Getting Started with Sustainable CT

Sustainable CT was created by towns for towns. Its menu of actions was designed to ensure a pathway to certification for every Connecticut municipality. Below, please find an illustrative list of actions particularly accessible to communities beginning the program or communities embarking on a new area of sustainability efforts. These "gateway" actions can be an attainable first step to completing an action in each category, though feasibility and relevance of implementation may of course vary by community.

Category 1: Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts

- *1.2.1 Participate in Equity Training*: Participate in a free equity training, consisting of three sessions, offered by Sustainable CT multiple times per year.

Category 2: Thriving Local Economies

- *2.1.1 Support Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites:* Create a municipal or regional brownfields inventory.
- *2.2.1 Implement Sustainable Purchasing:* Participate in a sustainable procurement training.
- *2.3.1 Inventory and Promote Local Retail Options:* Develop an inventory of local business options.
- *2.5.1 Promote Sustainable Workforce Development*: Inventory sustainable jobs and workforce capacity for your municipality or region.

Category 3: Well-Stewarded Land and Natural Resources

- *3.4.2 Develop an Open Space Plan:* Prioritize open space resources for protection.
- *3.5.1 Create and Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory:* Develop a town-wide natural resource and wildlife inventory.
- *3.8.1 c Implement Low Impact Development:* Attend training on low-impact development and/or green infrastructure practices.
- *3.9.2 a, 3.9.2 b Manage Woodlands and Urban Forests:* Through land cover assessments, evaluate tree cover in your municipality and ground-truth assessments with site visits. Inventory municipal policies, priorities, and practices on woodlands and urban forests.
- *3.11.1 Implement Green Grounds and Maintenance Program:* Complete an inventory (using the provided worksheet) for properties maintained by your municipality.

Category 4: Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems

- *4.1.1 Map Tourism and Cultural Assets:* Update your profile on CTVisit.
- *4.2.2, 4.2.10 Support Arts and Creative Culture:* Include arts and culture in publicly available municipal marketing materials. Support arts and cultural activities offered at your local libraries.

Category 5: Dynamic and Resilience Planning

- *5.3.4 Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practices:* Hold a farmer forum to identify critical needs or issues for agriculture in municipality.
- *5.4.2 Assess Climate Vulnerability:* Host a Community Resilience Building Workshop offered by the Nature Conservancy.
- *5.5.1 Inventory and Assess Historic Resources:* Identify priority historic assets within your community.

Category 6: Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices

- *6.1.2, 6.1.4 Implement Complete Streets:* Attend a Complete Steets training. Inventory municipal planning and design documents to assess consistency with Complete Streets goals.
- *6.2.1 Promote Effective Parking Management:* Conduct a parking needs assessment, either community-wide or in a specific area of your municipality.
- *6.4.2, 6.4.4 Support Zero Emission Vehicle Deployment:* Attend a training member and/or member of a relevant commission participate in a training related to electrification of municipal vehicles. Conduct an assessment of where ZEV charging infrastructure is needed in your community.

Category 7: Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure and Operations

- *7.1.1, 7.1.2 Benchmark and Track Energy Use:* With support from SmartBuildings CT, track energy use in municipal buildings, Board of Education buildings, and/or wastewater treatment plants.
- *7.6.1, 7.6.2 a Install Efficient Exterior Lighting:* Create a streetlight inventory and perform a lighting needs assessment. Initiate a conversation with your utility to plan and convert utility-owned streetlights to more efficient bulbs.
- *7.9.2 Participate in and Promote the C-PACE Program:* Encourage local building owners to access C-PACE financing.

Category 8: Inclusive Engagement, Communication, and Education

- *8.1.1 Hold a Sustainability Event:* Hold a sustainability event in your municipality and track details of the event using the Sustainable CT-provided template.
- *8.3.1, 8.3.2 Train Municipal Representatives:* Send members of your land use commission(s) and/or Inlands Wetlands Commission to sustainability-themed training.
- *8.4.1 Support Community Match Fund (CMF) Project and Civic Engagement:* Initiate sustainability projects that support your community at any scale. Contact funding@sustainablect.org to find out more and start a Community Match Fund Project.
- *8.5.1 Engage in a Sustainable CT Mentorship with Other Municipalities:* Mentor to, or seek a mentorship with, other towns on implementation of specific Sustainable CT actions.

Category 9: Strategic Materials Management

- *9.1.1 Report Materials Management Data and Reduce Waste:* Complete a worksheet reporting our municipality's solid waste and recycling data and post the data on your municipal website.
- *9.3.1 Recycle Additional Materials:* Recycle non-mandated materials, such as textiles or electronics.
- *9.4.1 Reduce and Compost Organic Waste:* Implement an ongoing food waste prevention campaign.

Category 10: Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities

- *10.1.4 Encourage an Equitable and Just Food System:* Hold a community food forum to discuss building a more equitable food system in your municipality or region.
- *10.2.1 Conduct Health Impact Assessments:* Have your elected officials and/or staff members participate in a training on performing health impact assessments.
- *10.3.1 Improve Air Quality in Public Spaces:* Gather local and regional data in your community on tobacco use, tobacco cessation, health consequences and costs, and local vendors and points of access; where possible, compare to state and national metrics.
- *10.5.1, 10.5.2 Support Equitable Food Access and Local Farmers:* Host a farmers' market. Accept payment in the forms of the accept Farmer Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers and the Connecticut Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which is the payment method for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
- *10.6.1 b, 10.6.2 a Plan and Prepare for Extreme Heat:* Conduct a heat assessment. Inventory cooling centers in your municipality or region.

Category 11: Strategic Materials Management

- *11.1.2, 11.1.4 Implement an Affordable Housing Plan:* Create, expand, or maintain your community's housing data profiles, starting with information in municipal housing data profiles produced by the Partnership for Strong Communities. Distribute your completed affordable housing plan to relevant municipal departments, relevant regional and local organizations, and community members; present the final plan as part of a community conversation.
- *11.2.1 Grow Sustainable and Affordable Housing Options:* Identify the current percentage of affordable housing in your community.

Category 12: Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention Strategic Materials Management

- *12.1.1 a, 12.1.1 b Strengthen Municipal Workforce Capacity to Address Homelessness:* Designate a municipal employee, elected leader, or other official to serve as the homeless services liaison in your municipality. Send this liaison to at least three trainings related to addressing homelessness.
- *12.2.2 Increase Public Awareness and Support for Efforts to End Homelessness:* Develop and post information on your municipality's website or other platforms that includes guidance and resources for individuals or families experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- *12.3.1 Collect and Share Homelessness Data:* In collaboration with your Coordinated Access Network, compile information on how many people in your municipality are experiencing homelessness.

Category 13: Innovative Strategies and Practices

- *13.1 Implement Your Own Sustainability Action:* Innovate and implement meaningful sustainability actions not yet listed on the Sustainable CT action list.