LOCAL PROJECT CHALLENGE 2020: Accelerating the SDGs
VERIDIAN AT COUNTY FARM - NEIGHBORHOOD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, USA

PROJECT OVERVIEW
Veridian at County Farm is transforming the site of a former youth prison into a Living Community. It is targeted to be a mixed-income net zero energy community: 100% all-electric, powered by solar, with resilient energy storage and no gas lines or combustion appliances of any kind. It is located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, adjacent to a 130 acre park with miles of forested trails, community gardens and play space.

Imagine an entire community designed and constructed to function as elegantly and efficiently as a forested ecosystem: a community informed by its bioregion’s characteristics, that generates all of its own energy with renewable resources, and operates efficiently and for maximum beauty.

Targeting Net Zero Energy
The Living Community Challenge defines the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment possible today.

100% of the community’s energy needs on a net annual basis must be supplied by on-site renewable energy. No combustion is allowed.

How do you create communities that are good for everyone?

Economic Mobility
Research shows that living close to people from a variety of incomes and backgrounds leads to substantially better lives, measured by real economic gains, greater educational attainment, and improved health. At Veridian, two thirds of the homes are being developed for sale at market rate and one third of the homes will be developed for low-income tenants, including some who have formerly experienced homelessness.

We will not be defined by the unparanorm consequences of climate crisis, but by how we respond as the window of opportunity for action closes.

Concept drawing by Union Studio Architecture and Community Design
Veridian at County Farm shows how neighborhoods can provide climate solutions

Adaptive, Resilient & Accessible Design
Communities must be designed for a changing climate. Local food production, universal access to nature & place, renewable energy and resilient community connections are all essential.
LOCAL PROJECT CHALLENGE 2020: Accelerating the SDGs

VERIDIAN AT COUNTY FARM - NEIGHBORHOOD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, USA

Native & Edible Landscape
Landscaping is viewed as a means of reviving ecosystems. Food production will be integral to the neighborhood with food-producing native species, like hazelnuts and paw paws, in addition to lanes lined with fruit trees and community gardens.

Growing Local Food Economy
Helping local farms succeed, the Farm Stop is a full service grocery selling only 100% local produce, meats & dairy - a next generation of the traditional farmer’s market model. The Barn is envisioned to host a weekly farmers’ market.

Good Health & Well Being
Veridian envisions nourishing, highly productive and healthful environments incorporated into indoor and outdoor spaces throughout the community.

Celebrating Rain
Reimagine “stormwater”
Pathways will incorporate innovative rainfall management techniques that mimic natural ecology and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Biophilia

Mobility & Human Powered Living
To encourage human powered living, the neighborhood will have abundant bike storage, a bike maintenance shed, EV Bike share, EV Car Share, and more.

Materials Conservation
Endorsing materials & products that are safe for all species through time.
Veridian intends to create a successful materials economy that is non-toxic, transparent and socially equitable.

A historic barn will be salvaged from a nearby farm.

People as Partners

PROCESS
Demolition of Youth Prison
2011 Washtenaw County demolished a youth prison and former site of County Poor Farm built in 1836.

Community Visioning
2014 County hosted collaborative design workshops with neighbors, designers, & public officials to develop a shared vision.

Collaborative Team Proposal
2016 THRIVE Collaborative and Avalon Housing collaborated with diverse public, private and non-profit stakeholders in response to request for proposal to address the most urgent challenges.

Collaborative Design Process
To create a Living Community Challenge Master Plan, THRIVE Collaborative is hosting issue-specific workshops targeting solutions for food, equity, local economy, biophilia, nature play and more.

Ground-breaking planned for 2020