

Microfinance Empowers

Join us in enabling the poorest of the poor to improve their own lives
www.GrameenFoundation.org

Public Service Ads by Google



November 2, 2010

A Chat With Legacy Partners

By Natalie Dolce



How, Dunn at office

SAN JOSE, CA-"Today, the definition of sustainability is becoming one of the most compelling topics in real estate ownership and development," according to Legacy Partners Commercial. GlobeSt.com recently sat down with Steve Dunn and Derrick How of Legacy Partners Commercial to discuss sustainability, design and the development of America Center.

Dolce: Let's start by discussing sustainability and what that means for Legacy Partners.

Dunn: Today, the definition of sustainability is becoming one of the most compelling topics in real estate ownership and development. The goals of development have shifted from creating landmarks of iconic status built as timeless monuments, to the objectives of resource conservation, operational efficiency, quality of life and the realities of a changing global environment. For Legacy Partners, this new paradigm has created a compelling desire to adopt a

best practices approach that embraces this focus on long-term efficiency, both to satisfy the desire of the tenant-customer to operate in a green and sustainable manner, as well as to further the company's commitment to sustainable real estate practices.

Dolce: I know that GlobeSt.com recently reported [http://news/1690_1690/sanjose/300553-1.html] on Legacy's 427,000-square-foot America Center attaining LEED Gold. Talk to me a bit about the design and development of that project.

How: The design and development of America Center, an environmentally sophisticated office campus in Northern California's Silicon Valley with LEED Gold certification, is one example of Legacy Partners' adoption of green and sustainable best practices. This landmark project converted a former landfill site to a viable, safe and productive asset that now offers both a social and economic benefit to the community. For Legacy Partners, the development of America Center was grounded in the desire to provide its customers with best of class product-an office campus that not only lived up to its expressed commitment to sustainability and advanced green design, but that also embraced and improved upon its natural environment.

Dolce: What were some of the key elements in the restoration and development of America Center?

Dunn: Land use for one. Brownfield restoration and subsequent redevelopment is an efficient way to recycle land

within existing, mature, and urbanized communities without encroaching on open space. The restoration and reuse of former brownfield sites transforms communities by repurposing blighted sites into commercially viable, safe and environmentally sustainable locations without impacting undeveloped land for new construction. This process also serves businesses looking to increase their commitment to sustainable operations by embracing a greener footprint and culture through site selection, while enhancing the fabric of their community at the same time. These sites can also provide an opportunity to develop on centrally located land sites offering access to existing street and utility infrastructure. The development of America Center transformed a commanding hilltop site from its former use as a construction debris landfill into an environmentally-advanced office campus within an existing commercial corridor. Sustainability and environmental consciousness is attained by this type of efficient reuse of resources.

How: Architectural style has long been the defining element of the structures that make up our cities and communities. How a building functions over generations is the goal of any well crafted development, from iconic status to efficient workplace. Modern advancements in design technique and materials have placed a new emphasis on resource consumption reduction, quality of life and flexibility of use. The design of America Center incorporates recycled materials, energy efficient glass and fixtures, and water conserving infrastructure, which qualified the completed buildings to achieve LEED Gold status. The adoption of these advances must still reflect the desire for companies to operate within architecturally distinct properties, and so they were combined with a creative structural aesthetic to develop both building identity as well as the operational efficiencies so desired by progressive office space users.

Dunn: Site integration: For architecture to be truly sustainable within its community, there must be an emphasis on how the structure and its site plan interacts with its surroundings. In the case of America Center, this meant embracing the site's natural environment with an abundance of complementary open space. Legacy Partners created an additional 30-acres of open space preserve with access to extensive jogging and biking trails, including the Bay Trail, the Alviso Slough Trail, and the Mallard Slough Trail. All of this open space helps make America Center incredibly rich in wildlife, including more than 250 species of resident and migratory birds. It also encouraged the adoption of a mixed-use format that includes a health club and hotel property within the master plan and proximity to public transit options for regional commuters. America Center was also planned as a campus environment, where open space and environmental interaction could form a 'workstyle' focused on nurturing quality of life as well as efficient operations.

How: Community benefit: This green, sustainable development project provides a lasting location that will serve a vital and viable use within its region for generations to come. The development of commercial office space like America Center provides meaningful employment opportunities, an expanded business tax base, and the restoration of natural environment and open space. It creates a place within its local community that provides for the smart and continued growth of a region, while doing so with a priority placed on green and sustainable operations and the efficient use of available resources.

Dolce: To end, any closing thoughts on sustainability?

Dunn: What was once thought to be important only as it related to property management's operational efficiencies or recycling programs, sustainability has now penetrated every stage of the development and leasing process and helps redefine what an iconic development is. From site selection, restoration and redevelopment; to using local materials and suppliers; to using efficient and eco-friendly materials and systems; to operating efficiently; to incorporating the needs of the surrounding community; and meeting the sustainability requirements of tenants; sustainability must now be addressed from the planning stages through to lease up.

Dolce: Any closing thoughts on what you learned or will take away from the America Center project?

How: For Legacy Partners, America Center provided an opportunity to recognize that as a real estate owner, manager and developer, it is paramount to focus on the communities and corporate customers that are served by the properties we deliver. The ultimate test for America Center and the workplaces we will create as an industry is how we adopt the realities of reduced resource consumption through innovative and sustainable architecture and planning.