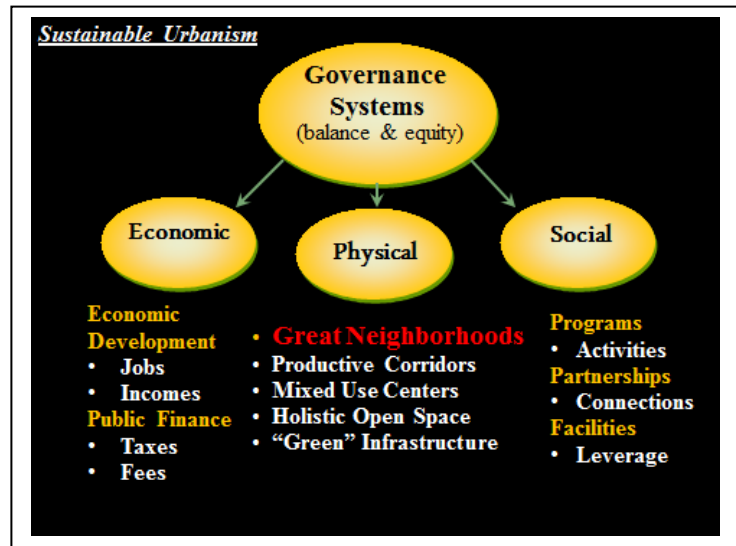


## The Neighborhood Sustainability Premise.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SUSTAINABILITY.

**Equity.** Neighborhood sustainability is achieved when the economic, social and physical aspects of the neighborhood are in balance and societal equity is achieved. The “middle class” lifestyle best epitomizes the balance envisioned for a sustainable neighborhood. The wealthy exist in proper proportion and the less fortunate have the necessary support systems to make the middle class attainable; educational opportunities being the main ingredient.



**“Complete” neighborhoods.** Remember that a neighborhood is more than a collection of dwelling units. They are places where people feel some commonality of being. They are places with single family homes, apartment and/or condominiums where people live together within the context of a community with immediate access to schools, parks, shops and stores.

Neighborhoods are places with mobility connections to other parts of the city for employment, entertainment and education. The neighborhood is a “complete”, balanced and sustainable system of uses and activities that serve the needs of its residents.

**The Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Social Contract.** The balance position is economic prosperity. When in balance, families have jobs with incomes that enable them to experience the recent social contract: a job with a livable wage, a chance at home ownership with resources to educate their children, retire in comfort and receive responsible health care all the while.

### THE ECONOMIC BASE.

**Jobs.** Jobs with living wages are the main element. The small cities and towns have the obligation to engage the private sector to lead economic development activities that retain and recruit employers to the city and its environs. Job training and education are essential to maintain and grow the skilled workforce necessary to support a sustainable local economy. Neighborhood prosperity starts with good paying jobs.

**Wages and Salaries.** Businesses in and around the city add to the prosperity of the city’s residents and business owners. Wages at or above existing averages are the goal. Workforce training and education help local businesses provide more and better services to their customers enabling them to increase their profits and their wage rates. Economic development incentives with performance measures are appropriate to ensure that the long-term benefits to the company also add to the prosperity of their employees.

**Taxes and Fees.** Taxes and fees are necessary for the city to provide the services and facilities necessary to sustain the neighborhood's residents, employees and businesses. Property values are maintained and increased through reasonable land development codes and standards that enable new investment while protecting existing property values.

Property values are also protected by the compassionate enforcement of codes; compassionate being the attitude of helping property owners correct deficiencies. Infrastructure maintenance is another element necessary to protect neighborhood property values. Finally, schools, libraries, hospitals and public safety systems are required for sustainable neighborhoods; they require funding and depend on a reliable and growing property tax base.

Fees play a role in supporting facilities and services that are not funded by their users. While more reliance is being placed on user fees for previously provided "free" services supported by general funds, care is required to continue to provide "free" services whenever possible. Neighborhood security, parks and recreation facilities, street and drainage system maintenance and bike/ped systems are usually funded by the general fund, as they should be, not by user fees.

**Community Prosperity.** A town that is prosperous looks and feels prosperous. People are employed and feel resilient, self-reliant. People are generally healthy, educated, safe and friendly. Economically strong neighborhoods are great starting places for community sustainability.

## THE SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENT.

**Cross-leverage.** Programs, partnerships and facilities are interchangeably used by successful neighborhoods to engage residents in activities that are fun, entertaining, educational and useful for the common good. Creating a civil and sociable neighborhood requires the attention of every neighbor.

**Enact Programs.** Programs and activities that bring people out of their homes to engage with one another build a sense of community and:

- Foster mutual expectations by engaging all segments of the neighborhood's society.
- Promote broad-based respect for rules of civic behavior.
- Build trust through open and frequent communication.
- Pursue a common interest in fun with community events and celebrations.

**Use Partnerships.** Working with other organizations is productive, including:

- Celebrating shared rituals and traditions.
- Enhancing the neighborhood's capacity to be self-reliant when faced with problems.
- Constructing ubiquitous connections.
- Appreciating enlightened civic and municipal leadership.

**Leverage Physical Facilities to Produce Social and Economic Benefits.** Use what you have to get what you want by:

- Understanding that public spaces matter, they serve social and economic purposes.
- Insisting upon respect for civic assets.
- Showcasing the town's great neighborhoods and its system of connected educational, cultural and recreational venues helps retain and recruit businesses.

### THE PHYSICAL FOUNDATION.

**Global Systems.** The physical aspect of every community consists of global air, water and land resources. Neighborhood participation in activities that improve the world resources is useful even if neighborhood scale programs seem insignificant.

Neighborhood support for city and other efforts to curtail ecological abuses and conserve resources is important. “Reduce, recycle and reuse” is a time-worn moniker but appropriate nonetheless.

**Neighborhood Systems.** The physical aspects of each neighborhood consist of the brick and mortar built environments and the flora and fauna in the natural environment. Water is a common and essential element in both settings.

**The Built Environment.** Sustainable neighborhoods have many features that conserve resources, responsibly dispose of wastes and recycle materials that cannot be otherwise re-used. The city should be helpful in these activities with the proper codes, infrastructure and waste disposal systems.

**The Natural Environment.** A holistic open space system connects the parks, school grounds, uplands, wetlands, drainage areas and water bodies with trails and paths. In essence, the neighborhood is planned as a park. Such a system can be ecologically sound and aesthetically exciting. Combined with multi-modal mobility options, greenhouse gases can be reduced, water can be conserved and waste can be reduced or recycled.

**Water.** Water is the base element. Systems that manage the quality and quantity of water make the neighborhood safe from flooding and water body pollution and contamination.

### Mr. Rogers...It's a Beautiful Day in This Neighborhood



<https://youtu.be/FL3xSctTB5c>

### CONCLUSIONS.

The unlikely ally in the quest for creating sustainable neighborhoods is attitude. With a sharing and caring attitude neighborhoods can begin the path to sustainability.

Development standards, security programs, infrastructure systems and partnerships available to any one neighborhood should be available to all neighborhoods. The city is only as strong as its weakest neighborhood. Partnerships with the city and organizations dedicated to the welfare of the city are useful in improving and protecting neighborhood values and lifestyles.