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CHARLOTTETOWN 2014

Catalyzing Change: What is the future of sustainability planning?



 #2014SCC

Moderator

Chris Lindberg, Manager of Knowledge Services, FCM GMF

(formerly Senior Sustainability Specialist with Golder Associates)



- A recognized national authority in sustainable community planning and development. Focussed on helping communities to move successfully from planning to implementation.
- More than twelve years of experience delivering strategic planning, sustainability, stakeholder engagement and management services.
- Author of various guides, including *From Great Ideas to Great Communities: A Guide for Implementing Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in Nova Scotia*

Workshop Questions

1. **What kinds of sustainability plans and structures** do municipalities currently have in place?
2. **What is currently working (and not working)** with sustainability plans – how are they being the most effective at driving change and influencing decision-making?
3. **What is needed to make sustainability happen** within a municipality? Is sustainability still the right frame for this?
4. **What kinds of sustainability plans and strategies do we need in the future?** How can we get there from here?

A great plan isn't enough to create a great community: it's how you implement it that counts

Guest Presenters and Table Hosts

- **Mark Brostrom**, Director, Office of Environment, City of Edmonton, AB
- **Robyn Campbell**, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Iqualuit, NU
- **Barry Dalrymple**, Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality, NS
- **Leon de Vreede**, Sustainability Planner, Town of Bridgewater, NS
- **Emanuel Machado**, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Gibsons, BC
- **Anna Mathewson**, Sustainability Manager, City of Surrey, BC
- **Karen Murchison**, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Charlottetown, PE
- **Jim Mustard**, Deputy Warden, Municipality County of Inverness, NS
- **Terry Thibodeau**, Renewable energy & climate change program Coordinator, Municipality of the District of Digby, NS
- **Karen Nasmith**, GMF Council member and Project Neutral
- ..and other honoured guests!

1) What kind of organization are you representing?

- A. Very small muni. (<1,000 pop.)
- B. Small muni. (pop. 1000-10,000)
- C. Medium muni. (pop. 10,000-100,000)
- D. Large muni. (pop. >100,000)
- E. Regional government
- F. Provincial or federal government
- G. NGO or academic organization
- H. Other



Workshop Agenda

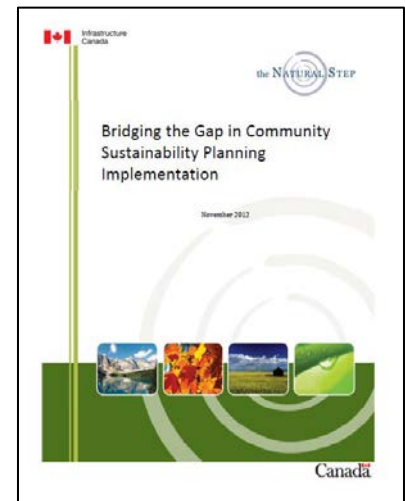
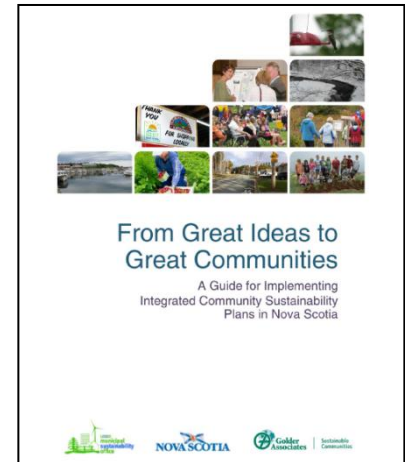
- **Setting the stage: A look at the state of community sustainability planning in Canada**
(Presentation by C. Lindberg)
 - Types of sustainability plans
 - Successes and challenges with implementation
 - Guest presenter survey results
- **Round Table Discussion: What is the future of sustainability planning in Canada?**
- **Closing Thoughts**
 - Key messages and observations from our guest presenters

SETTING THE STAGE: THE STATE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING IN CANADA



Resources

- Catalyzing Change: Leading Practices in Municipal Sustainability Planning (www.stratos-sts.com)
- From Great Ideas to Great Communities: A guide for Implementing Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in Nova Scotia. (<http://www.sustainability-unsm.ca/sustainability-a-icsps.html>)
- The Natural Step Sustainability Toolkits (<http://naturalstep.ca/toolkits>)
- Bridging the Gap in Community Sustainability Plan Implementation (<http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/resources-ressources/research-recherche-eng.html>)
- Guest presenter survey and opinions



Defining Sustainability

“Sustainability is about creating the kind of world we want for ourselves, our neighbours, and future generations.

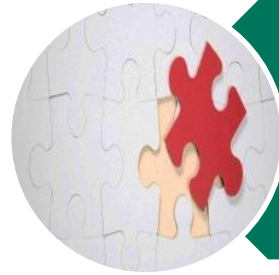
It challenges us to live our lives and make decisions as individuals, organizations and societies so that we make sure that future generations have access to the same opportunities and quality of life that we do”

- *The Natural Step Canada Sustainability Primer*



Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

A long-term plan (e.g. 20-30 years), developed in consultation with community members that provides establishes environmental, cultural, social and economic objectives for community development



Integrated

Integrates and focuses planning and activities across all community dimensions



Community

Led by the municipality but endorsed and owned by the community



Sustainability

Long-term vision and goals grounded in sustainability principles

Common Sustainability Goal Areas

Environment	Society	Culture	Economy	Governance
Solid Waste	Health	Arts & Culture	Local economy	Land-Use Planning
Water & Sewerage	Safety	Recreation	Business & Industry	Accountable Leadership
Air Quality	Poverty and Affordability	Community Identity	Workforce & Employment	Sound Management
Ambient Light & Noise	Food Security	Diversity & Inclusion	Transportation	Civic Engagement
Natural Ecosystems & Biodiversity	Desirable Community	Education	Buildings, Infrastructure & Housing	
Climate Change		Heritage	Targeted sectors (Agriculture, Tourism etc.)	
Energy				

The Role of an ICSP



Range of Sustainability Plans and Ownership

Range of formality and scope

- **Ad hoc** commitments, plans and projects
- **Issue- or pillar specific sustainability plans** (e.g. climate change, environment)
- **Corporate or municipal sustainability plans** (municipal activities)
- **Community sustainability plans** (Beyond typical scope of municipal activities)
- **Integrated with another plan** (e.g. sustainable official plan or strategic plan)

Range of ownership

- Municipally-led and owned
- Municipally-led but community-owned
- Community-led and owned

Position within planning hierarchy

- Highest level plan
- Equal to land use plan (e.g. official plan)
- Equal to master plan
- Equal to departmental plan



2) Which best describes the kind of sustainability plan (SP) that your municipality has?

- A. Stand-alone SP
- B. SP with land-use plan
- C. Corporate SP or strategic plan
- D. Combination of other plans
- E. None
- F. I don't know



3) Where does your sustainability plan (SP) fit in the municipal planning hierarchy?

- A. Top (> land-use plan / strat plan)
- B. Second (= land-use plan / strat plan)
- C. Tertiary (= master / departmental plan)
- D. I don't know / it isn't clear
- E. I don't have an SP plan



Infrastructure Canada Survey

Data (2012, n=61)

- **~40% are stand-alone plans**, ~25% part of a land-use plan, ~20% combination of other plans
- **>50% are top-level plans** equal to or higher than land-use or strategic plan
- **>75% include goals, actions, and/or strategies**; >40% don't identify targets or indicators
- **Of the municipalities surveyed:**
 - ~60% had one or more dedicated staff members
 - ~80% proactively reviewing and aligning existing plans
 - ~30% regular, comprehensive internal and external reporting

Infrastructure Canada Survey

Data (2012, n=61)

- **In terms of impact on infrastructure decisions**
e.g. solid waste, water, wastewater,
transportation, transit, asset management
 - **>75% actively and consistently include sustainability** as a high priority consideration in development and operation
 - However, <50% report measurable changes as a result
(except for waste management where 70% reported measurable changes)

4) Which statement best describes your municipality's success with implementing sustainability initiatives?

- A. Sustainability and long-term goals drive all decision-making: they are our North Star
- B. We're committed to sustainability, and are making significant gains in some areas
- C. We're committed to sustainability, but are struggling to make significant progress
- D. We just pay lip-service to sustainability: there's no real commitment to following through
- E. Sustain-a-what?



5) Do you think the gap between sustainability planning and implementation is significant in your municipality?

- A. Yes
- B. Somewhat
- C. No
- D. Don't know

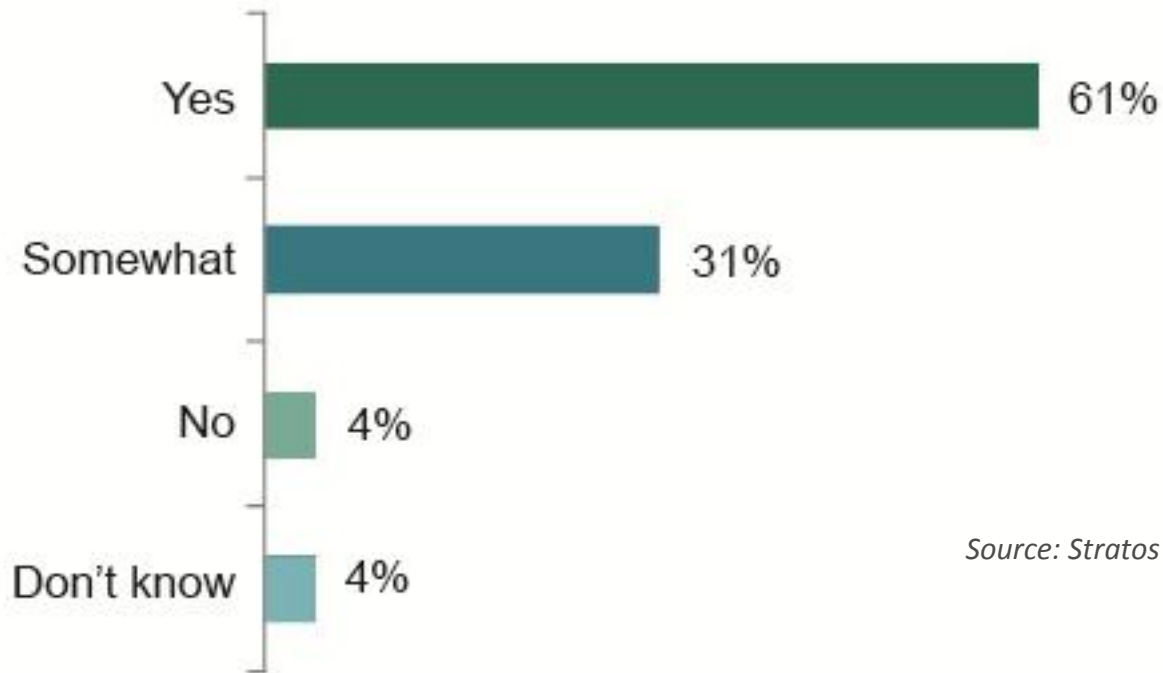


Most Communities Experience a Gap

QUICK POLL

Do you think that the planning-implementation gap is significant in your municipality?

Poll Results (single answer required)



Source: Stratos webinar, December 1, 2011 n=88

Discussion

At your table:

1. Take a moment to reflect on what you've heard so far.
2. Please go around the table and introduce yourself (name, organization) and briefly share one challenge you see that is getting in the way of making sustainability happen in municipalities.

Please be brief – we only have 10min for this discussion



Guest Presenter Survey

What's Working?

- Long-term goals & indicators
- Integrated, holistic perspective
- Stimulate participation & awareness
- Provide a baseline and reference
- Monitoring & reporting innovation
- Ongoing commitment of champions
- Land-use planning & development
- Operations & energy management
- Planning & decision checklists
- Pilot projects & initiatives

What's Not Working?

- Not meaningful for some residents/ staff (vague or broad)
- Hard to maintain (time, data)
- Monitoring action, not progress
- Lack of political/ senior support
- Public burnout, disinterest
- Staff structure and resources
- Organization culture slow to change
- No ownership in stand alone plan
- No systematic approach to integration (budgets, work plans)

6) Which statement best describes your opinion of your sustainability plan?

- A. It's awesome: it provides clear direction (e.g. goals, targets) to guide planning and decision-making
- B. It's great but would be stronger if its goals and targets were more specific
- C. It's so broad and vague that most people don't know what to do with it
- D. It's more a list of actions and ideas than a plan
- E. Um, I told you already, we don't have a plan!



7) Which statement best describes your current thinking on the future of sustainability plans (SP)?

- A. People see the value of SPs and many (or most!) municipalities will invest in them
- B. Stand-alone SPs will disappear as sustainability is integrated into other plans
- C. Sustainability is not working to drive change: new ideas will replace it (e.g. resilience)
- D. I have another idea I want to share
- E. I have no idea: you're the expert, buddy!



Three Problems

1) PLANS THAT AREN'T S.M.A.R.T.

1. Analysis

2. Strategic Framework

3. Engagement

4. Sustainability Framework

5. Vision, Goals & Targets

6. Comprehensiveness

7. Reporting and Indicators

8. Action Planning

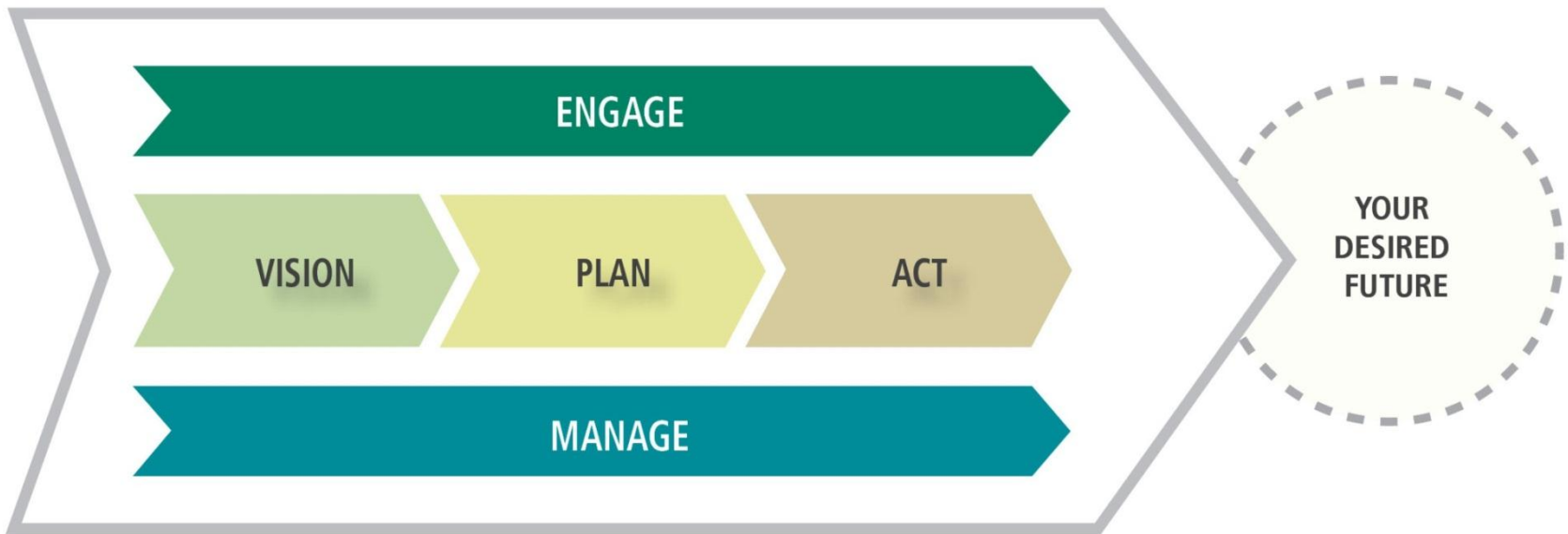
9. Integration

10. Presentation



Three Problems

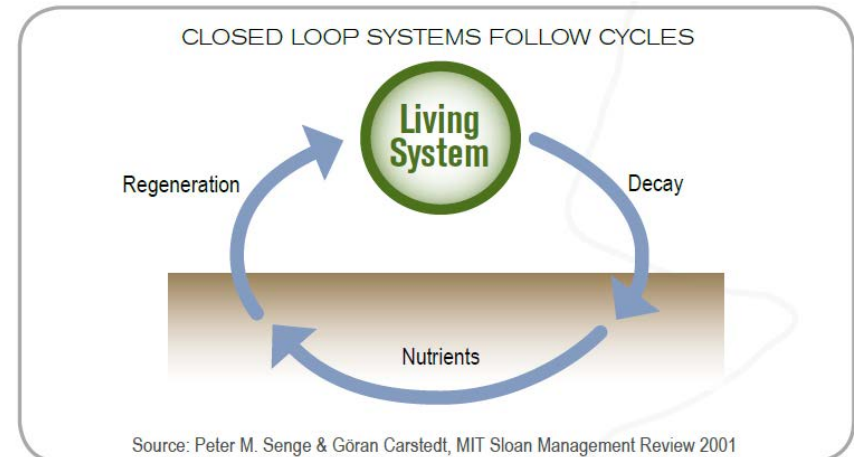
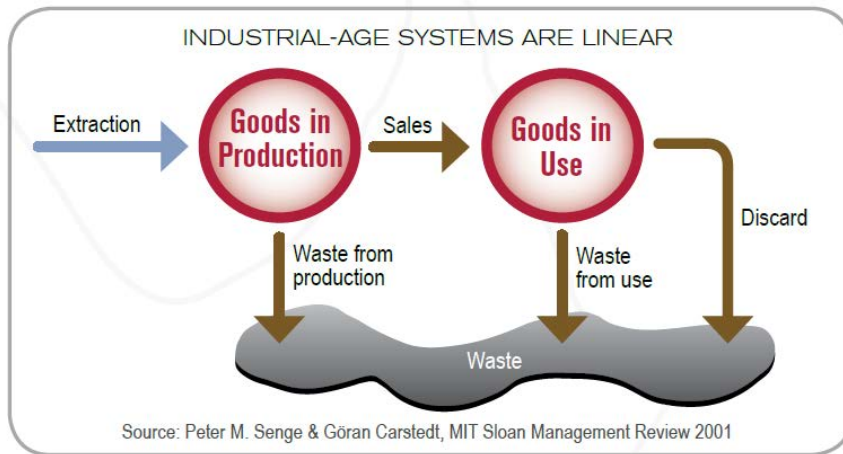
2) LACK OF SYSTEMATIC INTEGRATION, ALIGNMENT AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT



Three Problems

3) FAILURE TO DELIVER THE BIG CHANGES AND IDEAS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

5Rs: Redesign, Replace, Reduce, Refine, Re-circulate



Graphics from *The Natural Step Canada Sustainability Primer, 2009*; *The 5Rs from Leading Change Toward Sustainability, Bob Doppelt 2003*

What do we need to move sustainability forward in our communities?

- Renewed and improved plans, with clearer commitments and definitions
- Better understanding and more consistent commitment from the top
- Greater investment in strategic thinking/ analysis to create better integrated solutions
- More department ownership, fewer silos
- Stronger integration into key policies (e.g. strategic plan, budget)
- Resourced sustainability staff focusing on coordination, partnerships & culture change
- Stronger reporting and accountability (from goals and outcomes to work plans)
- Stronger leadership from prov/ fed govts

“It’s about people: personal connections and relationships, building shared purpose and understanding”

What does the future hold for SP?

Messages & strategies need to evolve

- **Position sustainability as part of the solution** for infrastructure deficit, asset management and fiscal responsibility
- **Beyond green:** Connect with social mobilization and movements (tech, Aboriginal, youth, Transition Towns, Sharing Economy)
- **More relational:** How we relate to environment, community, each other
- **Beyond sustainable:** Do we need to shift to other terms: resilience, long-term, others? Or is that throwing out the baby with the bathwater?
- **Beyond the plan:** Implementation at all levels requires rigor, economic chops and technical savvy
- **It's personal and political:** Advocacy needed!

“We didn’t change the world the way we thought we would”

“The work we’re doing is good, but its happening too slowly and we’re running out of time. The sustainability model either needs a kick in the pants or it will wear itself out”

Table Discussion

1. Take a moment to reflect on what you've heard so far: What messages resonated with you? What do you disagree with? What would you add?
2. As a group, discuss the following questions around the future of community sustainability planning:
 - a) **What do we need to “make sustainability happen” in the future?** Capture some bullet points on the paper provided.
 - b) **Given this, how does sustainability planning need to evolve to catalyze this change?** Identify and capture the 5 key shifts that you think are needed on the paper provided.
 - c) **What can we do as sustainability practitioners to support these shifts / get there from here?** Capture some bullet points on the paper provided



Closing thoughts?

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- **Barry Dalrymple**, Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality, NS
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Thank You!

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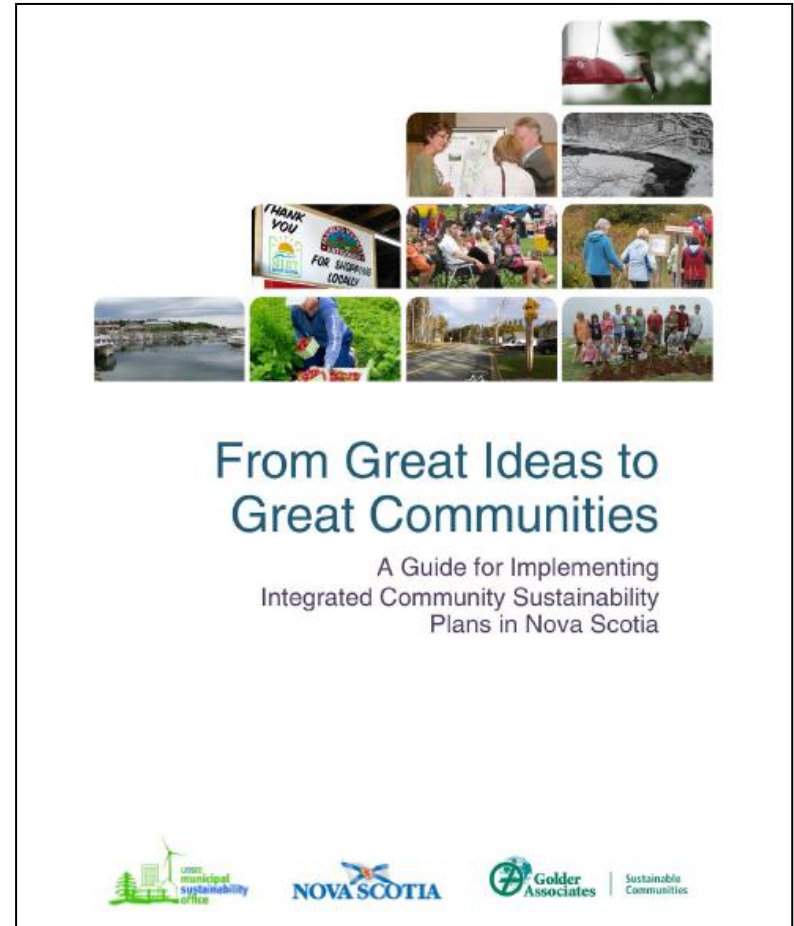
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Download the guide at:

<http://www.sustainability-unsm.ca/sustainability-a-icsps.html>

or www.golder.com/UNSM-Guide



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