

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.