



## Step up to the Challenge of Planning a Sustainable Future for Your Community



**Sustainability  
Solutions  
group**

### **Planning with Sustainability in Mind**

Smart Planning, Integrated Planning, Sustainability Planning and Integrated Community Sustainability Planning are increasingly important and prevalent planning methods that all strive towards the same goal: communities that are sustainable from all their environmental, economic, social and governance perspectives. At Sustainability Solutions Group we are passionate about community sustainability and offer unique, innovative and holistic ideas and strategies to communities that are stepping up to the challenge of planning for their sustainable future.

Chances are members of your community, your council and your municipal planning body are increasingly interested in applying sustainability principles to community development and land use. Planning for a sustainable future involves considering everything from natural resource stewardship to fostering just and equitable communities to ensuring strong economic viability, and everything in between. Since all elements of a community are interrelated, sustainability planning considers all of a community's various elements, needs, assets and aspirations.

### **The Sustainability Solutions Group Approach**

SSG believes that sustainability is a process of continuous improvement, not merely an end to achieve. We aid communities in developing their own processes by employing a unique integrated method that combines our members' diverse expertise across a variety of fields. Our approach to community sustainability draws on elements of sustainability planning, asset-based community development, green design and integrated design processes, among others. Our method is:

**Holistic:** we integrate economic, community and environmental planning into processes with common objectives.

**Participatory:** we empower community members to take active roles in creating their own resilient, sustainable futures.

**Action-Oriented:** we establish processes to implement plans, measure and evaluate outcomes, and report on progress on short and long term goals.

**Long-term in Perspective:** we help communities envision their desired future and establish steps needed to attain it.

## Five Stages to Community Sustainability

Our approach consists of five main stages with a strong emphasis on community engagement and holistic thinking:

- Stage 1:** Planning the Process – Solidifying community commitment to the process, focusing the direction and parameters of the process, determining stakeholders and forming a Citizens Advisory Group to guide the process.
- Stage 2:** Developing Sustainability Principles – Hosting community dialogue about the community’s goals, core values and vision to form a community sustainability vision.
- Stage 3:** Gathering Assets and Issues – Hosting community dialogue to identify obstacles to achieving the vision and assets within the community that can address these obstacles. Task forces are assigned to mitigate these issues and finesse the community assets.
- Stage 4:** Creating an Action Plan: Develop implementable ideas and actions based on the assets and issues that can carry the community forward on its course towards achieving its sustainability vision.
- Stage 5:** Implementation and Monitoring: Engaging the Action Plan at the municipal level and monitoring its progress. The implementation is structured such that the course is flexible to allow for tweaking, ongoing capacity building and direction shifts.

## Community Benefits

Our approach benefits communities by:

- Producing a baseline assessment of current economic, social and environmental conditions;
- Ensuring community awareness and understanding of sustainability;
- Inspiring community members to take action around a common vision;
- Identifying community assets and beneficially relating them to each other;
- Developing a tangible action plan for the community;
- Establishing ongoing monitoring and reporting strategies.

This systems-based approach emphasizes strong democratic community involvement, engages political governance, and integrates tangible plans and actions with an achievable, community-developed vision of sustainability.

## Contact Sustainability Solutions Group

Start the sustainability conversation with SSG. We want to help your community be the best it can be, now and in the future.



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