



Best Practices for Sustainable Community Development

(Using the Five Domains of Sustainability as a guide)

ENVIRONMENT

- Know what is fragile and irreplaceable in your region.
- Know what is renewable and can be used in constructive and economical ways.
- Designate “no-build”, “no-development” zones with public policies.
- Know what existing policies (local, state, federal) relate to the natural resources in your locale.
- Establish incentives and performance-based criteria for the appropriate public behavior.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

- Know the history of the place.
- Celebrate the positives of cultural history.
- Describe the future of a learning community; a creative, progressive community
- Emphasize future opportunities; diminish negative thinking.
- Emphasize transparent and participatory government and decision-making.
- Seek collaboration from and with neighboring communities.

TECHNOLOGIES

- Promote and invest in technologies that will save resources, time, money, or expand new opportunities.
- Eschew technologies that are not efficient and that may be wasteful of other resources in the long-run.
- Reevaluate low-tech, older technologies for new applications to new issues.
- Assess all technologies in a systems context with the other four domains of sustainability.
- Encourage and promote investments in new technologies that have long-term, positive implications for the whole community.
- Evaluate all infra-structure decisions to seek multiple solutions with single system expenditures.

ECONOMICS

- Evaluate all public expenditures on both a first-cost and life-cycle cost basis.
- Seek a balance of proportionate expenditures, based upon appropriate ratios of those who will gain from a public investment.
- Apply economic analyses and sustainability indicators to each of the other four sustainability domains; analyze the aggregate for balance among the five, and for potential “unintended consequences”.
- Be cautious of obligating future generations of community dwellers to expenditures that may not enhance their community or their lives.
- Seek public/private partnerships in all community investments.

PUBLIC POLICY

- Perform assessments of local, state, and federal public policies that have become barriers to sustainable development; perform these assessments continuously, or on regular cycles (i.e., such as Master Planning cycles).
- Make broad use of volunteer, citizen and stake-holder advisory groups for each of the five domains of sustainability.
- Recognize and celebrate good, sustainable development projects and work on behalf of the community.
- Correlate public policies with good planning and good strategic thinking.
- Establish “Sustainable Community Development” as the first priority for the expenditure of public funds, especially for buildings and infrastructure; utilize the EcoStep toolkit for assessments and evaluations.