

Sustainability Plan Toolkit

As awareness of environmental issues increases, more and more communities in the region are looking to develop sustainability plans. CMAP seeks to create a Sustainability Plan Toolkit that will serve as a guide to communities who wish to create this new type of plan. The project team will conduct a thorough review of existing sustainability plans and related resources, as well as gather information and feedback from a Steering Committee and municipal representatives, to create a toolkit that will be useful to a wide range of municipal audiences. This project is expected to take approximately one year to complete.

Project Partners

CMAP will serve as the project manager for the duration of the project, and CMAP's Environment Committee will serve as the project's Steering Committee. The Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus (MMC) and Seven Generations Ahead (SGA) will help to draft toolkit elements and provide input at key points during the planning process, as outlined in this scope of work. MMC and SGA will also participate in meetings with the Steering Committee.

Phase 1: Project Initiation

Task 1a: Establish a Steering Committee (Oct. 2013)

The CMAP project team will consult with the Steering Committee throughout the planning process. The Committee, comprised of the members of CMAP's Environment Committee, represents a broad range of perspectives that will serve to broaden the toolkit's applicability. The Committee will be responsible for offering general project direction, reviewing key drafts and providing feedback, and attending project meetings.

Task 1b: Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting (Nov. 2013)

CMAP will meet with the Steering Committee to kick off the development of the Sustainability Plan Toolkit. The meeting will serve to introduce the Committee's role as well as the project scope and schedule, and discuss preliminary ideas for what should be addressed by the toolkit.

Task 1c: Municipal Representatives Forum (Jan. 2014)

To ensure that the toolkit meets the needs of communities in the region, CMAP will seek feedback from municipalities at two key points in the planning process. At this first meeting, CMAP will host a forum for municipal representatives, which will provide a short overview on sustainability planning, gauge interest on sustainability topics, and discuss what they would like to see included in the toolkit. MMC will assist with this task by reaching out to mayors within their network to invite participation. The second meeting will occur during the drafting of the toolkit (see Task 3-b).

CMAP will also hold a meeting with members of the Prairie State Network, a group of municipal representatives who are active in sustainability-related initiatives in their communities. This meeting will serve to delve deeper into project approach, lessons learned from their own sustainability plans, and what they think would be useful to include in the document.

Phase 2: Create a Document Outline

Task 2a: Review Background Information (Jan. 2014)

To inform the toolkit's development, the CMAP team will inventory existing sustainability plans in the region and beyond and also review other sustainability resources (such as ICLEI's Sustainability Planning Toolkit, the STAR Community Index, Greenest Region Compact, etc.) to gain a more robust understanding of the topic of sustainability planning. This work will build upon MMC's research to

review and analyze existing plans, principles, programs, and strategies to identify potential alignment of practices and policy interests among communities in the region.

Task 2b: Draft an Outline (Feb. 2014)

After completing its review of relevant background information, the CMAP team will create a document outline for the Sustainability Plan Toolkit. The outline will propose the toolkit's overall organization and content, as well as "core" plan topics and indicators. The core topics and indicators proposed will be those deemed most appropriate and essential for sustainability planning in the Chicago region. Core topics and indicators will be proposed to the Steering Committee and refined based on the discussion, if need be. In addition, the outline will include a draft list of potential strategies to address the core topic areas.

Task 2c: Steering Committee Meeting (Mar. 2014)

CMAP will meet with the Steering Committee to discuss the draft toolkit outline. The meeting will focus on the overall organization as well as the core plan topics/indicators and strategies. Feedback from this meeting will be used to revise the outline prior to drafting the toolkit during Phase 3.

Phase 3: Draft the Toolkit

Task 3-a: Draft the Sustainability Plan Toolkit (Apr. – Sep. 2014)

The CMAP project team will draft the toolkit, which will feature the following:

- Guidance on the major steps needed to complete a sustainability plan.
- A menu of potential strategies of impact organized by core plan topic.
- Identification of regional core indicators and data sources, and general guidance on how to set quantitative goals/targets and aggregate data.
- Standards for implementation and monitoring.
- Guidance on engagement strategies for the public, municipal staff, and elected leaders.

The toolkit will be clearly organized and illustrated to clearly convey concepts and will emphasize the inclusion of resource links and identification of data sources to facilitate implementation. MMC and SGA will assist in drafting pieces of the toolkit, particularly sections relating to core indicators, implementation and monitoring, engagement strategies, and planning process.

Task 3-b: Municipal Representatives Meeting(s) (May 2014)

The CMAP project team will present preliminary ideas for the draft Sustainability Plan Toolkit to municipal representatives and other partner organizations at a session at the GreenTown conference. MMC will assist with this task by reaching out to mayors within their network to invite participation. Comments and questions will be addressed in a last round of edits.

Task 3-c: Steering Committee Meeting (Aug. 2014)

The CMAP project team will present the draft Sustainability Plan Toolkit to the Steering Committee for review and comment. Revisions will be incorporated into the draft toolkit prior to meeting with municipal representatives.

Task 3-d: Finalize the Toolkit (Sep. 2014)

After feedback from the Steering Committee and municipal representatives has been incorporated, the project team will finalize the document. MMC will aid in distributing the toolkit to member municipalities and will reach out to identified Environment Commissions to help gauge their interest in the toolkit as well.

Phase 4: Apply the Toolkit

Task 4-a: Coordinate a Pilot Project

The CMAP project team will seek to award assistance through the LTA program to a community in the region who desires to develop a sustainability plan under the toolkit. CMAP and partners will provide limited technical assistance to the selected community, but the community will be responsible for the majority of the work to develop the plan.