UPTOWN ECOINNOVATION DISTRICT

Development Guide

The EcoInnovation District in Pittsburgh is the first of its kind. It is a groundbreaking initiative that combines the goals of both EcoDistricts and Innovation Districts that have helped to positively transform communities across the country. The EcoInnovation District is an opportunity to identify the ways in which redevelopment can improve the environment, support the needs of existing residents and expand entrepreneurship and job growth.

* EcoDistricts emphasizes a bottom-up model of planning and development to create a resilient and sustainable city.  They reflect a new approach to development focused on economic opportunity, universal access, smart and efficient infrastructure, and green building practices.
* Innovation Districts are focused on job growth and economic opportunity.  Innovation districts that are walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented result in healthier, happier lifestyles for local residents, foster greater equity in access, and create a better environment for businesses to succeed.

Focused on the Uptown and West Oakland communities, the EcoInnovation District creates a new model for urban growth that is inclusive, innovative, and environmentally sound.

**THE PLAN**

The [EcoInnovation District Plan](http://www.ecoinnovationdistrict.org/read-draft-plan-here) is comprised of four main chapters that address strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to be built upon in order to help reinvest in Uptown and support current and future residents. Each of these chapters – Community, Development, Mobility, and Infrastructure – are broken into actionable items by the City of Pittsburgh, community leaders, and other partners.

**BONUS GOALS AND POINTS**

New buildings and renovations in this district can utilize the bonus system of[Section 915.07](https://library.municode.com/pa/pittsburgh/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PIZOCO_TITNINEZOCO_ARTVIDEST_CH915ENPEST_915.07PEPOSY). The list below identifies the bonus options available to projects in this district. Points earned by satisfying the bonus goals can be utilized in this district to achieve the bonus height as identified in[Section 908.04.C.4](https://library.municode.com/pa/pittsburgh/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PIZOCO_TITNINEZOCO_ARTIVPLDI_CH908PUREDI_S908.04UPPUREDI).

1. Energy efficiency
2. On-site renewable energy generation
3. Affordable housing
4. Rainwater management
5. Building reuse

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

ENERGY

* Benchmarking: Use the [Zero Tool](https://zerotool.org/) to benchmark your building. The Zero Tool is used to compare a building’s design or an existing building’s energy use intensity (EUI, total energy use in kBtu per square foot) with similar building types, understand how a building achieved its EUI (via energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy, and/or green power purchases), and set EUI targets. For more information on building benchmarking, contact Isaac Smith, Data & Performance Director at Green Building Alliance, [isaacs@gba.org](mailto:isaacs@gba.org).
* District Energy: Consider connecting to Uptown’s district energy system that can provide ready-to-use efficient district heating, eliminating the need for on-site heating systems. For more information, contact Torey Barr, Clearway Energy, [torey.barr@clearwayenergy.com](mailto:torey.barr@clearwayenergy.com).
* Electric Efficiency Rebates: Your project may be eligible for rebates through Duquesne Light’s Watt Choices efficiency program. For more information, contact Dave Defide, Manager of Customer Programs at Duquesne Light, [ddefide@duqlight.com](mailto:ddefide@duqlight.com).

How does your project consider and integrate Energy Efficiency?

WATER

* Water Efficiency: Consider using water efficient fixtures. Look for the EPA’s WaterSense label which ensures the product has met rigorous specifications for water efficiency and performance.
* Stormwater Management: Green Infrastructure utilizes vegetated areas and water retention techniques to mitigate stormwater problems and is critical to addressing the community’s flooding and combined sewer overflow issues. Additionally, the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority will soon be billing customers based on their impervious surfaces. For more information, contact Ruari Egan, Engineer III at Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, [regan@pgh2o.com](mailto:regan@pgh2o.com).

How does your project consider and integrate Water Efficiency and Stormwater Management?

HEALTH

* Material Selection: The materials selected for your space significantly impact the indoor environment for your building occupants. Consider incorporating material requirements related to chemical transparency, volatile organic compound (VOC) limits, and third-party verification systems (e.g. Green Label Plus for flooring).
* Indoor Air Quality Management During Construction: Simple strategies like sealing ductwork before it will be used, properly storing absorptive materials, and implementing green cleaning strategies during construction will improve the indoor air quality of your space. Sample guidelines can be found in the LEED rating system’s credit, Construction Indoor Air Quality Management Plan.

How does your project consider and integrate Healthy Materials safe Indoor Air Quality Practices?

LANDSCAPE

* Trees: Trees are essential to making a healthy neighborhood, creating a lush and sustainable landscape, absorbing carbon and other pollutants from the atmosphere, creating canopy and shade, and slowing and absorbing stormwater as well as direct human health and social benefits. For more information on planting new trees, recommended tree species, and tree preservation, contact Lisa Ceoffe, City Forester, [lisa.ceoffe@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:lisa.ceoffe@pittsburghpa.gov).
* Sustainable Landscapes:Vegetation should be diverse and well-suited to specific site conditions to support a healthy habitat for people and wildlife, and to better serve functionally as green infrastructure and open space. Landscaping should always be designed with long-term maintenance and sustainability of the plants in mind. For more information on sustainable landscape best practices, contact Kara Smith, Principal Environmental Planner, [kara.smith@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:kara.smith@pittsburghpa.gov).

How many trees will be preserved or planted? How is a sustainable landscape considering in your project?

WASTE MANAGEMENT

* Recycling: Consider designating areas in the space for recycling receptacles and outside the space (e.g. loading dock area) for proper collection and storage of waste and recyclables. For more information, contact Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC), [infoeast@prc.org](mailto:infoeast@prc.org).
* Composting: Commercial composting is available in Pittsburgh through AgRecycle and will greatly reduce landfill waste, particularly for food service use types. For more information, contact Carla Castagnero, President of AgRecycle, [carla@agrecycle.com](mailto:carla@agrecycle.com).
* Deconstruction: Consider deconstruction methods where appropriate, especially for historic structures and interiors. For more information, contact Mike Gable, Executive Director of Construction Junction, [mgable@cjreuse.org](mailto:mgable@cjreuse.org).

What Waste Management Practices will you include in your project?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

* Rental Housing: Consider reserving at least 10% of rental units to be affordable to households earning between 60% Area Median Income (AMI) and 80% AMI, or at least 5% for households earning below 60% AMI.
* Owner Occupied Housing: Consider reserving at least 10% of owner-occupied units to households earning between 60% AMI and 80% AMI.
* Financing Opportunities for Affordable Housing:
  + Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC): 4% and 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits are managed by the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). For more information, visit: <https://www.phfa.org/mhp/developers/lihtc.aspx>.
  + Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA): Many affordable housing programs are available such as the Pittsburgh Housing Construction Fund, Pittsburgh Development Fund, Rental Housing Development & Improvement Fund, and multiple programs from the Housing Opportunity Fund. For more information, visit [www.ura.org](http://www.ura.org).
  + Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh: Grants and subsidized loans for the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of affordable housing for households below 80% AMI are available. For more information, visit <https://www.fhlb-pgh.com/ahp>.
  + Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA): Subsidy and grant programs are available to affordable housing developers, more information can be found here: <https://www.phfa.org/legislation/act105.aspx>. PHFA also provides voucher subsidies to low-income persons with disabilities through the [Section 811 Project Rental Assistance](https://www.phfa.org/mhp/section811pra/) program.

Will any affordable or workforce housing be included in your project?

BUILDING REUSE

* Consider building reuse to preserve historic fabric and character. Building reuse also reduces resources associated with harvest, extraction, manufacture, transportation, and disposal of materials. For more information, contact Megan Zeigler, VP of Planning and Policy at the Green Building Alliance, [meganz@gbapgh.org](mailto:meganz@gbapgh.org).
  + Major Renovation of Existing Building: Existing building shell should be restored and retained.
  + Façade Renovation of Existing Building: At least 75% of street-facing building facades from structures more than 50 years old should be restored and integrated into new development.
  + New Construction: Exterior design should be compatible with nearby structures more than 50 years old including the use of similar window and door sizes and materials, cladding materials, bays, cornices, and other primary structure elements.

What efforts have you made to save any existing buildings in your project?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

* Designing spaces for universal accessibility, visitability, and ease of use enhances social interaction and diversity while fostering an inclusive community, independent living, and personal well-being. Accessibility is beneficial to all projects, whether housing for seniors or people with disabilities is present or planned. Diverse communities include a mix of abilities as well as ages. Visitability and universal design allow individuals to maintain their neighborhood social and economic networks in the event of short- or long-term physical restriction. For more information, contact: Hillary Roman, City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator, [hillary.roman@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:hillary.roman@pittsburghpa.gov).

What Universal Design features are included in your project?

OTHER RESOURCES

* Pittsburgh 2030 District: The Pittsburgh 2030 District, a program of Green Building Alliance, is an internationally recognized, locally driven initiative that supports building owners and managers as they strive toward 50% reductions in energy use, water consumption, and transportation emissions by 2030, while improving indoor air quality. The District connects Property Partners with Community and Resource Partners, driving industry-leading performance through peer-to-peer learning, technical trainings, and data benchmarking. For more information, contact Megan Zeigler, VP of Planning and Policy at the Green Building Alliance, [meganz@gbapgh.org](mailto:meganz@gbapgh.org).
* Sustainability **Technical** Assistance: Green Building Alliance provides technical assistance to projects on these sustainability topics and others. For more information, contact Isaac Smith, Data & Performance Director at Green Building Alliance, [isaacs@gba.org](mailto:isaacs@gba.org).