

reimagining the metropolis: *new york city's green building revolution*
High Performance Building in 2005

June 22, 2005
Opening Panel

Moderator: Nancy Anderson, Executive Director, Sallan Foundation
Kate Ascher, Exec. Vice President for Infrastructure, NYC Economic Development Corp.
Ariella Rosenberg, Senior Project Manager, NYC Economic Development Corp.

PlaNYC—which would be officially released in 2007—was the focus of the first forum, with panelists addressing the EDC viewpoint of the forthcoming document. High performance buildings were discussed in the context of how they related to the Plan's goals of developing 2,600 megawatts (MW) of new electric resources by 2008, reducing 675 MW off peak demand. EDC recommended LEED certification and wind power for their projects to promote sustainability. PlaNYC represented a shift from the conventional paradigm that views energy from the supply side to a more comprehensive approach that includes efficiency and conservation.

September 30, 2005
The Clients' Perspective

Moderator: Susan Szenasy, Metropolis Editor and Chief
Susan Boyle, Partner, Big Sue Inc
Jeff Perlman, President, Bright Power Inc.
Cecil Corbin-Mark, Associate Director, West Harlem Environmental Action

Speakers examined three high performance projects: the award winning Brooklyn Ice House development, the Lower East Side Greening a Block initiative, and the West Harlem Environmental Justice Center.

The Brooklyn Ice Project incorporated a number of new building techniques including: increasing the concentration of locally sourced fly ash in concrete to strengthen concrete; a focus on permeability for natural drainage, and use of low cost “off the shelf” solutions such as individual boilers, radiant heating, and dual pane windows. Boyle noted that you “need to stimulate the private sector to really grab the attention of those who can create tax incentives and policies”.

Greening a Block initiative proposed using funding from a Con Edison power plant settlement case to complete energy audits on individual buildings. With the goal of 30% energy savings per building the program intended to focus primarily on tuning boilers and heating systems, better insulating buildings, retrofitting lighting fixtures and updating appliances Perlman estimated that the energy savings for one block will be 180,000 gallons of fuel per year, which is equivalent to \$360,000 or 300 cars off the road.

The West Harlem Environmental Justice Center centered its focus around finishing construction debt-free, which they planned to achieve through capital campaign funding that would persuade elected officials to also contribute. The project successfully fused together a variety of environmental justice issues while transforming a row house into a community training center, a library, an art space, a gathering place and offices for the organization (WE ACT).

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October 30, 2005

Architects and Developers

Moderator: Carlton Brown, Chief Operating Officer, Full Spectrum

Bruce Fowle, Principal, FXFOWLE Architects, formerly Fox & Fowle Architects

Lydia Tom, Deputy Director, Enterprise Foundation New York

John Kriebel, Director of the Office of Sustainable Design, NYC Department of Design and Construction

This panel's objective was to "try and comprehend what the barriers are in each of these sectors (private architecture design, non-profit development, and public administration), and how we can begin to work with each other" according to moderator Brown. Panelists spoke about the use of green architecture; how labeling is often arbitrary and how US standards are different than those used in other countries, as well as how fluctuating technology costs can be a challenge. While Fowle noted that the Durst-developed Helena hi-rise apartment building uses a black water system and under floor air conditioning, the cost saving was not yet enough to compel traditional builders. Rather, his projects stand as demonstrations of what it can be achieved.

Tom described the \$500 million that Enterprise Foundation gives in the form of grants, loans and direct capital contributions to green housing units. In NYC, this figure was \$27 million in investment that created 500 affordable green housing units. She explained that tax credit investors are increasingly interested in her developments because of the growing understanding that the life cycle costs of green buildings will out-perform developments of similar size without green features.

The conversation turned to discussions of LEED and Intro 324-A and the challenges of using the rating system for all new construction and renovations in NYC. Said Kriebel, "LEED is like a SAT score. It can only show the direction a project is moving. The whole process should be simplified and although simplicity is important, credibility is what matters most."

December 31, 2005

The Policy Makers' Perspective

Moderator: Tom Hanrahan, Dean of Architecture, Pratt Institute

Ashok Gupta, Director, Air & Energy Programs, Natural Resource Defense Council

Randy Croxton, Principal, Croxton Collaborative Architects

Hillary Brown, New Civic Works

Patty Noonan, New York City Partnership

The final panel sought to project the conversation about high performance buildings into the future and focused on the drawbacks, benefits, and possibilities of integrating high performance buildings into the "new normal". For Gupta, smart growth means looking at efficiency through the lens of transportation access, land use and brownfield redevelopment; the next step in energy efficient buildings is making structures have a net-zero carbon footprint. By generating their own power sources new buildings could reduce dependence on a national grid that runs at "30% efficiency". Croxton praised LEED for making green building performance quantifiable but stressed that the next step should take into account the core tenets of sustainability. "Sustainability can not be done one building at a time"; rather should encompass all the elements and context of the human experience.

The panelists explored the synergy between building green projects and governance. Brown emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to sustainability—the "level of involvement and leadership is determined by the problem being addressed" but that if we change the process starting at conception and procurement, we could effectively create a "mission driven, democratic and collaborative process that recognizes the organizing principals of urban ecology." Noonan reiterated this stance for the private sector that she represented but stressed that developers "don't like mandates, but like incentives a lot".