



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

PO Box 3674 Wilsonville, OR 97070
PHONE: (503) 657-6087 • FAX: (503) 210-0860
oapa@oregonapa.org • <http://www.oregonapa.org>

Making Great Communities Happen

OAPA – Proposed Definition for Sustainability and Supporting Strategies

Sustainability in the Oregon planning context means:

Enhancing the quality of life for future generations of Oregonians by planning places that are resilient and provide multiple, ongoing economic, environmental and social benefits.

Planning sustainably means:

Strategic decision-making that guides human activity in such a way that it enables human social and economic vitality in the present without compromising the ability of the ecosystem and future generations to thrive.

A local government's comprehensive plan should be the primary guiding document for creating places that sustain life for the long term future.

Sustaining Places are regions and communities that:

Have a land use pattern that protects, and works to restore, ecological systems; meets a significant percentage of residents' daily needs within walking distance; and supports affordable housing choices and employment opportunities for their residents.

Provide efficient infrastructure (i.e. transportation, water, waste disposal, schools, health facilities, etc.) to meet the needs of residents, while minimizing contributions to climate change and impacts on non-renewable resources, and maintaining affordable access to housing, employment and services.

Provide significant opportunities for residents to be involved in integrated planning and decision-making processes that use performance measures to help guide thoughtful decisions about their long term resilience.

Create buildings and spaces of lasting value through quality design features that encourage active human use, and enhance the daily lives of residents by giving them a sense of permanency and belonging.

[It should be noted that not all communities or areas of the state will be places that sustain life over the long term. Sustainability is a goal that planners should work toward as a primary focus of their profession, but may not be practical for many parts of the state.]

Planners can help create, maintain and enhance sustaining places by:

Planning communities that preserve and restore natural and ecological systems while providing opportunities for all residents to support themselves

Providing leadership and expertise to integrate smart, efficient infrastructure choices at all scales

Facilitating the active engagement of residents in the planning process

(Others?)

OAPA Strategies to support Sustainability include:

Define best practices for Oregon planners, in collaboration with national APA (especially the Sustainable Planning Division), AIA, ASLA, Cascadia Green Building Council, LEED, ULI, ICLEI, Natural Step and other organizations that share our sustainability values

Actively support national, state, regional and local policies that foster “sustaining places”

Support the creation of planning tools and techniques that cultivate sustaining places at all scales, from regions to the block level, and work to share them broadly.

Use the PDC, LPAC and EOC as the primary vehicles for OAPA to activate these strategies. Explore the idea of an intern from PSU or U of O to help pull together various parts of this strategy. Create a web-based home for sharing best practices and discussions about implementing them.

2011 focus areas include:

Immediate actions: Initiate discussions with DLCD staff, legislators, and other organizations about aspects of this strategy; meet with Regina Hauser of Oregon Natural Step to help flesh out the strategy and create alliances with business organizations.

Help create strategies and best practices to implement all recommendations from the 2009 GHG Reduction Task Force. Support legislation to move beyond SB 1059 and provide funding for all MPOs and local governments to do scenario planning to identify the most effective land use and transportation strategies to meet their share of Oregon’s reduction targets.

Based on the overarching principles for the Oregon planning program established in HB 2229, help create performance measures for good, sustainable planning work at the regional and local levels.

Support state, regional and local decision-making that emphasizes the importance of “place-based” investment strategies, which work across agency and jurisdictional boundaries to achieve multiple objectives in the most efficient way possible.

Develop mechanisms to encourage better comprehensive planning along the lines articulated in the Definitions above. This means moving beyond the checklist of addressing the 19 goals (Lake Oswego and Portland are both attempting this with their new planning work).

Advocate for TGM grant applications that are responsive to sustainability criteria and encourage cross-sectoral thinking in leveraging public investments (Solutions for a Sustainable Oregon?)

Advocate for extending the Governor’s Schools initiative (Schools Plus?) to other public assets in the surrounding communities, including retrofits for other public buildings, enhanced “safe routes to schools”, etc.

Advocate for, and help promote, case studies that demonstrate the economic opportunities around meeting the challenges of climate change.

Advocate for continued Smart Growth outreach funding; build on those programs to highlight positive local government actions and results (e.g. establishing and meeting performance measures).