



Nonprofit Creates Model Green Streetscape Design to Enhance Community

Sustainability Pilot Background

EPA's Brownfields Sustainability Pilots provide technical assistance to assist communities in achieving greener, more sustainable results when redeveloping brownfields. These pilots also provide models for other communities across the country.

EPA provided Focus: HOPE, a civil and human rights organization in Detroit, Michigan, with technical assistance for the sustainable redevelopment of a half block of Oakman Boulevard in Detroit's Central Woodward/North End area. The area includes several brownfield sites and three adjacent properties. EPA provided assistance to support the integration of sustainable streetscapes and site-specific stormwater management approaches for the brownfield site and the adjacent properties undergoing redevelopment.



Focus: HOPE Project Background

Focus: HOPE is working with local partners to redevelop several properties along Oakman Boulevard. These properties were once used for industrial and commercial purposes including metal fabrication, warehouses and a service station. Focus: HOPE's plans for the area include the construction of a new residential building for affordable housing and the conversion of an historic commercial high rise building into a mixed use building. A new pocket park is also under construction at the corner of Oakman Boulevard and Woodrow Wilson Avenue, which will provide needed open space for the neighborhood.

The Focus: HOPE Sustainability Pilot initially focused on identifying green building design elements for the commercial high rise and new residential building. Focus: HOPE and its partners later determined a greater need to incorporate sustainable approaches within the streetscape.

Project Highlights

EPA's technical assistance to Focus: HOPE included the development of the *Green Streetscapes Study for Oakman Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan*. The study includes an introduction to green streetscape concepts, sample specifications, and construction details to support implementation. The study provides developers, designers and policy makers with essential components for achieving successful "green" streets.

Although many of the green streetscapes components outlined in the study may be applied to other properties, the study focused on the specific properties being redeveloped along the half block area of Oakman Boulevard. The EPA technical assistance team identified six green streetscape design objectives, including:

- Improve Air Quality
- Reduce Heat Island Effects
- Improve Water Quality
- Enhance the Urban Forest and Wildlife Habitat
- Reduce Light Pollution
- Mitigate/Rehabilitate Brownfield Conditions

The team identified green streetscape design guidelines and developed project concepts to meet the six objectives. Design concepts include sustainable stormwater management practices, native landscaping, bike facilities, and furniture and fixtures. To illustrate the feasibility of meeting the six green streetscape objectives and provide a roadmap for implementation, the study provided a conceptual design for adjacent redevelopment sites along Oakman Boulevard.

Focus: HOPE shared the project study with City of Detroit staff and is working to secure support from city officials for project implementation. Redevelopment on the four properties within the project scope is slowly progressing, despite a difficult affordable housing market. As the properties redevelop, Focus: HOPE intends to implement recommendations from the study for site stormwater management, native landscaping and green streetscapes elements to the extent both financially and operationally possible.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Fully Integrate Sustainable Design Professionals into an Ongoing Development Team

EPA sustainable design support was brought into an ongoing process where the development team was already in place. Extra effort was needed to fully integrate the short term technical support into the ongoing project to help focus the project and create synergies.

Include Local Expertise in the Project

Knowledge of local conditions, climate, community challenges and city requirements is important to bring focus to a project at inception.

Ensure Strong Project Coordination

Good coordination between the lead project team members is essential to meeting project objectives. The Focus: HOPE project coordinator and EPA regional contact worked closely to coordinate and guide the technical assistance to ensure that project goals were met.



Example of curb extension for Oakman Blvd.

Sources for Additional Information

For more information on this project, please see the full Focus: HOPE technical assistance study at: www.epa.gov/brownfields/sustain_plts/reports/Streetscapes_Final_7_31_09.pdf

Regional Contact Information

For more information on the Focus: HOPE Green Streetscapes project, please contact:

Aimee Storm
EPA Region 5
312-886-1972
storm.aimee@epa.gov