



WEST  
HARTFORD

# Sustainability Advisory Group

*Virtual Meeting*

Date: November 3 2021 Cont. November 16 2021

Start Time: 6:30 PM

# Agenda

- Land Acknowledgement
- Sustainable CT News & Updates
- Draft Subgroup Priorities Presentation
- Round Table
- Next Steps





# Land Acknowledgement

# Sustainable CT News & Updates

- We got Silver!
- Effective thru Dec 31, 2024
- Press release, WeHa article
- Awards at CCM Annual Convention, Nov 30, 2021
- Other “visibility” opportunities and celebratory event in April 2022.

**Congrats 2021 Certified Communities!**

**\*Bronze\***

Canaan (Falls Village)	North Stonington
Chester	Pomfret
Cheshire	Ridgefield
Durham	Suffield
Essex	Washington
Town of Groton	West Haven
	Weston

**\*Silver\***

Fairfield
Glastonbury
Greenwich
Hartford
Litchfield
Milford
New Milford
Old Lyme
Portland
Trumbull
West Hartford
Westport

**Congrats 2021 Certified Communities**  
60% of the state's population is living in a Sustainable CT certified community - [View Here](#)

# Sustainable CT Application Debrief

- 725 of 770 points approved
  - 0 points (not 30) for two Action 3.3.1 Watershed Restoration Projects b/c the description/documentation did not adequately explain benefit to watershed and native species vegetation restoration
  - 5 points (not 15) for Action 12.2.1b Homelessness Training b/c training had to be specifically by designated staff liaison, not other social workers.
  - 20 points (not 25) for 5.4 Climate Vulnerability Assessment b/c ?? (maybe math error on my part of their part)
- Still “tip of the iceberg” (2365 points); Greenwich got 1025
- You can view/download all the towns’ submission reports on the [Sustainable CT website](#)

# Sustainable CT Reminders


- Sign up for [newsletter](#)
- Attend a webinar; check out Sust CT [Trainings & Events Calendar](#)
- Don't forget: ANYONE can start a [Sustainable CT Match Fund Project](#) (works like a “Go Fund Me” site, but includes \$-for-\$ match by Sust CT - i.e., double your \$)



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# Draft Presentation to Town Council

# Background & Topics - (Placeholder for now)

- SAG assisted Catherine Diviney and Town of West Hartford in Submitting to Sustainable CT
  - SAG learned about efforts town has invested in in order to meet Sustainable CT Goals
  - SAG sent letter to the Town sharing our “wishes”
  - Mission Development Starter
  - SAG brainstormed list of top 11 priorities
  - Town Priorities
  - Gap Assessment
  - Vision of Future Version of SAG
  - Bike Lot
- 



# Top Priorities

1. Complete Streets Program: Build Out Sidewalks, Protected Bike Lanes, Walkable Streets - SCT #6
2. Invest in / Incentivize Clean and 100% Renewable Energy Programs - SCT #7
3. Support an Urban Forestry and Landscaping Initiative - SCT #3
4. Improve Public Transportation, Offer Better Commuting Options (connect to #1) - SCT #6
5. Prevent homelessness, provide wrap around services for the unhoused, and support affordable housing programs - SCT #11, #12
6. Invest in Anti-Racism programs, initiatives, efforts etc., - SCT #1, #13
7. Develop a food waste reduction / compost program- SCT #9
8. Address gap in healthy food programs: offer more fresh food / farmer market programs - SCT #10
9. Pass a climate emergency resolution and incorporate climate change into planning - SCT#5
10. Invest in attracting new businesses that support the circular economy - SCT #2, #13
11. Invest in accessible energy efficiency programs - SCT #7

## Administrative:

12. Future Structure of SAG
13. Presentation Consolidation Team



# Priority 1: Build Complete Streets Core Network - Prioritize Safety and Cost Over Speed and Volume

## Support Active, Non-Motorized Transport with Multi-Modal Street Design

Connecticut's Complete Streets Act (CT Gen. Stat. §13-153f) requires pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users to be routinely considered in the planning, design, construction and operation of all roads. Given its silver-level certification, West Hartford should aspire to be a model for Complete Streets compliance.

A strong majority of 1,019 respondents in a 2021 survey support safe and efficient multi-modal transport in West Hartford. Let's prioritize vulnerable users, enhance multi-modal connectivity to neighboring towns and promote healthy lifestyles to help reduce the town's carbon footprint.

**Short-Term Targets:** Build protected N-S bike lanes from Town Center to Bishop's Corner on North Main; coordinate with City of Hartford to create protected Bike Lane on Park Rd.; and design non-motorized LaSalle Rd from Arapahoe to Farmington.

**Mid-Term Target:** Reconfigure LaSalle to prioritize non-motorized uses; add pedestrian crossings townwide; expand protected bike lane network (New Britain-New Park); develop 4th grade street safety program in cooperation with Bike/Walk CT; Introduce 311-type program to report infrastructure issues (speeding, sidewalks, crashes).

**Three-Year Target:** Design and build Core Non-Motorized Network and bring road repair into compliance with state Complete Streets Act. In all design, consider vulnerable users and ADA guidelines; further expand bike lane network (Farmington E-W; Prospect N-S; install speed-reducing infrastructure on roads prone to accidents.

# Priority 2: Invest in / Incentivize Clean and 100% Renewable Energy Programs

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y

Sustainable CT Category: 7

## Description:

Actions to increase use of clean and renewable energy in municipal, commercial, and residential sectors by educating residents and businesses, and adopting targeted policies.

## Short-Term Targets (draft):

### Why is this priority important?

- Address climate change and air pollution
- Increase quality of life in West Hartford
- Make WH a leader and the place to be for CT residents and newcomers interested in clean and renewable energy
- *Meaningful action to follow up after climate emergency declaration*

- Heat Smart
  - Support & promote the upcoming Heat Smart campaign involving energy audits and clean heating and cooling- lead by Clean Energy Commission
  - Consider incentives for homes and businesses to improve energy efficiency
- Solar
  - Streamline permitting for rooftop solar
  - Allow ground-mounted solar
- EVs & charging infrastructure
  - Improve zoning requirements for charging infrastructure. EX: Add requirements for EV chargers at new parking lots and new larger apartment complexes like other CT towns do.
  - Encourage awareness and adoption of electric lawn care equipment
  - Consider incentives for electric car ownership
- Notification of Clean Energy Commission and future Sustainability commission for major new development to provide support for developers to make sustainable energy choices.

# Priority 3: Urban Forestry and Landscapi

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

The focus of this subcommittee is the preservation and growth of the native plant community of West Hartford with particular focus on the Tree Canopy.

This priority is very important. Thousands of mature trees have been lost in West Hartford over the last few years for a wide variety of reasons. Supporting and maintaining our trees has the following benefits: improved air quality, lower energy use in all seasons, carbon sequestration, noise reduction, stormwater and erosion control, wildlife support, enhanced property values, and improved aesthetics.

# Goals of the Urban Forestry Initiative

## Short term: (12 months)

Apply for State Grants for this year and next to fund forestry programs

Conduct a Tree Canopy Survey to establish a baseline

Continue to provide space for planting by West Hartford Tree Project

Create a section on town website for links to tree resources, videos by arborists that educate about pruning vs. removal,

## Mid term: (24 months)

Examine the possibility of tree cutting restrictions or approval process before healthy mature trees can be removed

Examine the possibility of underground power lines

# Urban Forestry Goals Continued

**Mid term**: Establish a town program that is funded by grants and town budget that provides and plants appropriate trees for residents

Begin to establish a commission that regulates the cutting of mature, healthy trees in Town

**Long Term**: Create a long term town strategy for replacement and preservation of mature trees and the replanting of young trees.



# Priority 4: Public Transportation

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

What is this priority?

Encourage and expand use of public transportation within West Hartford and the region.

Why is this priority important?

- Reduce air and climate pollution by encouraging less personal vehicle use
- Promote economic development and sustainable growth providing more options for people to travel to and around WH
- Address mobility and transportation justice concerns among children, elderly, disabled, and poorer residents
- Promote community connections with density and shared transportation

Short term targets:

- Include directions by transit for all public events
- Map crosswalks & signal crossings around stops; develop plan for improvement where necessary
- Allow Link or other e-scooters in town to solve “last mile” problems
- Prioritize municipal snow clearing around transit stops for access



# Priority 4: Public Transportation, cont

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Medium and long term targets

- Upgrade bus stops to include seating, rain & sun protection, maps, schedules, etc.
- Support dense development along transportation corridors through zoning & incentives
- Encourage state to expand CTfastrak to serve a wider area (e.g., across river)
- Provide easy connection from WH Center to CTfastrak and Union stations
- Work with state elected officials to propose legislation allowing private, municipal, etc. employers to opt-in to the U-Pass program
- Investigate a snow clearing ordinance either that fines property owners for not clearing (see: Hartford) or puts the town in charge of all snow clearing to facilitate stop access and last mile problems



# Priority 5: Prevent Homelessness

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Description:

Supporting more of the region's residents and workers who are struggling to stay housed or who have recently become homeless.

Part of sustainability is recognizing that sustainably is a regional issue.

## Short-Term Targets:

- Bring in experts from CT homelessness & housing orgs to speak with & advise Council on the topic
- Work with local homelessness and housing groups to facilitate meetings with residents experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming unhoused
- Look to other municipalities to investigate how multifamily housing along dense transportation corridors can be used to address the housing affordability crisis

## Why is this priority important?

- West Hartford is a key municipality in the metro Hartford region--and the region cannot flourish if its residents do not have stable, affordable housing
- Affordable housing will strengthen our families and economy by allowing more residents to live in town and devote resources to education, entrepreneurship, etc.

# Priority 5: Prevent Homelessness, cont

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Medium-term Targets

- Open warming and cooling shelters for homeless population (& not just during weather emergencies)
- Adopt a mandatory inclusionary zoning requirement for any multi-family development receiving town incentives

## Long-Term

- The town should develop a plan to house people and figure out where that will be and what services to provide.
- Partner with a community-based, equity-oriented non-profit to develop a land trust
- Partner with a community-based, equity-oriented non-profit to develop a housing first shelter or mixed-income development

# Priority 6: Invest in Anti-Racism

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

Description: [to be filled out by team.]

Transform current and proposed municipal policies and actions by evaluating them through an anti-racism/racial equity lens. Apply anti-racism strategies.

What is this priority?

Why is this priority important?

For West Hartford to be a town for everyone, municipal plans, goals, and actions need to address historic racism and inequality and support and promote the ability of all residents to thrive - in terms of education, health, housing, jobs (having them and creating them through small businesses), planning and decision making, etc.

Next 12 to 18 months:

- Review major policy & zoning programs, consider their impact on Black and other communities of color (BIPOC), rewrite them as needed to address equity issues.
- Support equity officer in identifying diversity and equity concerns and actions to address them.
- Support internship and employment programs for professionals who are BIPOC and programs that support BIPOC-owned business.
- Plan for/require 3 town representatives - 1 staff person, 1 elected official, and 1 community rep to attend the Winter 2022 Sustainable CT Virtual Equity Training Series - 1 date in Feb, 2 in March.
- Support additional programs at the library.

# Priority 7: Food Waste Prevention and Composting

**What is this priority?** "Reduce or eliminate food waste and increase food scraps recovery." - from Sustainable CT website.

In the US, 40% of all food produced is never eaten. About 33% of MSW is organic. West Hartford can address this in the following ways. Heighten education around food waste in public schools and general public; education around food rescue programs in West Hartford; improving and encouraging backyard compost practices while developing municipal curbside compost service

## Why is this Important?

- Provides food to those in need
- Reduces waste of resources and funds
- Reduce food that is sent to trash/compost
- Helps address CT's very real Waste Crisis
- Normalizes sustainability practices

## Short Term Targets

### 12 months:

- Reduce organics in both yard waste / landfill and trash curbside collection services by encouraging backyard composting
- Increase food rescue through heightened awareness of organizations like [Food Rescue](#)
- Letter to all town residents highlighting the impending waste crisis and other vital information

### 24 months:

- food rescue (share tables) and food scrap composting in all public schools
- Increased education through fliers, listserv, social media, etc.
- Harvest lower carbon energy from organics

### 72 months

# Priority 8: Address Gap in Healthy Food Options

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Description: [to be filled out by team.]

West Hartford needs a more sustainable food system, centered around three main areas:

- Farmers Markets
- Community Gardens
- Public Schools

## Why is this priority important?

Easy access to nutritious, organic, locally-produced food remains limited in West Hartford

## Short-Term Targets:

### 12-month

- Transform vacant municipal lots into edible and productive community gardens in the east side and center of the Town.
- Improve signage and web presence for the Farmers Markets that already exist
- Establish a Share Table (place to leave leftover, unopened food in all WH public school cafeterias)

### 24 month

- Form a Food Policy Council or commission
- Conduct a Community Food Assessment to collect data on where we're at
- Expand number of farmers markets, and hours/days of operation
- Re-establish school gardens and education curriculum (i.e. Kim Hughes' group Roots 2 Rise)

### 72 month

- Establish a community orchard in conjunction with community vegetable gardens
- Try to replicate the recent farm-to-school successes in Hartford Public Schools
- Re-examine and reform funding structure for food in public schools, so the funding doesn't come from sales of junk food

# Priority 9: Climate Resolution and Climate Planning

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Description:

We would like the town to pass a climate emergency resolution and start to adopt the provisions therein that would incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation into town planning.

## Why is this priority important?

Climate change is the existential crisis of the 21st century. All that we currently have and all other progress that we hope to make on other issues require a stable climate. It is an enormous problem that requires collaboration on a yet unseen scale. West Hartford needs to become part of the solution and not the problem.

## Short-Term Targets:

- Join other cities and towns in Connecticut in recognizing that climate change is an emergency by the end of 2021.
- State our support for the development of national carbon pricing legislation.
- Form a climate change commission, or a similar body, either by adding a new commission or repurposing an existing commission, and include student representation.
- Perform a greenhouse gas inventory by the end of 2023.
- Create a climate action plan for the Town of West Hartford to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Use climate change as a lens through which to evaluate every existing and new town policy/action.

# Priority 10: Attract Businesses in Circular Economy

Description: [to be filled out by team.]

## What is this priority?

Encourage businesses to consider locating in a town that values the principles of the circular economy, namely eliminating and designing out waste, creating opportunities to keep current feedstocks going for as long as possible before ending up in landfill or avoiding landfills all together

## Why is this priority important?

We have an inefficient system that sends too many valuable resources to landfills and is far too reliant on virgin materials that are not infinitely available. There are limits to what supply chains can provide and there are limits to what the current economic system is designed to optimize. Conceptually a circular economy requires a rethink of our approach to take-make-waste. Instead it thrives on cycles which are optimized over time to encourage the mimicking of natural cycles as much as possible.

## Short-Term Targets:

- Sharing sheds
- Launch a pilot program for companies whose waste can be used as a feedstock for another local business within CT. Match these businesses and reward them
- Create a tax incentive program for local businesses that are part of a circular economy
- Evaluate the Circular city plans from other towns and cities like the 450 in this directory  
<https://www.circle-economy.com/programmes/cities/service>
- Identify potential opportunities for West Hartford

## Mid/Long Term Targets:

- Tool Library for residents - Allow residents to donate/rent tools for around the house. (Electric Lawn equipment, Bikes, ect.) Could also act like a buy nothing for the town residents drop items that others can pick up. Benefits - cut down on waste/consumption and promote the electric/environmentally friendly options. Will bring down the cost of homeowners face and individuals as they could rent a tool they don't often need as a way to save money.
- Utilizing existing business outreach such as the Chamber of Commerce to educate business on the benefits of sustainability and promote easy swaps the business could make. Promote these businesses that make the switch as a town eco recognized business which outlines changes they made or what they are doing for the town/environment

# Priority 11: Accessible Energy Efficiency

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y

Sustainable CT Category: 7

Description: [to be filled out by team.]

What is this priority?

Why is this priority important?

Increasing energy efficiency is essential to meeting goals for 100% renewable energy, but barriers - mostly financial but sometimes logistical - discourage residents and businesses or make it hard to accomplish practically.

Short-Term Targets:

- Provide incentives or low income loans for low and middle income residents to increase efficiency where gaps in rebates discourage making changes. For all residents, provide incentives or low income loans for items that do not have rebates or other incentives.
- Investigate what other towns are doing.





# Priority 12: Future of SAG

Aligns with Town Priorities? Y/N

Sustainable CT Category: X

## Description:

This is the place where we will describe the future of the SAG. Could take many shapes. Ongoing permanent group with reps from commissions, residents, SAG members, staff etc. TBD

See next slides...

## Why is this priority important?

The town needs a permanent mechanism to continue to build on these recommendations and to ensure accountability

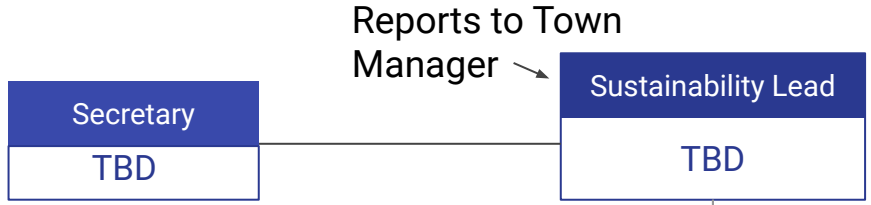
## Short-Term Targets:

- Confirm new structure
- Announce process to select representatives
- Continue to build on work of the SAG
- Take ownership of a sustainability plan for the Town in concert with the new climate commission

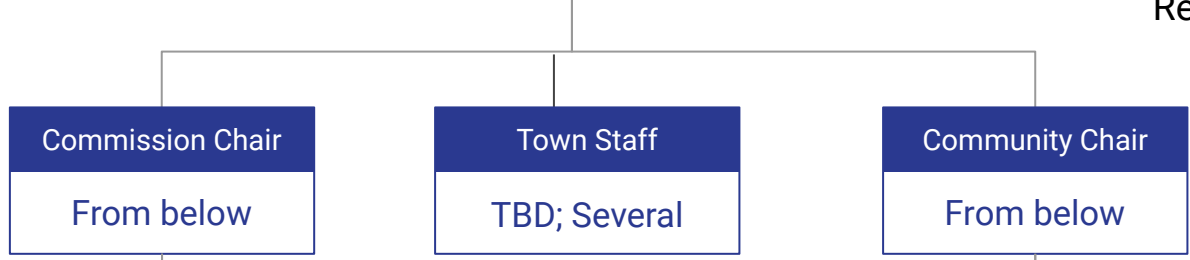
# Proposed Council / Commission

Council Selects Chairs and Secretary to Keep Minutes, Schedule Meetings, etc.

**GENERAL CONCEPT**



Reports to Town Council on Regular Basis



Reports to Regional Efforts

Example of Commissions



Reps from full cmte to fill subcommittee

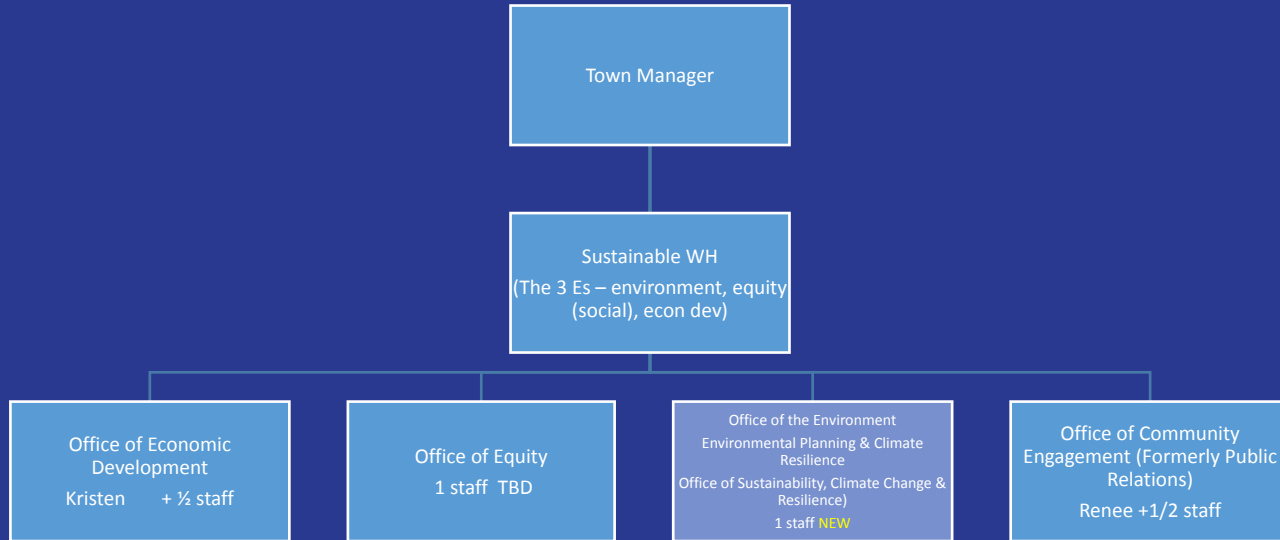


# Commissions (permanent, party-affiliation)

- TPZ – OK, Todd (Ord & Charter)
- Clean Energy – OK, Catherine (res)
- Ped Bike (Res) □ Multi-Modal Complete Streets (broader), **staff liaison? Rotating staff – leisure, Greg/Jim? Transportation Planner**
- Cons & Env't Ord □ needs prod, watershed/LID education, urban forest? – **staff liaison? new planner, PW/grounds staff, Justin? Rotating staff?**
- Prevention Council Ord – OK, Astrid
- Arts Ord - revise OK, **Kristen staff liaison? rotating?**
- **Materials Mgmt & Waste Prevention - Katherine**
- **Housing (after HAG done) – absorb Fair Rent Commission (leave Fellowship on-side) Todd, new planner**
- Human Rights (Equity?) – OK , equity officer
- Econ Dev – Town ask Kristen? Right now Council is doing this – OK, with Chamber and biz associations

- **Environmental Planner/ Transportation Planner/Sustainability Officer – new staff 3 E's**
- **Climate Change "Emergency" Task Force (temporary, also part of Sustainable WH team)**
  - Discrete – GHG inventory (info from various departments/commissions)
  - Environmental Planner liaison
  - build inventory, works with Sustainable WH committee to
- **Sustainable WH Committee/ Team (after SAG done)**
  - Meets quarterly
  - Matt, directors reps from Commissions, additional residents
  - Internal & external focus
  - Maintain Climat Action Plan & (like Police Community Trust Plan)
  - Sust CT certification
- Town Council Cttee structure not working. Communication and work flow – how a bill becomes the law revisit.
- Changes to AIS
  - Equity Impact: Was the community engaged in an inclusive process? How does this (the outcome) improve equity?
  - Climate Change Impact: How does this support lower emissions?
  - POCD Review: Is this consistent with the POCD?

To increase chances that a sustainability or climate change commission or council will succeed, town might also want to consider restructuring its departments to match the “3” E’s, and assist with filling gaps identified



- Buildings
- Materials Management
- Complete Streets, Transportation
- Natural Env't (incl. Trees, Water)

# Next Steps

1. Next Meeting 12/1

# Round Table

*Q&A, comments, announcements*

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