

Sustainability Defined

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

- In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), agreed on a definition of sustainable development that is now generally recognized as the standard.

“What about the seventh generation? What will they have? We say that the faces of coming generations are looking up from the earth. So when you put your feet down, you put them down very carefully - because there are generations coming one after the other. If you think in these terms, then you'll walk a lot more carefully, be more respectful of this earth.” - **Oren Lyons, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Chief**

“Sustainability is the ability to achieve continuing economic prosperity while protecting the natural systems of the planet and providing a high quality of life for its people”

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

“Think of it as extending the Golden Rule through time. Do unto future generations as you would have them do unto you.” - **Robert Gilman**

“Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us to restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations.” - **Theodore Roosevelt**

“Then I say the earth belongs to each generation during its course, fully and in its own right. The second generation receives it clear of the debts and encumbrances, the third of the second, and so on. For if the first could charge it with a debt, then the earth would belong to the dead and not to the living generation. Then, no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence.”

- Thomas Jefferson

“Sustainability, defined as the long term economic, ecological and social health and vitality of our community, is the fundamental purpose of city government... Sustainable means to be able to continue. We say a society is sustainable if it can continue for a long time. A sustainable society does not borrow resources unfairly from other parts of the planet or from future generations. A sustainable society recognizes that people, the economy and the environment are all connected.” - **City of Seattle**

“Sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform not against a single, financial bottom line but against the triple bottom line.”

- World Business Council on Sustainable Development

“To make the world work for 100% of humanity, in the shortest possible time, through spontaneous cooperation, without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone.”

- R. Buckminster Fuller

“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.” - **Edward Abbey**

"Only after the last tree has been cut down. Only after the last river has been poisoned. Only after the last fish has been caught. Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten." - **Cree Prophecy**

"Sustainable community development is the ability to make development choices which respect the relationship between the three "E's"-economy, ecology, and equity:

- Economy - Economic activity should serve the common good, be self-renewing, and build local assets and self-reliance.
- Ecology - Humans are part of nature, nature has limits, and communities are responsible for protecting and building natural assets.
- Equity - The opportunity for full participation in all activities, benefits, and decision-making of a society."

- **Mountain Association for Community Economic Development**

"Trying to run a complex society on a single indicator like the Gross National Product is like trying to fly a 747 with only one gauge on the instrument panel ... imagine if your doctor, when giving you a checkup, did no more than check your blood pressure."

- **Hazel Henderson, Paradigms of Progress**

"Sustainable Production is the creation of goods and services using processes and systems that are: non-polluting; conserving of energy and natural resources; economically efficient; safe and healthful for workers, communities, and consumers; and, socially and creatively rewarding for all working people."

Products and services are:

- safe and ecologically sound throughout their life cycle
- designed to be durable, repairable, readily recycled, compostable,
- or easily biodegradable
- produced and packaged using minimal amounts of material and energy

Processes are designed and operated such that:

- wastes and ecologically incompatible byproducts are reduced, eliminated
- or recycled on-site
- chemical substances or physical agents and conditions that present
- hazards to human health or the environment are eliminated
- energy and materials are conserved, and the forms of energy and
- materials used are most appropriate for the desired ends
- work spaces are designed to eliminate chemical, ergonomic, or physical hazard

Workers are valued and:

- their work is organized to conserve/enhance efficiency and creativity
- their security and well-being is a priority;
- they are helped to continuously develop their talents and capacities
- their participation in the decision making process is openly accepted

- **Adapted from Lowell Center for Sustainable Production**

<http://www.uml.edu/centers/LCSP/>