United States to be awarded certification as a LEED Neighborhood Development by the US Green Building Council.

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With the infrastructure completed for the first phase of the 20-acre Delaware Addition project (approved by a unanimous City Council vote in 2008), the US Green Building Council has awarded Redtree Properties' project certification as a LEED Neighborhood Development. Of the 196 American projects selected in early 2007 for this innovative pilot program, only 25 have yet to attain certification.

Craig French, project manager for Redtree, notes that the Delaware Addition is unique- and uniquely important- among this select group of projects. While most offer high-end residential and commercial uses or are heavily subsidized by taxpayer dollars, the Delaware Addition is being built privately for local business owners and start-ups for whom sustained productivity and economic resilience are

paramount. It's about sustainability, not gentrification. 350 people will live here, and 500 people will work here, all on 20 acres.

Project architect and LEED professional Mark Primack agrees that this project, and its environmental initiatives, grew from a local culture of grass roots entrepreneurship. "Craig hired me to design a green, innovative community here in Santa Cruz, in an industrial zone abandoned by big industry. In recent years Lipton, Wrigley and Texas Instruments had all shut down and gone elsewhere. But there are a lot of smart, industrious people living here in Santa Cruz, and Craig wanted to give them the option of working here as well, instead of commuting to Silicon Valley. So he cautioned me right at the start that if I designed an award-winning project that wasn't competitive with the tilt-up flex-space developments over the hill, we would have failed. Getting certified as a LEED Neighborhood Development meant we couldn't just purchase a lot of expensive accessories; we had to be green at our core. I think that's the spirit in which the US Green Building Council, in association with the Natural Resource Defense Council and the Congress for New Urbanism, initiated the LEED Neighborhood pilot program. Single-building programs are too limited in scope to be affective against global warming."

That attention to core sustainability made life difficult for LEED administrators, said Primack. "Because the success of a project like ours requires a maximum of flexibility over time- neighborhoods are more like living organisms than artifacts -and LEED is based on a commitment to a very precise and static end product, we had trouble declaring exactly what businesses or activities we would accommodate now and forever. But I think in the end we contributed to their consciousness of what makes a truly sustainable development."

The approach taken proved atypical. Rather than 'green-washing' an obsolete development model with expensive gadgetry and trendy features, The Delaware Addition asked the basic question, 'what makes a resilient working neighborhood within the current global economy?' and it sought answers that would resolve economic, environmental and social concerns.

They began with the understanding that viable businesses start small and then grow and contract as necessary. Says French, "At the Delaware Addition, you can own 600 square feet or 40,000, or anything in between." And Redtree convinced the city to allow work force housing on site, both centralized and as an option provided for individual business owners. The city also allowed density greater than that prescribed for 60's era suburban 'industrial parks', thereby enabling the 'critical mass' that makes working communities vibrant, and economical.

The effort to relate environmental consciousness and cost effectiveness proved very productive; buildings, parking, access and open spaces were efficiently distributed; inexpensive tilt-up concrete construction was explored for any and all aesthetic possibilities; and every physical and bureaucratic site constraint was turned into an opportunity. An abandoned concrete culvert, for instance, was rehabilitated as a cistern providing year-round irrigation water; the development setback from a naturalized drainage ditch became a linear park and bike path. Required landscape maintenance fees will support a groundbreaking urban

agriculture program providing fruit and perennials to residents; and the elimination of any reserved parking will maximize the use of provided spaces, reducing site paving by 25%. This means that front doors of businesses face onto tree-lined main streets, rather than parking lots. And the comfortable on-site bus stop doubles as a ride share station.

