

## Transformative Green Planning for the City of Auburn, Washington

In August 2010, the City of Auburn, Washington partnered with Washington State University's Institute for Sustainable Design (ISD) to develop detailed sustainable plans for stormwater management, land use, transportation and building design practices for approximately 600 acres encompassing portions of Downtown Auburn and residential, commercial and industrial areas west of Downtown. This collaborative effort was spearheaded by Councilmember Rich Wagner, a 20-year member of the Auburn City Council and a Washington State University alumnus. Professor Michael Wolcott, ISD's Director, is overseeing the efforts of the Integrated Design Experience (IDeX) studio that brings together students from engineering and the allied design disciplines to develop sustainable solutions for the built environment. Between August 2010 and June 2011, a group of 5 professors, 21 architectural students and 16 engineering students will work with City of Auburn staff to develop sustainable design approaches for infrastructure development, new residential and non-residential development and redevelopment of existing properties and buildings. Professor Wolcott highlights the benefit for IDS and the City in doing this project when he states, "It's difficult to study and do sustainability while you are sitting in a university. One of the reasons why this is a landmark deal is our integral involvement in the community in an explicit way."

A key focus of this transformative planning effort is to develop an integrated stormwater management solution that meets the needs of the community while enhancing the environmental and economic value of the study area. City of Auburn leaders believe that the ideas and work being done with ISD will also help attract "green jobs" to the Environmental Park District that is part of the study area. This District, anchored by the 130 acre Auburn Environmental Park, owned by the City of Auburn and comprised of environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, habitat, creeks and tributaries, is currently composed of traditional industrial and residential uses that reflect the City's historic industrial and manufacturing base and patterns of lower density development.

Beginning in 2006 with the rezoning of the area around the Auburn Environmental Park to the Environmental Park District, the City of Auburn has sought to establish a unique location in the City where new and future environmental design methods can be implemented, new sustainable non-residential and residential development practices can be implemented and new businesses or existing businesses can participate in the local, regional and national "green economy". Over time, the Auburn City Council envisions this area growing into a vibrant scene of diverse green businesses supplying technological solutions for energy conservation, physical infrastructure and water quality with many of their ideas tested and practiced in the District itself. In fact, the Auburn Environmental Park is anticipated to serve as a living laboratory for many of the companies that locate in the District.

In December 2010, the students presented 26 project concepts addressing broad-based sustainable design issues to City of Auburn staff and invited practicing architectural and engineering professionals. City staff and invited guests put students through a rigorous review to critically evaluate their ideas and their applicability to the City. Over the next several months, students will refine their concepts including analyzing their economic viability. Students will also present their ideas at a public open house and make a final presentation to City of Auburn leaders and staff.

The partnership between the City of Auburn and ISD brings together cutting edge technology and superior intellectual thought that will result in real life solutions to help the City balance environmental stewardship and economic progress. Councilmember Rich Wagner sums it up in describing ISD's contribution to the City of Auburn, "They will bring cutting-edge-technology thought and intellectual thought that is beyond where everyday engineers think. Plus, these will be graduate students who are fully capable almost at a professional level already, with new ideas that only young people have. Ideas that include types of pavements, ways that buildings channel their water, ways that buildings capture heat and ways that buildings reduce their carbon footprint. All this stuff about greenness, these folks are out on the cutting-edge of it while the rest of us are still trying to catch up."

*The City of Auburn, Washington, population 68,500, is located in South King County and North Pierce County, Washington. Incorporated in 1891, the City is a hub of culture, transportation and employment and is part of the Green River Valley Industrial Complex, one of the largest concentrations of industrial and manufacturing businesses on the West Coast.*

*Washington State University's Institute for Sustainable Design based in Pullman, Washington brings faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, design professionals, manufacturers, and suppliers in a stimulating, interactive environment that will serve as a model for how academia and industry can solve societal problems of sustainability. As part of its work, the Institute offers the Integrated Design Experience Studio where students can get real world experience in and exposure to sustainable issues, concepts and ideas.*

**The Integrated Design Experience (IDeX) Auburn Project Review, 12/10/2010  
Washington State University, Institute for Sustainable Design (ISD)**



An example of the review format, showing four of the 26 projects, each with four to six poster displays, and some with 3-D models of key concepts as shown in Jeff Leudeman's model of a retractable wall screen for stormwater management.



Dennis Selle, City Engineer, Assistant Public Works Director, evaluating Rose Golino's Auburn Environmental Park wildlife viewing tower and trail ideas in project "Attraction in Interaction"



Tim Carlaw, City Storm Drainage Engineer, evaluating Gina Usher's "Flow Management Thru Auburn"



Street canopy with plants provides a focal point at downtown intersection



Vegetated freeway sound barrier draws attention to views of the Environmental Park



Kevin Snyder, City Planning Director, evaluating Sharaya Hays, "Infiltration"



Stormwater flow analysis of 600 acre study area including the Environmental Park and Downtown



Tim Carlaw reviewing "Stormwater Strategies – Roofs" includes aquifer recharge & street canopy concepts. Rob Borden, Tyler Pierce, Md Alam, and Kevin Ryan



Freeway sound barriers for a separated bicycle path and for Environmental Park wildlife habitat

