

## Procurement

Environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) or green purchasing is the purchase of "products and services [that] have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose." EPP, however, not only protects the environment, it also protects human health, saves money, and improves the overall quality of government purchases.

## Investments

When a local government adopts operational principles and/or mandates, such as those related to sustainability, the combination of these considerations with fiscal responsibilities suggests the need for a clear and comprehensive set of policies to guide local government investments and other related activities. A description for such an approach is socially responsible investment.

## Human Resources

"In the context of greening operations, the objectives of human resources management are to ensure the health and safety of employees; to equip employees to meet the requirements of all applicable regulations, guidelines and policies; and to encourage employees to incorporate environmental considerations into their daily activities"

The toolkit is posted on the web at [www.shwec.uwm.edu](http://www.shwec.uwm.edu)  
For a printed copy, contact Center for Land Use Education, 715-346-3783, or email [landcenter@uwsp.edu](mailto:landcenter@uwsp.edu), cost: \$15.00

For more information about sustainable community development, eco-municipalities, The Natural Step sustainability framework, or the North American Eco-Municipality Network, please visit 1000 Friends of Wisconsin's website and Eco-Municipality section at [www.1kfriends.org/](http://www.1kfriends.org/) and [www.1kfriends.org/Eco-Municipalities.htm](http://www.1kfriends.org/Eco-Municipalities.htm).

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# Toward a *Sustainable* Community:

## A Toolkit for Local Government



Photo courtesy 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.

*"The future is literally in our hands to mold as we like. But we cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is now."  
-Eleanor Roosevelt*



Photo courtesy M. Rehwald

### Why this Toolkit?

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide ideas and descriptions of specific actions that a local government can take to transform itself into a model of sustainable practices. These are practices that can result in cost savings and increased employment, as well as enhance environmental quality and community well-being. The message of this toolkit is simple: local governments can lead by example.

### What is 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.”*

- World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future, 1987

The “Brundtland Report” definition of sustainable development – shown above – has been the most commonly used or cited definition since 1987 when the world community gathered to address this critical issue. Sustainability acknowledges the biophysical or environmental limits that the natural world imposes on economic activity and social and political institutions.

### The Natural Step Approach

This toolkit presents the principles of The Natural Step as a sustainability framework, both because it works and because it has been adopted by a growing number of Wisconsin local governments. It provides a shared framework around which communities are developing and implementing sustainable practices. But which framework a local government adopts – and there are others available – is less important than the act of adopting one. Such a step is a key part of the process of moving toward sustainability.



Photo courtesy S. Gruder

### How to Move Toward Sustainability

There are a number of fundamental steps a municipality can take to initiate a sustainable community program although there is no single route. Local governments can provide leadership to organize the process through municipal channels; or, this can occur through community involvement and grassroots efforts; or, it can evolve through both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

### Energy

Currently, the energy sources upon which we largely depend – coal, natural gas and oil – have many negative impacts on all

three forms of capital: social, economic, and natural. The most cost-effective way to reduce these negative impacts is to increase energy efficiency. Using clean energy from locally available renewable sources will bring Wisconsin closer to energy independence and economic sustainability.

### Buildings

Green Building, or sustainable design, is an approach to building design, construction and operation that considers the building, its property and place in the community as a whole system to create economical, environmentally sound and healthy spaces in which to live and work. Green buildings are designed to reduce environmental impacts on the site and on water, energy and resource use while creating healthy indoor environments.

### Transportation/Mobility

A local government’s transportation and mobility policies play a major role in a community’s sustainability. Those policies and decisions should address how to move residents, employees, visitors, as well as materials and goods to, from, and within the community in a sustainable manner. The results of such policies have the potential to generate environmental, public health, and social benefits, as well as significant cost savings for communities.



Photo courtesy 1000 Friends of Wisconsin