

THE ARC OF COLLABORATIVE SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP

INSIGHTS AND IDEAS GENERATED FROM THE 2013 URBAN SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE

**Proceedings and Final Report
January, 2014**



January 2014

Presented by:

The Metropolitan Institute and
The Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability (CLiGS)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Alexandria, Virginia

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Copies of the report are available at the Metropolitan Institute's website –
www.mi.vt.edu

Copies of the presentations affiliated with this event are available here -
www.mi.vt.edu/publications/2013-sustainability-leadership-forum

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In June of 2013, Virginia Tech's [Metropolitan Institute](#) and the [Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability](#) (CLiGS) held the first Urban Sustainability Leadership Forum. The Forum brought together 50 national and local sustainability leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to explore the current state of cross-sector sustainability coordination. The goal of the Forum was to identify strategies to help build the capacity of the urban sustainability movement, to explore the elements of a shared research and policy agenda, and to develop a menu of activities for cultivating the next generation of sustainability leaders.

This report is Virginia Tech's synthesis of the ideas and insights generated at the June Forum. Virginia Tech hopes this report will provide researchers, policy advocates, and agency officials with a common framework for exchanging further ideas around sustainability leadership. In addition to this report, the Metropolitan Institute developed a [video synopsis](#) which can be found on the [Sustainability Planning Lab](#) website. The video features Chris Forinash (Institute for Sustainable Communities), Dr. Courtney Kimmel (Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability), Joseph Schilling (Metropolitan Institute), Mariia Zimmerman (Metropolitan Institute), and Sir Robert Harvey (Waitakere, New Zealand).

The authors first thank the attendees of the Sustainability Leadership Forum for volunteering their time and sharing their ideas and insights that serve as the foundation for this report. We offer a special thank you to Dr. Michael Mortimer (Director, Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability), Dr. Courtney Kimmel (Associate Director, Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability), and Mariia Zimmerman, (Visiting Fellow, Virginia Tech's Metropolitan Institute) for providing opening remarks at the Forum. We also thank the following individuals for assisting with program development and participating as panel leaders, facilitators, and discussants: Dr. Anne Khademian, Ben Grumbles, Beth Osborne, Dr. Bruce Hull, Cathy Silverstein, Dr. Chris Pyke, Deohn Ferris, Eugenie L. Birch, Geoff Anderson, Jay Fiset, Jess Zimbabwe, Katherine Gajewski, Lawrence C. Nussdorf, Shelly Poticha, and Susannah Drake.

Additionally, we would like to thank Sir Robert Harvey of Waitakere, New Zealand, for not only participating in the Forum but also giving a keynote presentation on "leadership through landscape" at the event following the Forum. Jessica Hanff of the Metropolitan Institute provided critical assistance at the Forum and in the editing and formatting of this report.

Financial support for this Forum was provided by the [Virginia Tech's National Capital Region](#) and the meeting was convened at the [Virginia Tech Research Center](#) in Arlington, Virginia. Virginia Tech's National Capital Region (NCR) is dedicated to furthering the university's three missions – education, research, and outreach. With facilities, faculty, graduate degrees, and research in the region since 1969, Virginia Tech has a long tradition of creating new knowledge and applying it to the critical problems facing the Washington D.C. area, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world.

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PART ONE: FORUM PROCEEDINGS AND SYNTHESIS

On Thursday, June 6th, 2013 at the Virginia Tech Research Center – Arlington, Virginia Tech’s Metropolitan Institute and the Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability (CLiGS) brought together 50 sustainability leaders representing federal agencies, local governments, national and regional nonprofits, academia, and private businesses for a half-day forum. This forum, formally called “The Urban Sustainability Leadership Forum – the Art of Collaboration,” was by all accounts a success and positioned the Metropolitan Institute and CLiGS for continued work on this topic. Sustainability means different things to different people in different places, and because of this there are many definitions that encompass the notion of a sustainable community. Most definitions of sustainability involve three key elements:

- 1) Economic prosperity;
- 2) Equitable outcomes; and
- 3) Environmental protection.

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP IN PHILADELPHIA

In Philadelphia, PA the Greenworks sustainability policy plan is very ambitious – tasking nearly every governmental department with some responsibility for its implementation. Katherine Gajewski, Director of Sustainability with the [City of Philadelphia](#) explained during the Forum that a four-person sustainability office simply can’t manage the ambitious program without collaborative effort from other partners across sectors. In order to be successful, the City of Philadelphia engages as many players as possible and provides concrete opportunities for partners to “plug in” and collaborate on the [Greenworks Sustainability Plan](#). Ms. Gajewski underscored the fact that transparency is key to these engagements. In addition to sharing information with partners, Philadelphia understands they must actively share the spotlight by celebrating the accomplishments of partners. In many cases, recognition programs such as the American Public Transportation Association’s Sustainability Commitment Signatory program, help to foster leadership. Most importantly, the City focuses on bringing potential partners together to build trust and create community. Ms. Gajewski noted that relationship-mapping is a useful tool for building partnerships, and emphasized this notion by explaining that while we tend to rely on data and social media, “the human connection is still so important.”

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which is the Federal partnership between the the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the oenvironmental protection Agency (EPA) defines the sustainable city as one that works through policy to maintain practices that “lower transportation costs, reduce air pollution and stormwater runoff, decrease infrastructure costs, preserve historic properties and sensitive lands, save people time in traffic, be more economically resilient, and meet market demands for different types of housing at different price points.”¹

Mark Roseland identifies a sustainable community as one that “uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations,”² and “seeks a better quality of life for all its residents while maintaining nature’s ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy.”³ The ability of a city to become sustainable, however, depends heavily on the nature and effectiveness of its public, private, and civic leaders and on its local government regime since these players influence and in some cases control local land use decisions.⁴

This Forum provided a unique opportunity to convene leaders involved in creating more sustainable cities to reflect on the current state of the field of practice. The attendees shared their insights and experiences in building and maintaining partnerships, facilitating collaboration across sectors, and building the next generation of sustainability leaders by addressing some of the topics critical to sustainability leadership. The day was organized around three panel discussions that were guided by a series of questions which included:

1. Broadening the Tent:
 - a. How can sustainability leaders recruit new voices to the sustainability discussion?
 - b. What messages and mediums can help connect groups that typically have not been part of the conversation?
2. Maintaining Momentum:
 - a. How can sustainability leaders engage people within their own organizations and their close partners and allies to keep up the good work?
3. Coordinating Networks:
 - a. How do sustainability leaders manage multiple partnerships to facilitate collaborative action across sectors, disciplines, and overcome other institutional and individual barriers?

¹ United States. Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Retrieved 17 December 2013 from the USDOT website: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>.

² Roseland, M. (2012) *Toward Sustainable Communities*, British Columbia: New Society Publishers.

³ *Our Common Future*, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Published as Annex to General Assembly document A/42/427, Development and International Co-operation: Environment August 2, 1987. Retrieved 23 January 2014.

⁴ Jennings, I. & Newman, P. (2008). *Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems: principles and Practices*, Washington, DC: Island Press.

4. Building Capacity:
 - a. How are sustainability leaders building long- term organizational, civic, and community capacity?
 - b. How are they instilling a new organizational culture that supports sustainability?

5. Gazing into the Crystal Ball:
 - a. What are the challenges and opportunities on the horizon that sustainability leaders are preparing for?
 - b. How are they developing the next generation of sustainability leaders?

Context for the Discussion

The Forum launched with a discussion on identifying the megatrends currently affecting urban sustainability. Dr. Bruce Hull, Professor of Forestry, Senior Fellow of the Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability, Virginia Tech, identified four dominant megatrends:

- Changes in demographics (increased population, urbanization, increased wealth, end of extreme poverty)
- Changes in the environment (climate changed, water stressed, resource scarce)
- Changes in the market (global supply chain risk management, resource scarcity)
- Changes in governance (strong cities and corporations, increased cross-sectorial collaboration)

These trends intersect where cities, climate advocates, and civil society work in the same sphere. There was continual reinforcement of the notion that civil society has a critical role to play at a temporal scale (beyond the electoral cycle) and on a moral scale (local NGOs often provide moral authority that complements politics and business).

Collaboration across sectors on these opportunities and challenges is essential for successfully affecting change. Sustainability leaders must interact with the public sector for regulation and to create market incentives and opportunities. Likewise, the leaders must develop approaches for monitoring and measuring the progress of sustainability in collaboration with the community. Risk management for sustainability challenges must also engage the private sector through transforming business practices and accounting systems.

Resistance to sustainable development and climate mitigation efforts by some conservative political groups presents a challenge to advancing practice. Ideally, in a civil society, the collaborative process should draw a range of perspectives. If sustainability leaders can embrace the ambiguity and complexity of sustainability through collaborative processes, then perhaps refocusing the discussion as local solutions can minimize these conflicts.

Leadership: A Complex Challenge

The Forum discussion shifted to the complex challenges that organizational leaders must navigate as leaders in the sustainability realm. Based on her work with public officials and institutions, Dr. Anne Khademian, Director, School of Public and International Affairs, Virginia Tech, focused on four overarching challenges which confront our public sector leaders:

- Increasing political polarization and political methods that discourage cooperation or even dialogue
- Increasing complexity of systems and organizations (transportation and planning, health, environmental regulation, etc.) that traditionally operate in silos
- Ways of knowing problems are highly complex and have multiple sources
- High expectations for solving problems, for flexibility, and for accountability

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Anne Khademian, Director of Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs, established some groundwork for the Forum by outlining several collaborative leadership principles:

Relational and informational work: The quality of relationships is important and sustainability leaders sometimes need to act as information brokers, translators, or synthesizers;

Attentiveness to process: The collaborative process and adequate inclusion of all partners sets the stage for effective policy implementation;

Unlikely resources: It is important to consider a broad range of resources (beyond human and financial) and utilize them to their full potential.

No dichotomies: It is common to make distinctions in our daily work between different categories or opposites, but dichotomies can act as constraints, closing off possibilities. Structure and action actually work hand in hand.

Translational work across boundaries: Collaboration requires creative efforts to bring multiple perspectives and experiences together.

One of the major themes that emerged in this discussion reiterated the importance of collaboration and leading through inclusion. The leaders in the sustainability sector should focus on moving from sharing information to action. For example, metropolitan planning organizations are inclined to share information with their peer organizations and looking forward, but often get waylaid when it comes to collaborative, long-term planning with partners or collaborative policy implementation. Transit agencies also often find themselves tasked with managing development projects with different stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The sustainability sector is poised to address that open opportunity for collaboration.

After comments and discussion, the Forum was rounded out by three separate panel discussions and a final reflection of the day to identify a policy, action, and research agenda (see [MI website](#) or Appendix II for Forum materials).

- **Building and Maintaining Partnerships: Foundations for Collaboration:**
Strategies for building new partnerships with organizations and institutions to foster meaningful collaboration; Recruit new voices/partners to the sustainability discussion; Effective messages and mediums used to connect groups that have typically not been part of the sustainability conversation.
- **Sustaining and Leveraging Cross Sectorial Partnerships for Systemic Change:**
Strategies for sustaining and leveraging multiple partnerships and networks to ensure collective action toward sustainability outcomes across sectors and disciplines.
- **Capacity Building for Organizations and Institutions:**
Strategies for building long-term organizational, civic and community capacity that supports the type of transformational action and change necessary to build sustainable communities and to develop the next generation of sustainability leaders.

Drawing upon the Forum's closing session, four important themes emerged that are relevant to transforming collaboration and existing partnerships. Those include 1) **Culture** - leaders must exercise a high degree of cultural sensitivity when building coalitions and collaboration around sustainability. There is diversity of comprehension at the neighborhood scale as well as diversity of understanding that is linked to culture and values; 2) **People** - individuals and partnerships are the essence of sustainable communities; 3) **Capacity** - Long-term organizational, civic and community capacity is essential for creating sustainable communities, establishing networks, and building the next generation of sustainability leaders; and 4) **Leadership** - training leaders across generations and sectors is critical to the strength of the sustainability movement (see Part II for more detail).

In order to facilitate this transition, the participants recognized that having the right government policies in place sets the stage, but that such policies must also make financial sense in order to facilitate collaboration with the private sector. Participants also identified the need for creative and innovative actions, not letting extraneous factors serve as an obstacle to problem solving. The Forum attendees also agreed that capacity building for community-based organizations is essential to ensure they are active and effective partners. An engaged civil society that can outlast political transitions is another key requirement in successful collaborations for sustainable communities.

The Forum provided a useful scan of the core components of leadership and cross sector collaboration necessary for making cities more sustainable—what we call *The Arc of Collaborative Sustainability Leadership*.

The Arc of Collaborative Sustainability Leadership

In working with the Forum’s discussion leaders, four stages of collaborative leadership surrounding the notions of culture, people, capacity, and inter-sector collaboration — were identified as the Arc of Collaborative Sustainability Leadership. While not unique to sustainability, these four phases provide organizations, institutions, and communities with a framework that sheds light on the dynamics of collaboration and enhances our understanding about sustainability’s multiple dimensions. The Forum’s discussions highlighted the intense challenge of building sustainable communities which requires leaders to constantly readjust and respond to a myriad of local, regional, and national dynamics. Sustainability leaders can adapt and tailor the arc to local and even neighborhood conditions while leveraging the arc’s insights in helping build new coalitions, strengthen existing partnerships and develop organizational and institutional capacity over the long term

Building and Maintaining Partnerships: The Foundations for Collaboration

The notion of partnership is not a new one, yet the field of sustainability is intrinsically so complex and changing, that it requires different approaches to build and maintain successful partnerships. Given the inter-related nature of sustainability, collaborative approaches tend to require “silo-busting” across disciplines, industries, and sectors. Often this creates an initial excitement for those who see the merit of working outside the box and are eager to forge new working relationships. Conversely, it is often hard to sustain these partnerships over the long-term if there are conflicting missions between partners, funding, or political constraints, or an inability to foster support beyond a single individual within an organization.

Led by Mariia Zimmerman, a visiting fellow at Virginia Tech’s Metropolitan Institute, this panel explored strategies for building new partnerships with organizations and institutions to foster meaningful collaboration. The discussion drew on perspectives from public, non-profit, and private sector partnerships.

In discussing efforts to build and maintain partnerships that cross sectors, participants and panelists touched on the challenges of embedding sustainability into the culture of their own organizations. The unique challenges identified in the context of efforts involving the public sector are perennial in nature, and include changing political leadership, shrinking public budgets, and an aversion to risk in more conservative cultures.

Despite these challenges, opportunities with private and large institutions remain viable. Hospitals and universities, for instance, are often mission-driven and dependable. However, while they make for reliable partners in sustainability efforts, the continued expansion of these sectors could still result in the challenges associated with sustaining long-term efforts.

MEASURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The federal government did not previously have a way to measure sustainable development, which became especially important after the formation of the [Partnership of Sustainable Communities](#). [University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Urban Research](#) worked in partnership with the [Ford Foundation](#) and several federal agencies to [inventory indicator systems and identify sustainability indicators](#) based on the Partnership's Livability Principles. In developing sustainability indicators, it's important to look at equity and inclusivity across all goals. The final objective is that a more consolidated set of indicators can be employed by U.S. cities and regions in order to develop increasingly evidence-based sustainability policies. The best indicators are ones that support the narrative of what a community is trying to accomplish.⁵

⁵ United States. Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Retrieved 17 December 2013 from the USDOT website: <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>.

Maintaining partnerships over the long-term also depends on shared measures of success. In order to set new goals, real change must be measured. Difficult economic times often call for sustainability measures to be responsive to market changes and to consider other forms of partnerships, such as public-public and public-anchor institutions (e.g. universities, hospitals).

In order to bring new partners to the sustainability table, leaders should focus efforts on creating an aligned theory of change and the fostering the motivation to carry it out. It is important to create more value than the initial value that is captured through the partnership. It is also important to choose the right people as messengers for communicating with non-traditional partners.

Finally, the session participants and panelists underscored the importance of shared values in the collaborative process. In fostering partnerships, sustainability leaders should build in the time necessary to have the group reach a shared and collective vision, to ensure there is equitable ownership of the goals and outcomes.

Sustaining & Leveraging Cross-Sectorial Partnerships for Systemic Change

Building on the discussion of partnerships, the next panel focused on sustaining partnerships and leveraging partner strengths. Simply establishing a partnership is not enough; the partnership needs to be sustained and partner strengths should be leveraged so that the collective partnership is greater than the sum of its parts. Jay Fisette, Vice Chair, Arlington County Board compared partnerships to the spokes of a wheel, going on to say that "if one spoke is broken the wheel won't turn, so that spoke requires attention."

In addition to leading by example and showing early successes, sustainability leaders must be an effort to build momentum. This results in the institutionalization of a partnership. Institutionalization (i.e. stability) establishes the trust necessary for partner investment, and can provide legitimacy for partnerships. Compromise is also important in sustaining partnerships.

One of the common difficulties experienced in sustaining partnerships is the hurdle of different languages spoken in different sectors. Visual communications can help to broker agreement on shared terminology or meaning. Honesty and integrity of language used is also very important. The key is to help people connect to what's important to them, and this sort of cultural competency matters for building and sustaining trust.

Another challenge is that rural and/or smaller municipalities do not have capacity to take advantage of sustainability policies and programs. To achieve sustainability in these communities, it is important to first overcome locational disparities, integrate into regional programs, improve livelihoods and resources, and deploy community assets. There must be cross-sectorial interventions involving NGOs, the private sector, and government to enable all communities to become more sustainable.

Capacity Building for Organizations and Institutions

This panel examined strategies for building long-term organizational, civic, and community capacity that supports the type of transformational action and change necessary to build sustainable communities. Discussions focused on how organizations are developing the next generation of sustainability leaders. The objective was to relate practicum experience and philosophy about creating sustainable communities through organizational capacity building.

Networks happen across people, not places. For example, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network is helping relatively new sustainability directors in hundreds of communities not only define best practices but define the profession itself. Sustainability leaders need to be conscientious and do more to ensure that sustainability outcomes deliver on equity. To do that, the industry should focus on bringing disadvantaged communities to the sustainability table.

This often requires addressing historical issues and communicating with municipalities and leaders about present day-challenges. It should be the objective of sustainability leaders to help pilot projects and communities connect with the universities in their area to support and scale up their efforts.

PART TWO: ACTION AGENDA

Emerging Themes

Through the process of designing and facilitating the conversations at the Urban Sustainability Leadership Forum, the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech is advancing a holistic framework for understanding sustainability collaboration—the “Arc of Collaborative Sustainability Leadership.” In addition to providing a useful scan of collaboration in the sustainability realm, many of the Forum’s discussions centered around four emerging themes that help to further refine the interplay of the arc’s different stages:

1) *Culture* influences our understanding of sustainability; there is diversity of comprehension at different scales linked to community values.

Communities are at different stages in their journeys to become sustainable. Local culture, geography, demographics, and values may have long traditions that support the underlying principles sustainability. Pioneering places such as Portland, Oregon, or Santa Monica, California have extensive experience adopting policies and programs that promote sustainability. They have evolved a local green ethos over the course of many years. Other communities are in the early stages of their transformation to sustainability, smaller towns such as Dubuque, Iowa, and older industrialized cities such as Cleveland, Ohio, and Baltimore, Maryland, are embracing sustainability through their plans and city operations. Leaders may confront resistance and confusion at the neighborhood scale in meetings with local residents and community based organizations. In light of this diversity of scale and understanding leaders must exercise a high degree of cultural sensitivity when building coalitions and collaboration around sustainability. Honesty, cultural competency, and integrity of language become the leader’s core skills in building trust and helping communities develop their own vision around sustainability.

2) *People* and partnerships serve as the foundation for sustainable communities; engaging everyone, regardless of where they fall on the political or social spectrum, builds trust and fosters a sense of community that is critical to creating and maintaining collaboration.

The sustainability challenges that communities confront demand the forging of new and sometimes unlikely or unfamiliar alliances. Effective sustainability leaders have the critical skills and special talents that emphasize human connections and community building. An engaged civil society is key to successful collaborations for sustainable communities.

3) Developing a *capacity* to support capacity builders; building long-term civic and community capacity through the role of intermediary organizations, establishing networks, and developing the next generation of sustainability leaders are all essential to creating sustainable communities.

Within the last 20 years, dozens of national, regional, and local nonprofit intermediaries have emerged on the sustainability scene. Some organizations focus on particular dimensions of sustainability, such as water quality, smart growth, transportation, or urban greening, while others take a generalist approach. Many serve professional networks of planners, local government officials, and businesses. As intermediaries, these multi-dimensional nonprofits perform critical roles in the realms of advocacy, knowledge transfer, outreach, convening, policy analysis, and leadership development. Together they form an emerging nonprofit network committed to building the sustainability capacity of government, private, and community organizations. Policymakers and philanthropists should pay special attention to the pivotal role of these sustainability intermediaries and nurture their special approach to building cross-sector capacity.

4) Cultivating sustainability *leaders*; there is a need to create more sustainability leaders across every generation and across the public, private, and civil sectors.

The complexities of sustainability demand a new breed of leader that can understand multiple interests and reconcile competing goals. Government, business, institutions, and non-profit and community organizations each have critical roles to play. At times these sectors can be at odds with each other. Sustainability's holistic framework offers the opportunity to identify common goals and objectives that address their collective interest in building more sustainable, healthy and livable communities. Thus, it becomes critical for these sectors to develop a common language, common principles, and engage in common activities. Across these sectors we also see opportunities for passing the torch to a new generation of sustainability leaders. Moving forward, however, organizations should think more strategically about how to cultivate this new generation of leaders, identify core values that reconnect with these more technologically savvy millennials. Current sustainability leaders in all fields should provide leadership training opportunities as well as opportunities for young professionals to lead.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Future Action

Attendees of the Urban Sustainability Leadership Forum overwhelmingly acknowledged the inherent benefits in providing a regular space for professionals to come together to discuss and practice the art of sustainability collaboration. Of those who attended the Forum and responded to the feedback survey, 93% thought the Forum provided a good opportunity to meet with peers from other sectors and organizations, 94% plan to contact people they met during the Forum for follow-up on ideas discussed, and 87% were very satisfied with the Forum and are interested in attending future Forums.

A significant percentage of Forum participants work for national, local, and regional nonprofits and public agencies who have offices in metropolitan Washington, D.C. Many of these organizations focus on particular sustainability issues or topics, while providing different types of services from education to policy advocacy. A great number of the participants were executive or senior directors that have staffs of young professionals managing granted funded programs and projects. As far as we know there is no network or leadership program that caters to this influential cadre of sustainability leaders. Several of these sustainability organizations manage leadership networks for members from other cities, but there is nothing that focuses on the demands of leading national or regional sustainability organizations, agencies, or programs.

Coming out of this Forum, we believe a need exists for facilitating and convening a regular network of sustainability leaders from national (and perhaps international) organizations located within the greater Washington, D.C., region. Such a network could make significant contributions to fostering collaboration and building the next generation of sustainability leaders.

Located in the National Capital Region, Virginia Tech's Metropolitan Institute is strategically situated to serve not only as the neutral place and convener for national level organizations, but the synthesizer or observer of collaborative urban sustainability leadership. The Institute's extensive network of individuals and organizations positions it to document the roots and current activities of the urban sustainability movement. By acting as the movement's defacto policy ethnographers, the Institute could position the movement within the broader context of urban policy and planning while recruiting feedback from thought leaders about future directions. The Institute would essentially serve as a collaborative hub for practitioners, policymakers and researchers, to examine the urban sustainability movement from a variety of angles and disciplines.

Below is a preliminary menu of ideas for potential next steps. The Institute welcomes feedback from the Forum’s participants as well as interested partners and sponsors. We intend to gather input and recruit partners to move forward with many of these ideas during the first quarter of 2014:

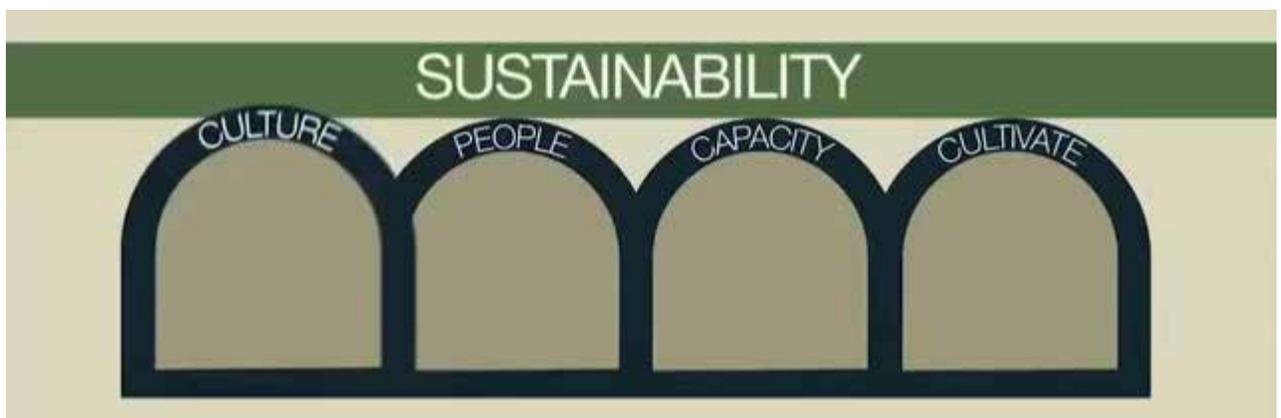
- 1. FORUM on Urban Sustainability Leadership:** Building on the June 2013 Forum, MI envisions a twice a year, half-day event held in Washington, D.C., that would address particular facets of sustainability leadership relevant to the needs and experiences of sustainability leaders. A Washington, D.C., location would naturally draw on the many government agencies, nonprofits, and private sector organizations working on sustainability. MI also sees the potential for collaborating with national sustainability NGOs and seeking private sector support and engagement. Another potential partner might include local universities who have programs and/or centers on sustainability, public and nonprofit sector leadership and management—an important intersection to facilitate going forward. Some of the topics raised during the Forum could become themes for future meetings:
 - Compare capacity building strategies and tools—what approaches do public sector agencies and NGOs use to build community and often local government capacity around sustainability and leadership.
 - Examine in more depth the use of technology, simulations, and role plays in building community capacity.
 - Explore how to make sustainability more accessible for the residents and leaders of distressed neighborhoods.
 - Discuss communication, branding and messaging around urban sustainability in different and diverse communities—what works and what does not?
 - Bring the private and philanthropic sectors together to explore their role in building the capacity of the capacity builders.

- 2. ACADEMY for Emerging Sustainability Leaders:** A vocal consensus emerged from the Forum around the need for building capacity within the emerging field of sustainability leadership. Participants frequently touched upon the importance of building the next generation of sustainability leaders. However, few opportunities exist for bringing together emerging sustainability leaders, say those under age 40, who direct or manage sustainability organizations, programs and projects from different sectors (public, nonprofit, and private). While the prototype pilot might focus on the existing network of sustainability leaders within the greater Washington, D.C., region, MI sees the advantage of first pilot testing this model here and then scaling it for other communities. One idea is to follow the successful model used by many community leadership academies that engage one or two classes of young-to-mid career professionals in regular meetings (once or twice a month) over the course of a 3-4 month term. Participants could be exposed to different models of sustainability leadership, engage in group problem solving, and perhaps collaborate on a public service group project. The curriculum could also include site visits and guest lectures. Such a leadership academy would provide opportunities for building the capacity of the next generation of demonstrated

sustainability leaders and lay the foundation for a peer network. Again, the target audience would be mid-level sustainability managers, program directors, etc., from across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

- 3. ROUNDTABLE for Senior Sustainability Leadership:** In order to maintain momentum and advance the sustainability movement, executive directors and CEOs of organizations, businesses, and nonprofits also need a place where they can confidentially share information, build relationships, and reflect. As a complement to the Leadership Academy, MI envisions the Roundtable as the space for senior sustainability leaders. Perhaps it only meets three or four times a year around a particular topic or current challenge. Instead of just a networking activity, a small group of members could devise the agenda and help facilitate the discussion so the participants manage the content and process. In light of the executive stature of the participants, the Roundtable might meet for 2-3 hours, late in the day, in a confidential space to encourage more candid conversations.
- 4. ADVISORY BOARD for the Urban Sustainability Leadership Capacity Building Network:** Virginia Tech cannot take on these responsibilities (e.g. Forum, academy, and roundtable) without active partners who can contribute their expertise and perhaps in-kind resources to launch this program and help build the capacity of urban sustainability leadership. Thus, it makes sense to form some type of planning committee to make these and other ideas happen. This informal planning committee could eventually evolve into an advisory board to the Forum, academy, and roundtable, helping raise resources, recruit partners, review the curriculum and actively support what we would hope might someday become an “alumni network” of participants from this suite of leadership training and education activities.

We welcome your feedback on these proposed activities as well as similar ideas that you and your organizations might have. Do you think these activities would help fill the gap in leadership development for the urban sustainability movement? Could they help you and your organizations? If so, what potential roles would you and your organizations be interested in playing? Please let us know what you think.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FORUM ATTENDEES

Public Sector Leaders	Nonprofit Sector Leaders	Academia	Private Sector Leaders
Danielle Arigoni and Charlie Bartsch EPA	Geoff Anderson SmartGrowth America	Eugenie Birch Penn Design	Susannah Drake Dlandstudio
Richard Dooley Department of Environmental Services	Gary Belan American Rivers	Ralph Buehler VT, Urban Affairs and Planning	Phil Hummelt Restore Capital
Therese Dorau NACo – National Association of Counties	Kendra Briechle The Conservation Fund	Jennifer Cotting University of Maryland, Environmental Finance Center	Marsha Kaiser Parson Brinckerhoff (PB Placemaking)
Jay Fiset Arlington County Board	Deeohn Ferris Sustainable Community Development Group, Inc.	Bruce Hull VT, Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability	Kate Marshall SRA, International
Kate Fritz Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission	Chris Forinash Institute for Sustainable Communities	Anne Khademan, VT, School of Public and International Affairs	Colleen Morgan SRA, International
Katherine Gajewski City of Philadelphia	Andrea Fox and Tad McGalliard ICMA	Courtney Kimmel VT, Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability	Harrison Rue ICF International
Robert Harvey Chairman, Auckland Waterfront Redevelopment Authority	Ben Grumbles US Water Alliance	Barbara McCutchan VT, College of Natural Resources & Environment	Dolores Schroeder Law Office of Dolores K. Schroder Attorney and Green Real Estate Consultant
Rob Krupicka VA House of Delegates	Katie Hummelt Climate Change Group of Historic Scotland	Michael Mortimer VT, Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability	Cathy Silverstein Management Systems International, Inc.
Beth Osborne US DOT	Sophie Lambert and Chris Pyke US Green Building Council	David Orden VT, Institute for Society, Culture and Environment	
Shelley Poticha HUD	Chris Miller Piedmont Environmental Council	Lee Paddock GWU Law School, Environmental Studies	
Kiel Stone Fairfax County Board	Tamar Shapiro Center for Community Progress	David Robertson VT, College of Natural Resources & Environment	
Denise Thompson City of Norfolk	Hilari Varnadore STAR Communities	Joseph Schilling VT, Metropolitan Institute SPIA Research Director	
Stephen Walz Northern Virginia Regional Commission	Raksha Vasudevan National League of Cities	Maria Zimmerman Metropolitan Institute, VT, MZ Strategies, LLC	
	Jess Zimbabwe The Urban Land Institute		
VT Support Team: Jennah Bedrosian; Lauren Bulka; Jessica Hanff; Shannon Lawrence and Tina Whaley			

APPENDIX B: AGENDA

AGENDA

Virginia Tech's Metropolitan Institute (MI) & Center Leadership in Global Sustainability (CLiGS)

Urban Sustainability Leadership Forum—the Art of Collaboration

Event Date: June 6th, 2013 11 am to 5 pm

Virginia Tech's Ballston Research Center

900 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA (Ballston Metro Stop-Orange Line)

East/West Falls Church Rooms (2nd floor)

11:00 **Registration Opens/Pick up Lunch**
11:30-12:00 **Informal Discussion/Open Panel**
12:00 **Official Welcome, Michael Mortimer and Courtney Kimmel**, Center Leadership in Global Sustainability; and **Joe Schilling** and **Mariia Zimmerman**, Metropolitan Institute

12:15 **Orientation and Agenda Review**

- Brief introductions
- Walk through the agenda
- Underlying premise/goal for the Forum: Given the complexities and multiple dimensions of the challenges communities confront, cross-sector collaboration is essential for effective sustainability policies, programs and projects to build more sustainable communities. This Forum invites sustainability leaders from different sectors to share their experience/insights on the art and science of collaboration, and identify pressing leadership development needs to build the movement.

12:30 to 1:00 **Urban Sustainability Leadership Challenges and Opportunities**

- Framing the urban sustainability trends, **Dr. Bruce Hull**, Senior Fellow, CLiGS; professor, VT, College of Natural Resources and Environment;
- Framing the characteristics and qualities of sustainability leadership, **Dr. Anne Khademian**, Director, School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA);
- Comments and discussion

1:00 to 2:00 **Panel One—Building and Maintaining Partnership—the Foundations for Collaboration**

This panel will explore strategies for building new partnerships with organizations and institutions to foster meaningful collaboration. What strategies have leaders used to recruit new voices/partners to the sustainability discussion? What messages and mediums have they used to connect groups that have typically not been part of the sustainability conversation?

Panel Leader: **Mariia Zimmerman**, MI Visiting Fellow

Facilitator: **Joe Schilling**, MI Interim Director

Discussants: **Jess Zimbabwe**, AIA, AICP, LEED-AP, Executive Director, Rose Center for Public Leadership, The Urban Land Institute; **Katherine Gajewski**, Director of Sustainability, City of Philadelphia, and **Chris Pyke**, Ph.D., Vice President Research, U.S. Green Building Council

2:00 to 3:00 Panel Two—Sustaining & Leveraging Cross-Sectoral Partnerships for Systemic Change

This panel will explore strategies for sustaining and leveraging multiple partnerships and networks to ensure collective action across sectors and disciplines towards sustainability outcomes. What are some of the more effective strategies and techniques for leveraging partnerships to achieve outcomes greater than the sum of its parts (multiplier effect)? How can leaders maintain and sustain collaboration? How can these collaborative efforts be brought to scale beyond individual partnerships?

Panel Leader: **Cathy Silverstein**, CLiGs, Visiting Fellow, Management Systems International, Inc.

Facilitator: **Courtney Kimmel**, CLiGS

Discussants: **Shelly Poticha**, Director of the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); **Ben Grumbles**, President, US Water Alliance; **Jay Fisette**, Vice Chair, Arlington County Board, **Susannah Drake**, AIA, ASLA, Principal dlandstudio.

3:15 Break

3:30 to 4:30 Panel Three—Capacity Building for Organizations and Institutions

This panel will examine strategies for building long term organizational, civic and community capacity that supports the type of transformational action and change necessary to build sustainable communities. How are organizations helping develop the next generation of sustainability leaders?

Panel Leader: **Chris Forinash**, Institute for Sustainable Communities

Facilitator: **Mariia Zimmerman**, MI Visiting Fellow

Discussants: **Geoff Anderson**, President and CEO, Smart Growth America; Beth Osborne, Deputy Assistant Secretary, US Department of Transportation; **Deeohn Ferris**, JD, President, Sustainable Community Development Group; **Eugenie L. Birch**, Lawrence C. Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research, Department of City and Regional Planning Chair, Graduate Group in City and Regional Planning, Co-Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania

4:30 to 5:00 Reflections on the Day and Potential Next Steps

Participants will brainstorm potential short and long term activities that could result from today's Forum.

**ADJOURN FOR RECEPTION AT ARTISPHERE (Rosslyn Metro Stop – Orange/Blue Line)
1101 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22209**