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# Healthy Living and Community Education

The role of the Community Outreach and Healthy Living working group is to be the catalyst and primary resource for educating the community-at-large as to the efforts proposed by each of the other working groups. They will be maintaining an on-going dialogue with, and between, each group; then implementing the most effective and appropriate method of reaching the desired audience for each working groups' goals and objectives.

In addition, while individuals make green decisions daily regarding their impact upon the community, the Community Outreach and Healthy Living working group has also focused upon the individual decisions made daily regarding their impact upon themselves in terms of healthy living and healthy eating.

## **Living and Community Education Goal I**

### **Educate the community on the value of sustainable practices and healthy living.**

The Healthy Living and Community Education (HLCE) working group believes the education and promotion of healthy living and sustainable practices in our community will enhance the quality of life for all.

The Community Education and Healthy Living Work Group mission is to support other working groups in their dissemination of information to one another/internal and to the community/external. Awareness of any duplication in services and identification of gaps in services is critical for coordinated delivery of all content areas.

The HLCE working group will assess resources already available in the community and identify, showcase, and coordinate with those existing efforts to demonstrate the inclusive nature of true sustainability.

Educational venues will be created for the dissemination of information in all content areas to demonstrate flexibility in their design (traveling exhibit, website, etc.). The means for delivery of services should be dependent on, and appropriate to, the target audience - age, ethnicity, family, "sustainable" knowledge base; and the 'level of action' in content area - personal, household, neighborhoods, schools, business, community.

Measurable outcomes that are meaningful and realistic will be set in place to reflect level of learned "sustainable" behaviors.

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## Objective 1

### Create a network of information between and among the working groups.

All working groups have worked diligently to identify key information and opportunities for our community to improve sustainable practices related to their particular subject. Many of the discoveries and priorities of these groups are related, directly or indirectly. By fostering networking and sharing of information between the groups, we will strengthen the efforts of all groups, create efficiencies among the groups, and approach our community's sustainability issues from a more holistic overview.

#### Tasks/Metrics

1. Meet with each working group to discuss their priorities and goals.
2. Compile information from each working group to identify common goals, themes, and opportunities for efficiencies in messaging.
3. Facilitate discussion between and among work groups by inviting a liaison from each work group to meet with the Healthy Living and Community Education working group work group on a regular basis.
4. Create an online vehicle for internal communication between groups,
5. Help facilitate partnerships between work groups through events and projects, such as the Green Expo.

## Objective 2

### Encourage the creation of a clearinghouse for existing community groups.

For the purpose of this committee, a clearinghouse is defined as a central agency for the collection, classification and distribution of information. It is an information-exchange mechanism for both internal (other working groups\*), as well as a communication channel for community groups regarding events, ongoing venues and new endeavors. It will provide a unified place, calendar and map in virtual and physical formats that can be easily accessed by the community-at-large. The clearinghouse will foster synergy through collaborative opportunities while avoiding double booking and conflicting events.

An example of "double booking" could be if a school plans a green event on March 1 and the Elgin Climate Change Organization (ECCO) has an event that same day. By checking with the clearinghouse to discover what is going on in Elgin, the two groups can choose to work together rather than draw away from each other's attendance.

\*Note, <http://elginsustainability.wikispaces.com/> is the current tool for sharing information among working groups.

#### Tasks/Metrics

1. Determine the most user-friendly means of collecting information from work groups and community organizations and disseminating it out to the community at large.
2. Determine and create the places and spaces that will be repositories for information, such as a City office, virtual site, calendar, poster/flier kiosk, for internal and external groups and the public.
3. Identify the person(s) and organization(s) that will be responsible for clearinghouse maintenance and updating by format and location (virtual and physical).
4. Determine if a budget is needed, and or allocation of staff.
5. Develop a budget, if needed; identify the source of funding.
6. Identify community groups and train them how to enter data and access information for timeliness and accuracy.
7. Advertise the creation of the clearinghouse.
8. Continuously update, refine, and improve the tools and processes for sharing information
9. Identify long-term overseer of the clearinghouse information.

### Objective 3

To showcase educational venues, create others and identify viewable working examples of sustainable practices.

Educating the people of our community on how to live sustainably and why doing so is critical to our health and quality of life now, and for the residents of the future. While making major changes such as converting to renewable energy sources are important, a greater impact is possible through awareness and smaller doable day-to-day steps in conservation and life style modification.

#### Tasks/Metrics

1. Identify existing events and venues that educate and promote sustainability - web sites, nature centers, non profits, resource centers (Downtown Neighborhood Associations green building information) community and school projects, existing community events.
2. Create new venues and tie into new events – Such as information outlet at the Harvest Market, a traveling City display at a Resident Officer Program of Elgin Officer's (ROPE) house or other City and community facilities.
3. Identify working sustainable examples to be viewed, compile information, and make it available.
4. Coordinate with other work groups to create sustainably incentives for residents, businesses, restaurants, non-profits, and community organization. Items could include CFL's, rain barrels, or new trees. Incentives could be given that encourage businesses to carry "green" products, buy local, conserve energy by lowering the lights, and provide on the spot recycling of paper, plastic & food. Non-profits could be given incentives to work their missions in a green manner and encourage their target audiences to do so also.
5. Establish the community challenge modeled after the film, "No Impact Man", tracking the progress of various residents and businesses as they attempt to reduce their carbon footprint, using the project to educate the community as they follow the participant's progress throughout the year.



### Objective 4

#### Promote healthy eating habits

To educate the community about living sustainable and healthy life styles, it is important to begin with a subject matter that can be easily understood and related to by the average resident. When it comes to sustainability, the one most common denominator we have as human beings is that we all eat and we all need nutrition to keep us healthy. It is the one common sustainable practice that applies to every single one of us, regardless of age, ethnicity, or economic situation. It is also the most straight forward and logical subject matter we can use to begin educating the community about sustainable and healthy living.

##### Tasks/Metrics

1. Define what healthy food and healthy eating is. Define what healthy eating is in terms of a sustainable community. Demonstrate how the production and delivery of food is influenced by every aspect being studied by our groups.
2. Identify what nutritional issues affect our community. Then focus on these nutritional issues/problems, and create a program proposal that can be used to solicit funding and/or be a catalyst for community support. Investigate best practices of other communities.
3. Identify individuals, and or groups in the community already practicing and promoting healthy eating habits. Partner with these wherever possible.
4. Identify sources for healthy food by recognizing local stores, restaurants, purveyors, local farms and community gardens. Provide that information to the community through outreach events, written literature and social media.
5. Research ways to bring healthy food from these sources to families and households across the city.
6. Advocate for fresh and healthy foods in the community, where access is most limited by strengthening the capacity of small regional farmers/purveyors/stores/community gardens/restaurants to aide in this task.

### Objective 5

#### Create a sustainable and green city-wide recognition program within one year of final adoption of the Sustainability Action Plan

Acknowledging the efforts and accomplishments of both individuals and businesses through an award recognition system will help educate the broader community through positive examples of what others in the community are doing, and encourage them to try living a more sustainable and healthy lifestyle. By highlighting and featuring existing best practices, other homeowners and businesses may be inspired to follow suit and make similar improvements.

##### Tasks/Metrics

1. Establish a residential property owner's recognition program that uses criteria from all working groups to identify properties that demonstrate creative and best practices in being sustainable.
2. Establish a business recognition program that recognizes companies for implementing green and sustainable practices in their workplace.
3. Design a process for nominations and criteria for award selection.
4. Identify a City department or community group to administer the award program.

## Objective 6

Disseminate information about sustainable practices and healthy living to the community through traditional media and other creative marketing resources.

It is important to introduce the concept of sustainability through visual and concise messaging to a diverse audience. Marketing efforts must be designed to be a call-to-action that will inspire and engage all residents in changing behavior that will result in more healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

### Tasks/Metrics

1. Research to determine how the community currently gets their information.
2. Determine the best media outlets and other resources to use to reach various Elgin audiences.
3. Identify the various audiences (children, seniors, families, businesses), and how best to target market to each category.
4. Engage the community to follow the results of a project, such as “No Impact Man” challenge mentioned under Objective 3, by partnering with local media and social networks.
5. Create a speakers bureau made up of representatives from each working group to present to community organizations, schools and neighborhoods.
6. Create video that showcases the concept of sustainability and current sustainable practices taking place in the community, that can be shared with the local community through City website, social media sites and television. (example: Luther College, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDGpPfuSGHs&feature=related>)
7. Create a Green Expo each year to showcase the latest “sustainable practices” and educate the community-at-large about all things sustainable.
8. Partner with other professional organizations to host other sustainable conference, meetings and demonstrations, such as NIU Sustainability Conference held in 2010.

## Objective 7

Endorse Kane County’s “Fit Kids 2020 Plan” to help curb childhood obesity in Kane County.

As noted in Kane County’s “Fit Kids 2020 Plan”, many communities in this nation are faced with the challenges presented by childhood obesity. In some Kane County communities one in three children are overweight. Overweight children often grow up to be overweight adults, which can lead to increased healthcare costs and a reduced quality of life.

To combat this trend in Kane County, groups of over 80 stakeholders met and discussed strategies to improve the health of Kane County children. The plan is the result of this collaboration. More information can be found at [www.MakingKaneFitForKids.org](http://www.MakingKaneFitForKids.org).

### Tasks/Metrics

1. Recognize Kane County’s effort in creating this plan by asking the Elgin City Council to endorse the plan.
2. Strive to follow the guidelines set forth by the plan.