



Oregon Center for Sustainability

Green industries

Research

Public policy

Higher Education

Community Resources

Investment

Commercialization

planning a “living building” for Oregon’s future



Oregon Center for Sustainability: a Living Building for Oregon's Future

A new public-private collaboration is poised to leverage Portland's and Oregon's green reputations and leadership through the development of an Oregon Center for Sustainability in downtown Portland. Public, non-profit and industry partners are planning for the proposed construction of a "living" and fully self-sustaining green building.

This innovative center will foster the city's and state's clean technology and green development clusters, resources, and best practices. It will also connect like-minded companies, allow them to share ideas, and be a hub of support for green industry cluster development. The Center is expected to become the city's and state's gateway to collaborative sustainable business practices, sustainability-related university research and education, environmental and energy policy, workforce development, and innovative government programs.

Led by the city of Portland, the Oregon University System, and a non-profit collaborative called the Oregon Living Building Initiative, the Oregon Center for Sustainability will be the first of its kind nationally and internationally. The Center will integrate a sustainability-focused effort from partners in the public, private, nonprofit, and education sectors. The mission of this project is to create a world-class center of excellence in sustainability that celebrates and nurtures the values and strengths of Oregon's leadership in climate change, land use planning, smart growth, green building, environmental stewardship, civic engagement, and social justice. The Center will innovatively advance the city's and state's economic development and green job-growth goals by creating synergy between green businesses, research, sustainability policy and practice.

"Oregon should be the first state in the nation to build a regenerative living building, and demonstrate to the rest of the country Oregon's sustainability know-how and expertise for building and living green."

Andrea Durbin, Oregon Environmental Council Executive Director

Collaboration for a Greater, Greener Oregon

The Center will facilitate synergies and collaboration among its tenant organizations by selecting a theme/ joint work program on an annual basis and connect that theme to real world changes in sustainability practices and policy in Oregon. This joint work will focus on the progression of several environmental issues of strength for Oregon:

- » climate change, renewable energy, and energy efficiency;
- » transportation, land use, and the built environment;
- » water protection and management;
- » sustainable agriculture, food systems, and forest management ; and
- » community engagement, citizen participation, and social equity.



Key Partners:

The proposed Center for Sustainability will be Portland's gateway to coordinated sustainability efforts. The project is led by the following groups:

- » The **Oregon State Board of Higher Education** and Oregon University System (OUS), involving multiple OUS institutions and programs.
- » **City of Portland:** Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and Portland Development Commission.
- » **Oregon Living Building Initiative (OLBI)** entities, including Earth Advantage Institute, Oregon Environmental Council, Portland Energy Conservation, Inc., Conservation Services Group, Energy Trust of Oregon, Green Building Services, and many others engaged in sustainability.
- » **State of Oregon,** Department of Energy and Oregon Building Code Division.
- » **Oregon BEST** (Oregon Built Environment and Sustainable Technologies Center)

The Center proposal was developed by the Portland Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Higher Education. Funding for the Center will include public and private sources, and is included in the Governor's Recommended Budget for 2009-2011.



The Net Zero Building: An Oregon Brand

The Oregon Center for Sustainability will be a state-of-the-art net zero energy and water living building. This living laboratory will be an icon of green building best practices, designed for adaptability to test and monitor new technologies over time.

The building will generate all of its own energy with renewable resources, capture and treat all of its water onsite, and use resources efficiently. In fact, the Center is poised to be the first large scale building to achieve the Cascadia Region Green Building Council's Living Building Challenge, rigorous global green building standards that were developed to challenge builders, owners, architects, engineers, and design professionals to build environmentally sound and self-sustaining buildings (see www.livingbuilding.org). This high performance living laboratory

will further highlight Portland's and Oregon's commitments to sustainability, providing a highly visible portal for sustainability industries and practices.

This living building will include visible integration of sustainability practices so that visitors, residents, businesses, foreign delegations, students, faculty, and the broader community can witness green strategies at work. These features might include kinetic energy generation in the floors; vertical gardens; interior green walls; living machines for waste processing; stationary bikes linked to energy systems; access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities; and direct connection to public transportation. The living building design will encourage interaction through strategies such as a roof garden, a childcare facility, and communal meeting spaces and kitchens.

Proposed Location

The Oregon Center for Sustainability will be housed in Portland's Eco-District near Portland State University at the junction of S.W. 5th and Montgomery streets. Here, institutional partners will work with non-profit and for-profit partners to connect with industry opportunities. Planners intend to work with the city and PSU to ensure that the University District becomes one of the city's first "eco-districts" to show the larger connection and importance of thinking holistically in community and building design. The site, which is owned by the Portland Development Commission, is located at the confluence of the Max light rail extension, the Portland Streetcar, and primary TriMet bus routes, providing easy access to the Center for local and out-of-state visitors.

One-stop Shop for Community Sustainability Knowledge

The Center for Sustainability will provide a one-stop shop for Oregonians to learn about available sustainability programs, including financial support. It will help link and connect the wider community of organizations and actors working on sustainability across the state. The building will serve as a sustainability hub for visitors to Oregon, providing them with an experiential exhibit of sustainability practices in the state and sharing Oregon's sustainability story. The design and programmatic focus will highlight community engagement using several strategies:

- » Sustainability tours, visitor exhibits, a learning center, and child-friendly space.
- » A speakers' bureau of people interested in engaging groups about sustainability issues.
- » A Web site for sustainability information with content by participating organizations. The site will also serve as a gateway for jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities, and international exchanges available in the sustainability field in Oregon.
- » Shared work space, state-of-the-art conference space, and a green business learning center that includes teleconferencing facilities and conference rooms, town hall meeting venues, and a visualization lab.
- » Space for a broad set of tenant and user groups in the building, including green companies in Oregon, nonprofits, smaller organizations, and startups.

"The Oregon Center for Sustainability meets our strategic focus to promote local and regional green businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators with the goal of creating more jobs for Portland."
Bruce Warner, Portland Development Commission Executive Director



An Economic Hub for Investments and Research

The Center will provide an access point and information hub to Portland, Oregon, and the Oregon University System for venture capitalists, businesses, foreign delegations, and others to seek incentives and learn about opportunities when making investments or other commitments to sustainable development.

The Center's PDX Lounge, a business networking and branding strategy for the region's clean tech and sustainable industry sectors, will be an economic conduit for the city and state. PDX Lounge will be a dynamic and beautifully designed exhibit hall that hosts meetings and workshops, as well as housing an interactive exhibit that tells the Portland and Oregon sustainability business story. This story traces back to landmark growth management legislation, the country's first bottle bill, and the region's strategy to diversify the economy in the 1970s and 1980s, and leads to today's leadership in the areas of green building, multi-modal transportation, and sustainable industries.

The Center will advance the city's and state's economic development goals in clean technologies and green development by fostering key industry cluster initiatives to drive economic growth. Some examples of cluster initiatives under exploration for the Center include the following: Decision Theater, a simulation lab for land use, natural resources, urban design, watershed planning, etc. (www.decisiontheater.org); Sustainable Materials Library, a cross-industry effort with local building design and apparel business clusters; and Green Workplaces Testing Lab, a cross-university initiative to test products and strategies to enhance worker productivity, occupant health, and ongoing building performance.

As a living laboratory, the building will allow for ongoing testing of new technologies and products used in the building, and will drive commercialization of emerging technologies and products from Oregon Built Environment & Sustainable



Technologies (Oregon BEST) and other emerging companies. In addition to serving Oregon industries, the Center for Sustainability will drive the development of unique and exportable proprietary knowledge about the development and operation of a living building. Portland will be able to share the data that it gains nationally and internationally.

Budget and Timeline

The Portland Development Commission and the Oregon University System are pursuing a feasibility study that is funded by the PDC. The study includes the design, engineering, and financial feasibility of constructing a living building. Included in the governor's recommended budget for 2009-2011 is \$80 million of bonding authority for the Center, which will be considered by the Oregon State Legislature in the 2009 legislative session. It is expected that other potential funding will be contributed by the city of Portland, nonprofits, and private businesses. If funded, construction of the Center is expected to begin in late 2009. This construction project will provide economic stimulus and jobs for the city and state while the completed project will place Oregon at the forefront of the new green economy movement.



Capitalizing on Higher Education Resources

Linking economic engines with university academic units is vital to growing sustainability initiatives and industries in Oregon. This partnership will simultaneously showcase OUS higher education; connect research to practice; bring together the best and the brightest educational, government, and private experts on sustainability; and educate the next generation of sustainability experts for a greater, greener Oregon and world.

The Center will drive improved coordination among community colleges, OUS universities, and workforce training entities to meet the workforce needs of private sustainable businesses and grow the pipeline to meet future growth. It will forge research and innovation partnerships between universities, the private sector, nonprofit, and governmental partners, and foster collaboration among OUS students and faculty to develop capacity in multidisciplinary research, instruction, and green company incubation.

At the same time, the Center will promote academic success by providing opportunities for hands-on involvement by students in sustainable practices, policies, and the work of the LBI partners through internships, apprenticeships, volunteering, and research. This partnership and foundation will help shape Oregon's future generation of employees and leaders in the new green economic movement.



“The Center has the potential to advance Oregon’s position as a global leader in sustainability.”

– Governor Ted Kulongoski

Oregon University System (OUS) comprises seven distinguished public universities, reaching more than one million people each year through on-campus classes, statewide public services, research, and lifelong learning. For additional information, go to www.ous.edu

The Oregon Living Building Initiative is a consortium of nonprofits and businesses committed to sustainability issues and protection of natural resources, land use, and public health in Oregon. LBI organizations include Oregon Environmental Council; Earth Advantage Institute; Green Building Services; Energy Trust of Oregon; Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund; Portland Energy Conservation, Inc. (PECI); Conservation Services Group; 1000 Friends of Oregon; Coalition for a Livable Future; Oregon Natural Step Network; Bus Project; Friends of the Columbia Gorge; Portland Audubon (for retail only); River Network; Technical Assistance Community Services (TACS); Community Health Partnership; Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force.

The Portland Development Commission was created by Portland voters in 1958 to serve as the city’s urban renewal agency as laid out in Chapter 15 of the City’s Charter. PDC’s mission is to bring together resources to achieve Portland’s vision of a diverse, sustainable community with healthy neighborhoods, a vibrant central city, a strong regional economy, and quality jobs and housing for all.

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