

Working Toward Regional Sustainable Development:

Community Responses to Sustainability Challenges



The State of Sustainable Community Development: Notes from the Field

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BACKGROUND

School of Business

- Environmental Strategy and Sustainability
- Systems Thinking and Sustainable Businesses
- Ethics Values and Sustainability
- Business and the Social Side of Sustainability

WI Department of Natural Resources

- Green Tier program



Sustainability – What Do We Mean?

"A sustainable society is one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support."

Donella H. Meadows, "Beyond the Limits"





What Marks a Sustainable Community?

- In addition to taxing and spending, a sustainable community pays attentions to
- Environmental performance and
 - Social performance





Environmental Performance

Transportation

Public transport

Road design and use

Biking and walking

Support for alternatively powered vehicles

Car-pooling

Food systems

Farmers Markets

Community Supported Agriculture

Food banks

Organic

Waste food



Environmental Performance

Energy

Support for alternative energy

Generated locally

Energy conservation support

Local government habits – procurement

Green building – design of buildings

Planning and Zoning

Consumption

Buy Local

Community resources

Bulk buying

Emphasis on repair



Environmental Performance

Waste management and recycling

Residential recycling

Commercial recycling

Waste generated

Litter

Water quantity and quality

Natural quality of local water

Recognition of importance of water -

Water conservation – overt and covert (zoning)

Wastewater treatment

Net water in or out of community



Social Performance

Safety

For children

For women

Community bonds

Crime

Types

Frequency

Communication

Newsletters

Face to face opportunities

Gathering places

Community Groups



Social Performance

Services

Community provides for its poor

Community addresses root causes of homelessness

Community takes care of its children

People volunteer

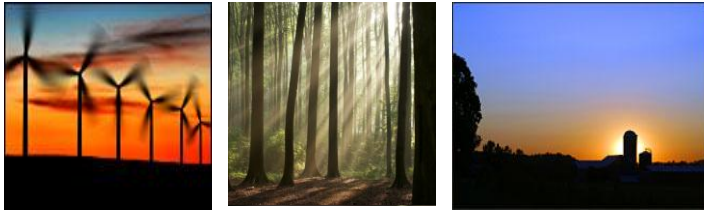
Diversity & tolerance

Participation by all in decision making

Races, socio-economic, sexes, ages, etc

Diversity discussions and trainings

Mechanism to deal with conflict is in place



Social Performance

Education

Community support for formal system

Parent involvement in education

Learners help determine focus and content

Drop outs discouraged

Post-secondary options

Early education options

Local economy

Local banks support community

Unemployment addressed

Economic inequalities minimized

Small businesses supported



Social Performance

Health Care

Basic health care for all

Costs under control

Elder care

Preventative care/encouragement

Major diseases controlled

Mental health care included

Support for Arts

Local community theater

Art fairs and programs

Community art displayed

Ceremonies and celebrations



Thinking Systematically About Developing A Sustainable Community

Develop vision of what the community wants to be

Identify critical issues facing the community

Establish objectives to address these issues

Develop a plan/strategy

Integrate into people's work

Establish how you are going to measure your progress

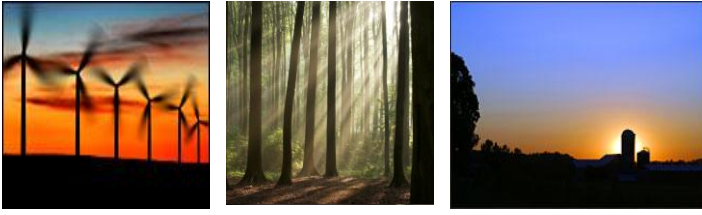
Ensure management is tied in



Develop vision of what the community wants to be

- **Attractive shared visions are driving forces.**
- **They generate energy and provide focus**
- **Process of developing the vision builds community**
- **Should be clear, motivating and easily understood**
- **Should be shared with everyone**





Identify critical issues facing the community

- Investigate what other communities are focused on
- Ask the public – involve them through Open Space approaches or Design Charettes
- Determine important/guiding principles (such as The Natural Step or eco-municipalities)
- Look at funding priorities





Establish objectives to address these issues

Objectives are consistent with the vision

An objective is an overall goal which may be made up of smaller targets

Objectives are

Specific

Reduce electricity use

**Measurable
consumption**

Minimize fleet fuel

Achievable

Reduce paper use

Assignable

Procurement to favor green

Time limited

Develop a travel policy

The process of setting and accomplishing objectives is a way of enhancing performance and achieving continuous improvement.



Develop a plan/strategy

- Assign someone as lead for each objective
- Provide resources to accomplish the plan/strategy
- Develop a timetable for the plan
- First step might be gathering information/research
- Then pilot an idea
- Check and learn from pilot, adjust plan
- Implement
- Review progress
- Tweak again



Integrate into people's work

- Once plan is working, train others
- Develop “ways of doing it” – might be work instructions or community education efforts
- Emphasize “why” things should be done this way
- Make sure everyone knows what to expect, so if the unexpected comes along, it is reported
- Think through how to bring new people in





Establish how you are going to measure your progress

- Ensure a baseline exists
- Know what your metrics are before you start
- Measurement intervals should be appropriate
 - Develop interim milestones
 - Make sure monitoring is sufficient to pick up changes
- Translate hard to understand measures into easy to understand measures
- Identify existing sources of information that can be tapped into



Ensure management is tied in

- **Can't just be a project for the implementers**
- **Management should walk the talk**
- **It is management's job to ensure resources are available**
- **Management should be kept involved/appraised of progress**
- **Management should celebrate successes**



What are current challenges for our communities?

- **Environmental**
 - **Climate change/energy consumption**
 - **Water quality and quantity**
 - **Waste generation**
- **Consumption patterns**
- **Bowling Alone Phenomena**
- **Land use**
- **Crime**
- **Education**
- **Health Care**
- **Transportation**



The Time to Start is Now.





Thank You.

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