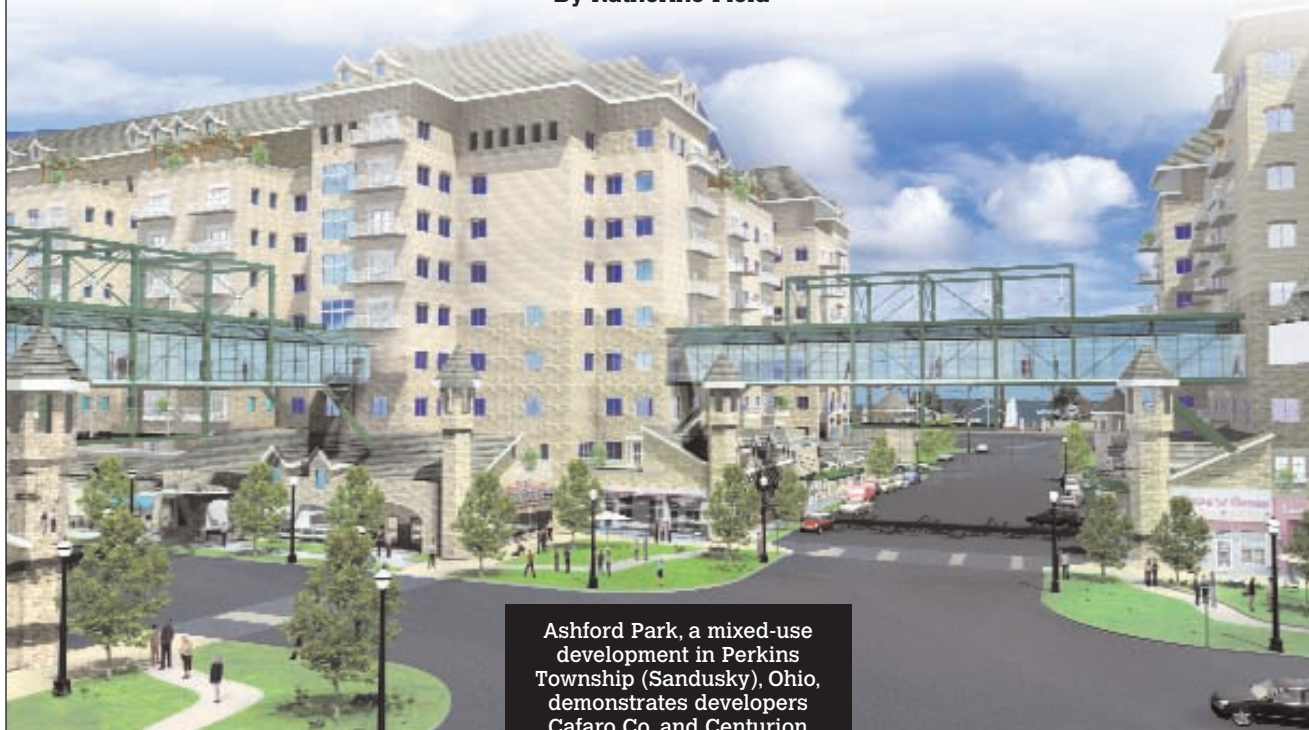


# Green Spaces and Places

Some lifestyle centers take 'green' to a new, sustainable level

By Katherine Field



Ashford Park, a mixed-use development in Perkins Township (Sandusky), Ohio, demonstrates developers Cafaro Co. and Centurion Development's progressive views on sustainability, combining green-building with upscale living and shopping.

Lifestyle centers are, by their very nature, green—what with the open-air format's green spaces, lush landscaping, parks and playgrounds. But some shopping center developers have taken the idea of "green" to a new, and deeper-hued, level, incorporating environmentally friendly building materials and sustainable methodologies into the lifestyle mix.

For this story, *Chain Store Age* talked with three shopping-center developers that have shown tangible dedication to the environment—and great innovation and moxie in their efforts to ensure that the art and science of sustainability factors into their creative and practical thinking in most, if not all, the projects they build.

**Green Thinking:** Green to its core, Cleveland-based Forest City Enterprises is one of very few shopping center developers that is recognized industry-wide—and beyond—for its environmental efforts. The company's WorkGreen

program is directed at its own employees—numbering more than 3,200 strong—to inspire sustainability both at work

and at home. WorkGreen was modeled after a similar Forest City program, GreenHouse, which promotes sustainability to the residents of the company's multi-family residential developments.

Across its business, Forest City is every bit as forward-thinking in its environmental efforts. In fact, according to Jon Ratner, director of sustainable initiatives for Forest City, the company, which formed a department of sustainability in January 2006, has three primary objectives that span the entire organization.

"Our first objective is to incorporate green building and sustainability into our new development projects to the highest practical degree," said Ratner. Forest City largely uses the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program for its sustainable standards.

“The second objective,” continued Ratner, “is to track, monitor and improve the utility profile in our managed portfolio—how much electric, gas and water we are using across the portfolio—and of course manage the purchase and usage of those utilities.

“The third objective is to make sure that in all actions within the management and operations of our own business that we are not only ‘talking the talk,’ but ‘walking the walk,’” said Ratner. Programs such as WorkGreen ensure that Forest City internally “owns this sustainable initiative,” he added.

It is crystal clear that green is far more than just talk to Forest City. “The overall philosophy is that we think there is a business imperative and a business advantage to incorporating green and sustainable practices into our core business,” said Ratner, “which is the ownership and development of real estate.”

Forest City’s real estate has been heralded nationally for its sustainability. Northfield Stapleton, an open-air lifestyle project in north Denver that opened October 2006, is the country’s first-ever green certified Main Street shopping center, having achieved LEED Silver Certification, and demonstrates Forest City’s holistic commitment to environmental performance.

The environmental encore was The Promenade Bolingbrook, Forest City’s lifestyle project in Bolingbrook, Ill., which received LEED certification in January 2008. “For both Northfield and Bolingbrook, we used the LEED scorecard to organize our efforts and were able to not only accumulate

enough credits to merit certification, but to demonstrate significant environmental performance,” said Ratner. Three Forest City projects are currently pursuing certification—The Promenade in Temecula (Calif.), The Village at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale Beach, Fla., and Ridge Hill, Yonkers, N.Y.

More information about Forest City’s sustainable initiatives and projects is available online by visiting [www.chainstoreage.com](http://www.chainstoreage.com) and clicking on Web Exclusives.

**Model of Sustainability:** When it comes to green-building initiatives, Regency Centers has scored a lot of firsts. The Jacksonville, Fla.-based company is the first retail shopping center developer to partner with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to implement shopping center development pilot programs throughout the United States—and it is the only developer to formally collaborate with the USGBC on a complete shopping center LEED-certification program.

Regency has also formed a green-building initiative task force to study the company’s emphasis on sustainability. The task force, which consists of subcommittees of Regency team members in construction, development, operations and marketing, will evaluate immediate and long-term business goals and objectives, and decide how best to communicate the company’s green initiatives to its external and internal audiences.

Regency wears its greenness proudly. “We are ramping up our national and regional efforts as a green developer of shopping centers,” said Nick Wibbenmeyer, VP of investments for Regency. “We have an opportunity to serve the industry as a



Green developer Forest City Enterprises builds landmark green centers, including The Village at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale Beach, Fla., which is currently seeking LEED certification.



Shops on Main, located in Shererville, Ind., and developed by Regency Centers, is one example of how Regency is ramping up its national and regional efforts as a green developer of shopping centers.

leader and innovator in promoting and practicing sustainability.”

Practicing sustainability means putting its time, focus and money where its mouth is—by implementing green-building initiatives into its current and future projects. “We have implemented LEED-certification goals for our new developments as well as baseline sustainability measures that will be implemented into our existing properties and corporate operations,” Wibbenmeyer said. Regency has committed to LEED-certify 20% of its 2008 development starts, 40% of 2009’s starts, and 60% of its 2010 development starts. In addition, the company will, beginning this year, incorporate LEED certification into redevelopments of existing properties

A new project for which Regency will seek LEED certification is Shops on Main, a 350,000-sq.-ft. open-air lifestyle center located in Shererville, Ind. When it is completed in May 2009, not only will Shops on Main feature public gathering places, cobblestone crosswalks, brick-faced storefronts, tree-lined avenues and a host of upscale retailers and restaurants, but it will incorporate sustainable construction methods and materials.

“With the LEED-certification designation,” said Wibbenmeyer, “such things as the following will be implemented into our Shops on Main project: premium parking spots for alternative-fuel vehicles, white roofs to reduce heat, native plant materials to reduce water consumption, low-flow/drip irrigation systems to conserve water, and high-efficiency HVAC systems with environmentally friendly refrigerants.”

Shops on Main is Regency’s second development to seek LEED certification; the first is Shops of Santa Barbara, a 67,226-sq.-ft., Whole Foods Market-anchored center in Santa Barbara, Calif.

**Building for the Future:** The Cafaro Co. may not be one of those tip-of-the-tongue green builders that comes to mind whenever the subject is sustainability, but the projects under way for the venerable Youngstown, Ohio-based developer say differently. In Sandusky, Ohio, is Sandusky Mall, owned by Cafaro. And being built adjacent to Sandusky Mall, to be connected by pedestrian walkways, is Ashford Park—a unique, mixed-use, eco-friendly community developed by Centurion Development Group of Columbus, Ohio, in partnership with

Sandusky Development Co., owned by Cafaro.

Ashford Park combines high-rise condo living (804 units in four towers) overlooking Lake Erie with ground-floor lifestyle retail, restaurants, a spa, performing arts center and service businesses. It is designed toward baby boomers and empty-nesters who seek upscale living in an environmentally friendly environment.

“Ashford Park is green in the same way that many lifestyle developments are,” explained Ryan Goldberg, CEO of Centurion, “in that there is an intrinsic greening in the idea of creating a walkable community, and getting rid of some of the big parking lots where you’re getting tremendous amounts of water run-off.” What Centurion and Cafaro have tried to do with Ashford Park, continued Goldberg, is take the project to yet another level of sustainability.

“Ashford Park, which will be LEED-certified, is green in a number of different fashions. We built it with the notion of being both environmentally friendly as well as economically sustainable. It was designed to make ‘going green’ make sense financially and environmentally, and to show developers how to bridge the gap between today and tomorrow.”

Nothing in the project is “token green” said Goldberg. When completed in early fall 2009, Ashford Park will feature such eco-friendly attributes as alternative energy—wind turbines, solar panels and geo-thermal energy—automated dimming systems, native plantings, permeable pavement, comprehensive water-management systems and sustainable building materials. As well, Ashford Park will maximize onsite resources by capturing rainwater for irrigation, and recycling and reusing “grey water” from sinks or baths for toilets, irrigation and other applications that don’t require sanitary water.

Greenness doesn’t preclude luxury. Ashford Park won’t scrimp on the amenities, featuring expansive water features, a rolling park, covered walkways and winding paths. And Ashford Park won’t be the only green project in Cafaro’s or Centurion’s portfolio.

“I think it’s imperative that green building become part of every developer’s vision,” said Goldberg. “Every project that we build is going to have a strong green focus.” ■

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