Baseline Survey of Municipal Opinions on Sustainability in Severn Sound Watershed 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sustainable Severn Sound (SSS) partners with the municipalities of the Severn Sound Watershed to achieve its goal of making these communities more sustainable. SSS is in the process of implementing a Sustainable Action Plan (SAP) over the next three years, 2016 to 2018. To measure the success of the SAP, SSS wished to learn about the level of awareness of SSS held by members of municipal government in order to ensure that these key stakeholders could cooperate with them effectively on projects. A baseline survey was conducted in order to gauge awareness of SSS initiatives, to understand the priorities and motivations regarding sustainability, and suggestions to enhance engagement with municipal partners.

Key findings from this survey include:

AWARENESS:

✔ Council members reported a higher level of awareness of SSS and its initiatives than municipal staff members
✔ Council members had no issues in identifying their SSS representative
✔ Over half of municipal staff respondents could not report their SSS representative and 20% who said they could, were mistaken
✔ Municipal partners tend to be neutral about the communication materials provided by SSS and those with greater awareness of SSS, tended to be more satisfied with the materials provided by SSS.
✔ Municipal partners agree sustainability is integrated in their communities. 88% could provide examples of integration, and the most common examples included water protection and waste management and recycling.

PRIORITIES AND MOTIVATIONS:

✔ Climate change & Community Economic Development were both the number one ranked priority while environmental threats were ranked the number 1 motivation for addressing sustainability
✔ Top 5 overall priorities, based on overall frequency, were (1) energy efficiency and renewables, (2) waste reduction and recycling, (3) land use, urban form, and community design, (4) community economic development, and housing and community development and water and sewage were tied for fifth
✔ Top 3 overall motivations for addressing sustainability were (1) environmental threats, (2) cost savings, and (3) government regulation

ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT

✔ Top two themes stated by municipal partners include communication and awareness
✔ Some suggestions from municipal partners included: “Green drinks events”, “host guest speakers like the invasive species program”, and “more events for only politicians and municipal staff”.

Based on these findings increased efforts should be made to educate municipal employees about the work of SSS and it is recommended to:

- Increased Engagement with Municipal Staff
- Email Sustainability Bulletin to Raise Awareness
- Share Survey Findings with Municipalities
- Increase Presence at Community Events
- Highlight SSS’s Work on Respondents’ Top Priorities and Motivations

These recommendations, paired with priorities and objectives of the Sustainability Action Plan, will result in more effective communication between SSS and municipal partners. The results presented act as a baseline for understanding municipal engagement and this survey instrument will be used to measure the success of the SAP over the next three years.
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Introduction

Local governments across North America are increasingly implementing initiatives that address sustainable development, in order to improve economic development, promote social equity, and protect the environment (Saha, 2009b; Pearsall & Pierce, 2010; Opp & Saunders, 2012; Pierce et al., 2014). Sustainable Severn Sound (SSS), a not-for-profit organization, has similarly taken a leading role in promoting sustainable initiatives in the seven municipalities within the Severn Sound Watershed. The municipalities include; the Towns of Midland and Penetanguishene, the Townships of Georgian Bay, Tiny, Tay, Severn, and Oro-Medonte. SSS’s mission of protecting the natural environment, promoting community wellbeing, and supporting sustainable economic practices depends on how these priorities are implemented by municipal governments (Sustainable Severn Sound, n.d.). Therefore, these municipalities are key stakeholders in SSS’s work of carrying out sustainability projects.

SSS is in the process of implementing a Sustainability Action Plan (SAP), 2016-2018, in order to provide strategic planning and guidance for SSS and the sustainability steering committee over the next three years (SSS, n.d). The aim of this plan is to promote sustainability within the local communities and foster a sense of sustainability within municipal governments. The SAP involves three facets: to effectively share information with project partners (including municipalities), deliver presentations and workshops to introduce municipalities to sustainable practices; to review the status of the sustainability plan by distributing a sustainability report card (SSS, n.d). One core component of the action plan is the launch of the new website in late summer or early fall 2016. The website will feature case studies of sustainable practices of their partner municipalities, funding to support additional practices and evidence-based research to inform and educate municipalities and their communities in order engage stakeholders.

To measure the effectiveness of the SAP, a baseline understanding of municipal awareness towards SSS and sustainability is required. This will adequately assess how knowledge of SSS and sustainability changes among municipal partners which include municipal council members and staff.

This report summarizes the results of the baseline survey conducted on behalf of SSS to better understand local government awareness towards SSS and its project initiatives, as well as to identify municipal priorities and motivations for addressing sustainability within the partner municipalities. These findings will allow SSS to work more effectively with their municipal partners and will be used as a benchmark for measuring changes in municipal attitudes over the next three years.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this research is to assess the attitudes and awareness of municipal council members and staff in the Severn Sound Watershed regarding sustainability and the SSS initiatives. The principal research objectives of this project are to:

1. Identify best practices for measuring and changing stakeholder attitudes over time;
2. Measure attitudes and awareness of municipal council members and staff towards sustainability and SSS initiatives;
3. Discern municipal priorities and factors motivating municipalities to address sustainable issues.
SSS will use the results of this assessment to inform strategies and improve stakeholder support and recognition for SSS initiatives. Data gathered in 2016 will be used as a baseline measurement for changes in attitudes and awareness towards sustainability and SSS over the next three years within the Severn Sound Watershed.

Literature Review

Local governments are key stakeholders in addressing sustainability as they have the greatest impact on communities in regards to implementing sustainability initiatives. This is because municipalities are more effective at identifying challenges and working with local residents to formulate solutions to local environmental problems (Thompson & Joseph, 2011). To better understand how to evaluate stakeholder opinions regarding sustainability a literature review of academic and grey literature from 2005-2016 was assessed. The following literature review provides evidence of:

- Best practices for engaging municipalities as stakeholders in sustainability projects;
- Best practices for measuring changes in stakeholder opinions;
- Factors affecting implementation of sustainable practices at the local governmental level.

Section 1: Best practices for measuring and engaging municipalities as stakeholders in sustainability projects

Stakeholder engagement surrounding sustainability initiatives can improve outcomes within the municipality. This is because stakeholders possess important information and resources and are often key decision makers (OECD, 2015). Therefore, understanding stakeholder perspectives leads to better coordination on projects and increased effectiveness of the implementation of sustainable practices (ASTSWMO Board of Directors, 2011). When designing an evaluation method to measure change, it is important to make the concepts measureable. It is suggested that collecting quantitative data is an effective means of measuring stakeholder attitudes. This is due to the fact that numbers can be compared effectively over time and allows for changes in responses over multiple evaluations to be determined (ASTSWMO Board of Directors, 2011). To keep stakeholders engaged following an evaluation, it is important to keep them informed regarding the final results and recommendations of the evaluation in order to demonstrate the value their opinions bring to municipal projects (OECD, 2015). This process can be accomplished through project websites and communication materials (Golder Associates, 2014) and requesting for feedback regarding initiatives (OECD, 2015).

Section 2: Stakeholder engagement case study

A case study from the Municipality of Chatham-Kent provides a good framework of a stakeholder engagement plan and describes how the abovementioned theories can be put into practice. In order to determine baseline information about energy use, and identify opportunities for conservation an online survey was conducted with stakeholders (Golder Associates, 2014). The rationale for an online survey was to reach a wide range of stakeholders that could not attend in-
person workshops (Golder Associates, 2014). To keep stakeholders informed with the project their engagement strategy involved creating a project website that provides easily accessible information for stakeholders and in turn allows them to stay engaged with the project (Golder Associates, 2014). Therefore, in this study an online survey consisting of closed-ended questions was designed to measure municipal attitudes. The findings will outline baseline indicators for future comparative analysis of attitudes and awareness of municipal partners regarding sustainability and its change over time.

Section 3: The factors affecting implementation of sustainable practices at the local government level.

Typical methods for measuring change within a local government’s approach to sustainability requires analyzing three key indicators; the local economy, social equity and environment (Saha, 2009b; Pearsall & Pierce, 2010; Opp & Saunders, 2012; Pierce et al., 2014.) These three components are included in SSS mission statement and are included in Roseland’s (2012) 10 core sustainability blocks.

To determine measurable indicators surrounding sustainability, environmental issues that impact municipalities were examined. Roseland (2012) identified 10 core sustainability building blocks which impact municipalities. These building blocks are used by SSS as a framework for communicating information regarding sustainability. These building blocks are: climate change; community economic development; energy efficiency and renewables; green building; greener, food-secure communities; housing and community development; land use, urban form and community design; transportation planning and traffic management; waste reduction and recycling; water and sewage. Therefore, these building blocks were used in the baseline survey as indicators to identify sustainable priorities and areas of importance to local municipalities. Furthermore, factors that drive actions of sustainability were identified to determine survey indicators for motivations for addressing sustainability within municipalities. These motives are as follows: cost savings (Daley et al., 2013), reputation (Heiskanen, Johnson, Robinson, Vadovics, & Saastamoinen, 2010), pressure from the community (Bansal & Clelland, 2004, as cited in Hahn & Scheermesser, 2005), government regulation (Ockwell, Whitmarsh, & O’Neill, 2009), environmental threats (Daley et al., 2013), pressure from outside groups (Hahn & Scheermesser, 2005).

Research Methods

Design Overview

This research was carried out in three phases which consists of a literature review, a baseline survey, and analysis.

Phase 1: Literature Review

A literature review was conducted regarding sustainability at the local government level. This literature review included case studies that illustrate the best practices for measuring stakeholder engagement and measuring change within local governments.

Phase 2: Baseline Survey

An online survey was administered to council members and municipal staff. The principal objective of the survey is to understand the
attitudes and awareness towards sustainability of these municipal partners.

Phase 3: Analysis

Data was analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS. Standard descriptive and statistical procedures were conducted in order to assess the motivations and priorities, and to identify any gaps in knowledge regarding sustainability of SSS initiatives among municipal council members and staff.

Participants

The participants were council members (n=10) and municipal staff (n=51) located in the Towns of Midland (n=9) and Penetanguishene (n=14), the Townships of Georgian Bay (n=3), Tiny (n=17), Tay (n=10), Severn (n=6), and Oro-Medonte (n=2). There was no perceived risk for participating in this study and informed consent was obtained from respondents. The consent form outlined the purpose of the survey and explained that respondents may withdraw from the survey at any time and that data will be kept confidential (refer to Appendix A for the full survey guide). In addition, anonymity was ensured for any responses that could possibly identify our respondents. Municipal staff who completed the survey were given the option to provide an e-mail address to be entered into a draw to win a $50 iTunes gift card.

Materials

A short online survey was designed to assess council member’s and municipal staff’s awareness of Sustainable Severn Sound and priorities regarding sustainability (see Appendix A for the full survey). The survey consisted of nine closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions to allow for quantitative analysis to be supplemented with qualitative insights. Respondents were asked to rate their level of awareness and if they could identify their SSS representative. Furthermore, respondents were asked to rank priorities which were based on the 10 sustainability pillars identified by Sustainable Severn Sound based on importance and motivations for addressing sustainability. Respondents were then queried about the top motivations for addressing sustainability in their community. Further, to supplement our awareness measurements, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with SSS materials. Questions also determined how municipal partners perceive sustainability is integrated into their municipality and asked for examples of how sustainability is being integrated. Respondents were also asked to provide suggestions as to how SSS could further enhance engagement with municipal partners. The demographic questions determined whether the respondent was a municipal council member or staff member and the location of their municipality, as well as occupational focus of staff.

These insights will provide SSS with a better understanding of which type of engagement efforts could increase stakeholder support. The survey tool developed will be used to measure changing awareness and attitudes over time.

Procedure

A non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was used to recruit respondents. SSS obtained permission from the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) of the seven municipalities to conduct the survey with council members and municipal staff. The survey was administered internally by each municipality. Municipal office clerks from each municipality distributed the link via email to staff and council members.
Results

Overall, 61 municipal partners completed the entire survey; this included 10 council members and 51 municipal staff. However, in Section 1 of the analysis, incomplete responses from municipal partners were included in analysis, as the total number of responses on overall awareness of SSS and satisfaction with information provided greater insights as respondents with the higher levels of awareness were more likely to fill out the survey to completion. Therefore, in Section 1, when speaking to overall awareness and satisfaction, total number of responses from municipal partners is n=85. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was not conducted based on department or occupational focus, and comparisons were not made across municipalities since the distribution across the various departments and locations could potentially compromise anonymity of respondents.

Section 1. Local Government Awareness of SSS and Sustainability

Overall, respondents tend to be aware of SSS, with only 10 respondents out of 85 (11.7%) reporting they are not at all aware. However, few municipal partners are very familiar with SSS initiatives, with only 16 respondents (18.8%) indicating that they are very much aware of the work being done by SSS (see Figure 1).

In addition, it appears that council members tend to have a greater awareness of SSS than municipal staff members, with 7 out of 10 (70%) indicating that they are very much aware of SSS (see Figure 2).

Municipal partner awareness of SSS

Figure 1. This graph illustrates overall awareness of SSS based on the responses from municipal partners (n=85) within the Severn Sound Watershed.

Figure 2. This graph illustrates municipal council member and staff member awareness of SSS based on the responses from municipal partners (n=61) within the Severn Sound Watershed.
Furthermore, 31 out of 69 respondents (45%) could not identify their SSS representative (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3. This pie chart illustrates the response rate for those municipal partners who stated that they could or could not identify their SSS representative, n=69.](image)

However, all council members indicate that they know who their representative, whereas municipal staff members are more divided. All of the council members correctly identified their representative. Out of the 24 municipal staff members who said that they could identify their representative five (20.8%) were incorrect (see Figure 4).

![Figure 4. This graph illustrates the accuracy for those municipal partners who stated that they could or could not identify their SSS representative, n=34.](image)

When asked about satisfaction with SSS materials, 13 out of 70 respondents reported never viewing SSS materials (18.5%). 28 respondents were neutral (40%) and similarly, 19 municipal partners stated they were and 10 were very satisfied (41.4%) with information provided by SSS (see Figure 5).

![Overall satisfaction with information provided by SSS](image)

Furthermore, a crosstab was created to compare municipal partners’ awareness of SSS and their satisfaction with SSS materials. Overall, respondents who are very much aware tend to be satisfied or very satisfied with information provided by SSS and those who are neutral or had never seen SSS materials were slightly or somewhat aware (see Table 1).

![Table 1](image)
As illustrated in Figure 6, respondents tended to agree (58%) that sustainability is integrated in their municipalities, and 55 out of the 62 respondents (88%) provided examples of how sustainability is being integrated in their communities. Some examples that municipal partners provided tended to fall into three themes. The most cited example of how sustainability is integrated into municipalities is water protection (22 mentions): either protecting local water sources and shorelines or wastewater treatments and sewage. Similarly, there were 5 mentions of being a “blue community” (see Appendix B for full responses). The Blue Communities Project encourages municipalities to adopt a water commons framework which includes three steps: Recognizing water and sanitation as human rights, banning or phasing out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events and by promoting publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services (The Councils of Canadians, 2016). Thus, blue community comments were coded under the theme water protection. The townships of Tiny and Tay are members of the Blue Communities Project (Patterson, 2014 and Township of Tiny, n.d.). Other common examples of how sustainability is being integrated included waste management (11 mentions), energy efficiency and renewables (10 mentions), and transit planning (10 mentions). In addition, many respondents suggested that sustainability is a core part of their overall municipal planning. Examples of responses on municipal planning included long term planning and asset planning (13 mentions).

### Agreement with level of integration of sustainability in municipalities

Figure 6. This graph illustrates municipal partners’ agreement with the level of integration of sustainability within their municipality, n = 62.

## Section 2. Graphs of Ranking the Priorities and Motives

Municipal partners were asked to rank environmental priorities for their municipalities from a list of the 10 core sustainability issues based on Roseland (2012) that can impact municipalities described above in the background section (n = 65). Council members and municipal staff tended to identify climate change (n = 15) and community economic development (n = 15) as the number one most important sustainability issues facing their
communities. Overall, the top five priorities were energy efficiency and renewables (n=44), waste reduction and recycling (n=44) which were mentioned the most frequently in the top five priorities. However, these two are not frequently cited as the top 1 and the top 2 priority (see Figure 7). Land use, urban form, and community design (n=42) was ranked overall as third top priority, community economic development (n=41) was fourth, and tied for fifth were housing and community development (n=36) and water and sewage (n=36). Further, when municipal partners were asked to provide examples of how sustainability was integrated in their municipality, they tended to list protection of their water supply (n=22), waste management (n=11), and public transit (n=10).

Environmental threats tended to be the top motivation to address sustainability in their communities with 40 out of 64 (62.5%) of municipal partners ranking this the top motivation for addressing sustainability within their municipalities and 58 out of 64 (90.6%) of respondents ranked environmental threats in the top 3 motivations for addressing sustainability. Cost savings were the second most important motivation for addressing sustainability in this study, with 12 out of 64 (18.7%) respondents ranking it as top priority and 21 out of 64 respondents ranking it as top 2 priority (32.8%) with 79.6 percent of municipal partners overall ranking it amongst the top 3. Government regulation was the third most important factor motivating municipalities to address sustainability with 65.6 percent of municipal partners ranking it amongst the top 3 motivations (see Figure 8).
Section 3. Respondent’s suggestions for SSS to further engagement

In order to analyze the open ended comments regarding suggestions for how SSS can further enhance engagement with municipal partners, responses were coded into 6 main themes (see Figure 9 and Appendix C for full responses). The themes which were identified included communication, awareness, engagement, education, events, and involvement (and other).

The themes of communication (mentioned 16 times) and awareness (mentioned 9 times) were the most likely to be brought up by respondents. Multiple municipal partners suggested that different public and private events would be beneficial to enhance engagement. Some example responses include “Green drinks events”, “Outdoor/Indoor speaker series for residents”, “host guest speakers like the invasive species program”, and “more events for only politicians and municipal staff” (Municipal council member and staff, personal communication, July 2016). Furthermore, when asked to provide additional comments to SSS some municipal partners again suggested more communication with municipalities and communities (2 mentions) as well as increase promotional activities of Sustainable Severn Sound would be beneficial. Other municipal partners indicated that Sustainable Severn Sound is doing “good/great work” (5 mentions), contributing positively to the community and their “effort is appreciated” (2 mentions) (Municipal council member and staff, personal communication, July 2016).
Objective 1: Understand best practices for measuring and changing stakeholder attitudes over time

The key to understanding stakeholder attitudes is to determine their engagement levels (ASTSWMO Board of Directors, 2011; OECD, 2015). The findings from the literature review suggest that stakeholder engagement is key to implementing effective sustainable initiatives (ASTSWMO Board of Directors, 2011) which can be used as assessing best practices. It is the key stakeholders who help to raise awareness within the community (OECD, 2015). Studies suggest by keeping stakeholders informed regarding research and project initiatives (OECD, 2015) and obtaining suggestions regarding initiatives (Golder Associates, 2014) helps to improve engagement. Golder Associates (2014) stated that creating a project website was the best way to do both. The survey findings regarding how to enhance engagement with municipal partners align with previous research which emphasizes the importance of communication and awareness with municipal partners and the community.

Furthermore, when municipal partners were asked for suggestions on how SSS could enhance engagement with municipal partners, they recommended increasing communication and awareness. To do this, SSS could hold events and continue with speaker series to inform the community of their initiatives. It is clear that SSS is on track with encouraging stakeholder engagement with municipal partners with the plans of launching their new website within the next couple of months. By continuing to conduct this online survey in the future SSS can measure and assess changes in stakeholder attitudes over time.

Objective 2: Measure perceptions of municipal council members and staff towards sustainability and SSS project initiatives

When municipal partners were asked to self-report their level of awareness of SSS and its initiatives, the findings suggest that municipal council members tend to be more aware of SSS and its initiatives compared to municipal staff members. Similarly, when asked whether municipal partners knew who their SSS representative was and to name that representative, the council members had no issues accurately identifying their SSS representative. Conversely, municipal staff members demonstrate a lack of knowledge regarding their SSS representative and some respondents mistakenly identified individuals as their SSS representative. These findings suggest that there is a lack of awareness and gaps in knowledge regarding SSS representatives among municipal staff members. Therefore, efforts should be put in
place in order to promote and enhance awareness with these specific municipal partners.

In order to assess if awareness was impacted by the materials provided by SSS, municipal partners were asked to self-report their level of satisfaction with the materials. The findings suggest that those who stated they were aware or very much aware with SSS and its initiatives also tended to be satisfied or very satisfied with the materials. Conversely, those who were somewhat or slightly aware tended to report neutral feelings toward the materials or reported never received/viewed SSS information.

When municipal partners were asked about their level of agreement with how sustainability is integrated within their municipality, respondents tended to agree. The majority of respondents were able to provide examples of how sustainability is integrated in their municipality. This high level of agreement paired with suggestions of integration indicates that municipal partners are aware of sustainable initiatives occurring at the local government level.

Objective 3: Discern municipal priorities and factors motivating municipalities to address sustainable issues

Municipal partners were asked to rank the 10 pillars of sustainability in regards to importance in order to gauge their priorities. The number one ranked priorities were climate change and community economic development. Interestingly, since they were asked to rank the top five, in terms of overall frequency, the results change. Energy efficiency and renewables, and waste reduction and recycling were the overall top two priorities. Therefore, it is suggested that energy efficiency and waste reduction and recycling are top of mind for municipalities, however, they are not the topmost priorities.

Municipal partners were asked to rank three out of the six reasons for addressing sustainability in order to gauge motivations at the municipal level. The findings suggest that municipal partners tend to view environmental threats as the top motivation for addressing sustainability in their municipalities followed by cost savings and government regulation. This finding is contrary to secondary research findings that suggests the main reason local governments are often motivated to act on sustainability is due to the possible economic benefits such as cost savings (Daley et al., 2013). The Severn Sound Watershed is under pressure from rapid growth which is threatening the environment by contributing to land use change, increase resource consumption and as a result is placing a greater impact on the environment (Sustainable Severn Sound, 2009). 64.6 percent of municipal partners chose land-use, urban form and community design amongst the top 5 priorities for addressing sustainability. Additionally, water quality and source water in the Severn Sound Watershed is under pressure from human activities and some precautions have been taken to protect water resources such as lakes, rivers and groundwater from contamination or overuse (Severn Sound Environmental Association, 2010). Water protection and conservation was the most common theme that emerged when asking municipal partners how sustainability is integrated in their municipalities and 55 percent of municipal partners chose water and sewage as a municipal priority for their communities. However, future research may want to probe deeper to better understand what municipal partners perceive as environmental threats impacting their local municipalities.
Limitations

The research conducted is exploratory in nature, and the results present findings from a small portion of the population. Therefore, results cannot be generalized to the entire population of this study; rather, they highlight how respondents tend to view sustainability and SSS and will provide SSS with a baseline understanding of stakeholder attitudes. The limitations of this study are as follows:

The online survey is composed of predominantly closed-ended questions, and qualitative research is limited to a few open-ended questions in the survey. Future research may wish to include in-depth interviews, in order to gain deeper insights into municipal priorities. This may be particularly effective in understanding awareness and attitudes of municipal council members as a greater sense of their municipal priorities towards sustainability can be obtained.

An online survey was conducted in order to reach municipal council and staff members in the seven municipalities in the Severn Sound Watershed. This method was seen as the most effective means of reaching these municipal partners in many different locations. In addition, given that many staff members work in the field, for example, parks and recreation staff, an online survey allowed everyone to be contacted. However, the survey did have a low response rate, with certain municipalities being much more responsive than others. Future research should revisit how to best communicate with municipal staff to encourage participation in the survey. Moreover, given that the survey was distributed in the summer months, from July 15-29th, 2016, there is the limitation that municipal partners may have been away on holidays.

In addition, this survey focuses on identifying municipal priorities for addressing sustainability and addresses factors motivating action on sustainability, however, in the future it may be difficult to attribute changes in awareness toward sustainability specifically to outreach initiatives done by SSS. Therefore, it is suggested that future surveys include more open ended questions aimed at assessing municipal partners’ perceptions of initiatives in order to better understand those perceptions and reasons behind changes in attitudes in order to limit the risk of confounding variables.

Finally, the research conducted focused on awareness and priorities towards sustainability at the municipal level. Future research could combine the insights gained in this study with the attitudes and awareness of community members to gain a more holistic understanding of awareness towards SSS initiatives and sustainable priorities in the Severn Sound Watershed.

Recommendations

Based on the perspectives shared by municipal partners, several recommendations have been made to improve municipal knowledge of SSS and to further promote the integration of sustainability principles within the partner municipalities. The findings of this survey provide a baseline understanding of municipal perspectives and will be used to effectively measure the impact of the Sustainable Action Plan (SAP) in the future. Therefore, some recommendations build off of the communication strategies of the SAP.
Section 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Increased Engagement with Municipal Staff

The findings from the survey suggest municipal council members tended to have higher levels of awareness towards sustainability, therefore, it is recommended that increased engagement efforts are targeted to municipal staff. However, given the small sample of council members surveyed, results surrounding awareness should be interpreted with caution and continuous engagement with these partners is also recommended. A key component of effective stakeholder engagement is continuous engagement (OECD, 2015). SSS is taking action to increase engagement with municipal partners, as key aspects of the SAP involve sharing information with project partners and delivering workshops and presentations with municipalities and their communities. The findings presented therefore serve to highlight the need for these communication methods to be implemented.

Email Sustainability Bulletin to Raise Awareness

The survey results suggest that not all municipal employees are receiving information about SSS. As part of the SAP, SSS has created a plan on sharing information effectively with municipal partners including monthly bulletins (SSS, n.d). One tactic to increase awareness of SSS among employees could be to send out the sustainability bulletins directly to municipal employees and by including information targeted to employees. In addition, SSS is planning a website redesign that will include case studies from specific municipalities; this information can be taken and formatted into the newsletter. Additionally, this bulletin could start including a short statement from a member on the steering committee explaining why this work was valuable. The email subject line to a municipality can emphasize when its local representative on the steering committee has written a statement. By creating content that is available in a short, easy to access format, knowledge levels will increase as it allows stakeholders to stay engaged with projects (Golder Associates, 2014).

Share Survey Findings with Municipalities

It is recommended that the results of the baseline survey should be communicated back to municipal partners. It is suggested that effective stakeholder engagement involves keeping stakeholders informed about the results of studies in order to demonstrate to them the value that the project places upon their opinions (OECD, 2015, p. 23). By informing municipal partners of the results of the survey, they will keep these stakeholders engaged with SSS’ initiatives. As part of the SAP, SSS intends to continuously assess the status of the action plan and this includes distributing a sustainability report card. It is recommended that a part of the report card include a section on reporting municipal awareness as a way to keep municipalities accountable on issues of sustainability.

Increase Presence at Community Events

When municipal partners were asked for suggestions about how to further enhance engagement, they often suggested ways Sustainable Severn Sound could promote its work to the general public. Some examples included increased attendance at community events and the implementation of a speaker series. Sustainable Severn Sound currently attends community events and has had a speaker series, therefore, there is
evidence of the gap in awareness of SSS attendance at community events.

Highlight SSS’s Work on Respondents’ Top Priorities and Motivations

Municipal partners indicated that their overall top 5 priorities were Energy Efficiency and Renewables, Waste Reduction and Recycling, Land Use Urban Form and Community Design, Community Economic Development, and Housing and Community Development and Water and Sewage. Highlighting these priorities during outreach efforts could catch the interest of municipal partners and increase retention of information regarding SSS’s work. However, attention should also be paid to the building blocks that are not a top priority to assess any gaps in knowledge or promote awareness around these environmental issues.

Section 2: Future Research

Future Research into Differences between Municipalities

Due to the low levels of responses among certain municipalities, analyzing differences among the municipalities was not completed in order to maintain anonymity of respondents. This would have been valuable information, as analyzing differences in awareness across different municipalities could be used to determine gaps in how information is disseminated. To obtain a higher response rate, it is recommended that the survey team acknowledge the risk of low response rate early on. In addition, the survey should be promoted to municipal partners ahead of distribution and that the benefits of participating in the survey be communicated to staff in order to obtain a higher response rate. Fryrear (2015) suggests emphasizing the benefit for participating in the survey whether it be for an incentive or how their information will help to improve and build on knowledge that directly relates to them. While online surveys run the risk of low response rate it is suggested that internal administration of surveys yields a higher response rates (~30-40%) versus external (~15-20%) (Fryrear, 2015). Therefore, it is recommended that future surveys should continue to be administered internally.

Conduct In-depth Interviews with Municipal Staff

In order to obtain greater insights into motivations for addressing sustainability it is recommended that future research include in-depth interviews with municipal council members. Municipal council member can act as key informants on issues of sustainability as they have firsthand knowledge of the community and in-depth interviews and will allow SSS to better understand municipal priorities regarding sustainability initiatives (Frechtling & Sharp, 1997). Perhaps, in-depth interviews could be conducted with one council member and one municipal staff member from each of the municipalities to try and gain deeper insights into sustainability within their municipality. Interview questions could assess what is working and what is not working when it comes to implementation of sustainability practices.

Consider Timing of Survey Deployment

Finally, after the new SSS website is launched, it is recommended that the next round of surveys not be sent to municipal partners during peak holiday times. SSS could coordinate with municipal clerks and CAO’s to determine an
appropriate time of year to reach a larger portion of the population.

**Conclusion**

The findings presented provide a baseline understanding of municipal partners’ awareness of Sustainable Severn Sound and identifies municipal priorities and motivations. The results suggest a need for increased engagement within the municipalities. SSS’s Sustainability Action Plan (SAP), taking place from 2016 to 2018, outlines many steps to engage municipalities and this baseline survey will therefore be a useful instrument for tracking changes over the next three years. To take full advantage of the opportunity future surveys will provide for measuring progress, the next iterations of the survey should be completed at a time of year when fewer staff members will be away on vacation.

The results suggest that council members tend to be more aware of SSS than municipal staff. However, given the small sample size it is recommended to focus engagement efforts on all municipal partners. Municipal partners who have viewed communication materials from SSS tend to be satisfied with the materials. However, given there is a large portion of staff who are not very aware of SSS, or have not viewed materials there is an opportunity to re-evaluate how materials are being disseminated to municipal partners. Effective stakeholder engagement requires continuous engagement and municipal partners identified the need to for SSS to increase communication and awareness with municipalities and their communities. In addition, these findings suggest that municipal partners tend to be motivated to address sustainability due to environmental threats and tend to view climate change and community economic development as an important priority regarding sustainability.

Overall, results from this study, paired with continuous investigation into stakeholder awareness and attitudes will foster a sense of sustainability within local municipalities and will result in municipal partners working together to achieve sustainability goals.
References


Appendix A
Sustainable Severn Sound Survey Guide

Recruitment Plan

A non-probabilistic convenience sampling method will be used to recruit respondents. SSS has obtained permission from the seven municipalities to conduct the survey with council members and municipal staff. A member of the research team or a SSS representative will attend the council meetings to administer the survey in person. An email link will be sent to those who are not present at the council meetings. Municipal staff will be contacted via email, through an email list provided by the municipalities to SSS. The total number of municipal staff members on the distribution list is n=230 and the total number of council representatives is n=51. An even distribution of respondents from each municipality will be obtained to ensure our data is a representative of the municipal council members and staff population.

Recruitment Script

We are students in the Research Analyst Program at Georgian College and are completing a project for Sustainable Severn Sound. We are interested in the attitudes, opinions, and awareness of municipal and council members in regards to sustainability and the Sustainable Severn Sound strategic plan. Your responses will help to inform strategies and improve partner support of sustainable practices and techniques. We have approximately eight survey questions and the survey should not take longer than 5-10 minutes. All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you have the right to refuse to answer. Thank you for participating in our interview and we truly appreciate your time!
Informed Consent

Letter of Consent

Baseline survey of municipal attitudes and opinions towards sustainability in the Severn Sound watershed

Before agreeing to participate in this research, we strongly encourage you to read the following explanation of this study. This statement describes the purpose and procedures of the study. Please note that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this project is to understand the attitudes, opinions, and awareness of municipal and council members in regards to sustainability and the SSS plan.
- This is a baseline study that will be used to measure how attitudes towards sustainability and Sustainable Severn Sound (SSS) initiatives change over time.

Risks and Discomforts

- There are no perceived risks or discomforts from your participation in the study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

- Your responses will be anonymous and confidential. The data collected will be stored on secure servers within Canada and will only be accessible to this Sustainable Severn Sound research team. Aggregate data from the surveys will be shared with Tracy Roxborough, an SSS representative, and may also be made available during council updates or in a final report that may be shared with the public.

Withdrawal without Prejudice

- Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty for refusal to participate. You can withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions we may ask you. However, once your responses have been submitted, it will no longer be possible to withdraw as thereafter the research team will not be able to distinguish one anonymous response from another.

Queries

- If you have any queries, doubts, or questions about this study, please contact:

Richard Rinaldo (Georgian REB Chair) or Julie McClement (Principal Investigator)
Email: richard.rinaldo@georgiancollege.ca Email: Julie.McClement@MyGeorgian.ca

If you choose to participate, please select the box below

☐ I have read the above and agree to participate in the study

Thank you for your time and effort. We appreciate your participation.

______________________________  __/__/2016
Signature                 Date
Splash Page
Welcome! You are invited to participate in our survey.

We are students in the Research Analyst Program at Georgian College completing a project on behalf of Sustainable Severn Sound. We are interested in the attitudes, opinions, and awareness that council members and municipal staff hold towards sustainability and the Sustainable Severn Sound strategic plan. Your responses will help to inform strategies and improve partner support of sustainable practices and techniques.

There are approximately 11 questions. The survey should not take longer than 5 minutes.

Please note: All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Your participation is completely voluntary. If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you have the right to withdraw without any penalty. You can exit the survey at any given time by simply closing the browser.

If you are a staff member, you are eligible to be entered into a draw to win a $50 I-Tunes gift card if you enter your contact information at the end of the survey. This contact information will not be used for any purpose other than contacting the winner. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project.

If you have any questions about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Julie McClement (Principal Investigator) by email at Julie.McClement@MyGeorgian.ca or by phone at 416-617-7658.

Thank you for participating in our survey and we truly appreciate your time!
By clicking next you accept the terms stated above.

The following questions are about Sustainable Severn Sound!

1.) Are you aware of the Sustainable Severn Sound initiative and its objectives?
   (If not at all, skip to question 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all aware</th>
<th>Slightly aware</th>
<th>Somewhat aware</th>
<th>Moderately aware</th>
<th>Very Much aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.) Each municipality part of the Sustainable Severn Sound initiative designates a representative to the Sustainability Plan Steering Committee. Can you identify your representative?

- Yes ____________ (Please specify)
- No
- Don’t Know/ Prefer not to say

3.) How satisfied are you with the information provided by SSS (events, newsletters, and website)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Never received/viewed SSS information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By clicking next you accept the terms stated above.
The following questions are about sustainability in your municipality.

4.) The following list contains 10 core sustainability issues that can impact municipalities and their communities. Please rank the following topics from in order of importance for your municipality by dragging items to the right or double clicking on the blue arrows. Choose at least 5, with 1 being the most important issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Economic Development</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency and Renewables</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Building</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greener, Food-secure Communities</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Community Development</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use, Urban Form and Community Design</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Planning and Traffic Management</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Reduction and Recycling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewage</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Prefer not to say</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.) The following list contains 6 possible reasons for addressing sustainability at the municipal level. Please rank the following reasons by moving items to the right or double clicking on the blue arrows. Choose at least 3 reasons, with 1 being the top reason for addressing sustainability for your municipality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Savings</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from the community</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Regulation</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Threats (climate change, waste management, water quality, etc.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure From Outside Groups</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.) Do you feel that sustainability is integrated in your municipality?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
7.) Can you provide examples of how sustainability is integrated into your municipality? (*Open-ended and required*)

8.) Do you have any suggestions for how SSS could further enhance the engagement of municipal partners? (*Open-ended and required*)

Almost done! Now we will ask you a few questions about yourself. Please remember that responses are anonymous.

9.) Which best describes your position:
   1) Municipal staff member
   2) Council member

10.) *(If response to Q9 was Municipal staff member)* What municipality are you currently employed by?

   - Town of Midland
   - Town Penetanguishene
   - Township of Georgian Bay
   - Township of Tiny
   - Township of Tay
   - Township of Severn
   - Township of Oro-Medonte

10.) *(If response to Q9 was Council member)* What municipality do you currently represent?

   - Town of Midland
   - Town Penetanguishene
   - Township of Georgian Bay
   - Township of Tiny
   - Township of Tay
   - Township of Severn
   - Township of Oro-Medonte

11.) *(Continuing questions for Municipal staff member)* What is your department or occupational focus?

   1) Administration
   2) Economic Development
   3) Planning
   4) Recreation and/or Parks
   5) Finance
   6) Communications and/or Marketing
   7) Engineering
   8) Public Works
   9) Community Engagement and/or Outreach
   10) Community Services
   11) Water and/or Wastewater
   12) Waste Management
   13) Other (Please specify)
   14) Prefer not to say
12). *(Only for municipal staff)* If you would like to be entered in the draw to win a $50 iTunes card please enter your email address below.

Participation in the draw is completely voluntary and your contact information will not be used for any other purpose than contacting the winner of the gift card.

Your contact information will not be used to identify survey responses in any way.

There is one iTunes card available and the odds of winning are contingent on how many people participate in the survey and enter the draw.

E-mail: 

*(Check box)* I do not want to participate in the draw

**Thank you for participating in our survey! You've reached the last question.**

13.) Do you have any other comments that you would like to share with Sustainable Severn Sound?
# Appendix B

## Transcript of Open Ended Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UserID</th>
<th>Can you provide examples of how sustainability is integrated into your municipality?</th>
<th>Do you have any suggestions for how SSS could further enhance the engagement of municipal partners?</th>
<th>Do you have any other comments that you would like to share with Sustainable Severn Sound?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>169</td>
<td>protection of shorelines and animals such as turtles</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>In compliance with Provincial directive, we have created an asset management plan. We now have a Fire Master Plan and are looking at a Master Plan for our waterfronts and parks. We are engaged in creating Seniors affordable housing and access to public transportation</td>
<td>We need a plan for extreme weather conditions and reduced access to water</td>
<td>Think SSS has contributed a great deal to our awareness and engagement in considering sustainability. Think Tracy is doing a great job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166</td>
<td>Regular updates on our water course by Sustainable Severn Sound Group. SPMIF funding and water course projects, including sewage inspections and high risk properties inspections and plans to ensure watercourse is protected.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>Implemented economic development group to ensure long term success Use of asset planning to manage municipal investment Improved environmental discipline in planning neighbourhoods</td>
<td>More communication More practical success stories One step at a time</td>
<td>Thank you for asking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>keeping our water, streams, rivers and shorelines clean and healthy</td>
<td>I'm not sure here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>In my experience, sustainability is a key consideration in assessing the acceptability of every development proposal in our municipality.</td>
<td>Find a way to be top of mind for those who are not regularly involved planning/development decisions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>Energy Plan, Land use planning, parks management, asset management planning.</td>
<td>Open house/idea brainstorming session Environmental charrette.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>energy planning</td>
<td>invite the public to attend some of the sessions to help build public support for the staff and Council to take on more sustainable activities awards to recognize good sustainable initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>review of pillar in staff reports and comments on how or how not a development conforms to SSS.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>We have a lot of home grown fruits and vegetables in our community. Also some butchers only sell local meats from farmers.</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>By offering different education opportunities and we review our reports and recommendations against the sustainability plan</td>
<td>More events for only politicians and municipal staff Nope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>Strategic Plan pillar: Environment To be a community that protects, supports and enhances our natural heritage and environmental assets.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Water supply carefully monitored. Waste water plant very advance &amp; extreme efforts to perfect, Waste management large priority. Homelessness being</td>
<td>Aggressive education based presentations to council, showing potential improvements in areas (one area per presentation) along with perceived and potential improvement being sought. Repeat Good work currently being done. Appreciate to efforts being put in. But do feel that there is a disconnect with council... Most are unsure and consider SSS &amp; SSEA to be the same. Thus more face to face with council would be important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Our Council is very conscious of the importance of sustainability in all sectors, and we continue our knowledge and ability by being part of groups like Sustainable Severn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Our membership in Sustainable Severn as well as other groups who strive to make our respective communities a healthy environmental friendly place to live and raise our families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>community garden, LED lighting, solar powered water dispenser, power interruption grid, water restrictions,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>LED streetlights for whole system - use of minimum fuel consumption standard for new vehicles for inspectors - energy efficiency efforts for municipal buildings - promotion of active transportation, esp. cycling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Blue Community Fill Bylaw Working towards better septage management Source Water Protection Provide information that can be distributed to residents through handouts and workshops. Do not necessarily target those that are already engaged in sustainability.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>It is not. located in outdated, inefficient facilities. Our policies and procedures do not support or address sustainability.</td>
<td>Municipalities as a group should set priorities along with targets and timelines. Use peer pressure among each other to reach goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Source water protection.</td>
<td>Specific projects and information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>waste management program, seedling program</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Various Environmental Programs Blue Community</td>
<td>focus on education and communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>I can't.</td>
<td>Involve all staff, not just at a Council or Department Head level so we are aware of what's happening / being proposed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Keeping farmland as green land, water conservation.</td>
<td>Make the community more aware of the organization and its vision. I have only heard of sustainable severn sound in passing. I believe more community members would be engaged if it was promoted more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>recycling, community garden</td>
<td>ensure your program reaches households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Blue box recycle program, green box, drive clean.</td>
<td>Reach out to community, go to the schools all students need volunteer hours. Host more programs/guest speakers. Like the invasive species program! invite Landscape companies, parks and other grounds maintenance staff to information sessions, continue with your community event presence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Clean up of the phragmities Sustainability of the piping plover</td>
<td>Unsure More awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Septic reinspection program</td>
<td>An award program...Thank you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Blue Community&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>recycling, land use, green areas</td>
<td>sharing resources,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Provide more information and be more involved within the municipalities itself. No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>THROUGH BULLITENS</td>
<td>CREATE PROGRAM FOR INCLUSIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Town has an Energy Management Plan</td>
<td>Tough - limited resources and multiple partners The challenges are great, progress is slow, but the effort is appreciated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>they build new roads to keep people moving and for new homes to be built to keep people working in the township that keeps more money in the township ask for town peoples input</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Nope</td>
<td>Nope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Water &amp; Wastewater Lifecycle Plan Energy efficiency projects Recycling community increased communications (email regular newsletter) no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Low Impact Development in storm water management planning, sustainability plan goals in staff reports to Council/committees, Council's Strategic Priorities include a Healthy Sustainable Community, land use planning considers long-term impacts on environmental features, Source Protection Plans Face-to-face meetings/round table events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Transportation - Purchase of hybrid bus Organic Recycling - use of green bins Other than minutes provided from their meetings, our municipality has not been engaged. They should have quarterly newsletters that are sent out to all staff and partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>We conserve natural built heritage homes Implement heritage conservation guidelines We do provide some alternative housing types but need more... We provide a variety of structures recreational services and facilities that are accessible for all ages etc...</td>
<td>Try to engage the community and businesses more.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>We have recently constructed a new Sewage Treatment Plant to aid in the sustainability of our municipality. Other examples are the new transit system which lessens our carbon footprint, our facade improvement program for our downtown stores, our new Bayside Market which promotes local purchasing, our bike lanes, and our recreation programs to promote active lifestyles.</td>
<td>Unfortunately, no suggestions come to mind at the moment.</td>
<td>Keep up the good work! All of the ideas are great. In my opinion, I haven't heard too much about the SSEA initiatives unless I look it up myself. Perhaps it would be good to try and get the word out more by emailing your newsletters and events to all municipal staff of the municipalities engaged with the SSEA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Trying to make change re: Economic Development</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Community Gardens, Transit system, advanced technology for Water and Wastewater Systems.</td>
<td>Quarterly updates to municipal staff on the directions for SSS and accomplishments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Recycling, bus services to cut down on traffic and pollution</td>
<td>Was not aware of their newsletters, therefore, they need to be more visible in the community. Perhaps set up booths at community events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Through our planning department initiatives</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I think it is, but I am a not sure of certain examples off the top of my head.</td>
<td>not sure,</td>
<td>I think this is a great idea!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Partnership/Collaboration dealing with issues such as effective strategies for a healthy and sustainable watershed community. Provide information with respect to invasive plants - strategies how to work with them.</td>
<td>I think there should be more public awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Blue community initiative</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>address in each of our staff reports.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Septic Re-inspection Program, Geese Management</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>not really sure</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Municipality part of Source Protection Program and recently obtained a grant for phragmites removal program.</td>
<td>More regular project-specific reporting (i.e. update on Source Water)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Our township has programs in place to help property owners on the waterfront learn about how to sustainably manage their shoreline.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Blue Community, celebrate Earth Week to spread awareness etc.</td>
<td>Assist in funding projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>- we power off at night - we sort waste (organic, paper, plastic) - our strategic plan focuses on improving sustainability</td>
<td>Green Drinks events Outdoor / indoor speaker series for residents (municipalities work for tax payers, to make real change we have to influence the people who then influence the politicians) Children's Water Festivals - other areas have CA's doing these kinds of events to improve awareness in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>youth (who grow up be leaders), up here no one is more suited than SSS. Work with Foundations and Gov. Grants to provide financial assistance for sustainable initiatives at the municipal level 50:50 matches, get everyone on board, then go for the grant. i.e. paperless Council's (would require purchasing tablets), etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>LED streetlight implementation. Land use planning.</td>
<td>presentation to staff members for greater awareness of the initiatives by SSS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Street lighting changed to LED</td>
<td>launch of web site and in the fall a seminar to teach how townships can utilize</td>
<td>I like the direction the committee is going in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C
How to Enhance Engagement with Municipal Partners Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UserID</th>
<th>Do you have any suggestions for how SSS could further enhance the engagement of municipal partners?</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>WE need a plan for extreme weather conditions and reduced access to water.</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 165    | More communication  
More practical success stories  
One step at a time.                                             | Communication, Other |
| 163    | Find a way to be top of mind for those who are not regularly involved planning/development decisions. | Communication, involvement |
| 158    | Open house/idea brainstorming session  
Environmental charrette.                                      | education, other, events |
| 157    | invite the public to attend some of the sessions to help build public support for the staff and Council to take on more sustainable activities  
awards to recognize good sustainable initiatives. | engagement, involvement, other |
| 153    | More events for only politicians and municipal staff.                                             | events |
| 150    | Aggressive education based presentations to council, showing potential improvements in areas (one area per presentation) along with perceived and potential improvement being sought. Repeat presentation to general public. | communication, education |
| 147    | we are constantly dealing with issues that require solutions, part of our process is to engage with other groups who are likeminded and share ideas and solutions. | engagement, communication |
| 137    | continued public awareness booths at special events thru out the different municipalities.       | awareness, engagement |
| 135    | Provide information that can be distributed to residents through handouts and workshops. Do not necessarily target those that are already engaged in sustainability. | engagement, communication |
| 133    | Municipalities as a group should set priorities along with targets and timelines. Use peer pressure among each other to reach goals. | other |
| 121    | Specific projects and information.                                                               | other |
| 115    | focus on education and communication                                                             | communication, education |
| 108    | Involve all staff, not just at a Council or Department Head level so we are aware of what's happening / being proposed. | awareness, involvement |
| 105 | Make the community more aware of the organization and its vision. | awareness |
| 104 | ensure your program reaches households | awareness, communication |
| 102 | Reach out to community, go to the schools all students need volunteer hours. Host more programs/guest speakers. Like the invasive species program! invite Landscape companies, parks and other grounds maintenance staff to information sessions, continue with your community event presence. | awareness, education, events |
| 101 | More awareness | awareness |
| 100 | An award program | other |
| 98 | sharing resources, | other |
| 97 | Provide more information and be more involved within the municipalities itself. | communication, education |
| 87 | CREATE PROGRAM FOR INCLUSIONS | other |
| 85 | Tough - limited resources and multiple partners | other |
| 83 | ask for town peoples input | Communication, involvement |
| 80 | increased communications (email regular newsletter) | communication |
| 65 | Face-to-face meetings/round table events | communication, events |
| 63 | Other than minutes provided from their meetings, our municipality has not been engaged. They should have quarterly newsletters that are sent out to all staff and partners of their catchment area to provide updates. | engagement, communication |
| 60 | Try to engage the community and businesses more. | engagement |
| 52 | Quarterly updates to municipal staff on the directions for SSS and accomplishments. | communication |
| 50 | Was not aware of their newsletters, therefore, they need to be more visible in the community. Perhaps set up booths at community events. | awareness, communication |
| 46 | I think there should be more public awareness | awareness |
| 39 | More regular project-specific reporting (i.e. update on Source Water) | communication |
| 37 | Assist in funding projects | other |
| 36 | Green Drinks events  
Outdoor / indoor speaker series for residents (municipalities work for taxpayers, to make real change we have to influence the people who then influence the politicians)  
Children's Water Festivals - other areas have CA's doing these kinds of events to improve awareness in youth (who grow up be leaders), up here no one is more suited than SSS.  
Work with Foundations and Gov. Grants to provide financial assistance for sustainable initiatives at the municipal level 50:50 matches, get everyone on board, then go for the grant. i.e. paperless Council's (would require purchasing tablets), etc. | communication, education, events, other |
| 35 | presentation to staff members for greater awareness of the initiatives by SSS. | awareness |
| 34 | launch of web site and in the fall a seminar to teach how townships can utilize | education |