POLICIES
For Sustainable Communities

BASED ON THE
GREENINGUSA 12 TRAITS©
OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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OVERVIEW – Taking a Stand for Sustainable Communities

Communities of all sizes, whether cities, towns, counties, or villages all are in a constant state of activity in three areas: environmental, economic and social. All three areas impact each other and ultimately determine whether the community is thriving, barely surviving, or declining. For better or for worse, the people in existing communities have been, and will continue to make, decisions that affect the long term and short term strength of all three of these areas. In order to nurture and sustain the overall quality of life and long term viability of a community, citizens and leaders need to make informed decisions, establish positions and set policies that are not only sustainable, but allow for positive environmental, economic, and social outcomes.

With the above as a basis, GreeningUSA, has identified "The 12 Traits© of Sustainability Communities" as a guide for any existing community to use to help establish positions and policy statements. The traits are listed below for reference and are the basis for the rest of this document.

Trait 1   **Governmental Leadership in Sustainability** by Executives, staff, and legislators

Trait 2   **Local Economic Resilience** with a diversified economic base

Trait 3   **Sustainable Land Use Planning and Natural Resource Preservation** that is integrated, balanced, and diversified

Trait 4   **Sustainable Transportation & Mobility Systems** with numerous options

Trait 5   **Water Related Infrastructure Systems** addressing long and short term quantity and quality of water

Trait 6   **Green Buildings and Housing** that are environmentally and energy responsive

Trait 7   **Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels** with localized and de-centralized sources

Trait 8   **Waste Material Management** that is holistic and value based

Trait 9   **Local Culture, Art and Entertainment** that is well rounded and inclusive

Trait 10   **Quality Public Education** that also teaches sustainability

Trait 11   **Public Health and Safety** based on clean, safe, healthy, places

Trait 12   **Community Engagement** and participation by citizens

Greening USA, Inc. is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation founded in 2004 in Syracuse, New York and governed by a 12 person all volunteer Board of Directors. Through education, research, partnering, and advocacy, it is advancing the vision of American communities that are much more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. Additional information can be found at www.greeningusa.org.

WHAT IS 'SUSTAINABILITY' AND WHY LOCAL ACTION?

The term "sustainability" emerged in the 1980s as both a rallying cry and strategy to bring about a much needed balance between the world communities' need to develop, in order to improve living standards for their residents, and the environmental degradation that had accompanied development and industrialization in the decades leading up to that point. A series of United Nations' reports and conferences gave light to the term 'sustainable development' which implied that, while economic progress was necessary to improve the lives of people, it must be done in a way to protect the environment, protect the health of people and protect natural eco-systems.

In 1987, the [United Nations](#) [World Commission on Environment and Development](#) released the report [*Our Common Future*](#), now commonly named the 'Brundtland Report' that linked economic development to environmental protection, impacts on human wellbeing and cross-generational responsibility to maintain resources for future generations. A somewhat similar notion of the responsibility that nations have was previously set forth in principles enumerated in the 1972, 'Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment'. This UN declaration asserted that "man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations". It also includes the principle that all countries have a responsibility to safeguard the natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora and fauna and natural ecosystems, for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning or management. The 1987 Brundtland report included what is now one of the most widely recognized definitions of sustainability when it stated: "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

But what does it—sustainability—mean for communities across the United States? It means maintaining our current standard of living but getting rid of the things that threaten our health, our economy, and the health of natural eco-systems. It means thinking about our living conditions not just for today, but also in terms of what conditions we are leaving for our children, our grandchildren, and their grandchildren. And it means looking at decision making at the public level as well as the private—corporate as well as personal—in terms of the "triple bottom line" that embodies environmental, economic, and equity, or social, impacts. To be sustainable, one must look beyond the customary financial rate of return on monetary capital investment and consider balancing environmental, economic and social equity. These collectively are known as the three 'E's' of sustainability, the three pillars of sustainability or the sustainability triad.

While the UN actions were generally directed to nation actors of the international community, it was recognized that local or regional areas had a key responsibility in the implementation of sustainability. Indeed, most if not all global or national problems associated with development have local consequences and local genesis and so mitigation also requires local initiation and action. This was galvanized into the *Agenda21* resolution adopted at the UN 'Earth Summit' in Rio in 1992. Chapter 28 of the resolution is titled Local Authorities' Initiatives in support of Agenda 21. Agenda21 asserted,

> Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 *have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. Local authorities construct, operate, and maintain economic, social, and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and sub-national environmental policies. As the level of*

governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing, and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.

A village, town, city, or county can choose to make some changes of their own for the betterment of that community. When several municipalities do that, it starts to affect their state. When communities in several states are confronting these issues, the whole country is improved. And that can be true whether or not other state or federal governments are involved. That's why sustainable local communities are important. And it is the reason that many leaders of the sustainability movement have coined the phrase, *think global, act local*.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell a former (1993-1998) Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program has stated the challenge that exists for governmental leaders at the local level this way, *"the increasing pace of global integration will determine whether in the future the lines that separate a city, a country, a region, and a continent will become progressively more blurred. But one thing is clear: the fate of cities will determine, more and more, not only the fate of nations but also of our planet. We can afford to ignore the issue of the sustainable management of our cities only at our peril."[1]*

Perhaps the biggest threat to the sustainability is the documented global climate change. Around the world, it is considered to be responsible for catastrophic weather events, disruption to water supplies and food production, coastal flooding, and habitat changes with related adverse social, economic and political implications.

In accord with recommendations by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, it will be crucial to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission by 40–70 per cent below 2010 levels by 2050 and near-zero emissions of $CO2$ and other long-lived GHG by the end of the century. This goal, according to the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, is "*consistent with a likely chance to keep global average temperature change below 2 °C (relative to pre-industrial levels)".* Two degrees C (3.6 degrees F) is the limit to the atmospheric temperature rise at which scientists claim it may be possible to reduce the severest adverse effects of global climate change. However, it needs to be recognized that catastrophic consequences may occur below this level and communities, nations as well a local communities, may wish to adopt an approach suggested by the Union of concerned Scientists based on a framework for "climate security," that has been proposed by scientists at the London-based nonprofit EG3: "This "ABC" approach says policymakers should aim for an "ambitious" target for reducing carbon emissions, while "building" for, or adapting for, greater warming than targeted, and engaging in "contingency" planning for future climate emergency." (***Scientists: Global Warming Likely to Surpass 2°C Target** By **Marianne Lavelle**, National Geographic February 28, 2014.)*)

Citizens and governmental leaders of communities of all sorts can affect the sustainability of their community and help avoid the effects of non-sustainable practices by adopting the general or overall policies listed on the next page of this document. Further into the document, you will also find additional specific policies and practices related to environmental, economic, and social equity aspects of each. All of this follows the format of GreeningUSA's *12Traits of Sustainable Communities Rating System* and are delineated in the same categorical groupings. The full rating system is published as a separate document for communities wishing to discern and measure how sustainable their own community really is. More information at www.greeningusa.org/12Traits

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[1] The Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide, ©1996, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

THE TWELVE OVERALL POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

GreeningUSA believes that the following twelve overall policies, based on the '12 Traits of Sustainable Communities' should guide communities in the setting of their own public policy, decision making and public administration. **Local communities are encouraged to adopt these overall and specific policies and practices as part of their own local governance**.

1. **Government Leadership in Sustainability - Overall Policy:** In light of the unique ability of local government to broadly influence the environment, the economy, and the social equity of a local community, **local government leaders must actively create public policy and support specific efforts to achieve long-term sustainability in their communities.** These actions can be coordinated with any related state or federal actions, but in the absence of state or federal action, local governments are in the unique position to forge local sustainability initiatives. In addition, local government leaders must act with the long term interest of their communities in mind over short term measures which may compromise true sustainability.

2. **Local Economic Resilience - Overall Policy:** Considering the necessity of local economic diversity, efforts must be supported that introduce a variety of economic activity into the local area while serving local and non-local markets. It is crucial, however, that such activity take place with respect for the environmental in terms of minimizing the overall environmental impact of the business operations. Such economic activity must also address social equity concerns by offering a range of employment levels and opportunities so that all members of the community can continue to earn a living wage and possess the opportunity for career growth. In short, **social equity and the environment do not need to be sacrificed in the interest of a sustainable economy, rather all three support each other.**

3. **Sustainable Land Use Planning - Overall Policy:** Communities should create, maintain and adhere to **a balanced approach to comprehensive, sustainable, land-use plans and procedures** to guide all land-use and development decision making. The community plan should balance environmental, economic and social equity objectives. It should also be based on the principles of 'smart growth' such as multi-use zoning to diversify districts and provide citizens with as many livable resources as possible within reach of public transportation or walking.

4. **Sustainable Transportation and Mobility - Overall Policy:** A transportation system must be in place that **balances multiple public and private mobility options to residents and visitors**. This system shall meet the needs of vehicular, pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle (bicycle) traffic while offering and including public, private and mass transit options suitable to the community's needs. All options should be cost-effective, yet not cost prohibitive for users, and minimize environmental impacts while providing equal opportunity access for all.

5. **Water Related Infrastructure - Overall Policy:** Intentional, proactive planning and implementation measures to **protect the quality and quantity of water in local natural sources and use it efficiently** must be put in place. Similarly, the updating of waste water systems including the installation of natural, "green infrastructure" measures that reduce the need for storm drainage, should be advanced. These measures should apply to all public and private water related systems so that safe drinking water and protected natural areas are accessible to all in the community.

6. **Green Building and Housing - Overall Policy:** Support all efforts that strive to help building owners, designers, and builders recognize **the multiple positive attributes of green buildings**. Further, support efforts to **establish green building codes and regulations** that require minimum construction standards for sustainable development, water conservation, energy use optimization, indoor environmental quality, and the use of safe, healthy, and environmentally conscious building materials. Include provisions for the use and preservation of historic buildings, 'aging in place' approaches to handicapped accessible buildings, and housing affordability to allow all citizens to remain and thrive within the community.

7. **Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels - Overall Policy:** In light of scientific evidence that our current dependence on fossil fuels is not sustainable, communities, including utility companies, municipal power providers and consumers, must take steps to **rapidly replace energy generated from fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) with renewable, non-polluting alternatives such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and biomass.** This conversion is worthy of significant support at all scale levels including larger energy utility companies, smaller local systems, or individual energy users. We further support all efforts that strive to make innovative, non-polluting methods for energy production widely available and affordable to all citizens.

8. **Waste Material Management - Overall Policy:** Support all efforts that aim to institute **comprehensive recycling and material re-use programs** that effectively reduce the need for disposal and that supplant the need for virgin material. These programs should also provide employment opportunities and provide service to all people and places in the community.

9. **Culture, Arts, and Entertainment - Overall Policy:** Communities that actively celebrate, create, identify with, and participate in their local heritage, culture, art, music, food, sports, and entertainment, will **build upon their history, promote a healthy diversity of people, foster creativity, and sustain a valuable community identity.**

10. **Quality Public Education - Overall Policy:** Recognizing the vital impact that education has on a community, support all efforts that i**mprove the quality of public education that is available to all community members**. In particular, support sustainability education as an integral part of curricula at all academic levels.

11. **Public Health and Safety - Overall Policy:** Since people naturally seek healthy, safe places to live, work, or play, support all efforts to **create healthier, safer communities.** In so doing, ascribe importance to providing all community members with ready access to community spaces and resources that promote healthy lifestyles and safe environments.

12. **Community Engagement - Overall Policy:** Foster opportunities, create incentives and motivate all **citizens to participate in the governmental, environmental, economic, and social affairs** of the community either as part of a group or as an individual in order to help to create a fully engaged, long term sustainable community.

Detailed policies and practices related to the specific environmental, economic, and social aspects of each of these 12 policies can be found on subsequent pages of this "Policies for Sustainable Communities" document.

12 TRAITS© POLICY TOPICS BY CATEGORY

Categories Sustainability Traits	A.) Local ENVIRONMENTAL Significance	B.) Local ECONOMIC Significance	C.) Local Social EQUITY Significance
1. Governmental Leadership in Sustainability by Executive, staff, and legislators.	**Carbon Footprint / Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction**	**Community Economic Health (Bond Rating)**	**Voter Registration Levels**
2. Local Economic Resilience with diversified economic base.	**Air, Water, and Land Quality**	**Employment Mix**	**Level of Employment**
3. Sustainable Land Use Planning and Resource Preservation that is integrated, balanced, and diversified.	**Developed Area vs. Open Area**	**Sprawl vs. Density** **Local Food / Agriculture**	**Owner Occupied Housing Units vs. Rental**
4. Sustainable Transportation & Mobility Systems with numerous options.	**Complete Streets**	**Commuting Options**	**Housing & Transportation Affordability**
5. Water Related Infrastructure Systems addressing long and short term quantity and quality**.**	**Potable Water Quality**	**Waste Water Processing**	**Community wide Green Infrastructure**
6. Green Buildings and Housing that are environmentally and energy responsive.	**Green Buildings per capita**	**Green Construction Jobs**	**Housing Affordability**
7. Energy From Non-Fossil Fuels with localized and centralized sources**.**	**Non-Fossil Fuel Electrical Power and Energy Sources**	**Green Energy Businesses**	**Energy Affordability**
8. Waste Material Management that is holistic and value based.	**Landfill Diversion; alternative actions**	**Business Recycling**	**Public Place Recycling**
9. Local Culture, Art and Entertainment that is well rounded and inclusive	**Green Event Capabilities**	**Event Economic Impact**	**Diversity of venues and events**
10. Quality Public Education that teaches sustainability	**Environmental Education / Sustainability Curriculum**	**Public Sustainability Education**	**Graduation Rates**
11. Public Health and Safety based on clean, safe, healthy, places.	**Public Recreation Facilities**	**Health and Safety Workforce**	**Crime Rate**
12. Community Engagement and participation by citizens.	**Environmental Organizations**	**Business Engagement**	**Diverse Participation**

Interaction between Individual Traits: Trait interactions are characterized and summarized below, with additional information contained in the individual position statements.

Sustainability Traits	1. Governmental Leadership in Sustainability	2. Local Economic Resilience	3. Land Use Planning & Resource Preservation	4. Sustainable Transportation & Mobility	5. Water Related Infrastructure Systems	6. Green Buildings and Housing	7. Energy from Non Fossil Fuels	8. Waste Material Management	9. Local Culture, Arts and Entertainment	10. Quality Public Education	11. Public Health and Safety	12. Community Engagement
1. Governmental Leadership in Sustainability		In-Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct
2. Local Economic Resilience	In-Direct		Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct
3. Land Use Planning & Resource Preservation	Direct	Direct		Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct
4. Sustainable Transportation & Mobility	Direct	Direct	Direct		In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct
5. Water Related Infrastructure Systems	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct		Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct
6. Green Buildings and Housing	In-Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct		Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct
7. Energy from Non Fossil Fuels	In-Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct		In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct
8. Waste Material Management	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct		In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	Direct
9. Local Culture, Arts and Entertainment	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct		Direct	In-Direct	Direct
10. Quality Public Education	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct		Direct	Direct
11. Public Health and Safety.	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct		Direct
12. Community Engagement	In-Direct	In-Direct	In-Direct	Direct	In-Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct	

DETAILED POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy#1: Governmental Leadership in Sustainability

Basis: The active role of local government is potentially more important to creating a sustainable community than any Federal mandate or policy. By influencing the physical and environmental composition of the community, local government has the ability to either protect or squander environmental resources, rendering it the decisive player in such matters. Local governments wield a strong influence over the community's economy and businesses given its ability to enact legislation impacting growth and quality of life. Local government can and must also promote social equity by ensuring that any action, no matter how potentially beneficial for some, does not only unfairly disadvantage other portions of the community but inures benefits to the entire community.

> **Government Leadership in Sustainability - Overall Policy:** In light of the unique ability of local government to broadly influence the environment, the economy, and the social equity of a local community, **local government leaders must actively create public policy and support specific efforts to achieve long-term sustainability in their communities.** These actions can be coordinated with any related state or federal actions, but in the absence of state or federal action, local governments are in the unique position to forge local sustainability initiatives. In addition, local government leaders must act with the long term interest of their communities in mind over short term measures which may compromise true sustainability.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Government Leadership in Sustainability:
- **Carbon Footprint Calculation**: Using available calculators such as the ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability CAPPA or CACP programs, local governments can calculate a baseline overall carbon footprint / greenhouse gas emissions level. Annual updates to this calculation allow the community to compare it to the baseline level and demonstrate progress.
- **Carbon Footprint Reduction**: Local governments should take steps to reduce their carbon footprint, e.g., greenhouse gas emissions, and other climate change contributions, related to public facilities and operations as well as influencing the reduction of private sector footprint through legislative action including regulation and incentives.
- **Sustainability Commitment:** Local governments should sign onto a national commitment such as the "Mayors Institute Commitment on Sustainability" and enact policies and legislation as needed to follow through on that commitment.
- **Sustainability Planning:** Local governments should develop and adopt a long term comprehensive plan and zoning reviews that incorporates principles of true sustainability.
- **Staff Responsibilities:** Local governments should establish a permanent staff position at a meaningful executive level to oversee and maintain accountability for sustainability efforts throughout all areas of the local government including purchasing, planning, and coordination. Public employees should be trained in the principles of sustainability and be held accountable for the development and implementation of practices which support the community's sustainability objectives.
- **Adequate Staffing and Staff Qualifications:** Employ staff, including those at the department head level, to be qualified for job they are hired for. The complexity of public works operations and environmental services management (such as environmental protection, water and sewer services, etc.) requires adequate staffing by employees with special knowledge, as well as certifications and licenses, in these fields in order to

protect the health, safety and welfare of the community and meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

- **Create a culture of innovation:** Solving some of the toughest sustainability issues will require a significant dose of innovation and "out of the box" thinking. Communities should strive to think creatively and generate innovative solutions that are based on extensive data analysis and science but also include local knowledge from community residents or those closest to the problem or issue being considered. Environmental problem solving requires understanding and reliance on the science of the natural world and physical systems. Communities that actively promote within their leadership and workforce a culture of science based innovation as a routine component of their environmental and public administration will find it possible to develop solutions to sustainability challenges faced by their community.

- **Rely upon the precautionary principle:** While perhaps a paradox with its juxtaposition with innovation, communities should utilize the precautionary principle that requires exercise of caution when developing new initiatives in the face of uncertainty about the impacts of proposed developments, technology, systems or processes which may have adverse health, safety or environmental consequences.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Government Leadership in Sustainability:

- **Carbon Tax Programs:** Local government leaders can support initiatives to create legislation which implements a tax, fee, or other payment from producers of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas emissions, which is effective at reducing those emissions.

- **Energy Efficient Building Standards**: Local governments can adopt energy use standards for all government owned or operated buildings. Local governments can also support measures to impose energy use standards on the private sector buildings and facilities as well by legislation or other public means.

- **Fleet Efficiency Standards:** Adopt government owned vehicle energy efficiency and emission standards to reduce carbon footprint. . Modify operations and vehicle policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

- **Green Product Purchasing**: Adopt green product purchasing program for all consumable products.

- **Value Long Term Quality over Lowest Initial Cost Purchasing:**: Limiting economic activity on the basis of "lowest bidder" does not take into account a more holistic, long term economic benefit to the community. Adopting qualifications based purchasing for services and even some products can be more cost effective, and more sustainable, than low price purchasing schemes.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Government Leadership in Sustainability:

- **Broad Inclusion**: Allowing all community citizens access to and participation in the decision-making process regardless of their social position allows all voices to be heard regarding the appropriate administration of economic, environmental, and social resources. Local governments should require and enable public participation in public decision making (through public education, notice and input) on a range of public initiatives such as public works projects, economic development projects, community planning, budget adoption, capital expenditures and local laws and charter revisions, etc.

- **Transparency**: Above all, governments should strive for transparency in all of their decision making in order to avoid alienation of the citizenry and promote and informed, involved citizenry whose participation in governing is embraced and not marginalized.

- **Voter Registration**: Local governmental leaders should encourage and create programs that promote voter registration for all members of the community.

- **Public Benefits for Public Support:** When private-public partnerships are created to carry out a project, such as an economic development venture, where public funding or public land is provided, the private partners should be required to create economic opportunity for the entire community. Also, any external project costs, such as noise, traffic or unhealthful conditions, should not be allowed to disproportionately affect any specific segment of the community.
- **Innovation and Precaution:** Create an environment that values innovation yet exercises precaution in developing programs and initiatives which may have positive as well as negative social equity impacts. Communities can and should rely upon data analysis and social science when considering potential problem solutions and community initiatives. Social problems are complex, and solutions are often counter-intuitive, thus requiring expert and innovative intervention that is based on science and analysis.

Policy #2: Local Economic Resilience

Basis: Diversified local economics are critical in the pursuit of a sustainable community. As technology advances and the larger economic climate changes, too many communities have found themselves devastated by an over-reliance on a particular industry, proving that healthy, sustainable communities require a diversity of business opportunities and employment options if they are to thrive in the long term. Employment is not the only aspect of a community that suffers when its economy weakens; without the revenue of a healthy economy, it becomes difficult to protect the local environment and ensure an equitable society. Therefore, it is imperative that local economies diversify to hedge against the potential decline of any particular economic sector. In this way, the local economy remains vibrant, the value of the local environment is recognized, and all local workers are afforded access to desirable employment or entrepreneurship opportunities.

Local Economic Resilience Overall Policy: Considering the necessity of local economic diversity, efforts must be supported that introduce a variety of economic activity into the local area while serving local and non-local markets. It is crucial, however, that such activity take place with respect for the environmental in terms of minimizing the overall environmental impact of the business operations. Such economic activity must also address social equity concerns by offering a range of employment levels and opportunities so that all members of the community can continue to earn a living wage and possess the opportunity for career growth. In short, **social equity and the environment do not need to be sacrificed in the interest of a sustainable economy, rather all three support each other.**

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Local Economic Resilience:
- **Air Quality Scoring:** We encourage communities to regularly calculate their score on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Air Quality Index" to be aware of the relative quality of the outdoor air and take appropriate action when needed to eliminate contaminants generated from economic activity.
- **Sustainable Business Certification:** We support all local businesses and institutions in becoming and striving to become certified as Environmentally Sustainable under ISO 14001 or other recognized certification programs.
- **Green Power Purchase or Production:** We support programs that promote green power purchasing requirements and/or on-site production and use of non-polluting, renewable energy for businesses, industries, and institutions.
- **GDP to Energy Ratio:** In the interest of efficiency, we support efforts to create targeted thresholds for their consumption of energy per dollar of local GDP. Business, institutional, industry, and government entities should then aim to operate below these thresholds.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Local Economic Resilience:
- **Renewable Local Resources:** We support the establishment of programs and incentives to grow the local economy based on renewable local resources.
- **Planning for Growth:** Communities should allocate locally controlled property or facilities for new or expanding business, industries, and institutions to locate, encouraging diversification and promoting growth and adaptation.
- **Economic Diversity Incentives:** We encourage the creation of local incentives to promote economic diversity such as property tax breaks, subsidies, or financing to attract new types of employers who can further diversify the local market.
- **Business Creation:** We support efforts and incentives to encourage new start-up businesses, entrepreneurship, patent and trademark development, and other new economic development activity.

- **Markets for Goods and Services:** We support the local production of goods and services that can be sold nationally and/or internationally, opening opportunities and establishing connections with non-local markets to create diversification. In addition, local goods and services should be made readily available to both government and private customers.

Social Equity Specific Local Economic Resilience Policies and Practices:
- **Living Wage**: We encourage all communities to determine the percentage of the workforce that is currently earning a living wage and to promote equal opportunity programs that incentivize local employers to offer a living wage at all positions.
- **"Incubators":** We support the local sponsorship of mechanisms to support small business start-ups and entrepreneurial opportunities for under-served populations.
- **Green Job Training:** We support the establishment of specialized training programs made available to all members of the community that provide training for local "green jobs."

Opposition Statements Related to Local Economic Resilience: In contrast to the sustainable policies and practices above, communities must **oppose** efforts that promote:

- **Restrictive growth:** We oppose all efforts that aim to centralize local market power and which discourage or oppose local economic diversification, or local business creation and development.

- **Unbalanced initiatives:** We oppose all efforts by government, business and industries that seek to disregard environmental concerns solely in the interest of economic gains.

- **Unequal opportunity:** We oppose all efforts that seek to discourage the availability of a living wage for all members of the community and which inhibit the opportunity for small business creation.

Policy #3: Sustainable Land Use Planning & Natural Resource Preservation

Basis: Sound land-use planning is a key mechanism for balancing the resource needs of present generation while not sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Land use planning and natural resource protection have many far-reaching consequences that all sustainable communities must consider. Historically, the use of zoning ordinances has restricted districts to an unsustainable single use format to separate conflicting uses. However, this format also prevents complementary uses from integrating, which leads to urban sprawl and a dependence on the automobile. Instead, sustainable communities require multi-use zoning which integrates complementary uses such as housing, recreational areas, employment, and institutions. This multi-use format makes for more balanced and self-sufficient communities, and encourages public transportation or walking, but must be designed intelligently to incorporate and protect local natural resources, provide access to people of all income levels and classes, and ensure a diversity of economic opportunity.

Sustainable Land Use Planning Overall Policy: Communities should create, maintain and adhere to **a balanced approach to comprehensive, sustainable, land-use plans and procedures** to guide all land-use and development decision making. The community plan should balance environmental, economic and social equity objectives. It should also be based on the principles of 'smart growth' such as multi-use zoning to diversify districts and provide citizens with as many livable resources as possible within reach of public transportation or walking.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Land Use Planning:
- **Smart Growth Policies:** Encourage all neighborhood and community leadership organizations to adopt Smart Growth policies that aim to diversify the existing community, prevent sprawl, and promote dark sky preservation. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's sustainability office can provide assistance in planning efforts.
- **Environmental Standards:** Encourage the adoption of environmental standards for new neighborhood development or subdivision development such as LEED for Neighborhoods or Congress for New Urbanism standards.
- **Local Agriculture:** Support local communities in establishing food garden and agriculture farmland protection policies. (Ithaca, NY's eco-village is an example of a community that conserves populated land, working diligently to reduce the town's impact and reserving the remaining space to be open green areas.)
- **Sensitive Areas:** Support efforts to protect waterways, wetlands, wildlife corridors, and all other environmentally unique or sensitive natural areas through formal recognition.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Land Use Planning:
- **Development Rights:** Planning and Zoning regulations should allow for the transfer of development rights for open space protection.
- **Mixed-Use Buildings:** Planning and Zoning regulations should also allow for and promote the utilization of buildings and districts for multiple uses.
- **Local Agriculture:** Encourage the promotion and protection of the community's local agriculture. For example, Farmer's Markets and other local agricultural outlets should be made available and be in use for as many months of the year as possible.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Land Use Planning:
- **Walkability:** Communities should introduce green pathways and trails that connect neighborhoods to the central community and business areas. Washington DC's Capital

Crescent Trail is one such example of a wooded and walkable pathway that connects suburban Maryland and DC to the downtown.

- **Planning Process:** Ensure that the comprehensive planning process regarding matters of land use and natural resource protection offers all members of the community a chance to provide their input.
- **Parks and Recreation:** Encourage public Parks and Recreation planning that provides park space throughout the community rather than in a central location only.
- **Free Access:** All open spaces must be free to all residents with appropriate fees for non-residents if necessary.
- **Neighbors input:** Where environmental hazards exist or are a consequence of development, all parties must have input such that no group is left out of the decision making process.

Opposition Statements Related to Sustainable Land Use Planning: In contrast to the sustainable policies and practices above, communities must **oppose** efforts that promote:

- **Unbalanced planning:** We oppose all efforts that disregard environmental concerns when planning community land use and zoning including negative health impacts.

- **Mixed-use Restrictions:** We oppose all efforts that restrict the mixed-use of buildings and districts for multiple purposes.

- **Unequal Access:** We oppose all efforts that would attempt to prevent any member of the community from having free access to both the decision-making process and Parks and Recreation facilities.

Policy #4: Sustainable Transportation and Mobility Systems

Basis: Transportation and the physical mobility of people are necessary parts of any community. Mobility of the community residents and visitors, as well as that of goods and services, is a critical component to its economic viability, and the health and welfare of its residents. In many cases, transportation has been regarded as a private issue, exemplified by a reliance on automobiles and roadways. However, more sustainable alternatives are eco-friendly, cost effective, and healthier for people. Public transportation that is reliable, affordable, and available to an entire community can reduce or replace automobile traffic. Integrating a mobility plan into an overall land use plan can allow for other mobility options too such as the creation of walkable communities. Further, the use of bicycle pathways and cycling lanes in roadways has been very successful across the USA.

Sustainable Transportation and Mobility Overall Policy: A transportation system must be in place that **balances multiple public and private mobility options to residents and visitors**. This system shall meet the needs of vehicular, pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle (bicycle) traffic while offering and including public, private and mass transit options suitable to the community's needs. All options should be cost-effective, yet not cost prohibitive for users, and minimize environmental impacts while providing equal opportunity access for all.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Transportation and Mobility:
- **Complete Streets:** We encourage local government and municipal offices to adopt a Complete Streets Policy, aiming to make existing and new roadways safe for auto, walking, and bicycling and accessible to all.
- **Transportation Plan:** We encourage implementation of a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan for the community. The Plan should include bicycle and walking paths separate from the roadway system.
- **Public Transportation Initiative:** Implement a specific public transportation initiative aiming to provide incentives for the use of public transportation by community members.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Transportation and Mobility:
- **Commuter Carpooling Incentives:** Incentives should be put in place to encourage carpooling such as express multi-passenger commuter lanes, park and ride lots, preferred parking, and information networking.
- **Public Transportation Incentives:** Incentives should be created to encourage workers and citizens to use public transportation.
- **Transportation Infrastructure:** We support the establishment of programs for the ongoing maintenance, updating, and replacement of transportation infrastructure.
- **Transit Oriented Development:** All programs which address transportation infrastructure should incorporate Transit Oriented Development principles, which creates communities that combine walkable, mixed use development within at least a half-mile of public transportation stations or stops.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Sustainable Transportation and Mobility:
- **Public Transit Access**: All public transportation systems must extend to all neighborhoods and areas of the community. This includes all bicycle and pedestrian pathways and trails.
- **Affordable Housing**: Programs and initiatives must be put in place to promote affordable housing closer to the activity and work centers of the community thus reducing the need for transportation to common destinations.
- **Input Capability**: All members of the community must have the ability to comment on and provide input into the community's transportation planning process.

Policy #5: Water Related Infrastructure Systems

Basis: Water is fundamental to all life. Therefore, any sustainable community must have readily available access to clean, protected, natural water supplies. Equally important, sewage, storm drainage and other waste water infrastructure systems must be effective at transporting human waste, preventing flooding, and avoiding contamination of water sources. Similarly, systems that contain or divert unwanted pollution from industrial or farming sources must be in place and effective. Many existing water infrastructure systems, however, are outdated and are causing water quality problems. To correct these issues, communities must alleviate the strain on existing systems while ensuring that all citizens and areas of the community are equally served.

Water Related Infrastructure Overall Policy: Intentional, proactive planning and implementation measures to **protect the quality and quantity of water in local natural sources and use it efficiently** must be put in place. Similarly, the updating of waste water systems including the installation of natural, "green infrastructure" measures that reduce the need for storm drainage, should be advanced. These measures should apply to all public and private water related systems so that safe drinking water and protected natural areas are accessible to all in the community.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Water Related Infrastructure:
- **Pollutants:** Local programs and initiatives must be established for the purpose of eliminating major sources of pollution from any source (municipal, industrial, agricultural, etc.) from entering the watershed.
- **Potable Water Treatment Funding:** Local government and businesses must ensure that the community's water treatment facilities have the adequate budget and resources to purify and remove all existing pollutants from drinking water supplies.
- **Infrastructure Funding**: Local government and businesses must assure that the community's water supply and waste piping infrastructure is in good repair and has an adequate budget and other resources for ongoing maintenance, repairs, and upgrades.
- **Potable Water Supply**: Community leaders must study, verify, and provide documentation to prove there to be enough potable water for the general population, for business, and for agricultural needs both currently and at least 25 years into the future.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Water Related Infrastructure:
- **Wastewater Treatment Funding**: Local community wastewater treatment facilities must have adequate capacity, budget and resources to operate at optimum performance in compliance with EPA requirements.
- **Onsite Wastewater Treatment**: Provide programs and incentives for decentralized, onsite wastewater treatment for building facilities with compliance monitoring required.
- **System Separation**: Sanitary sewer piping systems and storm drainage piping systems must be completely separated, whether newly built or existing.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Water Related Infrastructure:
- **Best Management Practices:** Storm water "Best Management Practices," as defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency, should be adopted and put in place.
- **Low Impact Development:** Low Impact Development policies and practices, as defined by the Low Impact Development Center, should be instituted.
- **Community Outreach:** Community outreach programs should be developed to promote the use of site-specific strategies such as rain gardens, rain barrels, and green roofs.
- **Access to Information**: All citizens and community members must be provided with access to water related infrastructure information and programs.

Policy #6: Green Buildings and Housing

Basis: A community's buildings have an enormous impact on its sustainability status and environmental footprint, as they are tightly woven into many other aspects of sustainability. Buildings consume roughly half of all energy and over 70% of all electricity in the United States. They also require vast amounts of water, materials, and land, meaning their design can have long-lasting ramifications for the community. Green building designs and renovations work better with the land, use less water, reduce energy consumption, and generate less waste. Programs and incentives put in place to attract and encourage the creation of new green construction and renovation in the community will not only produce better, healthier, more sustainable buildings, it will also create jobs. In addition, buildings are the community's physical presence of housing, businesses, and other activities. This means there must be a variety of options available that accommodate all social and income levels.

Green Building and Housing Overall Policy: Support all efforts that strive to help building owners, designers, and builders recognize **the multiple positive attributes of green buildings**. Further, support efforts to **establish green building codes and regulations** that require minimum construction standards for sustainable development, water conservation, energy use optimization, indoor environmental quality, and the use of safe, healthy, and environmentally conscious building materials. Include provisions for the use and preservation of historic buildings, 'aging in place' approaches to handicapped accessible buildings, and housing affordability to allow all citizens to remain and thrive within the community.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Green Buildings and Housing:
- **Green Requirements**: Encourage the establishment and enforcement of green building requirements for the construction and renovation of private, commercial, and institutional buildings, as well as multi-family residential buildings, and single family homes.
- **Weatherization:** Support the creation of programs and incentives to encourage the weatherization of existing residential buildings of all types.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Green Buildings and Housing:
- **Green Construction:** These same programs should look to retain and support existing construction related companies that are seeking to offer green products and services.
- **Green Training:** There must be workforce-training opportunities for workers to learn the skills and trades of green construction.
- **Reinvestment:** Programs and incentives should also exist to encourage reinvestment in existing and historic neighborhoods.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Green Buildings and Housing:
- **Affordability:** Programs and incentives must be put in place that aim to develop affordable housing in the community.
- **Buyer Assistance:** We encourage the availability of assistance for first-time homebuyers to help with lower interest rates.
- **Secondary Housing:** Planning and zoning regulations should or should be made to allow for "in-law," or secondary housing units on single family home sites.
- **Foreclosure Prevention:** Credit assistance and counseling programs should be made available to community residents to help avoid foreclosure conditions.

Policy #7: Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels

Basis: Most of the energy used in this country is provided by the consumption of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) that emit various types of air pollution. These emissions have been scientifically linked to human health / respiratory issues, the creation of by products like acid rain, and the altering of weather and climate patterns from greenhouse gases. Meanwhile non-polluting energy systems such as solar energy, hydropower, geothermal, biomass, and wind power are becoming much more prevalent and affordable options around the world. These innovative, non-fossil fuel sources of energy are much healthier for humans and do not cause the respiratory issues linked to the build-up of greenhouse gases. Further, the cost of purchasing any type of energy yields a disproportionate burden on low income households since two buildings may be virtually the same in terms of energy usage but not the same in household income, meaning a lower income household pays a higher percentage of that income for energy (i.e. energy burden).

> **Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels - Overall Policy:** In light of scientific evidence that our current dependence on fossil fuels is not sustainable, communities, including utility companies, municipal power providers and consumers, must take steps to **rapidly replace energy generated from fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) with renewable, non-polluting alternatives such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and biomass.** This conversion is worthy of significant support at all scale levels including larger energy utility companies, smaller local systems, or individual energy users. We further support all efforts that strive to make innovative, non-polluting methods for energy production widely available and affordable to all citizens.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels:
- **Availability**: Everyone in the community must have the option of purchasing non-fossil fuel generated energy or electrical power at a fair cost.
- **Codes and Requirements:** Local codes and zoning requirements must allow the use of solar and wind systems that generate electricity.
- **Localization:** Community based, localized, or decentralized energy and electrical systems that use alternatives to fossil fuels should be considered for inclusion in a community's energy source portfolio.
- **Waste-to-Energy:** Sustainable, non-polluting systems which convert waste into energy such as landfill gas, bio-fuels, solid waste, or methane systems should also be considered as part of a community's energy resources.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels:
- **Business Creation:** Encourage the establishment of programs and incentives that attract or create new green energy related companies within the community.
- **Business Retention**: Establish programs and incentives that support and help retain existing energy related companies in the community that offer green products and services.
- **Workforce Training:** Encourage the creation of training opportunities for workers to learn the skills and trades required by green energy companies to make available their products, technology, or systems.
- **Cooperative Enterprises:** Support the establishment of programs and incentives that encourage the creation of public and private cooperative enterprises related to green energy.

<u>**Social Equity**</u> **Specific Policies and Practices for Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels:**

- **Public Outreach:** Low and moderate income households within the community must be made aware of available energy saving programs and services through public outreach networking.
- **Weatherization:** Programs should be made available for low and moderate income households to have their residences weatherized for energy efficiency to reduce their energy burden.
- **Net-Metering:** Support "net-metering" programs being made available to the community to allow site generated electricity to be sold back to the utility grid at favorable rates to the seller.
- **Conservation and Awareness:** Support and promote all incentives and programs that encourage energy conservation and the use of renewable or green energy sources. It is imperative that these programs be made available to all residents and businesses in the community.

<u>**Opposition Statements**</u> **Related to Energy from Non-Fossil Fuels:** In contrast to the sustainable policies and practices above, communities must **oppose** efforts that promote:

- **Furthering the use of Fossil Fuels**: Initiatives to drill, extract, move or deliver more fossil fuels into or through a community, for whatever reason, is contrary to the position of replacing fossil fuels with alternatives.

- **Fossil Fuel related business growth**: Any public or private initiative that supports fossil fuel use over the increased use of sustainable alternatives is not viewed to be a sustainable economic solution.

- **Restricted availability**: We oppose any efforts to restrict financing, services, or programs due to the geographic or demographic features of a neighborhood within a community.

Policy #8: Waste Material Management

Basis: Waste management is an often under-appreciated and ignored obligation of any community, which, under current techniques, is not only very expensive to maintain, but is also extremely environmentally unfriendly. Therefore, many sustainable communities are looking to more effective, less expensive recycling and reuse programs to alleviate the burden currently placed on landfills and incinerators. The implementation of these programs is having a two-fold effect. Not only have they appreciably reduced the land use impact, transportation needs, water pollution, and air pollution attributable to waste management, but this new industry has also resulted in job creation and aided economic development in a number of areas. In addition, many of these newly created employment opportunities are able to be filled by untrained workers, meaning their establishment is having a positive effect on social equity.

Waste Material Management Overall Policy: Support all efforts that aim to institute **comprehensive recycling and material re-use programs** that effectively reduce the need for disposal and that supplant the need for virgin material. These programs should also provide employment opportunities and provide service to all people and places in the community.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Waste Material Management:
- **Material Recycling**: All communities should have a fully functioning and operating recycling program for households and workplaces for paper, plastic, and metals.
- **Outdoor Recycling**: Fully functioning and operating programs should also exist for yard waste and landscaping collection and recycling.
- **Hazardous Materials**: Communities must also be equipped with a fully functioning and operating program for products containing hazardous materials such as paints, batteries, and electronic equipment.
- **Landfill Alternative**: Every community must possess an alternative to landfills that provides some place for non re-useable waste and does not contribute to any other type of pollution.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Waste Material Management:
- **Business Creation:** Programs and incentives should exist that encourage the creation of new business focused on recycling or re-use of materials.
- **Business Retention:** Programs and incentives should also exist that aim to help support and retain existing business focused on recycling or re-use of materials.
- **Construction Debris:** The establishment of businesses that will accept and recycle construction debris of all types must be encouraged to avoid a build up of concrete, pavement, timber, and metals.
- **Deconstruction:** Businesses should be encouraged to participate in the "deconstruction," rather than demolition of buildings, meaning the dismantling, re-use, salvaging, and recycling of unused, retired, or faulty buildings.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Waste Material Management:
- **Public Recycling:** Programs or partnerships should be created to provide publicly available recycling for all paper and plastic products.
- **Education:** Community programs should exist for the purpose of educating the public about the benefits of and methods for recycling and re-use of materials.
- **Access:** It is imperative that all members of the community have ready access to all recycling services.

- **Cost-effectiveness**: It must be ensured that community residents pay the same or lower cost for recycling compared to the cost of trash removal to incentivize the complete adoption of recycling.

Opposition Statements Related to Waste Material Management: In contrast to the sustainable policies and practices above, communities must **oppose** efforts that promote:

- **Environmental degradation:** We oppose all efforts that seek to inhibit the adoption of recycling and material re-use programs in favor of less environmentally friendly methods of waste management such as landfills and unregulated incinerators.

- **Business restrictions:** We oppose all efforts that seek to inhibit the creation and retention of businesses in the field of recycling and material re-use.

- **Access restrictions:** We oppose all efforts that seek to restrict access to any waste management facility or method for any portion of the community, and which complicate or inhibit the adoption of recycling and material re-use programs by any residents.

Policy #9: Culture, Arts, and Entertainment

Basis: The preservation of community heritage is an often-undervalued necessity that has a more subtle and nuanced effect on sustainability than most other traits. By supporting its cultural heritage, historic resources, arts community, and entertainment groups and venues, a community helps to define its characteristics and strengthen its identity. Local heritage has too often been sacrificed or ignored in favor of the prevailing national or regional culture, a trend which has an unhealthy impact on any society. The sustainable approach is therefore to promote and encourage cultural diversity and celebrate the community's unique history, thereby enhancing cohesiveness and understanding between different groups and driving loyalty and support of local organizations.

> **Culture, Arts, and Entertainment Overall Policy:** Communities that actively celebrate, create, identify with, and participate in their local heritage, culture, art, music, food, sports, and entertainment, will **build upon their history, promote a healthy diversity of people, foster creativity, and sustain a valuable community identity.**

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Culture, Arts, and Entertainment:
- **Event Greening:** Programs and assistance should be in place to educate and encourage the greening of cultural, arts, entertainment, and sports events.
- **Facility Greening:** All cultural, arts, entertainment, and historical properties and facilities within the community should be operated as green facilities.
- **Transportation and Parking:** Public transportation systems should aim to connect the cultural, arts, entertainment, sporting, and historical facilities in the community as a way to reduce parking needs.
- **Waste and Water Management:** Adequate, permanent toilet facilities and drinking water must be available at all venues to reduce water waste and the need for temporary facilities.

Economy Specific Policies and Practices for Culture, Arts, and Entertainment:
- **Arts Growth:** Programs and incentives should be established to encourage the growth of the arts population in the community.
- **Historic Preservation:** Programs and incentives should also exist to encourage the preservation and public access of historic landmarks and facilities.
- **Entertainment and Recreation Venues:** Programs and incentives should support entertainment and recreation venues within the community for all ages, income levels, and cultural backgrounds.
- **Sports:** Initiatives should exist to promote supporters of local organized sports programs within the community.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Culture, Arts, and Entertainment:
- **Visual and Performing Arts:** Programs and incentives should be established that aim to attract, organize, and maintain visual and performing arts events in the community.
- **Participatory and Spectator Sports:** Programs and incentives to attract, organize, and maintain participatory and spectator sports events should be established and supported.
- **Historical Locations and events:** Programs and incentives should be created to protect, organize, and maintain historical locations and related events.
- **Cultural Festivals:** Cultural festivals and similar events must also be maintained and promoted through programs and incentives.
- **Sharing:** Community historic, cultural, arts, and entertainment should all be openly shared.

Policy #10: Quality Public Education

Basis: Education is a vital function of any sustainable society. Future generations must be universally equipped with the tools and knowledge required to function successfully in society. Quality education available to all children must therefore be made a high priority and curricula at all levels must cover concepts of long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability. In addition, higher education must be made attainable for all socio-economic classes, as well as educational advancement options for adults. The ultimate goal is to create and maintain a well-educated community in general who also have a specific awareness about the necessity of sustainability are able to embrace it.

Quality Public Education Overall Policy: Recognizing the vital impact that education has on a community, support all efforts that i**mprove the quality of public education that is available to all community members**. In particular, support sustainability education as an integral part of curricula at all academic levels.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Quality Public Education:
- **K-12 Curriculum:** The community's public K-12 core curriculum should include environmental education modules that are taught to all students in multiple subjects.
- **College Curriculum:** College students should be taught sustainability across disciplines as part of the core curriculum.
- **National Programs:** Encourage the incorporation of National programs such as the "Go Green Initiative" and others into the local curriculum and teaching process.
- **Out of Classroom Experiences:** Encourage local schools to incorporate events and facilities for "out of the classroom" experiences.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Quality Public Education:
- **Information Access:** Communities should create and/or maintain a web site or other electronic medium that is accessible to the public and that contains local sustainability information.
- **Employee Participation:** Local businesses and institutions are encouraged to support employee participation in green and sustainability programs.
- **Continuing Education:** Ensure that local continuing education programs be made available to the entire community on green and sustainable topics through local educational institutions.
- **National Program Hosting**: We encourage community hosting of national sustainability programs such as the GreeningUSA Sustainability Academy.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Quality Public Education:
- **Higher Education:** Local initiatives and programs should be created to encourage the pursuit of higher education studies including locally funded scholarships, achievement recognition, and other programs.
- **Graduation Rates:** Support the establishment of programs and initiatives to support or boost high school graduation rates including designations as a "High Performance School District."
- **Funding:** The mechanism for public funding for quality education for all residents must be adequate to meet ongoing budget needs.
- **English as a Second Language:** Programs that support English as a second language should be established and/or maintained to improve learning, graduation rates, and pursuit of higher education studies.

Position #11 Public Health and Safety

Basis: Health and safety are two closely tied traits of any sustainable community. When citizens feel safer, they are more inclined to spend time outdoors, a healthy lifestyle trend. Such reassuring safety is not achieved by sole reliance on law enforcement, but through citizen participation in addition to law enforcement. Therefore, healthy societies are those that have active community watchdog programs and that promote citizen empowerment in the face of crime. The outdoor lifestyle that this sense of security breeds should then be encouraged and facilitated by walkways that provide pedestrian access to all important facilities. These walkways also reduce the need for automobile travel, helping the environment. In regards to health care, too many communities rely on the services of one central hospital, meaning some parts of the community are severely disadvantaged in the case of an emergency. Health care should therefore be decentralized, with urgent care available within a reasonable distance to all parts of the community. A healthier community means a more reliable workforce and hence a more efficient economy.

Public Health and Safety Overall Policy: Since people naturally seek healthy, safe places to live, work, or play, support all efforts to **create healthier, safer communities.** In so doing, ascribe importance to providing all community members with ready access to community spaces and resources that promote healthy lifestyles and safe environments.

Environment Specific Policies and Practices for Public Health and Safety:
- **Walkability:** Public recreation facilities must be made accessible via pedestrian routes.
- **Decentralization**: Programs and incentives should exist to encourage the creation of decentralized open spaces and public facilities across the community.
- **Maintenance:** Government, private, and volunteer programs should be in place to care for and maintain public recreational facilities.
- **School Accessibility:** School facilities should be open to the public after school hours for recreation purposes.

Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Public Health and Safety:
- **Recruitment:** Local recruitment campaigns must actively encourage more paid and/or volunteer workers for police, fire, and other safety services.
- **Health Care Retention:** We encourage the creation of programs and incentives that aim to retain health care facilities and offices in the community.
- **Career Advancement:** Training and career advancement opportunities must be made available to the local workforce in health and safety fields.
- **Wages Equality**: It must be ensured that wages for health and safety workers are competitive with those of other professions in the area.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Public Health and Safety:
- **Crime Rate Reduction:** Programs and initiatives to reduce crime rate in the community must be a high priority.
- **Security Funding:** There must be adequate and ongoing funding to meet the community's security needs.
- **Neighborhood Watch:** Citizen participation programs such as "Neighborhood Watch" must in place to assist in reducing the local crime rate.
- **Public Outreach:** Public Outreach programs and neighborhood presence centers should be established and run by local police officers.

Policy #12 Community Engagement

Basis: No community can reach sustainable status through government action alone. Civic (including service, neighborhood and political associations), business, social and religious organizations can all help to make a community and its members stronger through joint action, mutual support and personal development. Communities that have a citizenry actively engaged in civic affairs, and whose citizens interact in wide and diverse ways, have a tendency to adopt policies correlated with greater sustainability. Citizens of all professions and social standing should strive to participate and be engaged with organizations in order to strengthen the environmental, economic, social and civic fabric of the community. Organizations can assist governments with their mission through private-public partnerships as well as participation in the development of public policy. Strong community based associations can counter balance disproportionate, and well-funded, special interest political influence.

Community Engagement Overall Policy: Foster opportunities, create incentives and motivate all **citizens to participate in the governmental, environmental, economic, and social affairs** of the community either as part of a group or as an individual in order to help to create a fully engaged, long term sustainable community.

Environment and Economic Specific Policies and Practices for Community Engagement:

- **Non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations** should exist so that the community has active interest groups formed around key community issues and opportunities. These may be local groups or local chapters of national organizations and may be environmental, economic or social justice oriented groups.
- **Citizen Participation**: Governments should seek out community interest groups to obtain their input into key community issues. By showing respect for their input, governments acknowledge the value of an engaged citizenry which strengthens democratic governance.
- **Advisory Boards and Task Forces**: Governments may also create advisory groups of citizens to obtain a broad cross-section of public input into issues, decision making and even operational policies. Recognition and participation by established NGO interest groups is a way to enhance widespread participation and involvement.
- **Meetings and Meeting Schedules**: Governments should engage with citizenry through community meetings which are designed to inform or educate citizens of the key aspects of issues up for resolution by governing bodies. Meetings should be designed to engage a cross-section of citizens by using proactive scheduling, multiple opportunities to participate and even web or public broadcasting of meetings. Individuals should be encouraged to provide free and open input and dialog.
- **Facilities Sharing**: Governmental units can support local NGO interest groups by making facilities available at reasonable (or no) cost for meetings, festivals, parades, educational programs and other events regardless whether the government is in agreement with the groups positions on various issues.

Social Equity Specific Policies and Practices for Community Engagement:

- **Citizen Participation**: Governments need to support healthy debate as a key component of democratic governing and sustainable communities and support community groups, neighborhood associations, cultural associations, and individuals.
- **Citizen Support and Empowerment**: Religious institutions and other cultural institutions should be encouraged and, where they exist, should be a vital component of citizen interaction, education and action on issues affecting the community.
- **Governmental Transparency**: Above all, governments should strive for transparency in all of their decision making in order to avoid alienation of the citizenry and promote and

informed, involved citizenry whose participation in governing is embraced and not marginalized.

- **Fair and Impartial Interest Group Politics**: Communities can work with governments to create an atmosphere where governing and electoral politics is fair and open; one where well-funded interest group politics is not allowed to corrupt or unduly influence the electoral and governing process.
- **Voter Registration and Election Participation**: Active voter registration campaigns as well as voter support can make it convenient for voters to register and vote can also help to engage citizens that may not have been actively engaged in community affairs in the past due to historical discriminatory practices or economic marginalization. Citizens should be enabled to help others who have difficulty in getting to polling places.

POLICIES
For Sustainable Communities

BASED ON THE
GREENINGUSA 12 TRAITS©
OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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