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## **Denver’s RiNo Art District Commits to World’s First Standard for Community Development**

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 1, 2017 – Denver’s RiNo Art District today became one of the first communities in the world to commit to a pioneering new standard for community development that makes equity and sustainability fundamental to neighborhoods for all. By embracing the new standard – EcoDistricts Certified – the RiNo Art District will join projects in other leading cities across North America in becoming the first certified EcoDistricts.

“Denver’s urban core neighborhoods are experiencing unprecedented growth, and the communities of Five Points, Elyria-Swansea, Globeville, and Cole - portions of which the Art District overlays - are certainly not immune to the associated impacts. As an Art District, RiNo is always seeking creative ways to address challenges in the community, and our commitment to EcoDistrict certification is driven by a collective vision. RiNo desires to always be a thriving, inclusive community that celebrates its industrial history, takes care of its great natural asset in the South Platte River, supports its artists, residents, and business owners, encourages a people-oriented built environment, and offers excellent connectivity and mobility throughout the district.”

The RiNo Art District’s commitment to the EcoDistrict is driven by a desire to ensure that the once industrial area transforms into a mixed-use neighborhood in a livable, sustainable way. Core to our values that we can believe can be strengthened by this commitment to EcoDistricts are:

- Giving everybody – regardless of class, race, age, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation – the right to live in a healthy, safe, connected and livable place
- Social equity, inclusion and democracy as fundamental to sustainable neighborhood development
- Economic opportunity, community well-being and ecological health
- A commitment to healthy, sustainable development that supports rather than adversely impacts the community

More details about the RiNo Art District’s commitment to EcoDistricts Certified can be found here: [rinoartdistrict.org/post/eco-district](http://rinoartdistrict.org/post/eco-district)

“We created EcoDistricts Certified to transform the market. The planet and our most vulnerable can’t wait for another generation. We’re spending tons of money in cities today and need to get it right,” said Rob Bennett, CEO, EcoDistricts. “This new standard is where an upfront investment in community engagement yields exponential returns: Leaders get organized, projects happen faster, new opportunities are created, people stay where they live, and others move there.”

[EcoDistricts Certified](#) is the result of seven years of research, pilot projects and the best thinking from international experts. It provides a flexible, holistic, and rigorous “how to” framework for organizing and achieving important public policy, sustainability, and investment goals. EcoDistricts Certified projects 1) commit to equity, resilience and climate protection at the heart of every decision; 2) form collaborative governance that reflects community stakeholders; 3) create an implementation roadmap to guide projects and programs; and 4) track and measure impact over time. Each step is submitted to EcoDistricts’ 3<sup>rd</sup>-party verifiers to ensure transparency and accountability.

Other projects committing to EcoDistrict Certified today are [Seaholm \(Austin\)](#), [ATL Airport \(Atlanta\)](#), [TNT Eco Innovation District \(Boston\)](#), [RiNo Art District \(Denver\)](#), [Sun Valley EcoDistrict \(Denver\)](#), [Millvale EcoDistrict \(Pittsburgh\)](#), [Lloyd EcoDistrict \(Portland\)](#), [Capitol Hill EcoDistrict \(Seattle\)](#), [High Falls EcoDistrict \(Rochester\)](#), [City Yards \(Santa Monica\)](#), and [East Harbor \(Toronto\)](#).

Additional information on these projects is available at: <https://ecodistricts.org/district-registry/>

## **A New Standard, Just in Time**

The RiNo Art District commits to EcoDistricts Certified at a time of unprecedented reinvestment in cities and when communities everywhere face an increasing number of interwoven challenges:

- \$30 trillion is expected to be spent rebuilding cities in the next 30 years. We are in the middle of one of the world’s largest building booms with over 75 million people moving to cities every year.
- 70 percent of cities in the U.S. are already dealing with the effects of [climate change](#), and nearly all are at risk. It is requiring cities to rethink the deployment of infrastructure, emergency services and neighborhood social networks.
- [Inequality](#) within individual neighborhoods has risen precipitously over the past 35 years. The already-significant income gap exacerbated by The Great Recession is creating massive pockets of disinvestment and gentrification.
- Infrastructure is crumbling. The American Society of Civil Engineers just rated the nation’s overall [infrastructure](#) with a grade of D+.

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## **EcoDistricts Accredited Professional**

EcoDistricts is also announcing the first class of [EcoDistricts Accredited Professionals](#) (AP), the new credential demonstrating a commitment to equity and sustainability in neighborhoods, as well as expertise in the EcoDistricts standard.

“The EcoDistricts AP is the signature credential to show that you believe in processes that promotes equity, sustainability, and resilience at the district scale,” said Dominique Hargreaves, Executive Director of the US Green Building Council (L.A.) and an EcoDistricts Accredited Professional. “I enjoy studying rating systems and this is not a rating system – it is a paradigm shift that will produce positive impacts for new and existing communities.”

### **EcoDistricts Summit**

On October 10-11, urban and community development leaders from around the world will meet in Atlanta at the annual EcoDistricts Summit to shape the future of neighborhoods. More than just a conference, the EcoDistricts Summit is a dynamic participatory event that brings together leading city-builders to design real-time solutions to complex neighborhood challenges. It provides a platform to build lasting relationships and learn about the latest trends, best practices, and projects influencing the market, including the first generation of EcoDistricts Certified neighborhoods. Early bird registration ends on July 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **About EcoDistricts**

EcoDistricts is a nonprofit organization that advances a new standard for community development. Through its programs and certification standard, EcoDistricts helps build equitable, sustainable, and resilient neighborhoods for all. Learn more at <https://ecodistricts.org>.