

The Mariposa-Lincoln Park Public Housing Redevelopment

Denver, Colorado

The Mariposa-Lincoln Park Public Housing Redevelopment is creating a new and energized transit-oriented community in one of Denver's oldest neighborhoods. The redevelopment, known as the "Mariposa District," offers proximity to downtown and a spectrum of housing options to residents, along with cultural diversity and environmental sustainability. The project is bringing economic, environmental, and social vitality to a Hispanic community with a long tradition of valuing the arts.

Following an EPA-funded brownfields environmental site assessment and a cleanup grant to the City and County of Denver, the site was purchased by Denver Housing Authority (DHA) for transformation into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development with affordable housing in a community with environmental justice concerns. Redevelopment in the neighborhood began in 2009 with the construction of LEED Platinum senior housing and a culinary school, both of which were built on former brownfields near a light rail station. Now in Phase III, the Mariposa District project is helping the neighborhood become a sustainable community with increased access to a range of transportation choices and over 800 units of mixed-income housing.

Green infrastructure elements are an integral part of this innovative and sustainable development project. A regional stormwater strategy workgroup was convened, and the City of Denver modified its Master Development Plan to include design of low-impact development and green infrastructure (porous landscape detention) in city rights-of-way to reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality.



Right of way detention basin. Source: U.S. EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization

The Master Development Plan also was modified to include a goal of "net zero energy community" by setting CO₂ emission limits, in addition to an 80 percent decrease in energy consumption. This set a new standard for public housing. The project won a 2012 EPA National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. For a more detailed look into the planning process for the Mariposa District, please see the video linked below.

One of the keys to success was extensive stakeholder involvement from all levels of the community. DHA conducted 123 community meetings and group interviews with residents, community leaders, city agencies, and local government representatives to outline a path for the neighborhood prior to the charrettes. DHA collaborated with residents of La Alma/South Lincoln Park and partnered with the City and County of Denver. DHA asked the HUD/DOT/EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities to support



Community members participating in a design charrette.
Source: U.S. EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization

design efforts. EPA funded and helped plan a series of community design charrettes focusing on energy, green infrastructure stormwater management, and transportation under a Partnership for Sustainable Communities Brownfields Pilot Program. Community members wanted to enhance La Alma/Lincoln Park's economic vitality while preserving its distinctive identity and strong sense of community.

The extensive partnership that has made this project possible includes:

- EPA Region 8
- EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, Office of Sustainable Communities, and energy efficiency, green infrastructure, and environmental justice programs
- Region 8's Partnership for Sustainable Communities (HUD/DOT/EPA)

- Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
- State of Colorado
- City and County of Denver
- Denver Housing Authority
- Regional Transportation District
- CEL Energy, Auraria Campus
- Private landowners, academic experts and consultants.

DHA also received a HUD HOPE VI grant, using data and lessons learned from the design charrettes. EPA also partially funded a contracted energy modeling study conducted by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. DOT provided funding for a light rail station that was already in place, and connectivity; and HUD is funding the next phase of mixed-income/mixed-use housing with energy and water design goals.

Video:

EPA's 2012 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement: The Mariposa District, Denver, CO



http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=VNZEz47W_2Y

