



Sustainability-Focused Development

Expanding the Building Communities Methodology to Encompass Sustainability Principles

Although “Sustainability-Focused Development” is not regarded as a Building Communities strategy in traditional economic development strategic planning, the broadening of objectives from “economic development” to “sustainability” brings a new set of considerations for communities.

This Sustainability-Focused Development strategy has been added to the traditional Building Communities approach and includes the additional key success factors and essential action steps that this broader approach requires.

This strategy is designed to surface all of the sustainability considerations encompassed in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Livability Principles (see table at right).

This new strategy differs from the traditional 25 strategies in that it fully encompasses a critical set of disciplines and values (housing, transportation, and environmental quality). Discussions related to this strategy will be widely divergent from community-to-community based upon the specific interests and opportunities of the communities themselves.

These broader considerations will help each community and Tribe to identify issues, challenges, opportunities, and potential development projects that can be supported by programs advancing sustainability as well as community and economic development.

Example Projects and Initiatives

- New or expanded **transit** services connecting housing to jobs and services
- **Affordable housing** development strategically situated to minimize traditional transportation time and costs
- **Mixed-use development** projects combining housing, services, and work opportunities
- **Proactive zoning** to facilitate growth
- Health and fitness **walking path systems**/promotional campaigns urging pedestrian and bicycle transportation activity
- Sustainable **local foods** initiatives
- **Forest stewardship** initiatives
- **Energy conservation** activities
- Establishment of **arts and crafts** coops
- **Green jobs** initiatives
- **Strategic use of treated wastewater**

Housing and Urban Development’s Livability Principles

Provide more transportation choices.

Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing.

Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

Enhance economic competitiveness.

Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs of workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy

Value communities and neighborhoods.

Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.



Potential Advantages to Implementing this Strategy

- Improve local quality of life
- Long-term perspective on infrastructure investments
- Reduction of traffic congestion
- Upgrading historically blighted areas
- Air quality improvement
- Short-term job creation from development projects
- Forest sustainability
- Support for local farmers and growers
- Engagement of cross-section of local population focused on sustainability
- Support for other strategies related to community livability

Potential Drawbacks to Implementing this Strategy

- Effort-to-visible-benefit ratio sometimes challenging
- Perception that local resources are being redirected to benign initiatives

Key Considerations

With ever-increasing focus and attention being placed on livability and environmental issues, communities that proactively address sustainability projects are riding a popular wave. State and federal agencies, as well as foundations, are redirecting funding and technical resources toward sustainability initiatives.

Sustainability initiatives may be viewed by traditional community and (especially) business development activists as peripheral to the essential development activity needed by the community. Alternatively, many communities advance sustainability initiatives as a central cornerstone to their economic development program.

Land Use Implications

Industrial. With the exception of forest stewardship initiatives, this strategy has little consequence for industrial land.

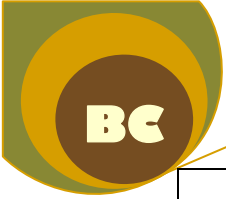
Commercial. Under this strategy, some future commercial development may be redirected toward mixed-use developments.

Residential. Under this strategy, some of the future housing development would be redirected toward mixed-use developments. Certain residential neighborhoods would also benefit from new transit projects.

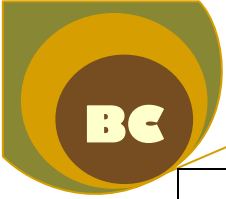


Key Success Factors and Essential Action Steps

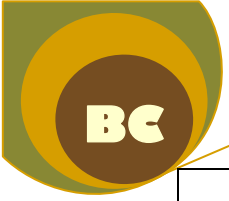
Key Success Factors	Essential Action Steps
Transit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to assess demand for transit services • Local or regional organization with experience in managing a transit program • Local governmental support for public transit as a priority • Available funding for expanded transit services 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation or support for existing transit advocacy organization <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of updated public transportation plan • Determination of sufficient funding for transit operations and promotion <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation/expansion of public transportation system
Affordable Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to assess demand for affordable housing development • Local community and government support for affordable housing development • Available land for affordable housing projects • Available public funding for housing development • Existing developers with interest and capacity to develop affordable housing 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of efficient local housing authority/organization <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a current housing assessment determining supply and demand of affordable housing <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new affordable housing stock, as appropriate
Mixed-Use Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available land for mixed use development projects • Adequate market conditions • Local or regional developer interest 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of local codes and policies reinforcing benefits and requirements of mixed use development <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public- and/or private-sector development of new affordable housing units
Proactive Zoning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support for sustainability principles • Local government support for sustainability principles • Local planning expertise 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of planning volunteers and staff in the principles and practices of sustainability <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining sustainability at the local level and



	<p>considering the associated planning implications</p> <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating of local codes and ordinances incorporating sustainability principles and practices
<p>Walking Path Systems</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available location/land for walking path system • Local government support for walking path development • Availability of public funding for walking path development • Community support for acquiring public right of way for walking path system 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation/support for local advocacy group advancing walking path project • Coordination between walking path advocacy group and local municipality <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary and final design (and cost study) of walking path project • Determination of existing and potential funding sources for development and maintenance <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and long-term maintenance of walking path system
<p>Local Foods</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local or regional organization with experience in managing a local foods program • Community and local government support 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of organization/cooperative advocating locally/fresh grown foods <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility analysis of local farmer’s market • Business plan for local foods cooperative <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment and operations of farmer’s market • Establishment/operations of local foods cooperative
<p>Forest Stewardship</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive public policy toward stewardship • Ability to secure long-term contracts for forest materials • Local or regional business interest 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of local advocacy organization partially or totally committed to natural resource-environmental advocacy • Effective networking amongst local, state, and federal agencies and non-profits <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of sustainability and stewardship concepts in local/regional forest management plans <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful execution of forest stewardship contracts • Retaining and/or expanding forest industry-based



	jobs through sustainability/stewardship initiatives
Energy Conservation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified lead agency advocating energy conservation • Availability of energy conservation incentives 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment/operations of local government agency or non-profit advocating energy efficiency initiatives <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of energy efficiency initiatives in local/regional electric utility planning <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of energy efficiency investments
Arts and Crafts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical mass of talent in arts and crafts • Qualified individual or organization focused upon organizing and promoting artisans • Sufficient marketing/promotional budget 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment/expansion of local arts and crafts advocacy organization <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a community-wide marketing plan for the promotion of local arts and crafts <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing of aggregated arts and crafts products • Establishment and marketing of local/regional events promoting area artisans
Green Jobs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local organization focused upon advocacy of environmentally-sensitive jobs • Local government support for environmental initiatives 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing/supporting a new or existing organization focused on advocating for green jobs <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the specific nature and outcomes of green job creation in the community/region • Research and promotion of incentives and resources for green job development <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of education forums and events advocating green job creation • Consideration of facility development (incubator) for green job start-ups and expansions
Strategic Use of Treated Wastewater	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of treated wastewater • Cost-effective reuse opportunity for treated wastewater 	<p>Organizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal (municipal) support for treated wastewater • Establishment of partnerships between local government and wastewater reuse advocacy groups



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local government support for reuse of treated wastewater• Sufficient expertise to engineer treated wastewater solution• Availability of current or potential infrastructure for channeling treated wastewater	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study to determine the availability of treated wastewater• Determination of the appropriate reuse opportunities for treated wastewater• Engineering and cost studies on treated wastewater reuse <p>Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of one or more treated wastewater reuse initiatives
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