



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Riley Smith

Will defend his thesis

Barriers to Execution of Sustainability Governance

Abstract

Cities offer the best hope for solving sustainability challenges. However, there is little research showing how cities can institutionalize sustainability within their governance structure. Informed by governance and sustainability theories as well as the Institutional Analysis and Development framework, this thesis aims to elucidate on the barriers to implementing sustainability governance within the City of Phoenix. Utilizing Q methodology, 21 government professionals sorted through and commented on barriers derived from the literature and their peers. The results of the research reveal four distinct discourses concerning barriers towards execution of sustainability governance – (a) sustainability strategy shortage; (b) city operations, leadership, and development mantra; (c) state context and community action; and (d) difficulty of sustainability at a city level. A suite of recommendations regarding city leadership, staff capacity, city operations, and strategic policies, serves as a cross-cutting synthesis for the four perspectives and provides opportunities for cities initiating sustainability governance. Key recommendations include integrating sustainability across departments according to specific sustainability issues as well as infusing sustainability criteria into policy and decision-making processes. Additionally, this research advocates for staff training regarding key features and procedures of sustainability.

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Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Chris Boone (Chair)
Dr. Arnim Wiek (Member)
Dr. Abigail York (Member)