



# SUSTAINABLE SACKVILLE

## Council Briefing

Date: March 8, 2010  
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### Briefing on FCM Sustainable Communities Conference – Ottawa, Feb. 10-12, 2010.

Below is a summary of notes taken during the conference which included exceptional keynotes and interactive workshops on everything from implementation of ICSPs, energy planning, storm water management, and social marketing. A full report is posted on the Town's website under the Sustainable Sackville initiative.

#### Messages from Keynote Speakers:

*Ken Melmid, Mayor of Whistler.*

**Sustainability does not mean the environment.** He suggested throwing away the “three-legged stool”. Instead think of sustainability as a nested hierarchy. The economy is based on the social wellbeing of the community which is itself based on health of the environment.

*David Miller, Mayor of Toronto*

“The best environmental policies are also good for the economy.”

Toronto is leading by example, developing partnerships with large businesses, and providing grants to residents and small businesses, allowing renewable energy sourcing as a right (no rezoning requirements).

*Avi Friedman, Green Architect*

- Consider tomorrow while working on today.
- Leadership is required – engage as many as possible in decision-making and show examples of how it can happen.
- The main barrier to act is NOT MONEY, but the DECISIVE COMMITMENT TO MAKE CHANGE.

*Steven Guilbeault, Equiterre*

Two degrees Celsius was the Copenhagen goal – scientists have concluded this is the temperature increase that the world can sustain – If we go beyond this there is a “tipping point” after which there will be impacts on water, plant, coastal, and human health throughout the world (not just impacts in the developing world). We have a 50-50 chance of surpassing this mark because of our lack of inaction. Municipalities will be key to change. Three elements of successful municipal action: 1) work with local partners; 2) project must have measurable and verifiable objectives; and 3) need a “one stop shop” for implementation

*Bob Willard, former IBM Executive*

Sustainability is justified by the three R's – risk, responsibilities, and rewards.

There is a business case for becoming sustainable – positive economic, social and environmental results  
The key is mobilizing commitment from all sectors using the business case approach.

*Lester Brown, Founder and President of the Earth Policy Institute*

- If the west Antarctic Ice sheet melts – world sea level will rise 16 ft.
- If the Greenland ice sheet melts – world sea level will rise a further 23 ft.

- Estimates that sea level will rise 6 ft this century even if we become CO2 neutral by 2020.
- Even a 3 ft rise in sea level would inundate many rice paddies in Asia.
- Mountain glaciers are also melting at alarming rates - these glacial melt waters sustain rivers and billions of people in Asia.
- Loss of these glaciers would result in massive impacts on world rice and wheat production and would likely create a world-wide food shortage.
- Must cut GHG emissions by 80% to save the Greenland ice sheet by 2020.
- Time is our scarcest resource – it's not about saving the planet (the planet will continue) – but saving civilization.
- **BUSINESS AS USUAL IS BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD.**

## **Key Lessons from Sessions**

### Approaches to Sustainability Planning

- In Saint John - the VISION was directly linked to OUTCOMES which were then tied to SERVICES
- Community leadership and partnerships with stakeholder groups are essential; buy in from both Council and municipal administration is key to success.
- In Edmonton - Any and all decisions and actions need to consider **reduced energy consumption**
- Olds AB (pop 7500) - Their vision is based on considering what a low-carbon future looks like for the community.

### Planning to Implementation

- Capital projects are evaluated and presented to Council based on the sustainability plan priorities
- Staff reports to Council must include how the proposal will reach the vision statement.
- Sustainability needs to be the lens through which decisions are made (triple bottom line, NOT just financial)

### **Community Energy Mapping**

- Use energy as the common denominator for all decisions made in the municipality (land use, transportation, recreation, etc.)
- Community energy plans help inform decision-makers – focus on where energy is consumed in the community and where GHG emissions are coming from. Principles of energy mapping – reduce demand conservation, efficiency and waste heat recovery. Use renewables (heat, electricity and mechanical) and maximize fossil fuel efficiency.

### **Stormwater Management Using Low Impact Development**

- Low Impact Development (LID) is NOT low density – it IS reducing paved surfaces, preserving open space and protecting stream corridors. Includes such things as curb cuts, grass swales, rain gardens, and use of permeable (holey) pavement to allow for greater infiltration of storm water. Retrofitting can happen anywhere, and is becoming increasingly used in North America.

### **Community-Based Social Marketing**

- Research suggests that the normal way of doing business – change behaviour by raising awareness (knowledge) and providing incentives (motivation) - is mostly a waste of time. Knowledge and information can change attitudes, and attitudes can change behaviours, BUT it is also true that behaviours shape attitudes.
- **It doesn't matter what we think, only what we DO.**