

Sustainable Development

The idea of sustainable development was a product of industrialization. As cities grew and became urbanized due to the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century they faced increasing problems related to public health, sanitation, residential overcrowding and lack of infrastructure. Industrialization brought with it deforestation and air and water pollution. These problems brought about concerns on the economic, social, and environmental equity as cities expanded. It was not until post-World War II that the United States saw numerous collaborative efforts around issues of environmental and social injustice which have led to successful organization and creation of policy leading, finally, to policy implementation in the areas of civil rights and environmental protection.

Sustainable development, or sustainability in general, is the culmination of these organizing efforts. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), a directive of the United Nations, produced a report titled *Our Common Future*. This report brought the concept of sustainability into the limelight, highlighting the global inequalities and the ecological consequences of unrestrained development. It also provided a simple yet effective definition of sustainable development:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Under this definition, leaders at all levels of government and individual citizens are able to make a contribution toward making a more sustainable world. In the past few decades planning academics and practitioners have developed a general consensus of some broad concepts that can help a community become more sustainable.

The Brundtland Commission report focuses on economic development and social equality as well as environmental conservation. Planning literature sometimes refers to these concepts as the “three E’s” of sustainability: environment, economics, and equity. Because policies addressing these issues individually have caused conflicting views to arise, planning academics have argued that sustainable plans should strive for a balance of environmental, social, and economic values.

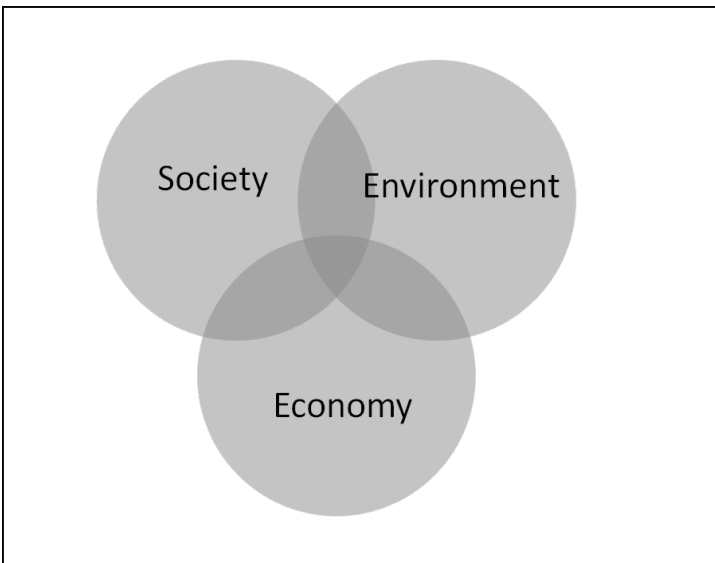
In 1993, the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) was established to develop new approaches to achieving sustainable development goals. Ten goals emerged from this Council:

1. Health and the Environment
2. Economic Prosperity
3. Equity
4. Conservation of Nature
5. Stewardship
6. Sustainable Communities
7. Civic Engagement
8. Population
9. International Responsibility
10. Education

Sustainable Development In Baton Rouge

The Horizon Plan, the comprehensive land use plan for the City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge has incorporated many of the same goals from the PCSD in it. The City-Parish Planning Commission (CPPC) actively pursues opportunities for public outreach and education in matters related to sustainability.

Annually, CPPC members participate in Baton Rouge Earth Day. In 2011, the Earth Day theme was “A Billion Acts of Green” urging people to consider the health of the entire planet



The three elements of sustainable development. Sustainability is achieved when these elements overlap one another.



City-Parish Planning Commission planners demonstrate the impact of everyday actions on the environment.

and to take action in their own communities and cities. The Office of the Planning Commission completed the Sustainable Government Operations Plan (Sustainability Plan) in the Fall of 2011. The Sustainability Plan identifies specific goals and outcomes that reflect the principles set forth in the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement that Mayor-President Holden signed in the summer of 2005. Moreover, in 2011 the City-Parish government launched the ConserveBR program which is designed to highlight the importance of energy efficiency, and what they mean for the sustainability of the place we call home for our children and our grandchildren.

Why Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development in the global context has implications in our daily lives and our built environment. According to a study of the world's oil reserves, between 1950 and 2050, eighty (80) percent of the world's oil will have been consumed. As oil production decreases, prices will increase. Suburbanization has depended on inexpensive transportation to serve its spread-out development pattern. Our transportation systems may not be able to support suburban lifestyles unless alternative energy sources, conservation of current resources, and efforts to provide alternative transportation options occurs. Future patterns may change to accommodate the situation; however, our current development patterns may prove unsustainable.

Additionally, sustainable development has relevance in regional and global contexts. Our local development patterns can have an affect on other living systems and societies. Global warming, waste management, petroleum shortages and ozone depletion are some issues that are related to unsustainable living and will have adverse impacts on lives around the world.

Achieving Sustainability

Although difficult, it is not impossible to "retrofit" the built environment to achieve sustainability. Infill development and brownfields redevelopment are just two methods to encourage adaptive re-use of land in order to preserve land on the edge of cities. By building on existing lands with access to existing infrastructure, these developments save land as well as municipal

resources. Communities can also move towards sustain ability by applying sustainable development principles to direct future growth. A city might seek to move toward greater resource efficiency, environmental quality, social equity, and community vitality.

Sustainable Efforts by the Federal Government

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution. The partnership agencies incorporate six principles of livability into federal funding programs, policies, and future legislative proposals.

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 by 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.

For more information contact:

City-Parish Planning Commission
1755 Florida Street, Third Floor
P.O. Box 1471
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Telephone: (225) 389-3144 Fax: (225) 389-5342
Office Hours: 8 a.m.—5 p.m. M-F
Email: planning@brgov.com
Web page: <http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning>