



**Sustainable Cities Network Statewide Meeting  
September 23, 2014  
ASU's Tempe Campus, Memorial Union  
Session Notes**

**Flipchart Notes**

Summary of topic posting exercise:

Individuals indicated their interest by posting stickers next to a topic area that was relevant to them. Below is the summary of topic areas and interested individuals.

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Interested Individuals</b>
Renewable Energy/Solar	4
Environment and Sustainability	14
Ecology and Urban Design	5
Funding Sustainability Projects	7
Small Community Sustainability	10
Health and Sustainability	10
Economic Development and Sustainability	16
Engaging Businesses Through Reverse Boycotting	13
Building Energy Benchmarking Ordinance	11
Renewable Energy/Economic Issues	13

**Group Discussion Notes**

Summarized below are notes from each group's discussion.

**Group 1: Green Group**

- A lot of cities have a General Plan for the city vision which leads to a holistic vision
  - This is helpful for connecting departments
- Challenges: Lack of a common vision, not having enough staff, no mandate from city manager office, not having a local culture, lack of education, not having common language for sustainability.
- Collaboration: Working with other cities is always helpful.

**Group 2: 1<sup>st</sup> Gold Group**

- Partnerships are very important as is engagement with community partners.
  - Ex: ASU and Americorps.
- Infrastructure is important as a best practice for cities.
- Working with neighboring communities.



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- Finding creative ideas for funding.
  - Public/private opportunities.
  - Working with the health community as well as local utilities.

**Group 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> Gold Group**

- Series of best practices were mentioned in the group: Home energy audits, environmentally sensitive land ordinances, financial sustainability (especially for Coconino County).
  - Additional best practices in composting, green waste, as well as in analyzing health benefits of transportation and development. Maricopa County is advising Valley Metro on this transit topic.
  - University Sustainability Practices, Arizona State University, is looking at a green awards/recognition program for employees. This can be helpful in developing further for communities.
- The main thing that came out of the group discussion was the importance of sharing best practices. The other thing was motivating people in the city. Making it personal.
- Challenges: Liability is a huge issue in addition to creating something with political viability.
  - Education is crucial, to both the public and politicians.

**Group 4: Blue Group**

- General topics: Solar shade structures, tradeoff for public shade structures/trees. Green building codes, and energy efficiency retrofits.
  - A lot of work was completed through ARRA grants. Question: How can we accomplish more without this funding source?
- Best Practices: Mesa has accomplished many things in education, educating residential contractors, working on spreading the word about hazardous waste.
- Utilize the press and take the opportunities that are available.
  - Work with local media like city publications/AZ Republic.
- Work with schools in terms of the education aspect. Coordinate with interns.
- Projects: Demonstration gardens, working with Luke AFB
- Phoenix: GHG reduction, waste reduction. There is 100% staff training for new employees in regards to sustainability.
- Maricopa County: Procurement code
- Avondale: Municipal sustainability plan, already adopted by council.
- **Important takeaway: The role of language and how we talk to our directors/elected officials.**



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**Group 5: Silver Group**

- Best practices: Set transformative policies to drive change. Work on specific mandates.
  - Examples: LEED certification for municipal buildings, reclaimed water use.
- Provide support for voluntary sustainable development.
  - Streamlining permitting, education, plan review incentives, award programs.
- Teaching through example.
  - Showcasing demonstration projects, energy efficient homes.
  - Rainwater harvesting demonstration projects.
- Collecting green waste.
  - Curbside pick-up/alley
  - Municipal offices, parks, golf course.
  - Repurposing.
  - Giving compost back to the community.
- Enforcing regulations
  - Backflow prevention
  - Sizing heating and cooling systems.
  - Inspection codes, working with 3rd parties.
- Challenges: Communication and building inertia
  - Short and long range planning
  - Education, building community awareness.
  - Coping with uncertainties.
  - Identifying individual community issues. Ex: Rural issues: illegal dumping.
- Encourage diverse input from different communities statewide.
- Big idea: Mayors summit, gather buy-in from mayors all over the state. A shared vision.
- Grow the network.
- Develop policy that all SCN members can uniformly pass, something that gets the inertia going on these sustainability policies.

**Group 6: Red Group**

- Group mentioned several community best practices:
  - Glendale's Xeriscape demonstration garden
  - Tucson commercial rainwater harvesting ordinance and green streets initiatives,



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- Tempe's LEED buildings/Tree and Shade program
- Pascua Yaqui tribe's historical sustainability study turning into an actual renewable project: 40 Megawatt Solar system
- Watershed Management Group's public outreach project: "Do Labor with Your Neighbor"
- Chandler's energy audits and Fleet Right-Sizing
- Maricopa County Flood Control District's public education efforts
- Desert Botanical Garden' canal water project, LED overhaul.
- **Challenges:**
  - Cultural obstacles
    - Example: Pascua Yaqui tribe has sacred areas.
    - Change can be interpreted as bad. Education is key.
    - Another example: Tucson has historical districts.
  - Design issues: Lack of leadership at the top or too much leadership.
  - Political obstacles: Agenda 21 group, economic obstacles
- **Partnerships:**
  - Sharing solutions
  - Community engagement
  - Engaging kids and parents,
- **How can cities work together?**
  - Lobby decision makers with case studies