



Sustainable DC Organizers

Resource Guide

Overview, Key Messaging, and Contacts

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DC?

Sustainable DC is a District Government-led plan to make the city the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the United States. It is a citywide initiative crafted for and by the city's diverse community with the ultimate goal of making DC more socially equitable, environmentally responsible, and economically competitive over the next twenty years.

HISTORY

Sustainable DC was started in the summer of 2011 when Mayor Vincent Gray went to the US National Conference of Mayors and listened to what other cities were doing in terms of sustainability and realized that Washington, DC had already been doing similar things far earlier and was already ahead of other cities in relation to many aspects of sustainability. In order to organize the city's sustainability initiatives and long-term planning toward the future, the Mayor called together the **Office of Planning** and the **District Department of the Environment** to put together a plan that would make DC the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the nation.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Lead Agencies**
 - **Office of Planning**
 - **District Department of the Environment**

- **The Green Cabinet**

Lead by the Office of the City Administrator, the Green Cabinet is made up of agency directors who advise the plan, collaborate to help design, and implement the plan. These agencies will ultimately be in charge of implementing actions in the plan and measuring and achieving the plan's targets.

- **The Green Ribbon Committee**

The Green Ribbon Committee is composed of business and non-profit professionals with subject matter expertise in the sustainability arena. They provide private and non-profit sector insights and perspective to the Sustainable DC plan.

- **Sustainable DC Working Groups**

The Sustainable DC Working Groups were composed of city residents, business and industry professionals, and District government staff who contributed to drafting visions for an original list of nine sustainability topics. They recommended visions, goals, and actions to make the District more



sustainable. Working group members participated actively in the Sustainable DC planning process through the winter of 2011 and 2012 and then provided comments and feedback as the list of recommended actions were refined and revised through spring, summer and fall of 2012.

- **Stakeholders**

All city residents have a stake in making the city more sustainable. Sustainability is about healthier communities, more affordable living through lower utility and medical bills, more transportation and active lifestyle choices, and a greener, more beautiful city. Sustainability affects all residents, workers, and visitors of our city.

- **Sustainable DC Organizer Program (pilot: February 2013 - July 2013)**

A group of active residents representing all wards who are supportive of the Sustainable DC initiative and act as advocates and messengers for the plan. Organizers are instrumental in helping raise public awareness about the importance of sustainability and how to lead more sustainable lifestyles that will contribute to achieving the goals in the plan.

PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- **Summer 2011**

- Mayor calls together key agencies to start to develop an ‘ambitious but achievable’ sustainability plan
- Office of Planning and District Department of the Environment begin laying out a planning process to lay a path for the District’s sustainable future

- **Fall 2011**

- “Start in September” — an outreach effort to talk to as many residents about Sustainable DC as possible — launches
- OP and DDOE design a foundation for the plan and collaborate with other agencies to find ‘points of contact’ with expertise on different sustainability topics
- Green Ribbon Committee and Green Cabinet begin meeting

- **Winter 2011-2012**

- Nine working groups meet every other week to discuss specific sustainability topics: the built environment, climate, energy, food, the green economy, nature, transportation, waste, water
- Working groups draft visions, goals, and recommendations that formed the *Vision for a Sustainable DC* and informed the later full Sustainable DC plan

- **Spring 2012**

- *A Vision for a Sustainable DC* is released in April 2012
- Lead agencies hosted ‘Community Conversation’ to address crosscutting issues that affected each of the nine working group topics: education, jobs, health and diversity
- DDOE and OP propose the Sustainable DC legislation containing several pieces related to sustainability, including: bee-keeping, PACE financing, weatherization for low income families and elderly households, fertilizer prevention, energy efficiency



- The District Fiscal Year 2013 budget awards the Sustainable DC plan \$4.5 million in capital budget money for innovative new sustainability projects across the city
- **Summer 2012**
 - Sustainable DC staff meet with District government agencies to better understand current operations and future plans
 - Working with consultants, Sustainable DC staff refine, condense, and prioritize key recommendations from the working groups as well as national and global best practices
- **Fall 2012**
 - Sustainable DC drafts sections of the plan to explain challenges the city faces and sustainability solutions to achieving ambitious goals
 - SDC Budget Challenge is announced: 32 District government agencies applied for the Sustainable DC Budget Challenge asking for over \$20 million
- **Winter 2012 – 2013**
 - Sustainable DC Budget Challenge awards are given to 12 of the 32 applications for a total of \$4.5 million dollars
 - The Sustainable DC Act is passed by Council and signed into law by Mayor Gray on January 16, 2013
 - The finished Sustainable DC Plan will be released by Mayor Gray on February 20, 2013
- **Upcoming: Spring 2013**
 - The Organizer program will start to help spread the word about the plan more broadly across the District.
 - Sustainable DC staff will work with Budget Challenge awardees to get projects running and develop metrics to gauge success. The Sustainable DC team will develop implementation work-plan for rolling out short term actions from the plan.
 - Sustainable DC staff will continue to seek new ways to engage the public and reach out to the city's diverse communities.

EXPLAINING THE SUSTAINABLE DC PLAN: BASIC BREAKDOWN

The Sustainable DC Plan focuses on solving core urban challenges within the District using sustainable solutions across a range of topics. Within each challenge and solution, there are **goals**, **targets**, and **actions** (short-term, medium-term, and long-term) that will help achieve the plan's vision.

4 Challenges:

- Jobs and Economy – creating jobs and growing the economy
- Health and Wellness – improving environmental quality and the quality of indoor space and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles
- Equity and Diversity – ensuring services are equally distributed with focus on those who need them most, solving historic environmental injustices
- Climate and Environment – reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change and protecting and preserving our natural resources



7 Solutions:

- Built Environment – building environmental performance, urban density and a vibrant city fabric
- Energy – energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Transportation – expanding travel options to encourage other modes besides personal vehicles
- Water – stormwater management, conserving water use
- Waste – reduce, reuse, recycle
- Food – healthy local food access and encouraging more people to grow their own food
- Nature – protecting wetland habitats, increasing the tree canopy and improving access to parks

HELPFUL LINES TO GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

- Have you heard about the Sustainable DC Plan? It's a twenty year plan to make the District the healthiest, greenest, most livable city in the nation.
- So, the plan is designed to address urban challenges using sustainability solutions. In the plan, there are four core challenges (Jobs and the Economy, Health and Wellness, Equity and Diversity, and Climate and the Environment). To address these, there are seven key sustainability solutions: the Built Environment, Energy, Food, Nature, Transportation, Waste and Water.
- If you interested in learning more, sign onto our listserve and we will send you emails about upcoming events and ways to get involved.
- If you have any questions, I can take your contact information and make sure to connect you with the right people.

TALKING POINTS FOR DISCUSSING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DISTRICT

- Sustainability means the environmental, social, and economic well-being of our community
- How we live our lives today is crucial to ensuring a sustainable future

Why is sustainability important?

Think of sustainability as a three legged stool where each leg represents the economy, the environment and our city's social fabric. If one leg is out of balance with the others, the system collapses.

A Sustainable DC will be a city...

- With clean air and healthy, clean rivers.
- Where every resident has a good job and a comfortable roof over their heads.
- Where children get good educations, preparing them to be competitive in the workforce.
- Where everyone has access to food that is nutritious and healthy.
- Where everyone has access to parks and recreational amenities.
- That is prepared for climate change with emergency services ready to deal with climate impacts.
- With a reliable source of energy available at affordable costs.
- With reliable and convenient transportation infrastructure that does not require every citizen commute by personal vehicle.



What is sustainability around the city?

- Does your basement ever flood? That’s stormwater management, and that’s sustainability.
- Do you know someone who has asthma? This could be related to air quality, and that’s sustainability.
- Is your commute sometimes long and painful? That’s transportation planning and that’s sustainability.
- Is your electricity bill too high? That’s energy efficiency and that’s sustainability.

How does sustainability personally affect you and your community?

- Living in a more energy efficient house saves you money on utility bills.
- Having to use your car less, saving you money on car repairs, gas and insurance.
- Being able to grow your food, saving you money on grocery bills.
- Spending less on medical bills because you have access to a healthy lifestyle.
- Sustainability in your life is good for your wallet, your health and your home.

Did you know?

- Replacing your 5 most frequently used light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs can save you \$70 annually in energy costs
- A leaky faucet can waste over 5,000 gallons of water per year; fixing it can save you \$25 annually
- Turning the water off while you brush your teeth can save you \$50 annually
- Shortening your shower by 5 minutes can save you over \$40 annually
- Replacing your showerhead with a low-flow fixture can save up to \$145 annually on energy costs
- Switching to a reusable coffee mug and brewing your own coffee can save you \$250 annually
- Using pots that are the right size to fit your burners saves up to \$36 annually
- Using cold water in your washing machine saves up to \$40 annually
- Setting your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit saves anywhere from \$36 to \$61 per year in standby heat losses and up to \$400 annually in demand losses

What can you do to be more sustainable?

<p>In your home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride a bike or take public transit • Grow a garden and eat locally produced food • Turn off the lights and look for places to save energy by unplugging • Use less water by taking shorter showers or not watering your lawn <p>In your neighborhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize your neighbors around collecting rainwater in a central spot • Organize a tool share for backyard gardens 	<p>In your business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure environmentally friendly products • Make offices and retail facilities more energy efficient <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Sustainable DC plan and sign onto our listserv • Visit the Sustainable DC website to learn more about what is happening across the city and how to get involved • Support sustainability issues in your community
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WASHINGTON, DC LEADERSHIP STATS

3 rd in number of LEED certified projects (behind NYC and Chicago—MUCH bigger cities! (USGBC)	1 st in per capita LEED certified projects for cities over 200,000 (US Green Building Council)
4 th bike-friendliest city (Bicyclist Magazine)	1 st among US cities in government green power usage
5 th in park access and quality (Trust for Public Land)	100% of energy used by District of Columbia Government offset (US EPA)
1 st in per capita ENERGY STAR rated buildings (US EPA)	1 st in solar density among states: 65.56 kilowatt hours per square mile (Green Source Magazine)
8 th greenest city in U.S. and Canada (2011 Economist Intelligence Unit)	4 th in access to transit (WalkScore)

SUSTAINABLE DC STAFF

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CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Sustainable DC Homepage: www.sustainable.dc.gov
- District Department of the Environment Homepage: www.ddoe.dc.gov
- District Office of Planning Homepage: www.planning.dc.gov