

## Sustainable Community Development

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### What is Sustainability?

There are over 70 published definitions for sustainability and we are all often confronted with the claim that no one really knows what it is.

It is seemingly a complex concept that can be explained and applied in a wide variety of ways depending on the unique circumstances of each community. However, when approached in a holistic and integrated way, multiple complex problems can often be addressed with relatively simple solutions.

Sustainability ultimately comes down to a community's commitment to be as self-sufficient as it can be in providing the energy, food, water, shelter, employment, and other resources necessary for citizens to collectively and equitably contribute to the well-being of each other and future generations.

What is Sustainable Community Development (SCD)? SCD is synonymous with engaged leadership at the local level to avoid "unsustainability." It is the belief that the negative trends of most global issues can ultimately only be solved at the local level ..... community by community, and region by region.

SCD is a broad-based commitment and conscious response to the issues of climate change, peak oil, water shortage, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic disparity (to name just a few), addressed through sustainability-based: 1) community resolutions; 2) energy, food, and water self-sufficiency; 3) land use planning; 4) educational curricula; 5) localized employment; 6) socially equitable health care; 7) "green" transportation and commerce; and a myriad of other approaches.

Local elected officials might feel they have a realm of influence limited to civic actions that directly affect your own communities. However, through collaboration with regional neighbors for development of sustainability-based public policy, influence can be greatly expanded and result in maximizing economic, social, and environmental benefits.

SCD is not a scare tactic, nor is it a concept that will come and go as if it were a fashion trend. It is firmly grounded in the scientific data and the trend analysis that is very clear on many fronts worldwide. The human species and the rest of the natural world are clearly headed for significant challenges that can be avoided if we use sustainability as our **"commitment to avoid unsustainability"**.

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