A Process for Rural Sustainability: Lessons from Williamston, North Carolina
Who is Audubon International?

“We envision our communities becoming more sustainable through good stewardship of the natural environment where people live, work, and recreate.”

- Audubon International, incorporated as The Audubon Society of New York State, Inc., in 1987 from one of the first state Audubon Societies.

- Audubon International’s education, training, and certification programs are delivered throughout the United States and worldwide.

- The natural environment isn’t confined to nature preserves, parks, and protected land. With over 60% of the land in the US privately-owned, environmental stewardship must come from private property owners, managers and developers.

- In more than two dozen countries on five continents, Audubon International members are cleaning up streams, protecting common and endangered wildlife, restoring wetlands, conserving water and energy, and educating communities about the value of good environmental stewardship.
Are you the bird people?

- Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program - 20 years of Golf in 2011
- Working with properties led to helping developers, surrounding neighborhoods, and whole communities
- It’s going to be built, why not provide education and guidance on how to be more sustainable?
Green, Sustainable, Smart, Audubon
Getting to sustainability: What you need

- Long-Term Plan
- Issue-Specific Planning
- Sense of Place
- “Sustainability Portfolio”
- Verification: Indicators
Parameters: Focus Areas & Indicators

1. Agriculture
2. Economic Development/Tourism
3. Education
4. Environmental issues
5. Governance
6. Public Health
7. Housing
8. Open Space and Land Use
9. Planning, Zoning, Building and Development
10. Population
11. Public Safety and Emergency Management
12. Recreation
13. Resource Use (water, energy, waste)
14. Volunteerism and Civic Engagement
15. Transportation

Three groupings
- Economic
- Social
- Environmental
SCP: Stages of Involvement

**STAGE ONE: Assessment (6 months-1 year)**
Community Outreach, Education, and Involvement

**STAGE TWO: Planning (1 year)**
*Sustainable* Strategic Planning

**STAGE THREE: Implementation (20 year plan)**
Implementing and Tracking the Strategic Plan
Motivating Factors:

• Economic
• Agriculture and Preservation of Rural Heritage
• Natural Resources
  – Roanoke River
  – Forests and Open Space
  – Water!
• Population Challenges (Pop: 6,000)
  • De-population
  • Out-migration
Issue Specific Planning
Defining a Sense of Place

Assets:
- Agricultural and Rural Heritage
- History
- Natural Resources
- Family Values/ Religion
Portfolio: Throwing everything into one room

Taking Inventory and Assigning Roles:

- Businesses
- Civic groups
- Churches
- Special Interests
- County entities
- Elected Officials
Verifying Progress: Goals

- Choosing *reachable* targets for community defined goals.
- Establishing short-, mid-, and long-term timelines
- Determining parties responsible for reporting and monitoring
- Collecting information on a predetermined regular basis
- Publicizing Progress
- Continual Auditing
Verifying Progress: Indicators
## Process for Change: Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failures for Change</th>
<th>Success</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fail to create sense of urgency</td>
<td>Rally: sense of place</td>
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<td>2. No guiding coalition</td>
<td>Catalysts: partnerships</td>
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<td>3. Underestimate the power of vision</td>
<td>Sell ‘Sustainability’ differently</td>
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<td>4. Under-communicate the vision</td>
<td>Over beer, BBQ, or Bible</td>
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<td>5. Obstacles block the vision</td>
<td>Sustainability: A meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Failing to create short-term wins</td>
<td>Celebrate success</td>
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<td>7. Declaring victory too soon</td>
<td><em>Sustainability Indicators</em></td>
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<td>8. Not anchoring in the culture</td>
<td>Steering Committee</td>
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<td>(Gov’t and Community)</td>
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New Eco-Education Model

AWARENESS
& UNDERSTANDING leads to
APPRECIATION leads to
ACTION

ACTION First! Leads to
APPRECIATION leads to
AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING
Sustainable Small Communities: Lessons for Change

Lead with the environment: Sense of Place
Connect with and educate people right away

ID & create catalysts, role models, and leaders

Identify partners: Distribute tasks for the plan

Start simple, celebrate, and build complexity

Create long-term commitment: Plan & Indicators
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