



EcoDistricts

VERSION | 1.3

PROTOCOL

THE STANDARD FOR URBAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





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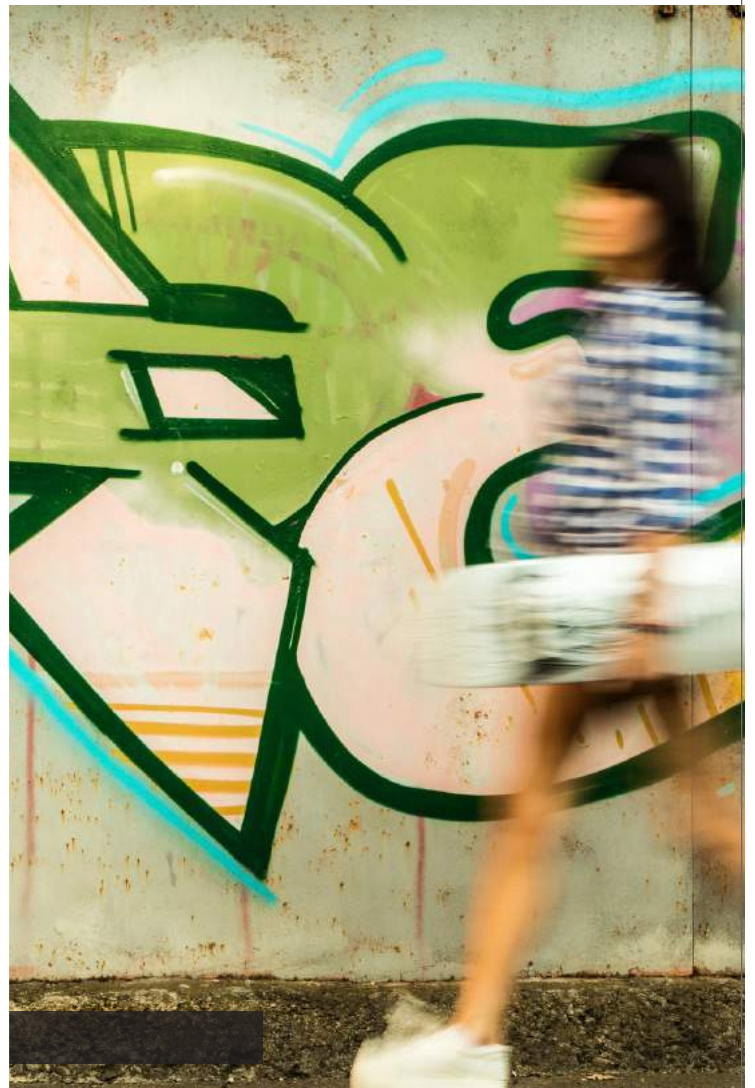
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THE
CHALLENGE



Our Cities Are Undergoing a Radical Transformation

Around the world, cities are undergoing the biggest growth of the past 100 years. More than one-half of the world's people now live in cities, a proportion expected to grow to two-thirds by 2050. To support this urbanization, trillions of dollars are flowing into communities. The number of district-scale projects is increasing at a record pace, and cities are making significant investments to build and revitalize neighborhoods, commercial districts, brownfields, as well as critical water, energy, and transportation infrastructure systems.

THE COST OF GROWTH HAS BEEN HEAVY, HITTING NEIGHBORHOODS THE HARDEST

Cities now contribute to a vast and growing equity gap — the postal code a child is born into has a bigger role in determining their future than any other single factor. Worldwide, a number of complex issues are colliding: income, education, and health disparities; blight and ecological degradation; and the growing threat of climate change.

Here is the good news — there is a growing appetite for innovation as cities seek a competitive advantage to attract talent and investment, embrace aging and historically disenfranchised populations, restore cultural integrity, enhance prosperity, and respond intelligently to a rapidly changing climate.

NEIGHBORHOODS ARE THE SOUL AND LIFEBLOOD OF THE CITY

Yes, neighborhoods sit at the heart of some of the most complex challenges facing city makers today. But they can also become the building blocks of sustainable cities. Neighborhoods provide a uniquely valuable scale to introduce and accelerate investments that can achieve profound improvements in equity, resilience, and climate protection. Neighborhoods are small enough to innovate and big enough to leverage meaningful investment and public policy.



OUR
RESPONSE



The EcoDistricts Protocol

For far too long, neighborhood development has been primarily about brick-and-mortar solutions to building and rehabilitating neighborhoods. The world of city building has drastically changed, and it requires a more diverse and more integrated range of solutions to empower social vibrancy and restore ecological health. Success hinges on building robust public-private-civic partnerships to align leadership, improve cross-sector collaboration, and build new models of inclusive governance to drive effective planning and project delivery.

To foster a new model of urban regeneration, EcoDistricts has created the Protocol: a rigorous, sustainable urban development framework for achieving people-centered, economically vibrant neighborhood- and district-scale sustainability.

THE ECODISTRICTS PROTOCOL IS:

- **A TOOL FOR FOSTERING NEIGHBORHOOD- AND DISTRICT-SCALE SUSTAINABILITY.** The Protocol is available for free digitally, and EcoDistricts encourages those who are interested in advancing comprehensive and meaningful sustainability strategies to use it.
- **A RIGOROUS CERTIFICATION STANDARD.** EcoDistrict Certified recognizes the achievement of Protocol requirements, marks industry leadership, and connects certified districts with a global peer-to-peer learning network pursuing continuous improvement.

The Protocol puts a comprehensive lens on every urban regeneration decision, drives the delivery of meaningful performance outcomes, and sets the conditions for sustainable, collective impact. And above all, the Protocol is designed as a flexible performance framework rather than a prescriptive standard, recognizing that every community has the ability and need to advance a place-based sustainability agenda. District teams tailor the Protocol to local circumstances, set performance targets based on local conditions and aspirations, and measure progress against the Protocol's Imperatives and Priorities.

Many terms used in the Protocol have specific meanings. Please refer to the **Glossary in Appendix A** for definitions of key terms.

INSPIRATION FROM COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The Protocol was inspired by collective impact, a collaboration framework for leaders to achieve large-scale social change. The Protocol calls for district teams to create a shared vision and common agenda, establish shared targets and indicators, foster mutually reinforcing activities and investments, and identify and support a backbone organization that orchestrates the work of the group. For further information about collective impact, visit www.collectiveimpactforum.org.

THE PROTOCOL IS STRUCTURED AROUND THREE CORE ELEMENTS:

3 IMPERATIVES:

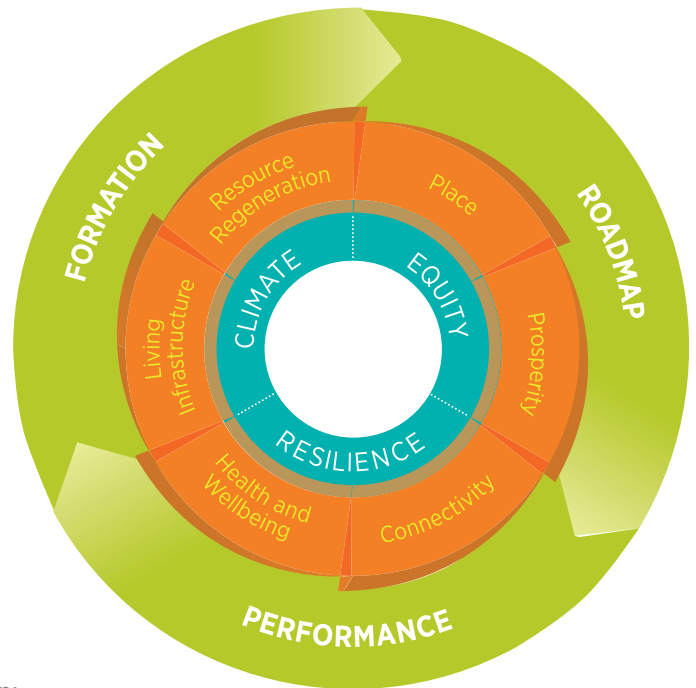
Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection

6 PRIORITIES:

Place, Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing, Connectivity, Living Infrastructure, and Resource Regeneration

3 IMPLEMENTATION PHASES:

Formation, Roadmap, and Performance



THE PROTOCOL IS DESIGNED TO INSPIRE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THAT:

- Commits to Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection;
- Supports multi-stakeholder collaboration and governance;
- Creates a comprehensive district-scale Roadmap guided by performance indicators; and
- Reports progress with a commitment to transparency and knowledge sharing.

IMPERATIVES

PUTTING PEOPLE AND THE PLANET AT THE CENTER OF CHANGE

The EcoDistricts Protocol starts with an unwavering commitment to three fundamental and interconnected issues — Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection — and, as a result, places social, economic, and environmental sustainability at the center of urban regeneration.

EQUITY

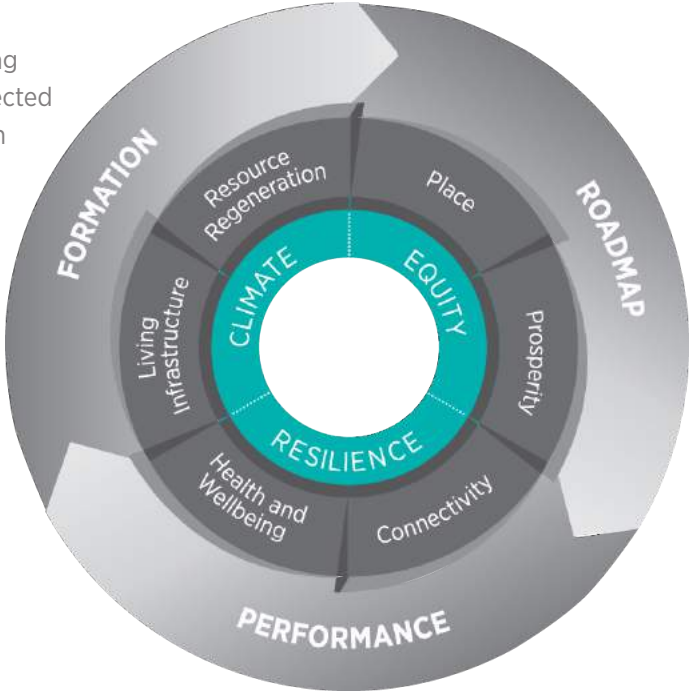
Cities that embrace equity identify and acknowledge the communities most vulnerable to change. These cities experience stronger and longer-lasting growth. District teams must ensure their communities have the opportunity to meaningfully participate, lead, and thrive.

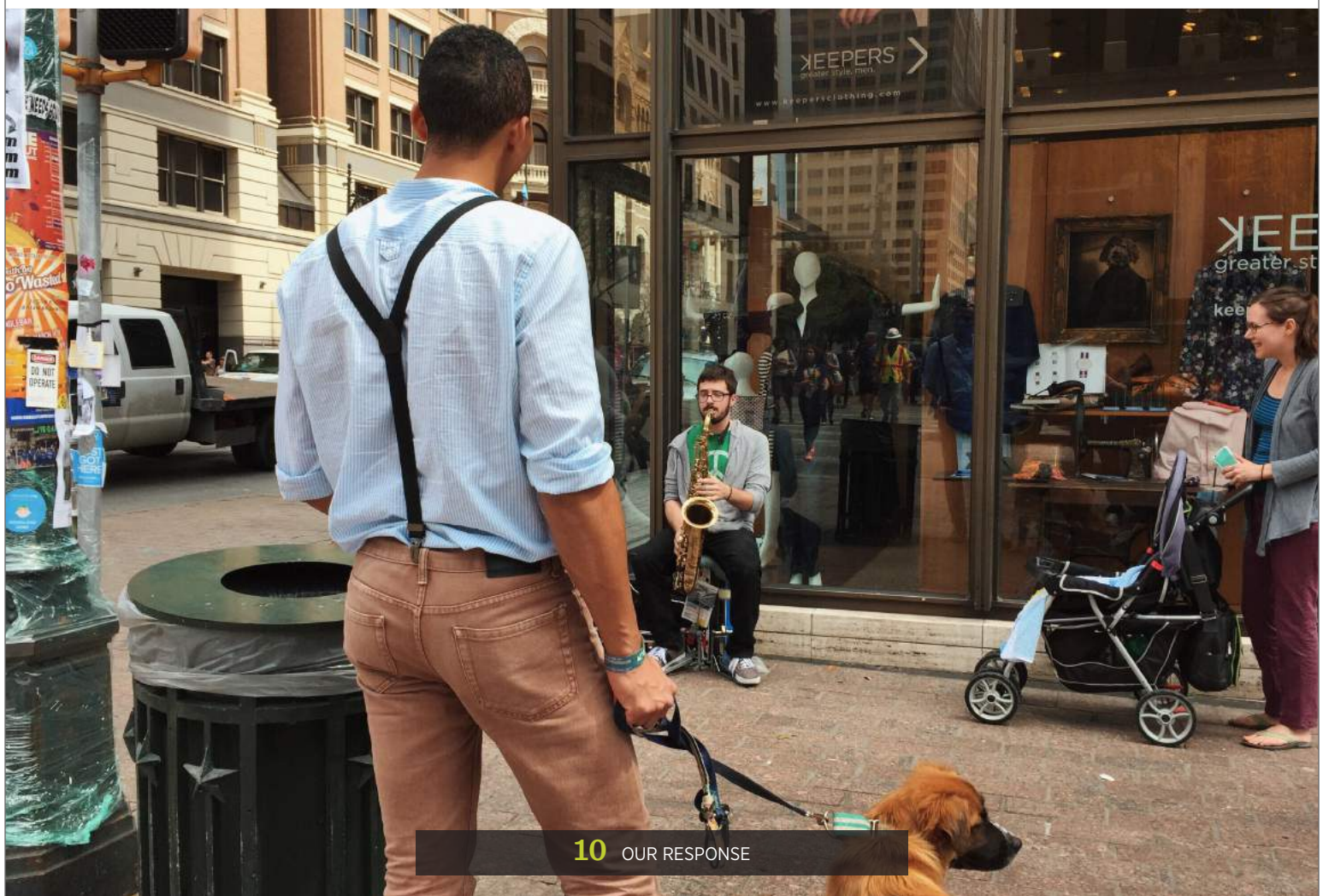
RESILIENCE

Resilience is the capacity of cities to function so that all people are able to withstand the shocks and stresses they encounter. District teams must address resilience with a broad approach that prepares for social, economic, and environmental shocks and stresses.

CLIMATE PROTECTION

Cities are responsible for a majority of global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the dominant greenhouse gas contributing to climate change. District teams must build a pathway to carbon neutrality.





PRIORITIES

ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES

At the heart of the EcoDistricts Protocol are six Priorities — a set of rigorous goals containing 20 objective categories used to set the scope of a district’s sustainability agenda.

PLACE

GOAL: Create inclusive and vibrant communities.

OBJECTIVES: Strong civic engagement, preservation and celebration of culture and history, diverse and affordable housing, and accessible public spaces and services for daily needs.

PROSPERITY

GOAL: Support education and economic opportunities that build prosperity and accelerate innovation.

OBJECTIVES: Equitable access to quality education and career pathways, a robust employment base with increasing jobs and job quality, and entrepreneurial innovation and business start-ups.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

GOAL: Nurture people’s health and happiness.

OBJECTIVES: Active living based on walkability and recreation; equitable health outcomes based on accessible, affordable health care; affordable, local, fresh food; remediated toxic environments; and strong public safety.

CONNECTIVITY

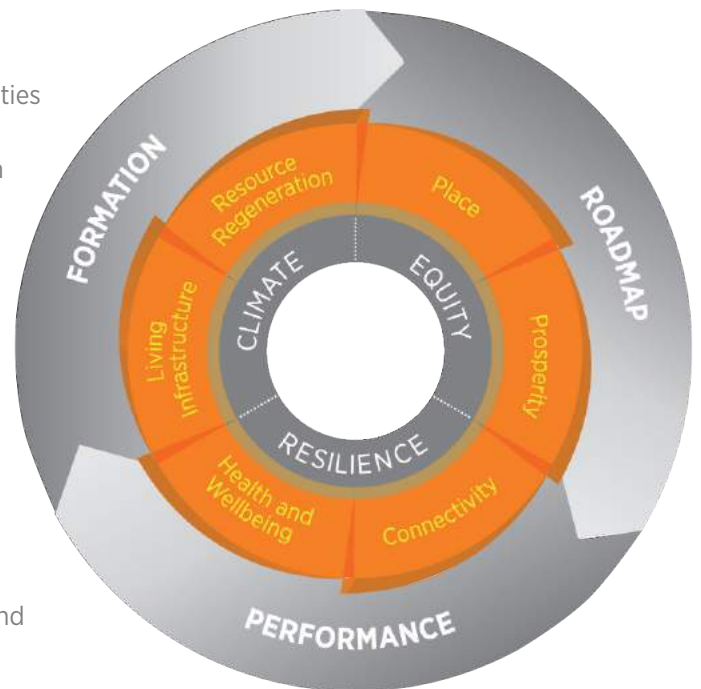
GOAL: Build effective connections between people and places.

OBJECTIVES: A street network that accommodates diverse ages and abilities by using multiple travel modes and shared mobility options, and a high-quality digital network providing equitable connectivity and leveraged community data.

LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: Enable and connect to flourishing ecosystems.

OBJECTIVES: Healthy soils, water, trees, and wildlife habitat; accessible nature; and natural processes integrated into the built environment.



RESOURCE REGENERATION

GOAL: Work towards net positive energy, water, and waste.

OBJECTIVES: More efficient water use; diversion of waste from landfills; reuse of remediated land; and the pursuit of energy efficiency, technology advancements, and renewable energy production that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



IMPLEMENTATION

CATALYZING NEIGHBORHOOD- AND DISTRICT- SCALE SUSTAINABILITY

Underpinning the EcoDistricts Protocol is a three-phase implementation framework. This framework sets the conditions for sustained, scalable outcomes that address the Protocol’s Imperatives and Priorities, and meet the specific needs of a district over time.

FORMATION

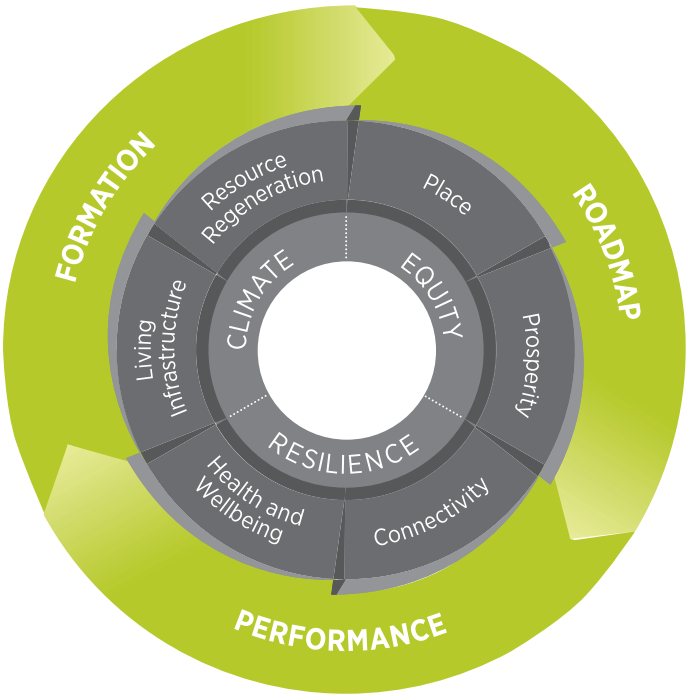
Build the necessary leadership, collaboration, and decision-making governance to support effective action through all phases of development and implementation.

ROADMAP

Assemble a comprehensive action plan of performance targets, feasible strategies for achieving the targets, and a schedule and resources for implementation.

PERFORMANCE

Implement the Roadmap, report progress towards targets, and use results to strengthen performance and transfer lessons learned.



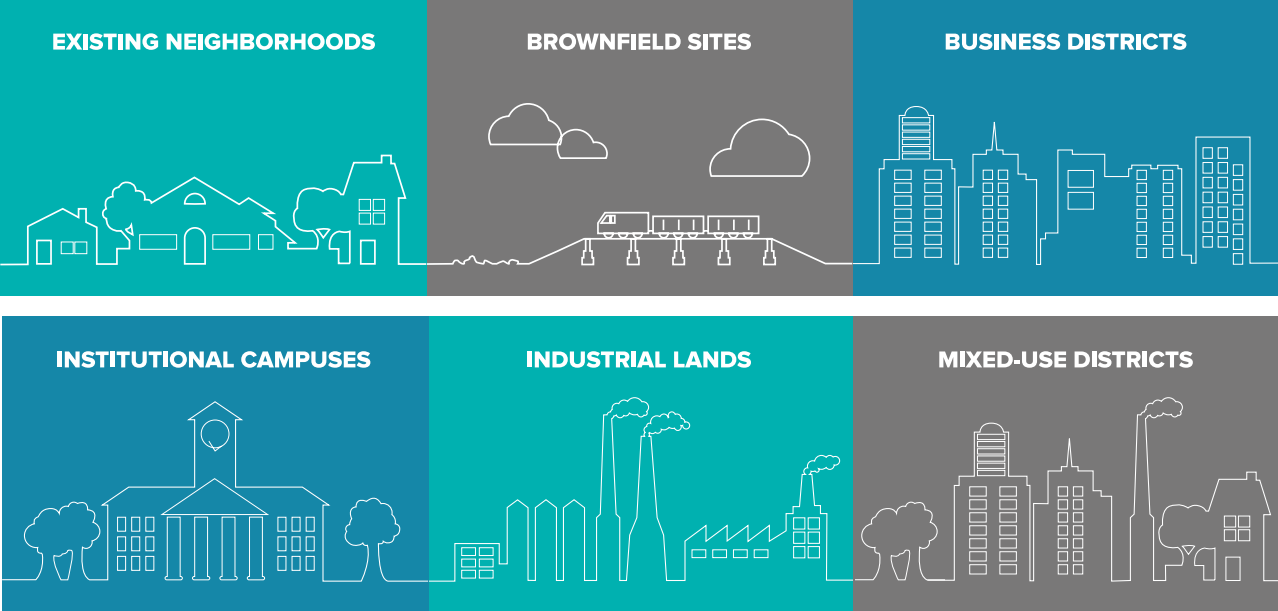


**WHO THE
PROTOCOL
IS FOR**

A New Model of Collaboration

The most successful neighborhood development projects bring together city officials, community-based groups, real estate developers, financiers, and all major district stakeholders to formulate a shared sustainability vision and action plan. The Protocol encourages and rewards such collaboration because it is focused on improving our cities from the neighborhood up.

The Protocol is designed to support a full spectrum of neighborhoods and districts, both new and existing, including residential neighborhoods, business districts, institutional campuses, mixed-use projects, and redevelopment areas. All neighborhoods — and the people who live, work, and play in them — deserve a sustainable future.



SUPPORTING THREE PRIMARY AUDIENCES WHO ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD- AND DISTRICT-SCALE INITIATIVES AND INVESTMENTS

GOVERNMENT

For municipalities, redevelopment agencies, and housing authorities, the Protocol is a comprehensive framework for neighborhood- and district-scale policy development, planning, and project delivery. The Protocol provides an important process for measuring impact related to public participation, transparency in government, stewardship of public investments, and public policy objectives.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

For community development corporations, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations, the Protocol is a comprehensive framework for identifying and moving catalytic neighborhood- and district-scale priorities forward. The Protocol provides a practical approach to collaborative governance, neighborhood planning and assessment, and reporting progress to stakeholders and funders.



THE PRIVATE SECTOR

For real estate developers, business improvement districts, and institutional and corporate campuses, the Protocol is a comprehensive project implementation framework and global mark of leadership that complements existing corporate and environmental performance standards. The Protocol provides an overarching platform for shaping project governance, selecting catalytic investments, and reporting sustainability performance over time.





HOW THE
PROTOCOL
WORKS

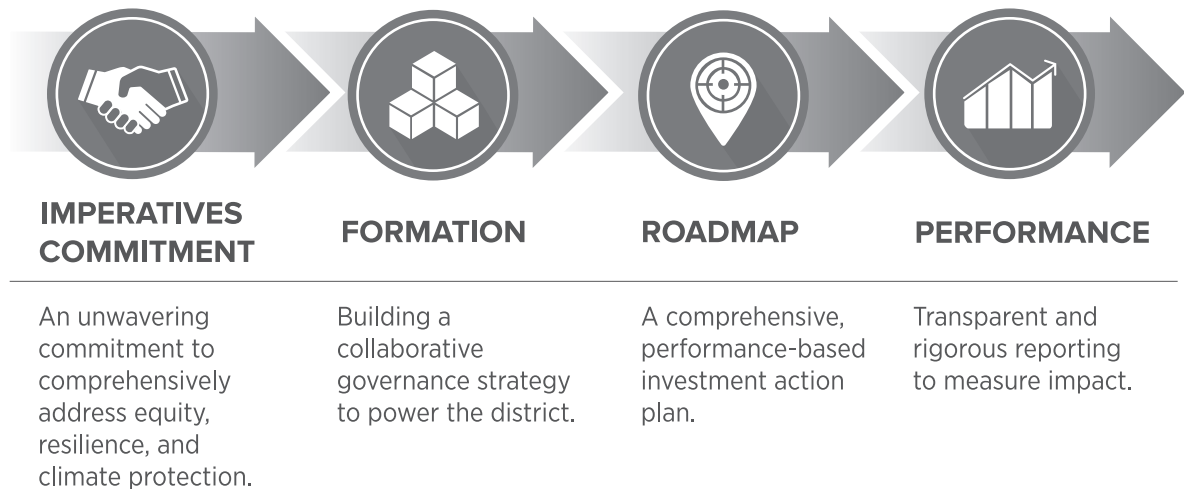


Using the Protocol

THE ECODISTRICTS PROTOCOL IS A POWERFUL WAY TO MOVE PROJECTS FROM VISION TO REALITY AND MAKE EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY FUNDAMENTAL TO NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL.

Embracing and using the EcoDistricts Protocol is a mark of neighborhood- or district-scale leadership. It confirms a district's commitment to inclusiveness, transparency, information sharing, and peer-to-peer learning.

APPLYING THE PROTOCOL MEANS TAKING ACTION IN THE FOLLOWING FOUR AREAS:



For definitions of key terms, refer to the **Glossary in Appendix A**.



EcoDistricts Certification is the new standard for community development. See page 29 and www.ecodistricts.org for more details.



IMPERATIVES COMMITMENT

The EcoDistricts Certified process begins with a district's commitment to the Imperatives that underpin the Protocol: Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection. These are indispensable cornerstones of long-term neighborhood sustainability and making a firm pledge to them at the outset of the process ensures their integration in the Formation, Roadmap, and Performance phases.

EQUITY

This obligation is a commitment that describes how a district will embrace procedural, structural, distributional, and cross-generational equity in district activities.

RESILIENCE

This obligation is a commitment that describes how a district will work to withstand environmental, social, and economic stresses and shocks.

CLIMATE PROTECTION

This obligation is a commitment that describes how a district will build a pathway to carbon neutrality.

REQUIRED ACTION:

- Convene stakeholders and collaboratively develop an Imperatives Commitment that details the methods for addressing Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection in subsequent phases.

SEEKING CERTIFICATION?

Districts that are seeking certification must submit their Imperatives Commitment within one year of registration with EcoDistricts. Detailed submission requirements can be found in the EcoDistricts Certified Handbook.



FORMATION

Formation focuses on shaping the necessary leadership, collaboration, and decision-making governance to support effective action through all phases of development and implementation. Formation is a key stage in exercising a district's commitment to procedural and structural equity in engagement and decision-making.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION IN 3 STEPS

STEP 1: CONFIRM READINESS TO FORM A DISTRICT

Conduct an evaluation to determine whether a district is ready to meet the Protocol requirements.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Convene stakeholders to understand the issues, opportunities, and organizations that will come together to form the district and determine the capacity to collaborate.
- Identify an interim district boundary that will be refined in subsequent steps.
- Prepare an asset map that categorizes social, economic, physical, and organizational assets according to their location inside or outside the district, and their control by entities based inside or outside the district.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Establish a district team that emerges from Step 1 to manage the formation and implementation process over time. The team will need capacity to evaluate backbone organization options, select the best fit, and move effectively through implementation phases.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Form a district team of key stakeholders representing the district's major public, private, and civic sector assets.
- Evaluate the best options for organizing a collaborative governance framework.

STEP 3: COMMIT TO COLLABORATION

Formalize the district's governance approach in a Declaration of Collaboration document that establishes a backbone organization, a decision-making body and procedures, and ongoing stakeholder engagement in district activities.



REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Identify or establish a backbone organization with the capability and necessary resources to support district activities.
- Create and adopt a Declaration of Collaboration that establishes or designates a backbone organization, defines roles and responsibilities, establishes or designates a decision-making body, and describes resources that stakeholders will provide to the organization over time.

SEEKING CERTIFICATION?

Districts that are seeking certification must submit a Declaration of Collaboration within two years of receiving EcoDistricts endorsement of their Imperatives Commitment. Detailed submission requirements can be found in the EcoDistricts Certified Handbook.



ROADMAP

The Roadmap is an action plan that describes baseline conditions, sets ambitious performance targets, and devises implementation strategies to achieve the targets by a horizon year.

ROADMAP ASSEMBLY IN 3 STEPS

STEP 1: ESTABLISH CONTEXT AND SELECT PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Understand the district's setting and location in the community, including who and what will influence successful district outcomes, and what goals are to be emphasized.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Convene stakeholders to finalize the district boundary, identify contextual issues, and identify ongoing or imminent activities by others relevant to the Imperatives and Priorities.
- Select at least three Priorities and corresponding objectives that align with contextual findings and stakeholder input. Consider addressing remaining Priorities in future Roadmap updates.

STEP 2: SELECT INDICATORS, ASSESS BASELINE PERFORMANCE, AND SET TARGETS

Choose performance indicators for the Imperatives and selected Priorities, establish current performance baselines, and develop future performance targets.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Select indicators for reporting on baseline conditions, future targets, and ongoing performance, as described in **Appendix B**.
- Using the indicators, prepare a baseline assessment of current district performance relative to the Imperatives and selected Priorities.
- Develop future performance targets using the indicators and relevant local plans.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY STRATEGIES AND ASSEMBLE ROADMAP

Identify feasible strategies, funding, and an implementation schedule for reaching targets by the horizon year and assemble into a comprehensive action plan.



REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Identify potential strategies to meet the targets and test the strategies with stakeholders to seek feedback and evaluate feasibility.
- Assemble the context, assessment plan, baseline conditions, future performance targets, strategies, funding, and implementation schedule into a Roadmap.

SEEKING CERTIFICATION?

Districts may submit their Roadmap and Declaration of Collaboration separately or in tandem. Districts seeking Certification must submit the required Roadmap within two years of Imperatives Commitment endorsement by EcoDistricts. Detailed submission requirements can be found in the EcoDistricts Certified Handbook.



PERFORMANCE

Performance focuses on measuring impact and gauging a district's progress towards its performance targets. This is an ongoing phase during which reports are shared regularly in the community and publicly on the EcoDistricts Registry. A district's biennial progress report becomes the basis of measuring impact over time and supporting peer-to-peer learning.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING IN 3 STEPS

STEP 1: UPDATE GOVERNANCE AND ROADMAP

Maintain organization capacity and leadership that represents stakeholder interests, keeps the district moving toward its targets, and seeks opportunities for strengthening district activities. Execute the Roadmap by confirming strategy feasibility and securing implementation. Update the Roadmap to reflect implementation experience and include new or modified strategies, and address Priorities not included in an initial version.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Maintain open and accessible accounts of district governance.
- Amend the Roadmap with new or modified strategies, as appropriate.

STEP 2: REPORT PROGRESS

Track the district's progress toward its targets, and report biennially to stakeholders and the community to foster transparency, share experiences, and maintain momentum.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- Prepare and distribute a biennial progress report that includes updated indicator results.

STEP 3: LEARN FROM PERFORMANCE

Ensure that the district continually develops its collaborative decision-making, celebrates successes, and identifies opportunities for improvements in implementation of projects, programs and indicator performance.



REQUIRED ACTION:

- Maintain a backbone organization and governance structure that provides leadership and strives for continual improvement.
- Ensure that success is celebrated, knowledge is shared, and opportunities to replicate success throughout the community are identified.

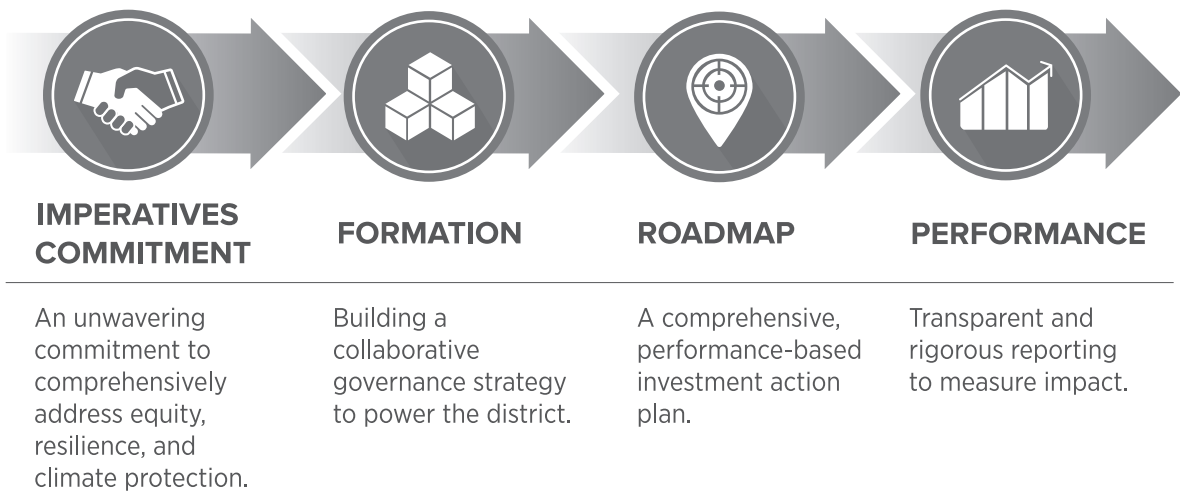
TO MAINTAIN CERTIFICATION:

To maintain certification, districts must submit biennial progress reports beginning on the second anniversary of certification, and every two years thereafter. Detailed submission requirements can be found in the EcoDistricts Certified Handbook.



THE NEW STANDARD FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

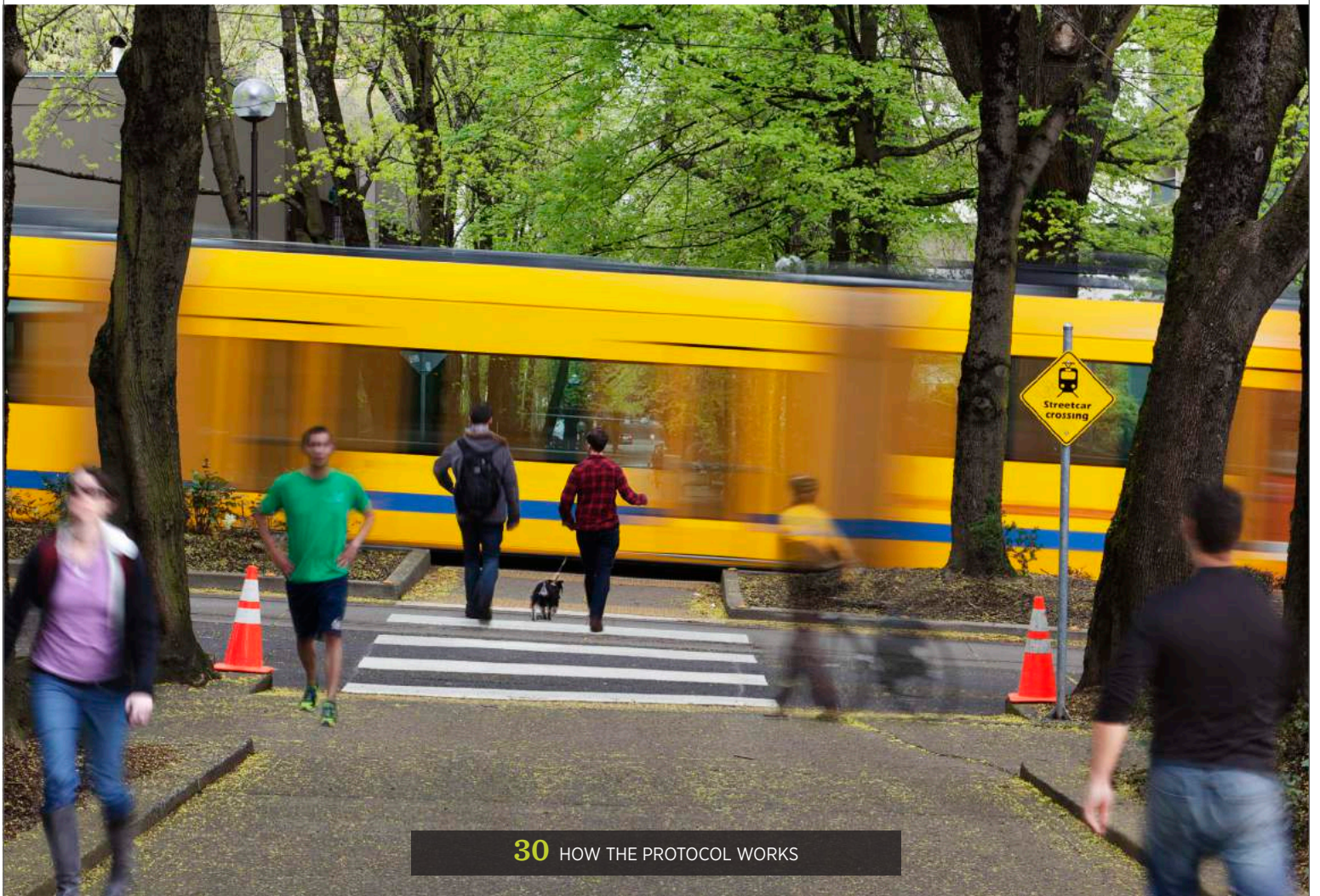
Powered by the Protocol, EcoDistricts Certified is a mark of excellence and a proven commitment to build people-centered, economically vibrant, planet-friendly communities from the neighborhood up. Certification bridges cross-sector interests, drives the formation of collaborative district governance, sets a new bar for meaningful stakeholder inclusion, and delivers powerful outcomes across Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection. Districts can initiate the process any time by registering their district online at www.ecodistricts.org.



As shown above, certification includes three core submission requirements, beginning with an Imperatives Commitment that must be submitted within one year of registration. After Imperatives Commitment endorsement, districts may submit their Declaration of Collaboration and Roadmap documents separately or in tandem, but no later than two years following the Imperatives Commitment endorsement. EcoDistricts will review both documents individually and will make a single certification award upon endorsement of both documents.

Certification is based on satisfaction of all Protocol requirements. To maintain certification, a district must submit biennial progress reports beginning on the second anniversary of certification and continuing every two years thereafter. Compliance with process timelines allows districts to maintain active status on the EcoDistricts Registry.

In the event a district fails to achieve a process deadline, it will be removed from the Registry, and any certification will be suspended until the required submission is received and approved.



APPENDICES



Appendix A: Glossary

ASSET. Something of social, economic, environmental, and/or organizational value that is supportive of district formation, and something of value toward achieving Priority goals.

BACKBONE ORGANIZATION. An organization dedicated to coordinating and managing district activities. The backbone organization may be an entity that is separate and distinct from the district decision-making body.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT. A comprehensive, quantitative appraisal of a district's current performance characteristics as measured by Imperatives and Priority indicators.

BIENNIAL PROGRESS REPORT. A report on district progress submitted every two years to EcoDistricts to maintain certification.

CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂). A naturally occurring gas, as well as a byproduct of burning fossil fuels and biomass, or of land-use changes and other industrial processes. Carbon dioxide is the principal human-caused greenhouse gas that affects the Earth's radiative balance and is the reference gas against which other greenhouse gases are measured.

CARBON NEUTRALITY. An alternative term for net zero carbon emissions, carbon neutrality refers to balancing the total measurable carbon dioxide emissions of a district's energy production, energy consumption, and waste production with an equivalent amount of carbon sequestration and offsets, thereby equating to a net total of zero carbon dioxide emissions.

CERTIFICATION. The process of certifying a district under the EcoDistricts Protocol, and the award of certification made by the EcoDistricts organization.

CLIMATE PROTECTION. Actions to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and reduce global warming.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE. A set of processes and structures used by communities to address problems that cannot be easily solved by one organization or sector alone.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT. A framework for facilitating and achieving change using a structured approach that brings cross-sector organizations together in a collaborative way to focus on a common agenda and produce long-lasting change.

DECISION-MAKING BODY. The governing body of the district as authorized in the Declaration of Collaboration.

DECLARATION OF COLLABORATION. A non-binding agreement that establishes or designates a backbone organization, defines organizational roles and responsibilities, establishes or designates a decision-making body with decision-making procedures, and describes resources that participating stakeholders will provide to the organization.

DISTRICT. Generically, a subarea of a community with a distinct identity, character, and/or planning area boundary; equivalent to neighborhood. For the purposes of EcoDistricts Certified, a “district” is a subarea of a community pursuing certification.

DISTRICT TEAM. Key stakeholders who register a district for certification and coordinate its Imperatives Commitment preparation and who may evolve into function as its core decision-makers, including the decision-making body created or designated in a Declaration of Collaboration. Throughout the Protocol process, the team should be broadly representative of the district.

ECODISTRICTS™. The nonprofit organization that originated the EcoDistricts Protocol, and now certifies districts globally under the EcoDistricts Certified program requirements.

ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED. A status achieved by a district that is certified by the EcoDistricts organization to be in compliance with the Protocol.

ENDORSEMENT. EcoDistricts’ individual approval of a district’s Imperatives Commitment, Declaration of Collaboration, and Roadmap. Certification is awarded when all three documents have been endorsed.

EQUITY. A state that is achieved when all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. The determinants of Equity include the social, economic, geographic, political, and built environment conditions in which people live and work that lead to the creation of a fair and just society.

GREENHOUSE GASES. Carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

HORIZON YEAR. The year a district has designated for achieving its Roadmap performance targets, except for carbon neutrality, which may occur at a neutrality year beyond a horizon year.

IMPERATIVES. Three critically important, overarching issues that must be addressed to attain neighborhood sustainability: Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection. The Protocol requires a commitment to Imperatives action before certification may be granted.

INDICATORS. A set of quantitative measurements that characterize district performance relative to the Imperatives and Priority objectives. Indicators are used to express baseline conditions, horizon year performance targets, and biennial performance results for a given Imperative or Priority. See Appendix B for additional information.

NATURAL CAPITAL. The stock of natural resources, such as land, water, and air, that communities depend upon for basic needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD. A subarea of a community with a distinct identity, character, and/or planning area boundary; equivalent to district.

OBJECTIVE. A desired outcome that contributes to achievement of a Priority goal.

OBJECTIVE CATEGORY. A group of similar objectives tied to a specific Priority.

PRIORITY. One of the Protocol's six goals: Place, Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing, Connectivity, Living Infrastructure, and Resource Regeneration. For certification, a district Roadmap must address at least three Priorities.

PROGRAM. An ongoing service or activity that implements an Imperative commitment or Roadmap strategy. An ongoing program may execute multiple subprojects.

PROJECT. A one-time action, such as a capital improvement, that implements an Imperative commitment or a Roadmap strategy.

PROTOCOL. The EcoDistricts framework for achieving people-centered, district-scale sustainability; and a certification standard that recognizes district-scale sustainability leadership and achievements.

PUBLIC SPACES. Publicly accessible streets, plazas, parks, and comparable outdoor areas; public facilities such as schools, libraries, and indoor recreation complexes.

REGISTRY. The online portal and database maintained by EcoDistricts to record registered districts and their certification work products.

RESILIENCE. The capacity of district stakeholders to survive, adapt, and thrive when confronting the stresses and shocks they experience. Stresses weaken a district on a chronic basis; examples are high unemployment or crime. Shocks are sudden, single event disruptions that threaten a district, such as a flood or a disease epidemic.

ROADMAP. The action plan prepared by a district to characterize district context, describe baseline conditions, set future performance targets, formulate strategies to achieve the targets, identify funding for the strategies, and establish a schedule for achieving the targets by a horizon year.

STAKEHOLDERS. Organizations based in, or serving, a district, including but not limited to public agencies, private utilities, schools, community development corporations, major property owners and investors, civic groups, and faith-based organizations.

STRATEGY. A Roadmap implementation measure that may include one or more programs or projects.

TEMPLATE. The outline of required content in district certification documents, including the Imperatives Commitment template, Declaration of Collaboration template, Roadmap template, and biennial progress report template.



BELLAGIOSTAMP

EcoDistricts recommends that the selection of indicators be guided by the Bellagio Sustainability Assessment and Measurement Principles (BellagioSTAMP), including a guiding vision of sustainability, adequacy of scope, transparency, effective communications, broad participation, continuity, and ongoing capacity for measurement. Using the BellagioSTAMP framework for district assessment can strengthen governance and improve accountability in setting and meeting targets.

SOURCE: BellagioSTAMP

Appendix B: Indicators

Indicators are conditions that can be measured quantitatively and that characterize district conditions and performance relative to the Imperatives and Priorities. Indicators are developed at the outset of the Roadmap phase and used to benchmark baseline conditions and, thereafter, to gauge progress towards targets in the Performance phase. Suitable candidates for indicators meet the following criteria:

- Measure a fundamental aspect of an Imperative or Priority objective;
- Use data that is readily available and regularly updated;
- Show change over time;
- Be easily understood by the public and media; and
- Inspire action.




THE DISTRICT TEAM HAS THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING A LOCALLY RESPONSIVE SET OF INDICATORS:

- Use the illustrative indicators from Tables B.1 and B.2 directly or as beginning points in formulating a set of indicators that fit local circumstances.
- Adopt or adapt relevant indicators that are already used in the community. Many civic organizations and public agencies operate local indicator programs focused on social, economic, and environmental conditions. These programs may offer cooperative data and measurement advantages for a district.
- Consult exemplary neighborhood sustainability indicator projects, such as the [Seattle Sustainable Neighborhoods Assessment Project](#)
- Adopt or adapt relevant indicators that appear in databases at the following indicator knowledge hubs:
 - [Community Indicators Consortium Project List](#)
 - [International Institute for Sustainable Development Global Directory to Indicator Initiatives](#)
 - [National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership](#)
 - [World Council on City Data](#)
- Consider indicators used in urban sustainability assessment and rating tools from the selection in the [Transformative Tools global registry](#).
- Adopt or adapt indicators from subject matter technical sources, for example the [U.S. EPA Guide to Sustainable Transportation Performance Measures](#) for transportation; or the [California Healthy Communities Data and Indicators Project](#) for health.
- Create new, custom indicators that take advantage of unique local data.

IMPERATIVE INDICATORS

A district’s indicators set must include at least one indicator for each Imperative; districts are encouraged to include additional Imperative indicators, if desired. Illustrative indicators for each Imperative are identified in Table B.1.

Table B.1: Imperative Indicators

IMPERATIVE	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATOR	
 <p data-bbox="224 827 311 852">EQUITY</p>	Civic participation	Percentage of eligible voters voting in latest local election
	Economic opportunity	Unemployment rate
		Percentage of population living below poverty level
		Percentage of population receiving social assistance
	Health and wellbeing	Premature mortality (deaths under age 75)
		Percentage of population reporting good or excellent mental health
		Persons with diabetes per 100 population
	Physical surroundings	Walkability score
		Number of civic meeting spaces within walkable distance
		Number of healthy food stores within walkable distance
Amount of green space within walkable distance		
 <p data-bbox="196 1335 339 1360">RESILIENCE</p>	Social	Average years of educational attainment
		Language competency (percentage of population who speak English as a second language)
		Percentage of voter participation in latest election
	Economic	Percentage of businesses with 100+ employees
		Percentage of households in poverty
		Sector diversity — percentage of workforce in primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors
	Environmental	Percentage of land area in 100-year floodplain
		Percentage of land area subject to sea level rise
		Percentage of land area with hydric soils (liquefaction)
 <p data-bbox="188 1713 347 1768">CLIMATE PROTECTION</p>	Energy use	Average residential electricity & natural gas use (million Btu/year)
		Average household vehicle fossil fuel use (gallons/year)
		Per capita total energy use in million Btu/year
	Onsite energy production	Carbon-free thermal energy produced within the district (million Btu/year)
		Renewable power generated in megawatt hours/year
	Net CO ₂ emissions	Per capita net tons CO ₂ emissions/year

PRIORITY INDICATORS

A district's indicator set must also include at least one indicator for each Priority objective category; districts are encouraged to include additional indicators, if desired. Illustrative indicators for each Priority objective category are given in Table B.2.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators


 PRIORITY: PLACE CREATE INCLUSIVE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES		
OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
ENGAGEMENT + INCLUSION	Civic engagement is strong and processes are inclusive and representative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of population engaged in public consultation processes (e.g., attendance rates, social media subscribers). - Demographic makeup of engagement participants. - Number of hours per capita volunteered annually by residents and business employees. - Percentage of eligible residents voting in most recent local election.
	Sharing programs are robust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of sharing programs in continuous operation. - Percentage of households and businesses participating in sharing programs annually.
CULTURE + IDENTITY	Historic and culturally significant places are preserved and celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of historic/cultural preservation projects completed and programs operated annually. - Number of public art and cultural interpretive installations.
	Participation in cultural events is high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of population participating annually in cultural events within the district. - Number of public spaces available for cultural events.
PUBLIC SPACES	Public spaces are accessible to all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of dwelling units and businesses within a 0.25 mile (0.4 km) walk of a public space other than a street.
	Public spaces are high quality, engaging, and active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of activities programmed annually for public spaces, including streets. - Number of people using public spaces daily, at peak and average levels of occupancy.
HOUSING	Housing is affordable and well maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of dwelling units priced at affordable levels. - Percentage of dwelling units occupied. - Percentage of dwelling units in poor condition. - The district's Housing and Transportation Affordability Index score.
	Housing is available to meet a diversity of dwelling needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity index score of district dwellings. - Percentage of dwellings meeting local visitability and universal design standards.
	Housing is close to facilities that offer a complete set of daily needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of daily essentials (e.g., shopping, civic, education, recreation) within a 0.5 mile (0.8 km) walk of 50 percent of dwellings.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators

OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY	Income and racial inequality are reduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Household income and education levels. - Percentage of population living below the poverty line.
	Schools provide quality education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduation rates. - Absenteeism rates. - Percentage of students advancing from one grade level to the next.
	Career pathways and training are available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training programs matched to district job opportunities. - Percentage of eligible district participants enrolled in training programs.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Employment in the district is retained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and type of jobs retained annually (workforce survey). - Percentage of district residents employed at locations in the district.
	Job quality in the district is enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Median wage. - Percentage of employees with full job benefits.
	New job creation occurs through economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of “local sourcing” agreements and programs in operation. - Number of community-owned/controlled business formations annually.
INNOVATION	Interaction between entrepreneurs is fostered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of incubators, accelerators, maker spaces, and co-working spaces in the district. - Number of programs, and enrollment levels, to cultivate business innovation.
	Job growth in emerging sectors is higher than in traditional sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of district-based start-ups in emerging sectors annually.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators


 PRIORITY: HEALTH + WELLBEING NURTURE PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND HAPPINESS		
OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
ACTIVE LIVING	Access to recreation facilities and services is improved.	- Percentage of population within a 0.25 mile (0.4 km) walk of a public indoor or outdoor recreation space.
	Walkability is enhanced.	- Percentage of street length in the district with sidewalks on both sides. - The district's Walk Score.
HEALTH	Health outcomes and life expectancy are more equitable.	- Average life expectancy. - Percentage of population with cardiovascular disease. - Asthma rates. - Obesity rates.
	Affordable, high-quality health care is accessible.	- Percentage of population with health insurance coverage. - Walk and Transit Scores of health facility locations.
	Toxic environments are remediated and regenerated.	- Number of days annually that air quality emission standards are exceeded in and near the district. - Percentage of population living near an unremediated brownfield or contaminated site.
SAFETY	Public safety is enhanced.	- Annual composite index score of crimes against persons and property.
	The built environment is designed for public safety.	- Percentage of public space frontages visible from a street. - Number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities annually.
FOOD SYSTEMS	Healthy and affordable fresh food is accessible.	- Percentage of dwelling units within a 0.5 mile (0.8 km) walk of a fresh food outlet.
	Food production in the district is encouraged.	- Area per capita used for food production. - Percentage of households with a home garden or using a community garden. - Quantity of local fresh food procured annually by establishments in the district.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators


 PRIORITY: CONNECTIVITY BUILD EFFECTIVE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PLACES		
OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
STREET NETWORK	The street network supports all travel modes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intersections per square mile or kilometer. - Transit stops per square mile or kilometer. - Percentage of total street length with bicycle sharing.
	The street network accommodates people with diverse ages and abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of students walking to school and residents walking to work. - Percentage of arterial intersections with traffic-controlled crosswalks.
MOBILITY	District travel, internally and externally, is safe, efficient, and multimodal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicle miles or kilometers traveled daily per capita. - Mode split of daily person trips. - Household car ownership rate. - Number of “first and last mile” options at major transit stops.
	Shared mobility options are increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of bike and car share stations. - Percentage of population using shared cars and bikes annually.
DIGITAL NETWORK	Quality wired and wireless connectivity is available throughout the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of residential and nonresidential users with Internet download speeds of at least 1 gigabyte. - Number of free Wi-Fi hotspots per square mile or kilometer. - Percentage of public spaces with free Wi-Fi.
	Local government data is open and accessible for public consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of local government services that can be accessed by citizens via the Internet or mobile phone. - Number of technology hubs for low-income residents to access the Internet.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators


 PRIORITY: LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE ENABLE AND CONNECT TO FLOURISHING ECOSYSTEMS		
OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
NATURAL FEATURES	The quality and functions of habitat are enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement in functional habitat performance. - Percentage of nonfunctional habitat restored annually.
	Natural features are protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of steep slope areas designated as nonbuildable. - Average buffer distance protecting wetlands and water bodies.
ECOSYSTEM HEALTH	Rainwater is managed in the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of 50-year storm event managed within the district. - Ratio of pervious to impervious surfaces.
	Soil fertility and farmland are protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual compaction, erosion, and chemical treatment rates.
	Contaminated land is remediated for productive reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area of contaminated land remediated for reuse annually.
CONNECTION WITH NATURE	Access to nature is improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of residents within a 1 mile (1.6 km) walk to natural open space.

Table B.2: Priority Indicators



PRIORITY: RESOURCE REGENERATION
WORK TOWARDS NET POSITIVE ENERGY, WATER, AND WASTE

OBJECTIVE CATEGORIES	OBJECTIVES	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
AIR & CLIMATE	All sectors improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and increase natural carbon sinks.	All sectors improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and increase natural carbon sinks. - Average energy use index for new building construction. - Percent of district with tree canopy.
	Electricity generation is decarbonized.	- Percent of annual electricity demand met by district-based renewable power generation. - Carbon content of local grid-delivered electricity (CO2 pounds/megawatt-hour)
	All sectors shift to renewable power and carbon-free fuels.	- Carbon and carbon-free fuel shares for household vehicles, e.g. percent clean electric vehicles.
	Air quality is protected from criteria pollutants	- Annual air quality index score.
WATER	Potable water is used efficiently.	- Gallons of water used daily per capita, indoors and outdoors.
	Alternative water sources are used for nonpotable purposes.	- Percentage of buildings connected to nonpotable water sources.
	Water quality is protected from pollutants.	- Annual water quality index score.
WASTE	Waste is diverted from landfills through reduction, reuse, and recycling.	- Percentage of nonhazardous waste diverted from landfills annually.
	The residual value of organic waste is captured.	- Percentage of organic waste diverted for energy recovery or composting annually.

History of the Protocol: Research and Development

Protocol research and development, since its inception in 2012, has engaged more than 100 expert advisors, comprehensive roundtables, listening sessions, and peer review milestones. The Protocol has been applied to over 60 projects throughout North America.

In the interest of transparency, a complete report of the research, development, and engagement strategy employed by EcoDistricts is available at www.ecodistricts.org/protocol. We want to acknowledge the commitment of our Protocol Advisory Committee members and peer reviewers for their tireless effort in helping us build the Protocol and delivering it to the world.

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Next Steps

DOWNLOAD THE ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED HANDBOOK for an actionable, step by step guide to implementing the Protocol. ecodistricts.org/handbook

GET SUPPORT OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Through the EcoDistricts Accelerator, we provide direct support to cities, developers, institutions and communities to integrate equity, resilience and climate protection; to form collaborative governance; and to develop strategic roadmaps to advance projects. We develop a customized package of support to advance equitable, sustainable community development across a city or neighborhood.

Accelerate Adoption of EcoDistricts. EcoDistricts Accelerator activities range from services such as workshops or assessments to longer-term programmatic delivery. Activities are customized based on the unique challenges and opportunities facing a particular place.

Request a Consultation: ecodistricts.org/accelerator

Bring Your Team to the EcoDistricts Incubator. The EcoDistricts Incubator is a three-day intensive designed to empower district-scale teams to advance outcomes in equity and sustainability and to form collaborative governance.

Learn more: incubator.ecodistricts.org

TAKE YOUR PROJECT TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED

EcoDistricts Certified is a powerful way to move projects from vision to reality and create neighborhoods for all. Through EcoDistricts Certified, neighborhoods commit to equity, resilience and climate protection, form collaborative governance, create an implementation roadmap, and track and measure impact. **Register for EcoDistricts Certified:** ecodistricts.org/certified

BROADEN YOUR SKILLSET WITH ECODISTRICTS ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL

EcoDistricts Accredited Professional (AP) is the only credential demonstrating a commitment to creating sustainable, equitable neighborhoods. EcoDistricts AP is for anyone involved in community development, including architects, planners, landscape architects, urban designers, public policymakers, developers, and staff members at public redevelopment agencies and community-based organizations. **Become an AP:** ecodistricts.org/professional

About EcoDistricts

NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL

For far too long, urban development has focused on real estate and infrastructure, rather than truly comprehensive investments that embrace the needs and challenges facing neighborhoods and cities. EcoDistricts is advancing a new model of urban regeneration to empower just, sustainable, and resilient neighborhoods. Through an integrated suite of programs, convenings and project certification tools, we aim to mobilize, empower and accelerate sustainable urban development leadership throughout North America and beyond. Together, we will build the vibrant neighborhoods of tomorrow.

LEARN MORE OR JOIN OUR COMMUNITY AT
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