

# Sustainability Action Plan for the City of Peoria, Arizona

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June 2009

## **Mission Statement**

The City of Peoria is committed to providing an environment in which our natural resources, our people, and our economy are balanced. We will not compromise the future by focusing solely on the needs of today. We aspire to make Peoria a leader that develops, promotes, and improves the quality of our community through sustainable practices. (City of Peoria Sustainability Team, 2009)

## **Definition**

*Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.* (Brundtland Commission 1989)

## **Guiding Principles**

City Council Goals have been used to create the Guiding Principles, which relate the goals within a sustainability context to position Peoria for the future:

- Community Building: Preserve and Expand our Quality of Life
- Total Planning
- Enhance our Current Services
- Preserve our Natural Environment
- Economic Development
- Leadership and Image

## **Executive Summary**

Sustainable organizations operate within an environmental, social and economic context. Environmental sustainability is a part of this operation and best achieved when integrated with other components. An environmentally sustainable organization seeks to participate within its community and seeks to balance the economy, society and environment within its operations. Through seeking balance, an organization may better steward natural and economic resources while taking into account the needs of future generations.

The Sustainability Action Plan is the logical first step in the City's determination to promote and achieve sustainability in operations and business practices as well as future growth and development. The City's commitment to sustainability derives specifically from its new strategic vision and from its employees' desire to act responsibly and be seen as leaders in sustainable practices consistent with the City's mission.

To date, the City has established an interdepartmental sustainability team that involves over 40 employees across all City departments (the Sustainability Team). The team has identified eight sustainability categories, each with its own list of action items to be completed, implemented, and measured over the next 3 years for results.

## **Action Plan**

The Sustainability Action Plan is built on eight categories: Energy; Partnerships; Transportation; Open Space Preservation; Sustainable Development; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; Water Conservation; and Communication. The goals and measurements for each are listed below:

### Energy Use

- Reduce light pollution and energy consumption by increasing efficiencies in City operations, building uses, and employee activities and functions.
- Be a leader in the region to reduce our carbon footprint by seeking out clean technologies and renewable energy sources as well as increasing operational efficiencies and reducing energy consumption.
- Develop an across the board public/private strategy in order to develop supply and demand; recommend policy by which the City becomes largest single user of renewable energy.
- Establish a friendly economic environment for renewable energy companies to locate in Peoria.

The measurements for success in the category of Energy Use are the following:

1. 10% decrease in the usage of energy at the municipal complex by the end of 2010 and an additional 10% by December 2012.
2. The relocation and expansion of renewable energy companies in Peoria.
3. Increase fast-track applications by 25%
4. Reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
5. 20,000 homes using solar energy by 2020.
6. Retrofit all City buildings to utilize solar and alternative energy by 2020.

### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Encourage green procurement standards at the City that feature recycled or environmentally friendly products.
- Create efficiencies in city operations by reducing the number of office machines in use and standardizing procurement of future office equipment.
- Expand the recycling program with business and private partners.

The measurements of success in this category will be dollars saved through energy efficient practices, new procurement standards, recycling, and reuse and diversion rates of solid waste to recyclable.

### Water Resources and Conservation

- Promote water conservation as a top priority in the planning of sustainable, development within the City, and to assist City customers in reducing water use and saving money, through educational outreach and rebates.
- Find new ways to increase reuse of reclaimed water, and recharge of surface and reclaimed water, to minimize reliance on ground water.

The measurements of success in this category will be reclaimed water reuse and recharge, surface water recharge, reduction in groundwater pumping, and reduction in customer water use measured in gallons per capita per day.

### Sustainable Development

- Invest in the revitalization and redevelopment of established urban centers to improve quality of life while supporting emerging industries.
- Promote neighborhood-centric activity centers that employ a smart growth development template integrating a mix of uses, multi-modal circulation options, public spaces and other elements.
- Create a green building program that encourages sustainable development in Peoria.
- Review, analyze, and recommend sound policy requiring solar and alternate energy installations on all new construction.

Success will be measured in terms of installation and implementation of renewable energy sources both by the City and by residents and commercial organizations; percentage of private sector development that has adopted green building tenets; and total number of green jobs (all jobs in the environmental sector) in the local economy.

### Transportation

- Focus on creating transit-oriented developments that address all transportation options, complement existing and proposed land uses, and allow easy access to public commuting services within a close proximity without diminishing the efficient movement of people, goods, and services.
- Encourage and support the development of a multi-modal path and trail network as alternative safe routes that connect with adjacent regional networks.
- Create opportunities for alternative modes of transportation (such as street cars, electric car sharing, bikes)

The measurement of success in the transportation category will be miles of trails and paths, accessibility to public transportation alternatives, and reduced number of car trips per resident.

### Open Space Preservation

- Establish and maintain connections between wildlife habitats by identifying and protecting corridors for unimpeded movement.
- Limit development in areas that may pose natural or man-made environmental hazards by researching and proposing non-destructive alternatives for sensitive areas, such as brownfield sites.
- Ensure the protection of an ecologically-functioning network of critical open space areas, restore natural habitats, and accelerate urban reforestation in order to create recreation areas and pristine environments free from pollution and construction.

The measurement of success in this category will be the total number of acres of protected open space for public recreation as well as preserved natural habitats.

### Communication

- Investigate and communicate opportunities to Peoria residents on practical, convenient and creative solutions for increasing energy efficiency in order to improve the understanding of sustainability throughout the community.
- Aggressively market our energy strategy as well as our overarching sustainability policy.

Success will be measured in civic engagement such as participation in City events.

### Partnerships

- Form partnerships with various public and private organizations to encourage cooperation in the efforts to unify conservation measures, bring a regional perspective to planning and transportation efforts, and standardize green building initiatives.
- Partner with educational institutions such as the Global Institute of Sustainability at Arizona State University and the Peoria Unified School District to promote an understanding of growth and energy implications.
- Transform the basis of our partnerships with APS and SRP to focus completely on alternate energy sources.

The measurement of success will be regional implementation of sustainable measures identified and achieved through partnerships.

## **Conclusion**

The interests of environmental, energy, and economic sectors will be balanced in the development and management of resources within the City. Irreversible long-term damage to the local environment will be prevented through sustainable-oriented initiatives and necessary regulations and incentives. The City will encourage and ensure grassroots involvement in investigating problems and developing innovative solutions to the pressing problems of our times. The City will ensure that its transition to a low carbon economy has the potential to create jobs, generate needed revenue, reduce operating expenses, and improve the quality of life for all residents.

All decisions have implications to the long-term sustainability of Peoria. The City will ensure that each of its policy decisions and programs are interconnected through the common bond of sustainability as expressed in the guiding principles. The City will lead by example and encourage other community stakeholders to use sustainable principles to guide their decisions and actions.

*Sustainability is simplicity in our approach and our outcomes.*