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## Encore Tampa: Green Initiatives Shape Urban Design

ALEXIS QUINN CHAMBERLAIN | TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2013



Think shady trees, curvy streets and sidewalks wide enough to walk, bicycle and sit down at trendy outdoor cafes serving up Cuban sandwiches next to Jamaican jerk chicken next to French beignets next to Asian sushi -- all washed down by local microbrews.

Think a diversity of workers scurrying along exercising their thumbs on their smart phones -- some with sleeves rolled up; others with collars buttoned down. Think young moms and dads pushing baby strollers to a neighborhood park while grandparents make their way slowly back from a nearby grocery store.

Think people with tattoos and earrings, dreadlocks and purple mohawks next to the well-coifed fresh off their latest botox injection -- all coming together in a popular urban setting.

Think hip and cool. Think energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Get the picture?

Yes, this is the vision for the newest urban neighborhood emerging just north of downtown as part of the \$500 million Encore Tampa project that aims to attract all of the above and more in years to come.

Encore Tampa is designed to create a sustainable, environmentally sensitive project ultimately meeting resident needs while preserving resources for future generations.

Spearheaded by the [Tampa Housing Authority](#) (THA), the 28-acre project keeps environmental awareness in mind while creating a [new vision](#) for a once impoverished area of Tampa, located immediately north of downtown where Cass Street meets Nebraska Avenue. [Encore](#) will take advantage of and improve upon the preexisting elements of a previously developed sustainable, urban Brownfield

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site -- an abandoned or underused piece of land available for re-use.

The project, which broke ground in 2010, celebrated the grand opening of The Ella, a 160-unit senior housing facility, in December 2012. Anticipated for 2013 is The Trio, a 141-unit apartment building designed for families with children. Then, The Reed, an additional complex for seniors, is expected to open by 2014-15.

Also in the works for the much-anticipated project are two additional residential apartment complexes, a grocery store, two office buildings, 300 condos, two parks, a hotel and a museum.

### Sustainable Living At Encore

Encore's design team aims to set the bar for environmentally friendly development in Tampa.

In order to achieve this, all new units at Encore have been designed and registered under the U.S. Green Building Council LEED 2009 New Construction and Major Renovations guidelines with the goal of receiving a LEED Gold rating for overall site development and LEED Silver certification for each residential building.

"Our goal is a cleaner, healthier environment for both residents and workers," says Alan McDonnell, Baker Barrios senior associate and project manager for the Ella.

To receive LEED certification, the Encore team -- THA, Baker Barrios Architects and civil/engineering design team Cardno TBE -- identified a focus on five major categories within LEED requirements: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy and Atmosphere; Materials and Resources; and Indoor Environmental Quality. By honing in on these elements, the team hopes Encore will become a successful, sustainable community offering a multitude of opportunities.

"THA really wants Encore to become a nationwide expo for how to do smart, sustainable development on a grand master scale," says Baker Barrios Principal Rob Ledford. "This is a really great opportunity for Tampa."

### Efficiency, Energy And Atmosphere

Fully and wholeheartedly embracing the concept of sustainable communities for more than a decade, THA has been implementing a number of sustainability features throughout the Tampa Bay region with a goal of making local living healthier and more affordable.

"We have successfully completed several energy efficient upgrades to existing sites throughout Tampa Bay and have been building and rehabbing to substantively increase the energy efficiency and environmental performance of all of our properties," says LeRoy Moore, THA senior VP and COO.

And when it comes to the Encore project, THA's focus is no different. First on the list to increase the energy efficiency and environmental performance of the project? A sustainable site.

The project being located on a previously developed urban Brownfield site allowed developers to take advantage of and improve upon several preexisting elements: Community connectivity, public transportation access and improved storm water management. This meets LEED's requirement of encouraging strategies that minimize the impact on ecosystems and water resources.

Promoting smarter use of water and reducing potable water consumption was another major focus for the team, minimizing water usage for both Encore's landscaping and buildings.

According to Baker Barrios Architect Paul Lauber, the Encore design incorporates native plant materials and technologies to reduce water use by up to 50 percent for landscaping and an overall reduction in water use by 30 percent when compared to similarly designed buildings using low-flow fixtures.



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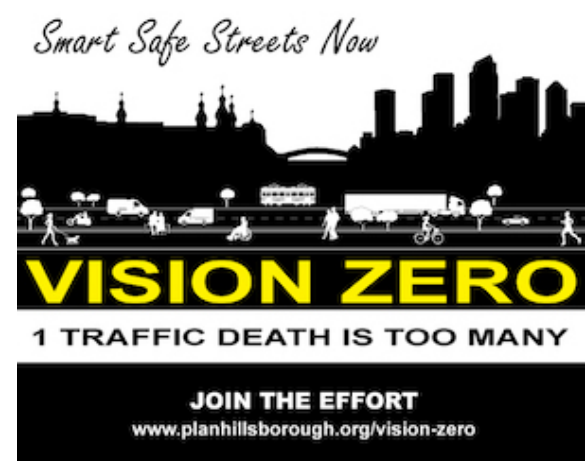
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When looking to address LEED's Energy and Atmosphere Category, the team kept energy efficiency in mind to promote better building energy performance through innovative strategies: Materials such as double glazing, high reflective roofing and sufficient insulation were carefully selected and balanced throughout the project.

Modeled with a 20 percent reduction in energy use to achieve LEED credits, sustainable and efficient electrical and mechanical equipment such as compact fluorescent fixtures and high-efficiency water heaters were also incorporated into Encore's design to minimize energy use.

Additionally, a district chiller plant connected to individual air conditioning equipment within each residential unit was also developed on-site by Cardno TBE and additional credits are to be received for providing bike storage and priority parking for hybrid and zero emissions vehicles; Ledford says future plans may call for electric vehicle charging stations for residents with EVs.

### **Materials, Resources And Quality**

Another major focus for the Encore development? LEED's Materials and Resources and Indoor Environmental categories, encouraging the use of sustainable building materials while reducing waste and promoting better indoor air quality and access to daylight and views.

According to Lauber, major contributions to the Materials and Resources and Indoor Environmental categories will be through the specification of regional and recycled content materials. Ultimately, this will deter more than 75 percent of construction waste from winding up in a landfill; in addition, interior materials, adhesives and sealants using very little or no volatile organic compounds can be found throughout the development. Ledford says the team focused on staying close to home when it came to choosing materials.

Additionally, a focus on LEED's Innovation and Design category was kept in mind when developing Encore with plans to utilize the development as an educational tool via community outreach to further advance and educate on the benefits green design-- perhaps an extension of THA's \$11 million Energy Performance Contract Program, focusing on conservation.

"The program includes a strong education, awareness and tracking program to ensure that our residents are made aware of the environmental and real impacts to their ability to achieve affordable living," Moore says.

### **The Future At Encore**

With plans to create 955 permanent jobs and support more than 1,300 local jobs post-construction, Encore is sure to be a game changer for the Tampa Bay area.

In December 2012, THA received the long-awaited \$30 million [Choice Neighborhoods Grant](#) from the [U.S. Department of Housing](#) (HUD) -- the largest Choice Neighborhood Grant ever issued. In addition to going toward the development of the Tempo at Encore, a 203-unit family building, the funds will be used for renewable energy at the Ella, Reed and Trio complexes, as well as Technology Park at Encore.

"Encore is evidence that an environmentally sensitive and conscious redevelopment in a city core is possible," Moore says.


*Alexis Quinn Chamberlain, a Florida native and freelance writer, can often be found barhopping on South Howard Avenue, walking around her North Hyde Park neighborhood and daydreaming with her boyfriend and Chihuahua at Curtis Hixon Park. Comments? Contact [83 Degrees](#).*

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