
A unique opportunity to support sustainability planning and implementation in Alberta neighbourhoods
Introduction and Background

A growing number of municipal governments across Alberta have either developed or are in the process of developing a Municipal Sustainability Plan or a Community Sustainability Plan. These plans provide a high-level overarching framework that guides all other community plans, policies, activities, and services. And they support an ongoing community change process toward sustainability. These plans can only achieve concrete results if they become integrated into the policies and activities of the whole community, and if they are supported by multiple stakeholders and partners. Key stakeholders include neighbourhood and community associations who can play a pivotal role in the success of these plans, as it is at the neighbourhood level where implementation occurs and where opportunities can be realized.

Interestingly, there has been a growing trend among municipalities over the past few years to undertake more specific, localized neighbourhood planning processes. To further this, The Natural Step Canada is developing an Alberta Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Guide, which will be a useful resource for municipalities and community associations to meaningfully engage residents and stakeholders in conversations about the future of their neighbourhoods from a sustainability perspective, and collaboratively create Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plans for their communities.

The Initiative

In 2011 and 2012, The Natural Step Canada developed and piloted the next generation of sustainable neighbourhood planning—one that integrates sustainability at its core, and streamlines the neighbourhood planning process with a community’s Municipal Sustainability Plan. The Alberta Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Guide was put to the test with the Ramsay Community Association in Calgary, and we are in the process of integrating lessons learned into a final guide, which will be launched by the end of the year through a series of webinars and in-person workshops.

The Alberta Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Guide outlines a process to engage and empower neighbourhoods to draw on their local knowledge and embed their priorities within the community’s Municipal Sustainability Plan. It will assist them in contextualizing the neighbourhood’s social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governance needs and concerns. It will help to align priorities, activities, and services at the neighbourhood level with the broader community plan. The Guide also provides clarity around the future vision and direction of a neighbourhood, including its land use, resource conservation, development opportunities, services, and infrastructure. The process provides an opportunity for municipal departments to work collaboratively on project planning.

In addition, the Guide promotes an increased sense of neighbourliness and community, and will provide significant opportunities for collective learning. Residents in neighbourhoods that undergo a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning process will learn much more about their community and each other, and will build deeper long-term relationships and civic involvement.

Deliverables

1. An Alberta Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Guide (approximately 80 pages with examples, tools, and resources)
2. A web page with information about the project and link to download the Guide for free
3. A webinar to promote the Guide and workshops with regional partners
4. Two in-person, one-day workshops for community associations, municipal staff, and others interested in using the Guide (to take place in Calgary and Edmonton)

The Alberta Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Planning Guide will be professionally designed and made available to download online for free. The Guide will be launched with a press release and accompanied by promotional efforts online, via social media, at conferences and events, and via submissions to academic journals and municipally-focused magazines such as Municipal World.
The Opportunity

The Natural Step Canada is seeking support from corporate, foundation, and municipal leaders who would like to contribute to this exciting new frontier in sustainable neighbourhood planning.

Sponsors will receive the unique opportunity to:

- Support a cutting-edge initiative that will reach thousands of municipal sustainability managers and sustainability professionals.
- Increase recognition of your brand, products, and services in the municipal sector.
- Connect with sustainability leaders and professionals within municipalities and those who work with them, as well as those who are generally working to improve their communities.
- Advance the cause of long-term sustainability in neighbourhoods and communities across Alberta.

Partners will receive significant public recognition according to the following sponsorship levels

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<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Major Sponsor $5,000</th>
<th>Supporter $2,500</th>
<th>Contributor $1,500</th>
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<tr>
<td>Logo on final report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution to thousands of municipal administrators and community stakeholders</td>
<td>Size: Large Location: Front and back covers</td>
<td>Size: Medium Location: Back cover</td>
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<td>Launch webinar</td>
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<td>Free webinar for municipal decision-makers and interested stakeholders</td>
<td>Participation in the launch &amp; large name and logo on title slide</td>
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<td>One-day workshops</td>
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<td>Two interactive workshops held for municipal decision-makers in Calgary and Edmonton</td>
<td>Signage, verbal recognition &amp; in-person participation – 2 workshops</td>
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<td>Social media</td>
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<td>The Natural Step has 2,800+ Facebook fans, 3,100+ Twitter followers, and 1,350+ LinkedIn members who will receive notice of the report and the sponsors</td>
<td>Multiple mentions on social media channels</td>
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<td>Newsletter promotion</td>
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<td>Our newsletter is sent out to over 6,800 subscribers</td>
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<td>The Natural Step web site</td>
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<td>We get over 275,000 annual visits to our web site</td>
<td>Name and logo with link to sponsor's web site</td>
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Summary of Key Dates

- Guide launch and promotional webinar: November 30
- Calgary in-person workshop: December 5
- Edmonton in-person workshop: December 12
- Distribution and promotion: Ongoing
Why The Natural Step Canada?

The Natural Step Canada is a dynamic charitable organization that is empowering leaders in businesses and municipalities to make transformational changes in their organizations toward sustainability. We have worked with organizations across Canada and are part of a growing global sustainability network with projects in 18 countries. Our unique approach is based on 20 years of scientific, peer-reviewed research. We are well-qualified to work on municipal issues, having worked with many leading communities across the country. We also designed a process for creating an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that is now the most widely-used in Canada.

WE ENVISION... a sustainable world in which individuals, communities, and businesses thrive within nature’s limits.

WE STRIVE... to inspire, educate, and connect Canadian leaders to accelerate the transformation toward a sustainable world.

Through award-winning learning programs and advisory, coaching, and process facilitation services, our unique approach translates the fundamentals of sustainability into practical steps that businesses and communities can take to achieve lasting change. Our Sustainable Communities program helps municipal leaders embed sustainability into their culture and operations, develop effective Integrated Community Sustainability Plans, and build the capacity of community stakeholders to lead change toward sustainability.

Funders

We’d like to extend our gratitude to the generous funders of this initiative to date:

Collaborators

We’d also like to thank several collaborators who have supported the development of this initiative:

• Mark Anielski, Genuine Wealth, ANIELSKI Management Inc.
• Kevin Cunningham, Ramsay Community Association
• Dick Eberson, City of Calgary
• Andy Filmor, Dalhousie University
• Natasha Kuzmak, Federation of Calgary Communities
• Sonya Meek, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
• Monica Pohlmann, Monica K Pohlmann & Associates
• Doug Pollard, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
• Luc Rabouin, Montreal Urban Ecology Centre
• Tim Smith, SERA Architects

To find out more about sponsoring this exciting opportunity:

• Please contact John Purkis, Senior Sustainability Advisor, The Natural Step Canada, jpurkis@naturalstep.ca, 613.748.3001 x227.