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STEERING COMMITTEE

Inaugural Meeting Report
September 29 – 30, 2008
Washington, DC



Center for American Progress



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The STAR Community Index is a partnership program initiated by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the U.S. Green Building Council and the Center for American Progress.

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INTRODUCTION

The STAR Community Index (STAR) is a new program of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) to develop a national, consensus-based rating system to improve livability and sustainability of U.S. communities. This initiative was established through a partnership between ICLEI, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the Center for American Progress (CAP). STAR is inspired by the success of the LEED Green Building Rating System™. In much the same way as LEED™ transformed the building industry, STAR will transform the way local governments set priorities and implement policies and practices to improve their sustainability performance.

The inaugural meeting of the STAR Steering Committee (Steering Committee) took place on September 29-30, 2008 in Washington D.C. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Approve the STAR concept and development plan, budget and schedule
- Agree upon governance protocols for decision-making
- Identify critical issues (or indicators) that will be addressed by STAR
- Discuss guiding principles for the selection of indicators
- Formulate an organizing structure for the system

The Steering Committee is comprised of the Founding Partners and elected officials and executive staff from a diverse group of 45 cities and counties, national associations, federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. A majority of the Steering Committee members are local government executives. The cities and counties represent diversity in size, region, and progress toward sustainability. The retreat was well attended, with 37 members represent, and 8 members unable to attend. The meeting was facilitated by the Meridian Institute.

This meeting summary provides the highlights of the information presented, topics discussed and decisions made over the course of the meeting.

STAR CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Program Briefing

Overview

Staff summarized the *STAR Community Index Development Plan*.

Across the U.S., many local governments have already developed sustainable community frameworks and others are beginning the process. This growing movement is a result of an imperative to address climate protection, promote sustainable development and enhance quality of life. There is also a growing understanding and acknowledgement of the benefits from investments in sustainability that are strengthening local economies, creating new jobs, improving the natural environment, restoring habitat, enhancing livability, and improving community health.

Unfortunately there is very little consistency in the structure, focus, and language of the existing frameworks, making it difficult to compare the progress of one locality to another. STAR will serve as an important and timely national program – providing standardized indicators and metrics that will make it

possible to compare progress from one locality to another, and to leverage change by sharing best practices, approaches, and lessons learned in a way that isn't possible with the current models.

This national program will allow local governments to affect change through a common agenda and broad-based consensus process. It will accelerate adoption of model policies and innovation and facilitate information sharing and opportunities for collaboration between municipalities.

STAR will also provide financial benefits to municipalities. Developing individual local sustainability frameworks requires a significant municipal investment in both staff and program resources. By establishing a national program that can be adopted at the local level, STAR will make it possible for municipalities to direct limited resources from program development and administration to the implementation of policies and best practices.

Stakeholder Engagement

STAR will be developed through a stakeholder engagement process that is open, consensus-based and led by volunteer committees. The Steering Committee will govern the development by providing strategic direction on issues that must be addressed in STAR, as well as direction on program scope, design and organizing structure.

Following the LEED model, Technical Advisory Committees (TACS) will be formed to develop the indicators and metrics that will comprise the STAR system. Indicators will cover a broad range of issues from those that municipalities are directly responsible for such as municipal operations and services, to issues they have influence over such as economic development, air quality and community health. Policies, best practices and performance-based metrics will be utilized in the rating system to influence public sector levers that drive change.

Corresponding Committees will be established to provide opportunities for all interested parties to review the progress of the development of STAR, submit questions and provide comments.

Program Management

STAR will be a program of ICLEI. ICLEI is accountable for the overall success of the program, and will manage the development and implementation process. ICLEI has conducted an assessment of capacity needs, established a two-year budget, and is leading efforts to secure funding. ICLEI will administer the program, develop tools, technical resources, educational curriculum and workshops, marketing and communications materials, and manage the certification process.

Budget and Schedule

STAR will be developed on an aggressive schedule over a 24 month period. To meet this goal a substantial investment will be needed – a total of \$4,500,000 over a two-year period – to build organizational and programmatic capacity. The two-year budget reflects a compressed development cycle, a robust stakeholder engagement process, and the costs for launching STAR as a program with a full suite of tools and resources that support local government adoption and implementation.

The staffing plan identifies the need to fill 12 full-time positions over the first 14 months. The budget reflects salaries, fringe and overhead and indirect costs. The first six positions are slated to be filled by January 2009. Two positions have been filled, the Program Director and Technical Development Manager. Four technical officers will be hired to support the volunteer Technical Advisory Committees. The technical officers will facilitate the work of the committee, conduct research and analysis, make recommendations, draft credit and measurement methodology language for review, gain review and comment from members, and maintain the development schedule. Staff will also manage consultants who will produce the STAR reference guide and technical resources.

The remaining staff positions will be filled mid-2009 to manage the development of program tools and resources, including: educational curriculum and workshop development; workshop coordination; branding, marketing and communications; information technology and development of web-based tool and peer-to-peer network; webmaster; government affairs liaison; and, administrative support. Consultants will meet some of the capacity needs. Many of these tools and resources will be developed by consultant under the direction of staff, and fees are identified as programmatic funding in the budget.

Two-Year Development Budget

Staffing Resources	\$ 1,662,892	35%
Program Tools & Resources: Consultant Fees	\$ 1,613,500	36%
Indirect Costs	\$ 675,865	15%
Steering Committee	\$ 140,050	3%
Technical Committees	\$ 443,400	10%
TOTAL	\$ 4,535,707	100%

Business Model

The budget does not reflect revenues generated from the STAR program. A business model will be developed in 2nd Quarter 2009. Staff will identify sources of revenues generated through the sale of tools, resources, fees, and educational programs. A primary objective is to reach financial self-sufficiency within one year of program launch.

Fundraising Strategy

To move quickly, ICLEI initiated a two-pronged fundraising strategy: 1) raise immediate funding through sponsorships to carry the program into the first Quarter of 2009; and, 2) solicit grants from federal agencies and foundations to cover 80% of the development cost. Requests for sponsorship funding will be directed to key stakeholders, including: cities and counties, state and federal agencies, and national associations and non-profit organizations. ICLEI has raised \$175,000 in sponsorship to date. However, an additional \$325,000 must be committed by October 31, 2008 to meet the next milestone – hosting the Technical Advisory Committee retreats in January 2009.

Early Program Sponsors

Silver Sponsors

The Johnson Foundation

Bronze Sponsors

American Institute of Architects

City of Seattle, WA

National League of Cities

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Steering Committee Discussion

Steering Committee members shared their vision for STAR. Members also identified specific issues and challenges that need further discussion to refine the programs scope, design, and function. The following common themes emerged:

Shared Vision

- Create a **leadership** program that challenges municipalities at the leading edge of progress and encourages healthy competition between leadership communities.

- Develop a voluntary rating system to assist municipalities with meeting their sustainability priorities by providing a tool that **benchmarks performance** and encourages continuous improvement over time and as compared to other localities.
- Design with **flexibility** to accommodate existing municipal sustainability frameworks.
- Identify **key priorities** to address in STAR through a consensus process. Priorities will **facilitate decision-making** by local government officials.
- Create an **inclusive** program that serves as a learning tool and allows access to all municipalities – from rural to urban, small to large populations, and diverse geographic locations. Offer guidance to support municipalities that have limited capacity or are beginning their journey toward sustainability so they too can begin to affect change in their communities.
- Serves to **educate** and encourages information sharing and learning among peers, and to a broader audience through communications and outreach. Catalyze change by defining sustainable communities and clarifying key priorities through the development of indicators.
- **Collaborate** to reduce the total investment made by local governments to develop and administer sustainable community programs, allowing more resources to be invested toward policies and practices that create more livable communities.
- Design a **dynamic** system that evolves over time as we learn from the program and each other.
- Find the right **balance** between simplicity and rigor. Consider how to meet competing objectives from cost-effectiveness and adaptability to comprehensive and scientific rigor and validity.
- Recognize the inherent localness of sustainability, reward **innovation** in government policies and practices and the unique individual strengths of localities.
- Develop an operational strategy and financial model that leads to **financial self-sufficiency**.

Issues and Challenges

A number of issues and challenges were raised. Deliberation on these topics occurred throughout the event. They are discussed in more detail in report section “Program Scope, Structure and Design”. The questions raised include:

- Who is the primary audience for STAR?
- What other perspectives and stakeholders need to be involved in the design process?
- What is the appropriate geopolitical scale for STAR? Will STAR be applicable to a metropolitan planning region in addition to a municipality?
- Will non-municipal entities be able to apply for STAR certification for their community?
- How can STAR be designed to address any perceived risks from elected officials such that the system celebrates and recognizes progress, while at the same time establishing a system that allows for the comparison of progress of one locality to another?
- How can STAR be designed to challenge participants at all levels of achievement and encourage continuous improvement over time?
- What type of rating will both encourage participation and communicate achievements most effectively (e.g., an absolute score, color or descriptive term)?
- Will there be prerequisite requirements for participation?
- What is the right emphasis on sustainable versus green?
- Will ICLEI demonstrate that STAR is cost-effective to adopt and implement, and can the design allow for integration with existing municipal systems and lines of responsibility?
- Is third-party certification necessary or is there an alternative validation process that may be more cost effective?

Outcome

1. *Conceptual agreement on the program purpose, process, schedule and budget as presented in the Concept Development Plan.*
2. *The Steering Committee will discuss program scope, structure and design in more detail to gain a consensus on these issues.*

GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

Governance

STAR will be developed as a national, consensus-based system that is developed through a stakeholder engagement process. The governance structure is comprised of:

1. Steering Committee to govern and provide direction and oversight;
2. Executive Committee to preside over Steering Committee meetings, facilitate decision-making between meetings, and in emergencies make decisions on behalf of the Steering Committee;
3. Technical Advisory Committees to indicators and metrics; and
4. Corresponding Committees comprised of parties interested in following progress.

Role of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will serve as the governing body responsible for guiding the development of the STAR Community Index, and will:

- Confirm program goals and objectives and approve concept and development plan.
- Provide strategic direction.
- Identify government priorities and issues to be address within STAR.
- Create a set of principles to guide selection of indicators.
- Construct an overarching structure to enable categorization of issues and indicators.
- Oversee development of the STAR system and program.
- Encourage adoption of STAR within respective communities.

Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee is to help the Steering Committee accomplish its work efficiently by facilitating decision-making and acting on behalf of the Steering Committee between meetings and in urgent circumstances. The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Founding Partners, Platinum Partners, and four members elected by the Steering Committee. Three of the four elected seats shall be filled by local government representatives. Executive Committee members will elect its Officers. The Executive Committee will:

- Preside over Steering Committee meetings.

- Appoint committee chairs and members as necessary and delegate committee activities.
- Appoint members to fill other positions, such as ad hoc task force leaders, with Steering Committee approval.
- Assist Program Director in establishing agendas for Steering Committee meetings.
- Assist in program planning, monitor progress towards goals and evaluate performance.
- Prepare and furnish Executive Committee minutes to the Steering Committee in a timely manner.

Members supported the governance structure led by volunteer committees and agreed with the recommendation to establish an Executive Committee with the majority of the elected seats filled by local government representatives. Volunteers for serving on the Executive Committee were solicited and elections were held on Day Two. (Elections results listed in adjacent sidebar.)

Decision-Making

The Meridian Institute proposed a collaborative and consensus-based decision making process as outlined in the *Decision Making Guidelines*. This model ensures that decisions and outcomes are widely supported and represent a broad range of interests, ideas and knowledge. The following principles characterize the nature of the process:

- **Inclusive:** Open, interdisciplinary participation to build understanding and shared commitments.
- **Consensus-based:** All perspectives are considered and agreement is reached that all participants can support or “live with it” to enable the group to move forward.
- **Deliberative:** Utilize knowledge, representation, accountability and commitment to work toward consensus.
- **Facilitated:** Guide the discussions in a balanced and fair manner to help develop consensus through a respectful dialogue, keep the group focused to meet agreed upon objectives.

Through discussion of the consensus-based decision making process, members confirmed wide support for an inclusive, open and broadly representative process. Members emphasized a need for efficient decision making, and members discussed concern that a consensus process can be inefficient as it can encourage repetitive and unconstructive deliberation if not well facilitated. To address this concern, members recommended a norm for group discipline and tools for moving deliberation toward decision within the consensus-based framework.

Outcome

1. *Agreement on a tiered governance structure of volunteer committees and staff, and the role and structure of the Steering Committee and Executive Committee.*
2. *Election of Executive Committee members.*
3. *Adoption of a collaborative and consensus-based decision-making process.*

Elected Executive Committee Members & Officers

Sadhu Johnston, **Chair**
Chief Environmental Officer, Chicago, IL

Shannon Parry, **Vice-chair**
Sustainable City Coordinator, Santa Monica

Ken Rosenfeld, **Treasurer**
Policy Director, National League of Cities

John Coleman, **Governance Officer**
Sustainability Officer, Fayetteville, AR

Lynne Barker, Founding Partner
Program Director, ICLEI

Jason Hartke, Founding Partner
Director Advocacy & Public Policy, USGBC

Bracken Hendricks, Founding Partner
Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Summary of Existing Frameworks

Staff presented the findings of research conducted to analyze existing frameworks reported in a study, *A Comparative Analysis of Sustainable Community Frameworks*, distributed to Steering Committee members as background material for discussions on priorities, design and structure of STAR. The study concluded:

Sustainable community frameworks attempt to give form and direction to the environmental, social, and economic activities of a locality. Across the nation and around the world, communities are beginning to take on the task of both defining sustainability and identifying the requisite actions needed to get them there. In the absence of a national framework to reference, the landscape of sustainable community frameworks in use is hugely variable.

A review of more than 30 local frameworks highlighted the vast diversity in the structures and focus of existing local frameworks. This diversity makes it difficult to compare the progress of one locality to another and reduces the opportunity to share lessons learned. The study further illustrated that existing frameworks contain commonalities in the use of themes and terms, however these themes and terms do not share common definitions. The lack of a common reference can lead to confusion and lost opportunities for collaboration to accelerate change.

A national, consensus-based system will provide a level of standardization and integrity to give local governments more confidence in their investment decisions. Just as the frameworks varied widely, framework development costs spanned an order of magnitude. The advent of a national system offers the potential for public sector financial and human resources savings that can be redirected increasing the investments in strategic actions that improve performance.

Identifying Issues and Priorities

During a plenary session the committee was asked to brainstorm and produce a list of critical issues that reflect local government sustainability goals and priorities. Issues were listed without discussion, and were grouped together as broad categories emerged. Identification of these issues and priorities, and the emergence of categories, will guide to develop indicators and metrics that will be contained within STAR. The listing will also inform the breadth of expertise needed to form Technical Advisory Committees.

Following the plenary, smaller groups were formed to facilitate a more focused discussion on the preliminary issues and priorities that were identified and organized into broad categories. The work groups further refined the issues and presented their results to the full group during a reporting plenary. The Steering Committee was not asked to reach consensus on the listing of issues and priorities, and rather will recommend this initial listing as a starting point for the Technical Advisory Committee discussions. The issues and priorities were organized by five broad categories that emerged: Quality of Life; Built Environment; Energy, Climate and Natural Resources; Local and Sustainable Economic Development; and, Government Operations and Programs.

Outcome

- 1. The Steering Committee identified a preliminary list of critical issues that will be addressed in STAR through the development of indicators and metric, and inform the formation and focus of Technical Advisory Committees.*

Preliminary Listing of Critical Issues and Priorities as Guidance

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land Use and Transportation	Buildings
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	Public & Private
Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	New & Existing
Transit	Commercial, Residential, other
Density	Universal Design & Accessibility
Car Sharing	Stormwater
Bicycle	Urban Heat Island
Urban Heat Island	Utilities
Stormwater	Grid
Green Infrastructure	Distributed Generation
Streets, Sidewalks & Paths	Energy Source Emissions
Walkability	Water Supply
Bicycle	Sewer
Universal Design & Accessibility	Parks & Open Space
Stormwater	
Urban Heat Island	

CLIMATE, ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality	Energy Supply & Demand
Carbon Reduction	Delivery
Carbon Sequestration	Renewable Energy
Climate Adaptation	Fuel Sources
Pollution Prevention	Waste Management (Nuclear, Fly-ash, Water)
Reduction from Exposure	Energy Efficiency
Toxics Reduction	Demand Management
Water: Drinking Water	Urban Forestry
Quantity: Conservation & Climate Adaptation	Land: Natural Environment
Quality: Source Protection	Ecosystem Management
Water: Watershed	Biodiversity
Stormwater Management	Climate Adaptation
Native Landscapes	Habitat Species
Wastewater Management	Land: Built Environment
Waste: Reduction & Management	Brownfields
Consumption	Parks & Open Space
Recycling	
Pollution	
Toxics Reduction	
Composting	
Reuse	
Methane	

QUALITY OF LIFE

Social Services for At-Risk Populations	Race & Social Justice
Aging (in Place)	Environmental Justice
Access to Services	Minority Involvement
Children	Race & Social Equity
Poverty & Homelessness	Value Diversity
Maternal & Infant Health; Prenatal Care	Outreach, Education & Civic Education
Intellectual & Cultural Capital	Political Support
K-12 Educational Excellence	Civic Engagement
Arts & Culture	Public Awareness
Public Art	Community Cohesion
Arts & Culture in Public Education	Public Education
Access to Higher Learning	Economic Prosperity
Health	Affordability (housing, food, utilities)
Recreation – Access to Parks & Open Space	Poverty Reduction
Physical Activity	Income Equity
Wellness	Livable Wages
Public Health	Affordable & Workforce Housing
Access to Healthcare	Public Safety
Preventative Health (Obesity, Asthma)	Emergency Preparedness
Access to Wholesome Foods	Crime & Violence Prevention

LOCAL SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development	Local Commerce
Attract New Green Business	Local Purchasing
Green Existing Business & Industry	Sustainable Procurement
Green Job Development	Local, Sustainable Food System
Workforce Develop to Green Existing Industry	Small Business Development
	Communication Connectivity

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS

Overarching Principles	Operations
Innovation, Research & Development	Green Purchasing
Transparency	Fleet Management; Green Fleets
Leadership	Waste Management & Recycling
Regional Cooperation & Coordination	Water Conservation
Institutionalize Policies & Practices	Stormwater Management
Environmental Management Systems	Use of Bio Based Products
Stakeholder Engagement	Shared Services to Address Social Issues
	Energy Conservation
Legislation	Education
Local Incentives	Internal Training
Local Mandates	Public Outreach, Marketing & Education
Local Shared Services	Political Drivers
State & Federal Incentives	Public Perception; Public Opinion
State & Federal Mandates	Election Cycles

PROGRAM SCOPE, STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

Discussion

The Steering Committee was asked for additional input on the outstanding issues raised during plenary discussions. The committee as a whole deliberated, and then formed smaller work groups to discuss these issues, including: purpose, audience, program structure and design, and other perspectives stakeholders to involve in the development of STAR. The deliberations and decisions of the Steering Committee are summarized according to the key issues identified.

Primary Audience

The Steering Committee widely agreed that local governments (elected officials and staff) are the primary audience for the STAR program.

Geopolitical Scale

Members discussed the appropriate geopolitical scale such as metropolitan area or municipalities, as well as what type of entity will be able to apply for STAR certification. The committee agreed that while the broader community or metropolitan area may be included in the process, applicants for STAR certification will be limited to municipal governments – cities or counties.

Program Scope

The Steering Committee discussed the scope of the program in terms of whether the indicators will cover issues that municipalities are directly responsible for such as municipal operations and services or extend to a broader set of issues that jurisdictions have influence over such as economic development, watershed protection and community health. The members agreed that the scope should address a broader range of issues with a focus on municipal management and services, and quality of life objectives.

Many municipalities are identifying measures for improving public health. Assessing the health of a community will in many cases include factors that are not directly under the control of the municipality. For example, a community may address the increasing rate of childhood obesity by locating schools within walking distance to where families live, and to provide access to public parks and green space that encourage physical activity. A municipality may not have direct control over changing behaviors, but can influence a healthy change by providing better choices – such as the opportunity to walk to school or bicycle along green trail systems.

It is important to include a broader spectrum of indicators to more comprehensively measure sustainability. A holistic approach encourages discovery of the interrelationships and synergies between priorities. Local governments can influence change in areas they may not have direct control over. STAR can be designed to recognize this leadership and reward implementation of policies and programs or formation of alliances and strategic partnerships that affect positive change.

Green vs. Sustainable

Another question of scope was discussed and was one of the most contentious issues address by the Steering Committee – whether indicators will focus more explicitly on “green” or environmental indicators, or if indicators will address a broader diversity of issues that fall under all three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy and society. A few members advocated for a “green” focus, while the majority of members encouraged a more holistic and triple bottom line approach.

The Founding Partners clarified that the original intent behind STAR was to develop a program that

encompasses the broader elements of sustainability, as opposed to a more limited “green” scope. This criterion was vetted and established in response to interest from the members and constituents served by the Founding Partners. In addition, research of existing frameworks clearly demonstrated that existing local government frameworks addressed a broader spectrum of issues indicating a preference based on leadership communities.

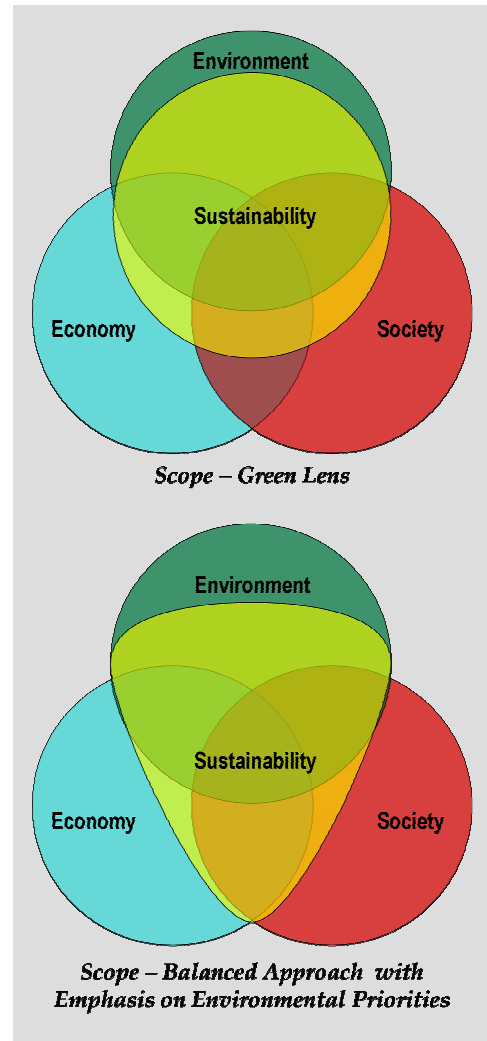
Members expressed concern that the Steering Committee itself lacked representation with the breadth of expertise needed to address all three pillars of sustainability. Steering Committee members recognized their membership predominately reflected environmental perspectives and did not represent a balance of expertise in economic and social perspectives. Other members cautioned that with a more expansive scope STAR may become difficult to implement and unwieldy.

After significant deliberation, the Steering Committee came to agreement that STAR will serve as a broad sustainability framework, and establishing indicators and metrics within each of three primary categories: environment, economy and society.

However, a range of views were expressed regarding whether to maintain a relative emphasis on the environmental factors. Many members of the group supported an approach that focused the indicators within the “sweet spot” that exists between the three spheres that define sustainability. Others preferred that STAR be developed with a “green-lens”. The prevailing sense and direction of the committee was to develop indicators that reflect the interconnectedness between environmental, economic and social issues, while also maintaining a subtle emphasis on environmental priorities.

For example, economic development indicators may focus on promoting clean technologies and green jobs. Social equity goals can be improved by establishing an indicator for green affordable and to encourage the location of workforce housing and in close proximity to workforce wage jobs. These strategies support communities who will benefit most from healthy, high quality housing that provide utility savings. Locating affordable housing close to transit or within mixed-use neighborhoods in close proximity to workforce wage jobs reduces travel distances. This strategy also supports greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. It also provides more savings that can be spent on essential needs.

The graphic on this page illustrates the two positions, the minority recommendation for a strong “green lens” and the majority position for a more balanced approach that reflects the interconnectedness between the three pillars while also responding an interest to emphasize environmental priorities and progress. The staff and Technical Advisory Committees will be tasked with refining and further developing options for further consideration.



Third-Party Verification

A few members perceived the cost of third-party verification as an expense that may prohibit local governments from participating, and asked whether alternative validation processes may be used without impacting the integrity of the system. Other members pointed out that participation is voluntary, so third-party certification is not mandated. The consensus of the committee was that third-party verification should be required for all municipalities interested in earning a rating and being recognized for their performance. Third-party verification is necessary to validate results and preserve the credibility of the rating system.

While local governments will be encouraged to pursue certification, the committee also recommended that STAR be designed as an open source tool that is easily accessible. As such, STAR can provide guidance and learning opportunities for municipalities getting started on their journey toward sustainability.

Requirements

The Steering Committee discussed whether there should be a minimum level of performance required for participation. STAR is intended to be a leadership standard and the general consensus was that it will be important to establish a minimum level of performance or a set of prerequisites. The discussion did not extend to identify specific requirements or prerequisites. However a few ideas were introduced, including: forming an interdepartmental team to manage STAR implementation, and adoption of predetermined policies and programs that support key priorities.

Rating Structure

Members discussed the most effective rating structure to communicate the performance and progress of municipalities. The committee explored structures that will both recognize leaders and celebrate municipalities that are beginning the process and demonstrating improvements. An absolute number may serve as a deterrent, while a color or label similar to LEED will highlight performance within a range. There was agreement that a rating structure that might be interpreted as a rank among cities was undesirable. During the discussion, several approaches were suggested that will require further discussion. The Steering Committee directed the staff to recommend options working with the Technical Advisory Committees and others. The ideas are not mutually exclusive.

- Consider developing (five) substantive categories to report accomplishment, with the potential for a separate rating for each category and also a combined score. This will result in a potential for a “5 star” rating and also have the option of responding to issues of regional importance.
- The committee preferred the use of labels to reflect relative levels of performance over numeric results. A recommendation was made to develop labels that use positive terms and reflect a range of accomplishment (e.g. partner, innovator, leader, and champion).
- While labels may be a good way to communicate overall performance, it may be important to provide information on the score achieved for validation in specific areas.
- Develop metrics that follow the a “4 P-framework” for policy and performance that includes: 1) policy – adopt the policy, 2) practice – policy implementation, funded vs. unfunded 3) performance – measured results, 4) progress – continuous improvement over time, adoption of new policies that restart the cycle.

System Evolution

The Steering Committee agreed that the rating system must be designed as a dynamic system – evolving over time to allow for improvements in measuring progress, reflect the best scientific knowledge, incorporate new credits and address emerging priorities and issues. Steering committee members suggested updating the system on a 2 – 5 year cycle to allow for revisions as our

understanding evolves, and to update the program tools and resources to incorporate new technical resources, best practices, and tools as they become available to support municipal adoption of STAR.

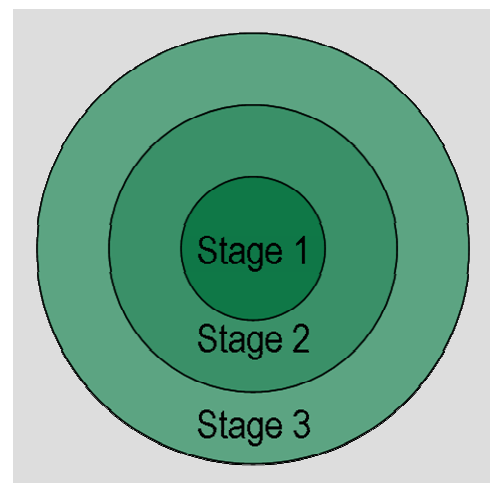
The discussion also highlighted the need to learn from the experience of participants and capture and share their progress over time. To demonstrate continuous improvement will require periodic (annual or bi-annual) reporting from participants. Staff discussed the intent to develop an online report tool for municipalities.

Inclusiveness

The Steering Committee provided direction to design STAR so that it encourages a wide range of municipalities to participate in STAR from large cities to rural towns and governments with advanced sustainability initiatives to those just beginning to develop their sustainability plan or program. In addition, members recommended that STAR provide tools for evaluating one locale against others with similar characteristics such as population and geographic region. However, comparative analysis may discourage participation and this challenge must be addressed in the design. Several design considerations were introduced:

- As a leadership system, STAR must challenge all municipalities including municipal leaders.
- Establish a “base” level of performance for newcomers or small communities with limited capacity so that they can engage without compromising the integrity of the leadership standard.
- Increase access by developing the system that municipal characteristics such as size or capacity are reflected in the performance requirements. For example, a tiered system of indicators and metrics may be offered that provide increasing levels of sophistication and complexity.

The group deliberated over various models for a non-linear structure. A series of concentric circles was suggested to represent a tiered and dynamic framework for participation as reflected in the adjacent figure. One specific example focused on the range of indicators used at various stages of the concentric circle. All stages would include a suite of indicators pulled from the three categories: environment, economy and society.



In this model, the center circle represents Stage 1 with a core suite of indicators suitable for communities who are just embarking on an exploration of sustainability. It may have a relative emphasis on green issues, and be designed as a self-evaluation system with no rating. Stage 2 applies to moderately experienced municipalities and may allow comparison against localities of similar characteristics and experience. Participants would be evaluated against indicators reflective of a more demanding and complex interpretation of sustainability. Stage 3 applies to the leaders and most experienced communities.

Integrate with Existing Systems

Steering Committee members recommended that STAR be designed to integrate with existing municipal systems and lines of responsibility to minimize the cost and added responsibility. The cost for collecting data on indicators can be significant. Minimizing these costs can be accomplished by targeting the use of data that is commonly tracked and available to cities and counties whenever possible. However, while many indicators are tracked by municipalities, there is often a lack of standardization across localities limiting the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning or the sharing of

best practices. Additionally, where performance data is not commonly gathered new metrics and methodologies for measuring performance must be established. The Steering Committee recommended that STAR adopt or adapt existing indicators and measures when possible, and to standardize indicators and metrics to facilitate consistent and comparative data collection.

Cost-Effectiveness

Members discussed concern over the potential costs for adopting and implement STAR and supported the program objective to identify cost-effective approaches for data collection and performance measurement. A national system will reduce the overall investment by local governments in developing and administering a sustainability program, and allow more resources to be invested in implementing policies and practices that improve performance. Additionally, an emphasis was placed on measuring outcomes or performance and improvements over time rather than documenting specific approaches.

Next Steps

1. Recommend an organizing structure and Technical Advisory Committees with expertise needed.
2. Recruit candidates and form Technical Advisory Committees. Staff will recommend candidates to the Steering Committee for appointment.
3. Host Technical Advisory Committee retreats in January 2009 at Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, WI.
4. Meet the near-term goal to raise \$325,000 in sponsorship funding by October 31st.
5. Organize a meeting for Steering Committee Members attending GreenBuild to discuss a timely topic.

ATTACHMENT A – PARTICIPANT LIST

STEERING COMMITTEE

Albuquerque, NM	John	Soladay	Director, Environmental Health Department
Asheville, NC	Maggie	Ullman	Energy Coordinator
Austin, TX	Matt	Watson	Policy Director, Office of Mayor Will Wynn
Boston, MA	Jim	Hunt	Chief of Environmental & Energy Services
Chattanooga, TN	Gene	Hyde	City Forester
Chicago, IL	Sadhu	Johnston	Chief Environmental Officer
Cleveland, OH	Andrew	Watterson	Program Director, Sustainability Program
Dallas, TX	Eric	Griffin	Acting Director, Office of Environmental Quality
Denver, CO	Scott	Morrissey	Program Manager, Greenprint Denver
Fayetteville, AR	John	Coleman	Sustainability Officer
Kansas City, MO	Dennis	Murphey	Chief Environmental Officer
New York, NY	Melissa	Wright	Policy Advisor on Energy & Special Projects
Oakland, CA	Charles	Stephenson	Director of Federal Affairs
Santa Monica, CA	Shannon	Parry	Sustainable City Coordinator
Seattle, WA	Amanda	Eichel	Advisor, Office of Sustainability & Environment
St. Louis, MO	Paul	Kalchbrenner	Strategic Advisor
St. Petersburg, FL	Michael	Connors	Internal Services Administrator
Washington, DC	Chris	Carew	Chief of Staff, District Dept of the Environment
King County	Michael	Jacobson	Performance Management Director
Miami-Dade County	Devesh	Nirmul	Program Manager, Office of Sustainability
Sarasota County	Amy	Meese	Natural Resources General Manager
Westchester County	Susan	Gerry	Senior Assistant to the County Executive
American Institute of Architects	Brooks	Rainwater	Director, Local Relations
American Planning Association	Paul	Farmer	Executive Director & CEO
Center for American Progress	Bracken	Hendricks	Senior Fellow
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention	Chris	Kochtitzky	CCEHIP Healthy Communities Team Lead
Enterprise Community Partners	Stockton	Williams	Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer
Florida Green Building Coalition	Terry	Janssen	Board of Directors
Green For All	Parin	Shah	Local Policy Director
ICLEI U.S.A.	Lynne	Barker	Program Director
Local Government Commission	Judy	Corbett	Executive Director
National Association of Counties	Lesley	Buchan	Program Director, Community Services Div.
National League of Cities	Ken	Rosenfeld	Policy Director
Natural Resources Defense Council	Jennifer	Henry	RE Sector Mngr. Center for Market Innovation
Sierra Club	Stephanie	Cutts	Policy Analyst, Cool Cities Campaign
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Andrea	Denny	Clean Energy Environment Municipal Network
U.S. Green Building Council	Jason	Hartke	Director, Advocacy and Public Policy

OTHER ATTENDEES

Center for American Progress	Benjamin	Goldstein	Research Associate
Climate Communities (The Ferguson Group)	Ken	Brown	Executive Director
Meridian Institute, Retreat Facilitator	John	Ehrmann	Senior Partner
Meridian Institute, Retreat Facilitator	Molly	Mayo	Senior Mediator
St. Petersburg, FL	Laura	Tuleen	Government Relations Manager
U.S. Green Building Council	Aaron	Lande	Advocacy & Policy Coordinator
Worldwatch Institute	Erik	Assadourian	Staff Researcher

ATTACHMENT C – STAFF RECOMMENDED TACS

PURPOSE

During this cornerstone event, the Steering Committee will discuss and approve the development plan and schedule; establish governance protocols for decision-making; discuss guiding principles to guide selection of credits and/or indicators; identify the critical issues that must be addressed in STAR; and, begin to formulate an organizing structure to group the critical issues into broader categories. The most critical Steering Committee decisions and outcomes are listed within the Agenda.

DAY ONE

8:00 – 8:30 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
8:30 – 8:55 AM	Welcome & Opening Comments Lynne Barker, STAR Community Index Program Director, ICLEI U.S.A. Bracken Hendricks, Center for American Progress Jason Hartke & Michelle Moore, US Green Building Council
8:55 – 9:15 AM	George Hawkins, Director, District of Columbia Dept. of Environment
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Steering Committee Introductions [1-minute] Introductions & share vision for STAR
10:15 – 10:30 AM	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:30 AM	STAR Concept: Presentation Followed by Group Discussion Comparative Analysis of Existing Local Government Sustainability Frameworks Program Overview, Development Plan, Process & Schedule Capacity Assessment & Funding Strategy Committees: Roles & Responsibilities <i>Outcome: Agreement on Concept Development Plan</i>
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Governance Structure “Decision Making Guidelines” presented followed by group discussion of governance model proposed to facilitate decision-making Executive Committee: Role & Responsibility; Election Process; Elections on Day 2 <i>Outcome: Agreement on a Decision Making Process and Structure</i>
12:30 – 1:15 PM	<i>Lunch & Informal Discussions</i>
1:15 – 3:15 PM	Facilitated Discussion Critical Issues that must be addressed by the STAR Community Index <i>Outcome: Preliminary list of critical issues to be addressed.</i>
3:15 – 3:30 PM	<i>Break</i>
3:30 – 5:00 PM	Small Group Work Sessions In-depth discussions of an assigned set of critical issues identified by full plenary <i>Outcome: Refinement of set of critical issues assigned</i>

ATTACHMENT B – RETREAT AGENDA

5:00 – 5:15 PM	Reconvene and Post Refinements of Critical Issues
5:15 – 6:00 PM	Facilitated Group Dialogue & Refinement of Critical Issues
6:00 – 6:15 PM	Day One Closing Remarks
7:00 – 9:30 PM	Dinner at Hook <i>[walk to Hook in Georgetown]</i>

DAY TWO

7:30 – 8:30 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Review Day-One Discussion & Decisions; Agenda Review
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Small Group Work Sessions of Critical Issues
	<i>Outcome: Refinement of set of critical issues assigned</i>
10:30 – 10:45 AM	<i>Break</i>
10:45 – 11:00 PM	Reconvene and Post Refinements of Critical Issues
11:00 – 11:45 PM	Facilitated Group Dialogue & Refinement of Critical Issues
	<i>Outcome: Agreement on refined set of critical issues</i>
11:45 – 12:15 PM	Executive Committee Election
	Candidates express their interest in Executive Committee seat
	Distribute ballot; ballots due by 3:00 PM Break
	<i>Outcome: Elect Executive Committee</i>
12:15 – 1:00 PM	<i>Lunch & Informal Discussion</i>
1:00 – 2:15 PM	Small Group Work Sessions
	Discussions on: guiding principles for establishing credits; organizing structure to group critical issues into broad categories; formation of Technical Committee; shared vision for how sustainability framework will serve local governments.
	<i>Outcome: Strategic advice on guiding principles; organizing structure; Technical Committees; and shared vision.</i>
2:15 – 3:00 PM	Plenary Discussion of Results from Small Groups
3:00 – 3:15 PM	<i>Break</i>
3:15 – 4:00 PM	Recap of Progress & Next Steps
	Feedback on Conceptual Development Plan
	Governance Model; Executive Committee Elections Results
	Critical Issues
	Next Steps: Retreat Report; Technical Committees Formation
4:00 PM	Adjourn

ATTACHMENT C – STAFF RECOMMENDED TACS

Technical Advisory Committees (TACS)

Based on the issues identified, staff recommended formation of eight Technical Advisory Committees as listed in below. Each Technical Advisory Committee will address a range of issues and requiring a diversity of expertise. In formulating the Technical Advisory Committees, staff analyzed the issues identified by the Steering Committee, indicators contained in existing sustainable community frameworks, related disciplines responsible for specific areas, and the interrelationship between issues.

Environment

Natural Systems (ecosystems and habitat, water and stormwater, air quality, waste and resource conservation)

Planning & Design (land use, transportation and mobility, and parks, open space and recreation)

Energy & Climate (energy, emissions, renewable energy, and green building)

Economy

Economic Development (clean technologies and green jobs, local commerce, tourism, and local food system)

Employment & Workforce Training (green job training, employment and workforce wages, and youth skills)

Society

Education, Arts & Community (education excellence, arts and culture, and civic engagement and vitality)

Children, Health & Safety (community health and wellness, access to healthcare, and public safety)

Affordability & Social Equity (affordable and workforce housing, social equity)