



Forming a Sustainability Committee

The Basics

1. Find a committed group

Whether the group consists of two members or twelve, it is important to find people to collaborate with from the beginning. Reach out to people both within and outside of your neighborhood association, seeking people interested in making a time commitment to help the neighborhood work towards sustainability.

2. Neighborhood Assessment

To improve the sustainability of your neighborhood, you must understand your starting point. Assessing the priorities of the general population can help you evaluate opportunities for action. These can be casual conversations or door-to-door surveying. It's important to understand what your neighborhood is already good at, what needs improvement, and what types of projects might get the most support.

3. Create a Vision

Once you have gained support for the committee and have evaluated your neighborhood needs, you can use the information to solidify the objectives of your group. Your vision should reflect both the concerns of the neighborhood and the capabilities of the committee. This vision should provide a framework for what committee projects will work towards.

4. Get Started!

There is certainly no right or wrong way to manage a sustainability committee. Every single committee will have different goals, visions, and actions. As the committee begins moving forward, more people will gravitate towards the projects. The remainder of this guide is designed to assist and inspire you in creating a committee that reflects your own neighborhood.

Spotlight: PSU Ecodistrict

So what do sustainable neighborhoods really look like? The City of Portland and the Portland Institute of Sustainability have teamed up to demonstrate the full reach of sustainable neighborhood development, starting with an ecodistrict right in the heart of downtown Portland. An ecodistrict is a district or neighborhood that is resource efficient; captures, manages and re-uses most of its own energy, water, and waste; provides a range of transportation options; provides a diversity of habitat and open space; and enhances community engagement and well being.



The downtown Portland Sustainability Committee will be collaborating with PSU through the research and implementation process. This will ensure that the plan is developed in a way that includes citizens and enables them to engage actively with sustainability initiatives. The Ecodistrict framework strives to engage in projects on a neighborhood level, and involving the committee will allow each stakeholder to accomplish its goals.

NEIGHBORS WEST-NORTHWEST: A Coalition of Central Westside Neighborhoods

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