Pathways to Sustainable Communities

*Every community can make a difference in securing a sustainable future*

Local Environmental Efforts

Environmental efforts at the local level can go a long way to foster sustainability. For example:

- **Land use decisions** that discourage sprawl development conserve open space and reduce the burden on natural resources caused by commuting, land clearing, construction, road building and maintenance;
- Protecting **trees** and other vegetation helps absorb carbon emissions and insulate buildings to reduce cooling loads;
- **Protecting natural water bodies** helps ensure the continued availability of drinking water while reducing the need for energy-intensive processing and transportation of drinking water supplies;
- Public education programs on **energy conservation**, **vehicle emissions reduction**, **recycling** and other ways people can reduce their carbon footprint;
- Designing communities with energy efficient, **green buildings**;
- Protecting habitat and preventing **invasive species** from degrading biodiversity and planting **native species** that require fewer resources to thrive helps to foster a healthy, resilient ecosystem.

What Can Environmental Commissions Do

**Prepare a Sustainability Action Plan**

Develop a sustainability action plan. NJ municipalities with action plans: Belmar, Highland Park, Hopewell Township Maplewood, Montclair, Princeton, Summit, West Windsor and Woodbridge.

**Help your Green Team with Sustainable Jersey Certification Program**

**Sustainable Jersey** is a certification and incentive program for NJ municipalities. To become certified under the program, municipalities must form green teams and complete a significant number of the program’s defined sustainable actions.

**Conduct Audits & Assessments**

- Determine the level of carbon emissions
  - For local governments and communities, utilize the following tools
    - **World Business Council for Sustainable Development**
    - Sustainable Jersey has actions for both **municipal government** and the **whole community**
  - For houses, encourage residents to
    - **calculate their household’s carbon footprint**
    - estimate **personal emissions**
• **Conduct an energy audit**
  - For local governments, NJ Clean Energy provides rebates for participants in its Local Government Energy Audit program.
  - For houses, encourage your residents to perform a Home Energy Analysis or to contract for a low cost professional energy assessment through Home Performance with Energy Star.
  - For large businesses and governments (where peak electricity usage exceeds 200kW) NJ Clean Energy Program offers the Existing Buildings component of the Pay for Performance Program.
  - For smaller businesses and governments NJ Clean Energy Program offers Direct Install to perform Energy Assessments and installations.

• **Track and assess** ongoing energy and water consumption in individual municipal buildings to monitor performance and identify strategic opportunities for savings and conservation.

**Adopt Sustainable Policies**

• Adopt Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System™ (LEEDs) for major construction projects
• Implement sustainable purchasing policies;
• Use green cleaning supplies in municipal facilities to protect employees' health and to prevent damage to the environment;
• Implement pesticide free pest management programs: and reduce pollution through Integrated Pest Management;

**Promote Sustainable Land Use Planning**

• During site plan review, consider factors like building orientation, preserving shade trees and nonstructural drainage to conserve heat and air conditioning and reduce stormwater runoff
• Promote use of the Green Design Checklist for development applications.
• Protect and enhance wildlife habitats and natural ecosystems.

Call 973-539-7547 or email info@anjec.org for more information.