Mapleton-Fall Creek LEED-ND Charrette: Policy Recommendations

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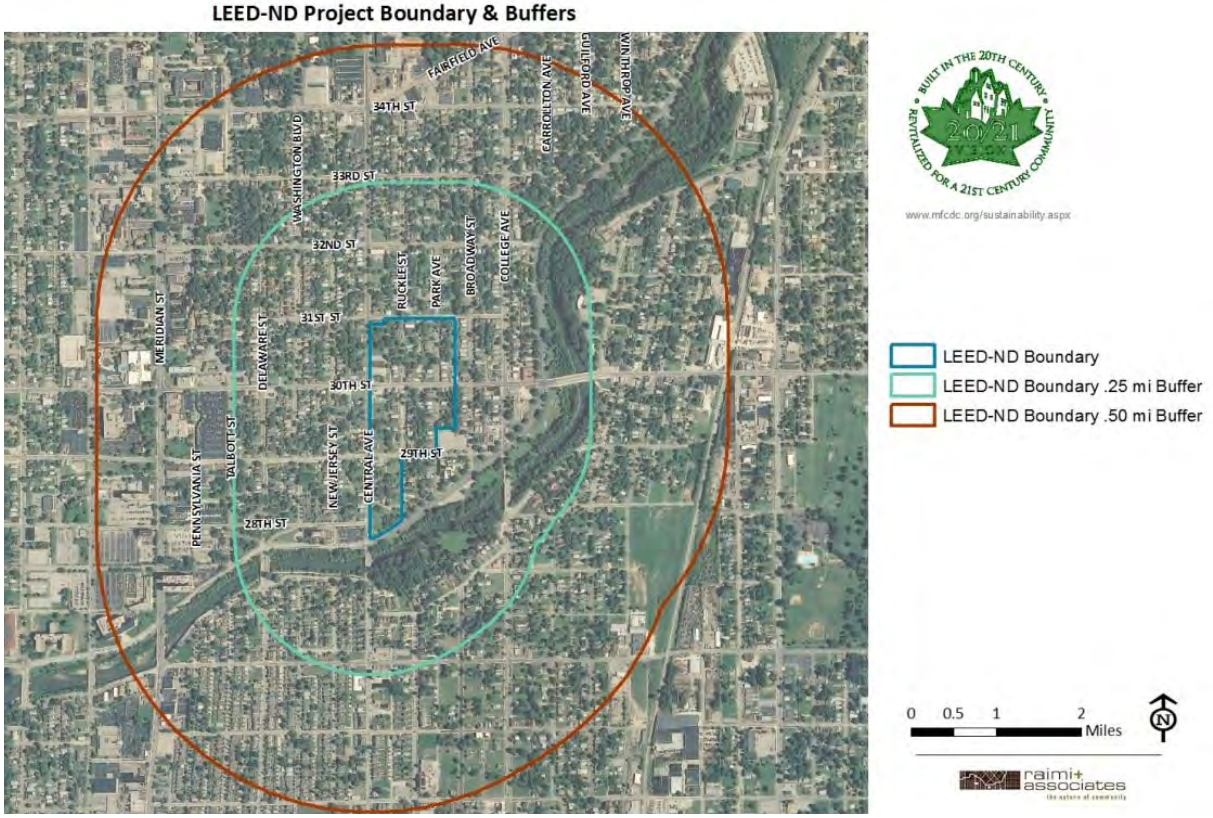
The following policy recommendations were generated during the August 17-20 Mapleton-Fall Creek LEED-ND charrette held in Indianapolis, IN. The charrette focused on work being undertaken by the Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation (MFCDC). It was funded by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Local Iniative Support Corporation (LISC), with support from the U.S. Green Building Council and other local partners in Indianapolis.

Over the course of the 4-day charrette, these policy recommendations were developed specifically for the 27-acre LEED-ND project area (pictured below) as the result of a credit-by-credit feasibility assessment using the LEED-ND Rating System. Pursuing these recommendations will be an important strategy for the neighborhood to achieve LEED-ND certification and increase its sustainability performance. For the complete detailed assessment and work plan for future LEED-ND documentation, see the document entitled "LEED-ND Prerequisite and Credit Plan – Mapleton-Fall Creek."



Smart Location

The Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood is well located in terms of proximity to downtown and both East/West and North/South bus routes.

- **Location.** Publicize and market this neighborhood as a location "sweet spot."
- **Transit Service.** Ensure that bus service is at the very least maintained and if possible enhanced.
- **Transit Stops.** In coordination with IndyGO and developers, encourage improvements such as benches, shelters, lighting, and schedules at existing transit stops.

Density

Continue to increase the population and the number of dwelling units of the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood. Meeting the LEED-ND density prerequisite will require approximately 145 new or rehabilitated dwelling units within the LEED-ND project area; it is most feasible that the majority of these would come from new multi-family housing. Perhaps more importantly, there is a lack of housing suitable for an aging population. Smaller housing units are suitable for non-seniors as well.

- **Mixed Use Building.** Pursue the mixed use/senior living building along Central between 29th and 30th. In case there is a change to MFCDC priorities or development feasibility of a senior living building, other types of mixed use development could also contribute to LEED-ND goals.
- **Assisted Living.** Pursue an assisted living facility on the vacant property between Central and Ruckle at the southern end of the LEED-ND project boundary, but ensure that it is integrated with the neighborhood and provides an active, attractive, and publicly accessible gateway to the neighborhood given its highly visible gateway location at East Fall Creek Parkway and Central (soon to be a 2-way street with both north and south traffic through the neighborhood). In case there is a change to MFCDC priorities or development feasibility of an assisted living facility, other types of mixed use development could also contribute to LEED-ND goals.
- **Housing Diversity.** Continue to provide diverse housing types such as single-family homes, duplexes, rowhouses, and apartments.
- **Visitability.** Set standard for visitability for new development.

Walkable Streets

LEED-ND heavily values neighborhoods with walkable streets. The Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood has excellent bones but there is some room for improvement.

- **Street Speeds.** The city speed limit of 35 mph is too high. Consider lowering speeds to 25 mph on mixed-use blocks and arterials and lowering to 20 mph on residential streets.
- **Non-residential Setbacks.** Continue the historic pattern of minimal or zero setbacks non-residential building.

- **Residential Setbacks.** Continue the historic pattern of consistent setbacks for single family homes (estimated at approximately 18-22 feet) when building or rehabilitating single family homes.
- **Driveway Cuts.** Continue to limit curb cuts by accessing driveways from alleys.
- **Sidewalk Widths.** Consider constructing new sidewalks that are 10' on non-residential blocks and 5' on residential blocks.
- **Replacing Gaps in the Sidewalk Network.** Repair failed, overgrown, or missing sidewalks within the LEED-ND project boundary. Confirm and maintain the inventory of failed sidewalks drafted during the LEED-ND charrette.
- **Short Blocks and Mid-block Passages.** Encourage short blocks, mid-block passages, connector trails, and other strategies to support connectivity. For example, during redevelopment of the planned assisted living facility, seek to maintain and improve 28th Street – or a similar mid-block passage – to provide active, publicly available street frontage that increase neighborhood connectivity.
- **Avoiding Surface Parking Lots.** Continue to avoid surface lots along streets. Funnel new parking demand towards existing alleys, on-street parking, or structured parking. New surface lots are discouraged but if they are built should be small and located behind buildings.
- **Transportation Storage for Seniors.** Provide storage in senior facilities for walkers and scooters.

Bikeable Streets

There have been notable recent commitments by the City of Indianapolis to improve bicycle facilities citywide. In addition to many of the components of walkable streets mentioned above, a number of other strategies could make bicycling in the neighborhood more safe and pleasant.

- **On-street Facilities.** Continue to support on-street bicycle facilities and trails through the neighborhood, including connections to surrounding neighborhoods and destinations.
- **Parking Facilities.** Consider minimum bicycle storage standards for new non-residential and multi-unit residential development.
- **Bicycling Programs.** Encourage bicycling programs such as the Freewheelin' Community Bikes and a potential bike hub similar to the one at East Wing City Market.

Rich Architectural and Planning Traditions

Continue to support and invest in the rich architectural character of the neighborhood.

- **Existing Building Rehabilitation.** Continue to encourage rehabilitation of the existing housing stock whenever possible. In addition to its environmental benefits, existing building reuse is a good way to maintain the neighborhood's architectural fabric.

- **Integrate New Development with the Existing Neighborhood.** When planning new buildings, use architectural and urban design strategies that compliment and are sensitive to existing buildings. This is especially important for larger mixed use or multi-unit buildings and their transitions to adjacent single-family housing.
- **Capitalize on Optimal Solar Orientation of Blocks.** The existing blocks in the Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood are platted such that most of the existing buildings have a longer E/W side, which is the optimal orientation for active and passive solar applications. This optimal solar orientation should be capitalized on in existing buildings and replicated in new buildings.

Investing in Local Assets

The Mapleton-Fall Creek neighborhood has nearly 30 existing businesses that should continue to be supported and diversified. In addition, Mapleton-Fall Creek is turning underutilized, vacant property into highly productive local food production.

- **Mixed-use Tenants.** When considering tenanting the ground floor retail of the mixed-use building, market the opportunity to local businesses, institutions, or service organizations.
- **Diversity of Uses.** Increase the diversity of uses that are in or proximate to the neighborhood.
- **Access to Healthy Foods.** Continue to improve the quality of the existing grocery store (Double 8 Foods) or encourage a grocery store or other healthy food outlet to be located within the neighborhood.
- **Access to Local Jobs.** Encourage local employers – including small business as well as larger employer like State Auto, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, or Ivy Tech State College – to employ neighborhood residents and implement jobs training and skills-matching programs.
- **Community Gardening.** Ensure that growing food is allowed in all zones throughout the city, since urban gardens are a good way to use vacant land, improve health, and increase food security. Ensure that soil used for growing is free of contamination or hazardous materials.

Green Building

Building green can provide environmental benefits while saving owners and residents money, improving occupant health, and helping buildings maintain their value over the long term.

- **Revise Specifications for New Buildings.** In order to meet LEED-ND prerequisites and qualify for certification, MFCDC must revise and formalize its specifications for building energy efficiency, building water efficiency, and erosion and sedimentation control for all new development. Most of these revisions are minor and add specificity to strategies already being pursued – they are defined in more detail in the accompanying document entitled "Recommended Revisions to MFCDC Building Specs."
- **Green Building Incentive Program.** Continue to utilize and support the City's Green Building Incentive Program, and encourage implementation of

design guidelines from the City's Green Supplemental Document. These existing resources support a wide variety of LEED-ND goals and credits.

- **Contractor Education.** Educate contractors about green best practices such as water efficient fixtures, energy efficiency, and tracking and implementing erosion sedimentation control best practices, and support those contractors who follow best practices.
- **Avoid Landscape Irrigation.** Continue to avoid irrigation of landscaped areas.
- **Use Solar Reflective Roofing.** Continue to require roofing on new buildings of SRI 29 or higher. Require SRI 78 on new roofs for low-slope buildings such as mixed-use buildings.
- **Light Pollution Reduction.** Encourage downfacing lighting and lighting that automatically turns off during daylight hours, while still maintaining sufficient lighting to support neighborhood safety.

Green Infrastructure

The environmental performance of infrastructure is an important consideration for overall neighborhood sustainability.

- **Energy Efficiency in Infrastructure.** Adopt energy efficiency standards for new public infrastructure such as streetlights, crossing signals, or pumps. In addition, ensure that the following City programs are adequately deployed in the neighborhood:
    - City retrofit of all traffic signals with LED technology, with the goal of completion by September 2011
    - A City pilot program for LED street light in targeted areas of the City
    - Replacement of land indicators along Fall Creek Parkway with LED technology
- **Recycled Content in Infrastructure.** Ensure that new infrastructure in the LEED-ND project area – such as paving or road base – utilizes recycled content.
- **Limestone Curb Reuse.** Through RebuildIndy, pursue potential re-use of the limestone curbs along 29th and Ruckle.
- **Green Checklist.** Utilize and expand upon the required Green Checklist for all infrastructure projects such as street and sidewalk paving, road and sidewalk sub-base and water and stormwater piping.

Stormwater

Stormwater has broad environmental impacts. It is of particular importance to neighborhoods in Indianapolis given the City's out-of-date combined sewer system, the upgrade of which will not be completed for several years.

- **Support Existing Programs.** Continue to utilize and support city programs for improved stormwater such as the Rain Garden and Native Planting program.
- **On-site Retention.** Encourage on-site stormwater retention and treatment for new development and rehabilitation.

- **Discourage Uncontrolled Runoff.** Discourage uncontrolled runoff from locations within the neighborhood and encourage improved water quality in Fall Creek and other downstream water bodies.

Street Trees

Street trees have multiple benefits. They shade streets during hot summer months, slow stormwater runoff, reduce the urban heat island effect, and make sidewalks more pleasant for walking.

- **Install Frequent Street Trees.** Since streets trees are missing along many streets in the neighborhood, work to increase the number of street trees, with the goal of a street planed at least every 40 feet.
- **Preserve Existing Trees.** Continue the policy of only taking down invasive or sick trees and protecting heritage trees.

Community Leadership

The MFCDC has been a strong facilitator of community participation in past and current initiatives.

- **Continued Leadership.** Continue MFCDC's high level of leadership and organization.
- **Prioritize the Needs of Residents.** Continue to prioritize the needs of current and future residents in all development decisions, and actively seek their input and involvement.
- **Social Equity.** Continue to both implicitly and explicitly support social equity in the neighborhood, promoting health, economic opportunity, resident stability, and access to transportation.

LEED-ND

The 27-acre LEED-ND project area in Mapleton-Fall Creek is an appropriate size for LEED-ND certification given the high amount of current and planned community development and the majority property ownership by a single entity (MFCDC).

- **Maintain Current MFC LEED-ND Boundary.** Maintain the current project boundary when submitting for LEED-ND certification for Mapleton-Fall Creek.
- **Other CDCs and LEED-ND: Majority Ownership.** As other CDCs consider using LEED-ND, define the project boundary such that the CDC and/or its partners controls a majority of the land area. LEED-ND will be most effective in areas with a high degree of development activity likely in the near or mid-term future.
- **Use LEED-ND Early in the Process.** Commit to LEED-ND early in the design process so requirements and credit thresholds can be considered during the design phase.